

Name:

Class:

Date:

The Saori Story

An activity of "Our Singapore: Carpet Shop"

INTRODUCTION

Step into a carpet shop like the one in *Our Singapore* and you'll see a rich variety of rugs and carpets from various countries. Many of the designs have been handed down through generations of weaver families. So much so, carpet lovers can say where a carpet is from by examining the design, colours, fibres and the way it is woven. Traditional carpets like those celebrate the rich diversity of peoples around the world.

There is one kind of weaving that won't let you guess so easily who did it. This kind of weaving started only recently but it is quickly crossing continents, cultures and age groups. It is called Saori Weaving.

In Japan in the late 1960s, Misao Jo decided to weave a sash (*obi*) for her kimono by hand. Her 84-year-old mother taught her how to weave and her husband and sons made a loom for her. Instead of using a traditional design, Ms Jo wanted to express herself as a unique individual.

"I have a brain and emotion. I'm a human being. I will weave an obi that is full of humanity," said Ms Obi. She had so much fun that Ms Obi didn't stop. Ms Obi is now 98 years old and still weaving her Saori pieces. In just four decades, Saori Weaving has spread to over 40 countries, including Singapore.

At the individual level, Saori Weaving is about the uniqueness of every human being. But, as a global movement, Saori Weaving is also about our common humanity. Pull these threads together and you have a powerful tale that needs to be told.

INSTRUCTIONS

As a whole class

1. INVITE a guest speaker to give a talk about Saori Weaving and to show your class a sampler of woven items. One way to do this is to contact an organisation that teaches its members Saori Weaving (e.g. invite a manager from MINDS Craft ► <http://www.minds.org.sg>).

On your own

2. GATHER information about Saori Weaving: how Misao Jo started weaving, what she did with her first creations, Ms Jo's four 'slogans' of Saori Weaving and the spread of Saori Weaving worldwide.

As a whole class

3. COMPILE all the information you have. WRITE up a script for a one-act play that tells the story of Saori Weaving as a movement that is unifying people around the world.
4. REHEARSE and STAGE the play for students from other classes. Organise yourselves into work teams so that the tasks involved are spread out fairly and make good use of different talents and interests.
5. REFLECT, as a whole class, on what turned out to be the most meaningful part of this project for you.