

Lesson 6: LGBT+ Rights Trailblazers -

Katherine Zappone and Ann Louise Gilligan

Key Enquiry Question: Why are Katherine Zappone and Ann Louise Gilligan significant in the struggle for LGBT+ rights?

Time: 1 hour

Learning Objectives:

- To learn about some of the major personalities in the struggle for LGBT+ rights – Katherine Zappone and Ann Louise Gilligan
- To develop a simple understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, motivations and actions of individuals and groups involved in the struggle for equal rights for LGBT+ people
- To create an image depicting the day the referendum result was announced

Resources:

- 'LGBT+ Trailblazers – Katherine Zappone and Ann Louise Gilligan', pages 36–37
- Copies/A4 sheets and drawing equipment

Introduction:

- Ask the class to consider the question 'Why are Katherine Zappone and Ann Louise Gilligan significant in the struggle for LGBT+ rights?'
- Ask them to discuss in pairs what prior knowledge they have about this topic and what questions they would like to find out the answers to.
- Share the lesson objectives with the pupils (WALT).

Development:

- Preteach vocabulary from the text as necessary. Depending upon your class, some words you may like to explain in advance include:

Key Vocabulary

driving force kick-started legalisation convent theology PhD
doctorate community development initiative transformational
Revenue Commissioners explicitly appeal civil partnership coalition
election manifesto constitution constitutional negotiation referendum
amendment public representative nominee brain haemorrhage legacy

- Distribute the texts ‘LGBT+ Rights Trailblazers: Katherine Zappone and Ann Louise Gilligan’ to each pupil or pair.
- As you read through the text, facilitate the pupils in the application of appropriate comprehension skills as suggested.
 - Skimming (allowing your eyes to quickly move over the text to get a sense of its meaning)
 - Determining Importance (identifying the most important elements of a piece of text)
 - Visualising/Creating an Image (using your imagination to ‘see’ what is happening in the text)
 - Comparing (identifying ways in which two or more texts are similar or different)

Closure:

- Ask the pupils to identify the most significant historical facts in the account.
- Pupils then use the information they have learned to create an image of the day that the results of the referendum was announced. Encourage them to include other LGBT+ campaigners in the image also.
- Ask the pupils to evaluate their work using the ‘Two Stars and a Wish’ methodology (two elements that they’re proud of and one thing they’d like to improve upon).

Assessment of Learning:

- Teacher observation of responses to comprehension questions and images

Assessment for Learning:

- Pupils self-assess using ‘Two Stars and a Wish’

Differentiation:

- Pupils who require additional language support should be pre-taught the key vocabulary prior to the lesson.
- Pupils who require extension could be challenged to write a description of their image using at least ten of the key vocabulary words.

LGBT+ Rights Trailblazers

Katherine Zappone and Ann Louise Gilligan

Katherine Zappone and Ann Louise Gilligan were a driving force behind the campaign for Marriage Equality in Ireland. They got married in Vancouver, Canada in 2003 and their struggle to have this marriage recognised kick-started the struggle for the legalisation of same-sex marriage in Ireland.



COMPREHENSION SKILLS: SKIMMING

Quickly let your eyes drift over the two pages of text.

What words jump out?
What do think it is about?

Ann Louise was born in Dublin on the 27th July 1945. She had one sister and one brother. She went to Loreto secondary school in Foxrock. From there she went on to become a nun. After some years, she left the convent and spent some time living in Spain and France. Finally, in 1976, she was hired by St. Patrick's College (a college specialising in training primary school teachers) to teach theology.

Katherine was born on 25th November 1953 in Seattle, Washington. She has four siblings. In 1981, she began a PhD programme in Religion and Education in Boston College. It was here that she met Ann Louise who was studying there for her doctorate in theology. They fell in love immediately. They returned together to Ireland in 1983. At that time, Ireland was not a very LGBT+ inclusive place.

The pair lived in a house in the Dublin Mountains called 'The Shanty'. It was here in 1986 that they first established the community development initiative now called 'An Cosán'. This project is based on the ideas of active citizenship and the transformational impact of education. It works to offer adult education and services to women from disadvantaged areas and is now Ireland's largest community education organisation. This organisation continues to play an important role in Jobstown today.

In 2003, Ann Louise and Katherine went to Canada and got married. When they returned, they applied to the Revenue Commissioners to have their marriage recognised for tax purposes. They were refused and told that Irish law only recognised marriage as between a man and a woman. The women brought a case to the High Court but the ruling found that although it did not explicitly say so, the Constitution had always meant for marriage to be between a man and a woman. In 2007, the case was appealed to the Supreme Court.

COMPREHENSION SKILLS: DETERMINING IMPORTANCE

Condense the information you have learned on this page into two sentences which include the most important facts.

In 2010, the government brought in the Civil Partnership Act which allowed same sex couples to enter civil partnerships – a similar but different institution to marriage. While some people were delighted, there were still differences between a civil partnership and marriage. Some campaigners felt that anything that remained different still marked LGBT+ people as unequal.

In 2011, a coalition government took office. The Labour Party election manifesto had promised to hold a constitutional referendum on the matter of same-sex marriage. After much negotiation with the Fine Gael party, the agreement was to hold a Constitutional Convention on six issues, including marriage equality. A Constitutional Convention is where a group of 100 randomly chosen citizens listen to evidence related to a matter and make recommendations to the government. In April 2013, the Constitutional Convention recommended that a referendum be held on the issue of marriage equality. In November of the same year, the government announced that the referendum would take place in early 2015.

COMPREHENSION

SKILLS: VISUALISING

Use the information you have learned to create an image of the day that the results of the referendum was announced.

On 22nd May 2015, the Irish people were asked if they wanted to change the constitution to make it so that any two people could get married, regardless of their sex. This was approved with 62% of people voting in favour of the amendment. On that day, Ireland became the first country in the world to bring in marriage equality based on a popular vote (i.e. vote of the people). Katherine and Ann Louise's marriage could finally be recognised and LGBT+ people from all over the country celebrated the victory as a step towards a more equal Ireland.

In addition to this campaign, Katherine spent almost ten years as a public representative. In 2011, she became a senator as a nominee of the Taoiseach. With this, she became the first openly lesbian member of the Oireachtas and the first member in a recognised same-sex relationship. In 2016, she was elected to the Dáil for Dublin South-West and was appointed Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. She lost her seat in the election of February 2020.

Sadly, Ann Louise died in June 2017 after suffering complications from a brain haemorrhage but she leaves behind a legacy of positive change for all the people of Ireland.

COMPREHENSION SKILLS: COMPARING

Compare the stories of Dr Lydia Foy, Senator David Norris and the story of Katherine and Ann Louise.

What was the same?

What was different?