**Emmeline Pankhurst biography for kids**

**Emmeline Pankhurst**

Date: 1858 – 1928 (70 years old)

Who was Emmeline Pankhurst?

Emmeline Pankhurst was a British political activist and the leader of the suffragette movement in England that helped women win the right to vote.

She lived through a time where the role of women in society changed quickly but her passionate belief that women deserved equal rights never changed. For many people, Emmeline Pankhurst is a symbol of the struggle women made at the start of the 20th Century.

5 facts about Emmeline Pankhurst

Emmeline Pankhurst was a leader of the suffragette movement and a political activist. She has been described as being one of the most influential people of the 20th century.

The suffragettes were focused on securing women’s rights, especially the right to vote. As well as campaigning, they often broke the law or chained themselves to railings to protest.

Emmeline Pankhurst was born in Manchester in 1858. She attended school in Paris and married a barrister more than 20 years older than her, who was involved in securing rights for women.

In 1886 Pankhurst was involved with the strike of girls working in the Bryant and May match factory. The girls worked 14 hours a day and were fined for dropping matches on the floor.
She was also concerned with the conditions in workhouses in Manchester. She began organizing meetings in the local park, which were soon declared to be illegal.

**Quotes:**

« Men make the moral code and they expect women to accept it. They have decided that it is entirely right and proper for men to fight for their liberties and their rights, but that it is not right and proper for women to fight for theirs. »

“Governments have always tried to crush reform movements, to destroy ideas, to kill the thing that cannot die. Without regard to history, which shows that no Government have ever succeeded in doing this, they go on trying in the old, senseless way.”

“I had to get a close-hand view of the misery and unhappiness of a man made world, before I reached the point where I could successfully revolt against it.”

**Biography:**

**Emmeline’s Childhood**

Emmeline was born on the 15th of July 1858 in Manchester, England. Her family had a tradition of practicing radical movements.

Emmeline was the oldest of her nine siblings and a very bright child who learned to speak at the age of three. She learned to be socially conscious at an early age, thanks to her parents, who were both strong supporters of the antislavery movement and women’s rights.

At only 14 years old, Emmeline went to her first suffrage meeting with her mother and came away inspired by the speeches she had heard.

She was a shy girl who was afraid to talk in public but she was not timid about telling her parent that she felt they treated
her unfairly in comparison to her brothers, whose education they put a lot of importance on.

At the time, girls attended a local boarding school that taught social skills that would enable them to become good wives. Emmeline convinced her parentsto send her to a progressive women’s school in Paris. When she returned five years later at the age of 20, she had become fluent in French and had learned not only sewing and embroidery, but chemistry and bookkeeping as well.

**A Family of Activists**

In 1889, Emmeline and her husband Richard founded the Women’s Franchise League (WFL), fighting for married women to be able to vote in the local elections. However, the League was not a success and it disbanded in 1893.

Having failed to achieve their goals in London and with some money troubles, the Pankhursts returned to Manchester in 1892. Joining the newly-formed Labor Party in 1894, they worked with the Party to help feed the poor and unemployed people in Manchester.

Emmeline Pankhurst

**The Poor Law Guardians**

Emmeline Pankhurst was named to the board of “poor law guardians,” whose job it was to supervise the local workhouse. Emmeline was shocked by the terrible conditions in the workhouse, where the inhabitants were badly fed and badly clothed and young children were forced to scrub the floors. Emmeline helped to improve conditions immensely; within five years, she had even established a school in the workhouse.
The Suffragettes

In October 1903, Emmeline’s daughter Christabel persuaded her mother to form a more aggressive group, and so Emmeline founded the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) - an organization that gained a lot of fame for their work, and outraged society. The members of this union were named the ‘suffragettes’.

Like many suffragettes, Emmeline was arrested six times over the next few years and even went on a hunger strike. But it was not an easy fight.

In 1913, many others started to go on hunger strikes, and the government started what became known as the ‘Cat and Mouse’ Act. The prisoners that were striking were released until they grew strong again, and then re-arrested.

The War

The fight came to an end suddenly when World War 1 broke out in 1914 and Emmeline turned all her energy to the supporting the war effort and encouraged all women to do what they could.

Women had the opportunity to prove themselves because of the war, doing jobs that the men used to do. By 1916, the attitudes towards women had changed; they were now thought of as more deserving of the vote after they had served their country so admirably.

In 1918, the Representation of the People Act gave voting rights to women over 30. Ten years later, women were granted equal voting rights with men (at 21). Emmeline died shortly after on 14 June 1928 in Hampstead.
Emmeline Pankhurst is arrested by police outside Buckingham Palace while trying to present a petition to George V in May 1914