

ART – 9-11 years

Unit and Lesson Plans



Refugees contribute to the culture of their host community. Some are well-known artists, painters, poets or novelists. Dante Alighieri created the major part of his work during his exile. Playwright Bertold Brecht, authors Thomas Mann and Franz Kafka, poets Pablo Neruda and Jorge Semprun, musician Miguel Angel Estrellas, painters Lucian Freud and Remedios Varo -- all suffered periods of exile which, in some cases, deeply colored their work. The theme of exile can be studied in literature, the history of music and art.

UNIT PLAN FOR AGES 9-11 IN ART: CREATIVE ART WORK

UNIT OBJECTIVES

Knowledge

To understand the kinds of experiences through which refugees pass.

Skills

To exercise creative imagination

To practise translating powerful emotions into artwork.

Values

To encourage the students to envisage the situations which refugee children live through, and the conditions in which they now live.

To stimulate empathy for children who are trying to cope and adjust their recent memories of their refugee experiences.

LESSONS 1 and 2

| CONTENT | TEACHING METHODS/LEARNING STRATEGIES |
|---|---|
| Creative artistic response to refugee children's experience. | Stimulus: An evocative passage is read out aloud to which the students respond through artwork. |
| RESOURCES | |
| The teacher could select from: "Narin's Story", (Geneva, UNHCR, 1993), pp. 12-19. "Something like an accident" and "I am the first born" by Sybella Wilkes. | |



LESSONS 3 and 4

| CONTENT | TEACHING METHODS/LEARNING STRATEGIES |
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| What refugee children draw. | Display: Two groups of artwork are on display - the first group is a collection of artwork depicting their experiences by refugee children, and the second group includes prints and reproductions by painters such as Renoir and Gauguin. |
| RESOURCES | |
| Poster series | |
| Do your kids bring home pictures like this? Refugee kids do. | |
| Available from info@unhcr.org.uk UNHCR, Millbank Tower, 21-24 Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP | |
| Additional sources of refugee children's artwork | |
| Sybella Wilkes, p. 20 (The Walking of Many), p. 21 (Crossing the River Gillo), p. 29 (My Village in Sudan), p. 33 (Walking to Kenya), p. 41, p. 52-53 | |
| Display prints and art books which contain artwork depicting every day life in various ages. | |

LESSON PLANS FOR AGES 9-11 IN ART: A RESPONSE THROUGH ARTWORK COMMUNICATION

Purpose

More than half of the world's refugees are children. During refugee emergencies, they are often the hardest hit for they are the most vulnerable. It is very difficult for refugee children to deal with the emotional horrors they have experienced. Many find it hard to express in words how they feel, and are reluctant to discuss, often withdrawing into themselves and refusing to reply to questions. However, in some of the refugee camps, the children have been given paints and some have received simple art lessons. These refugee children have found it less disturbing to relive their memories through painting, using artwork as a means of expression.

In this unit, students will be introduced to some pieces of artwork produced by refugee children. They will find that the refugee children, like children all over the world, draw and paint what they see, what is around them. Thus the subject



matter of their drawings often deals with flight, death, and the visible consequences of violent and armed conflict.

One of the main objectives of these lessons is to encourage young students to empathise with the refugee children who, through their refugee experience, have lost much of the spontaneous joy and innocence of their childhood.

LESSONS 1 and 2: What do you see in your mind?

Preparation

The children will need paper, coloured pencils, felt-tip pens, crayons or paints.

Choose one of the selected passages ("Narin's Story", "Something like an accident" or "I am the first born"), or another evocative passage from elsewhere to read to the children. References are provided in the Resources column of the Unit Plan for Ages 9-11 in Art.

Procedure

Have the children relax; they could perhaps rest their heads on their arms on their tables. Read to them the selected passage, encouraging them to picture in the minds what is happening in the story.

Ask the children to imagine themselves in the situation described in the passage. What would be their feeling(s)? Fear? Loss? Sadness? Anger? ... What colour(s) would they choose to express their feeling(s)?

Hand out the drawing materials and ask the students to draw or paint as they wish in response to the reading. Encourage the children with few ideas or who are unwilling to participate (for whatever reason).

Towards the end of the two lessons, ask several children to share their pictures with the rest of the class. You could arrange an exhibition of the students' pictures, perhaps coinciding with a Parent-Teacher meeting or an Open Night.

LESSONS 3 and 4: What refugee children draw

Preparation

Have on display various artworks by refugee children listed in the Resources column of the Unit Plan for Ages 9-11 in Art. These pictures express the children's experiences, or the conditions they live in.

There should also be on display prints or reproductions from various art books that depict ordinary, peaceful life in any age, e.g. *Le Bal du Moulin de la Galette* by Auguste Renoir (which shows couples dancing happily while a group of friends chat at a table); *Paysannes Bretonnes* by Paul Gauguin (which depicts Breton women in a colourful pastoral scene).



Procedure

Let each student select a refugee child's picture to think about. There can be several students per picture.

Discussion questions

What is the picture about? What do you see in the picture?

Why do you think the child who drew the picture included these things in his/her picture?

Does your selected picture describe an experience the child artist has lived through, or is it a picture about his/her current living conditions?

Have a look at the other pictures on display - the ones which are not by refugee children. What are the pictures about?

How do you feel while looking at the refugees' pictures? What different feelings do you have while looking at the other, peaceful pictures?

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