

Back... with a zogabang!

By Laura Colgan

IRELAND'S favourite double act are making their comeback.

Twins Zig and Zag will be back on our screens in a 26-episode animated series.

The series, which will see the pair crashland in suburbia and set up home on planet earth, is aimed at six to nine-year-olds.

Zig, Zag and their dog Zuppy were created by Ciaran Morrison and Mick O'Hara.

The two alien's new animation series has already attracted a large celebrity following, including Kaiser Chiefs singer Ricky Wilson and bassist Simon Rix who recorded the theme tune.

Speaking at the launch yesterday, Zag said: 'OMZ! This is like the coolest thing ever, having our own animation series on TV! It's the greatest thing since mackerel and banana smoothies.'

The series will broadcast each weekday at 5.45pm on RTÉjr from



The terrible twins: Zag, presenter Emma O'Driscoll and Zig

next Tuesday, as well as on the RTÉjr app. RTÉjr's channel controller Sheila de Courcy said: 'Zig and Zag is the perfect opportu-

nity for parents and children to watch TV together and share a laugh at tea-time.'

Comment - Page 12

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

Kindness can change the entire world

MY wife is a person who looks upon our world with a smile. No matter how bad things seem she will always disperse the gloom with humour. For her, nothing can withstand the power of good cheer.

That is why I was taken aback when she recently exclaimed: 'Even though I like the up-and-coming generation, there doesn't seem to be much kindness in them'. She said this more out of regret than despair, but I think we all know what she means.

Kindness is such a beautiful word, conveying as it does the sweetness of our condition. According to Robert Louis Stevenson, the 'essence of love is kindness'. We may not know how to love a stranger, but in showing them kindness we have given them love.

'My religion is kindness,' says the Dalai Lama. And what would a religion be that did not make people kind? It would be nothing less than a travesty of itself.

A kind act overflows with generosity and without thought of a return payment. When I was growing up kindness was the norm. Young people gave way to the old, offering them their seat on the bus or helping them cross the road.

Kindness was second nature and never forced. People were generous and kind because that was the way of the world. Kindness was taught at school, in church and in the home.

It is too easy to say that the loss of religion resulted in the loss of kindness. It is undeniable, however, that with the decline of religion, and the values it instilled, society has coarsened. Where once we were bound together in a web of mutual attachments, we are now bound to nothing greater than ourselves.

To live for ourselves without regard for the other is to lose the essence of what we are. For it is kindness which sets us apart, which confers on us a sacred dignity. To reach out towards another person, to help ease their pain, is to ascend the heights of humanity.

Kindness is medicine for the soul. Without it, we live in a constant state of alienation and fear. We walk the streets isolated and alone.

The terrible thought arises: who will come to my aid if I am attacked? Where are all the good samaritans gone? Why are people more inclined to take photos of those in distress rather than go to their aid?

Kindness costs nothing and yet it is the most precious thing we can offer another person. A smile, a cheerful greeting or a comforting word is all it takes to banish the blues. Even a little can totally transform a life.

The children of 'Cyberia' are no different from those of my generation - except that they are totally detached from traditional wellsprings of kindness. In plugging in, they switch off

from family, society, religion and culture. Unlike us, they are no longer shaped by the great stories of human kindness which those structures sustained.

Think of a world where the story of the Good Samaritan was rarely heard. Think of one in which children were often denied bedtime stories of love and kindness. Think of one where survival and success were favoured above gentleness and compassion.

Sadly, that is our world, but the good news is that it need not be. Young people may have switched off but this does not mean their hearts are devoid of kindness. Buried deep within each human heart is a seed which, when watered, will brightly bloom.

Offer kindness and watch the transformation. Even now, when society seems to be falling apart, kindness possesses an extraordinary power. It can pacify aggression and provide hope where there is none.

When it comes to moral matters, I have always believed that you only learn by example. That is why stories are so important, especially for children. They show how nothing, however harmful, can withstand the force of a good and kind heart.

Show them kindness and they will be kind. Permit them to see the beauty in small acts of service and they will be transformed. Let them live in a kindly atmosphere and they will fulfil their potential as caring and good people.

TO have known only kindness enables a child to clearly identify its opposite. I see this in my own children whenever they are forced to confront what my seven-year-old calls 'meanness'. They immediately recognise and reject it for what it is.

There is so much that we as parents wish to do for our children. And yet, there really is only one thing that is absolutely necessary: let them see and experience the full force of human kindness. In so doing, you will give them something of inestimable value that will last them for life.

Kind people are attractive people. They smile and glow from within, never opting for despair above hope. Neither can they ignore misfortune or side-step the suffering of others.

In a world that has gone dark, such people shine like beacons of light. They show us what it means to be human, what it means to live more for others than for oneself. They remind us that beauty is not what you see in the mirror, but what flows from a heart shaped by true kindness.

Mrs Dooley is correct: there is so little kindness around.

However, that could all change if only we took notice of the person sitting beside us.

After all, being kind is only hard when you have forgotten how easy it is to smile.

mark.dooley@daily@mail.ie



SNOOZE, YOU LOSE!



FRIDAY 26TH UNTIL 10AM.

Get a **FREE** Sausage and Egg McMuffin® or Bacon and Egg McMuffin®.

#FreeBreakfastFriday