

Civic Education 9-11 years

Lesson and Unit Plans



Refugees are a painful living reminder of the failure of societies to exist in peace. People should be able to lead productive and independent lives in their home communities. Sadly, they are sometimes forced to flee because of abuse, violations of their rights and various forms of social breakdown, including war. These issues are linked to concepts such as justice, equality, tolerance, freedom, minority rights and the formation of community. Refugees can be the subject of work units on human rights, nationalism, racism, immigration, persecution and war.

UNIT PLAN FOR AGES 9-11 IN CIVIC EDUCATION: REFUGEE CHILDREN

UNIT OBJECTIVES

Knowledge

To understand the abnormal and trying conditions in which refugee children live and endure

To introduce the idea that people's basic needs are considered rights

Skills

To practise extracting factual information from written material

To apply imaginative thinking to the situations of refugee children

To develop discrimination and discernment

To develop skills in negotiation and teamwork

Values

To encourage *empathy* by having the students imagine themselves in Jacob's situation and how they would cope with the difficulties which refugee children must face

To encourage in the students *respect for others* through exposure to a lifestyle very different from their own

To develop in the students a desire to seek solutions to problems, which do not violate the rights of others

To help students differentiate between things that they want, and things that they need



LESSON 1

CONTENT	TEACHING METHODS/LEARNING STRATEGIES
<p>Case history of Jacob Jacob is a Sudanese refugee child who fled Sudan without his family. After joining up with other Sudanese boys who were also without parents, he walked from southern Sudan, across thousands of miles of barren land, to the safety of a refugee camp in north-west Kenya.</p>	<p>Introduction Questions designed to stir the children's imagination and to sensitise them to Jacob's situation.</p> <p>Suggested "set the scene" questions can be found in the accompanying lesson plan.</p> <p>Development The teacher reads aloud Jacob's story. (If possible, the photo of the Sudanese boys trekking their way to safety should be on display).</p> <p>Students answer the comprehension questions on the accompanying Activity Sheet: Jacob's Story.</p>
<p>RESOURCES "Jacob's Story" from Refugee Children (Geneva, UNHCR, 1993), pp. 14-16. Activity Sheet: Jacob's Story</p> <p>Suggested reading for teachers Christiane Berthiaume, "Alone in the world" (Refugees no. 95, 1994).</p>	

LESSONS 2 and 3

CONTENT	TEACHING METHODS/LEARNING STRATEGIES
<p>The wants, the needs and the rights of a child</p>	<p>Link to previous lesson Quick recall questions: Where did Jacob come from? Where is he living now? How did he get there? Why did Jacob flee his country?</p> <p>Development Activity - students first work in pairs and then as a class to determine what are wants and what are needs, and</p>

finally what are the basic human rights of children.

RESOURCES

Activity developed from an analogous lesson by Susan Fountain, *Education for Development* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1995), p. 162-165.

"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in simple language", Jill Rutter, *Refugees: We left because we had to* (London, Refugee Council, 1996), p. 51-52.

LESSON PLANS FOR AGES 9-11 IN CIVIC EDUCATION: REFUGEE CHILDREN

Purpose

Refugee children are people without a country, living in families without a home. Sometimes they no longer have a family. They are children without a childhood.

Every day, somewhere on this planet, children become refugees. They flee their countries because their lives are in danger. If they are lucky, they have space to pack a favourite book, a toy or a teddy bear. But often, there is no room in their baggage for such precious possessions - no time to gather them. Sometimes refugee children escape only with their dreams.

As they flee conflict, hatred or persecution, they see horrible suffering. Sometimes they are abandoned in the panic, or are abused or forced to take sides in wars they do not understand. When they finally arrive somewhere safe they are scared, tired and hungry. They often find little food, little water. Only more danger.

They risk catching diseases that prey on those who are thin and weak. So in those first frightening months, they wonder how their dreams of a happy home and a normal life turned into a nightmare.

This unit of lessons has been designed to help young students to empathise with the plight of refugee children, to become aware that children from all over the world, have similar needs and to which they have a right to have answered. In lesson 1, the students will discover a situation that is experienced and endured by thousands of refugee children: the perilous flight from danger in their home country to a country of asylum, often without their parents. Through lessons 2 and 3, the students will become familiar with the notions of human needs, wants and rights.

Case Histories/Resources

Reproduce "Jacob's story " from *Refugee Children* (Geneva, UNHCR, 1993), p. 14-16 and "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in simple language" from

Jill Rutter, *Refugees: We Left Because We Had To* (London, Refugee Council, 1996), p. 51-52.

LESSON 1: Jacob's story

Preparation

Have ready a class set of *Jacob's Story*, and also a set of the Activity Sheet: *Jacob's Story*. Have a large map of the world installed where all the children can see it.

Procedure

Begin the lesson with some questions to stir the children's imagination and to sensitise them to the situation that Jacob is in. Some "set the scene" questions could include the following:

"What's the longest distance you have ever, ever walked?"

"Were you wearing shoes when you walked so far?"

"If you had to walk, let's say, a thousand kilometres, where could you have walked to? If you walked two thousand kilometres, where might you be?"

"Do you think you could walk to this place, having to carry everything that you would need for the trip all by yourself? You may have made the journey with some other children, but without either your parents or the parents of the other children. Would you like to do it? Why, or why not?"
Hand out copies of *Jacob's story* and let the children give their first impressions of the photographs before reading through the account together.

Encourage the children to imagine themselves making the long trek from Sudan to Ethiopia. To help the children comprehend the distance walked by Jacob and his companions, give the children a destination, with which they are familiar, which is a similar distance from their home town or country.

The accompanying Activity Sheet can be answered individually or together as a class. It provides a link to the following lessons.

LESSONS 2 and 3: Children's Rights

Purpose

These lessons are designed to help students differentiate between the things they *want* and the things they *need*. The children will be introduced to the idea that people's most basic needs are considered rights.

Preparation

Cut up enough small pieces of white cardboard so that there are 20 for each group of 5 students in the class, e.g. 120 cards for a class of 30. These will be called "Wants and Needs" cards.

Procedure

Arrange the students into groups of 5, telling them that they are each a family.

Ask them to decide which two are going to be parents and which three will play the role of children. Give each family a blank set of 20 "Wants and Needs" cards.

Tell the students that a war has started and, as a family, they must flee to safety together. Since they must abandon their homes, they need to take all the things they need and want in order to live and grow at their new temporary home, when they find one. The family must decide on no more than 20 items to take, and write the names of each item onto the "Wants and Needs" cards.

Announce to the families that because of limited space in their transport cars, carts, and wheelbarrows, the students can only take 14 items instead of all 20. They need to decide on six items to eliminate. They should draw an X through all these.

Inform the students that the roads are too congested with other people who are fleeing and so their family cars cannot be used. Everyone will be walking, and to lighten the loads which are to be carried, they can only take six items with them, instead of 14. Have the children eliminate eight more items, leaving only the six that they consider most essential for their survival.

Stress that millions of refugee children have had to make such choices in real life.

Discussion questions

Which items were most commonly eliminated in the first round? Why?
Was the second round of eliminations more difficult than the first? Why?
Did you and your partner have any disagreements over the items to eliminate? Which ones, and why?
What is the difference between wants and needs? Which items on the list were wants, and which ones were needs?
Do wants and needs differ for different people? Why or why not?
Remember the story of Jacob, the Sudanese refugee boy. What were they able to bring with them? Were their needs all met? What about their wants?
Explain to the children that: *People's most basic needs - to survive, develop, be safe, and participate in their communities - are often referred to as rights. Rights can be thought of as those things that it is fair and just for all people to have, or to be able to do.*

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