

# Civic Education 9-11 years

## Student Resources



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Thousands of boys roamed between Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya after fleeing from the fighting in southern Sudan. Gradually they met up and formed into large groups. Some stayed on the road for years, crossing thousands of miles of barren land.

### Jacob's Story

from *Refugee Children* (Geneva, UNHCR, 1993)

For a long time, Jacob dreamed of living in a place where there was no fighting. One day he decided to run away from his village in southern Sudan.

"In my hometown in southern Sudan, there was fighting everywhere. There was no school and I was just looking after the animals and playing all the time.

For a long time, I dreamed of running away to a place where there was no war, where I could go to school again, where there was food, and where the bombs could not hurt my father's goats.



## **Time to go**

I knew that this place did not only exist in my dreams because I had heard people in town talking about it and planning to go there.

Lots of people were going there. I asked my father, "Can't we go there now?" But he said it was too dangerous. People were dying on the road of hunger and thirst.

A woman was living alone next door with her two children because her husband had been killed in the fighting.

It was when she left that I decided it was time to go. So I just left without telling anyone. Not even my father.

There were so many people walking on the road. I had nothing. No clothes. No food.

The first day I didn't eat. I just ran.

And the first night I remembered the wild animals I had seen along the road. And I was afraid, so I climbed up a tree to sleep.

But I couldn't sleep. I thought something would come and pull me down, or that I would fall.

## **A long and hazardous journey**

The next day I found the woman who lived next door to us in my hometown. She asked me why I had left without anyone to care for me.

I told her it was because everyone was always running from the bombs. Even our goats were bombed. No one had time to plant the crops.

She said, "OK. You can come with us."

So we walked for days.

One day we came to a place that had mines. Someone was blown up and everyone started running and there was blood everywhere. We held hands tightly and ran together across the field.

We reached a river. On the other side, we found more people. All of them were hungry.

So we kept walking and people walked with us. In this way, our group got bigger every day.

We walked through many empty villages, where people just like me had run away.

We saw villages where there was nobody. Not even a cat. We had no food and people started eating leaves.

## **The place of Jacob's dreams**

After ten days, people in our group began to die. One night, an old man sat in the road and said he couldn't walk any more. He died an hour later. We crossed another river and planes dropped bombs on us. I was very tired and thought we would never find the camp. But the woman told me, "We are close. After we have crossed the border into Ethiopia we won't have any more problems."

Three hours later we reached the camp.

There are many people here from Sudan who are just like me.

This is the place I dreamed of.

Now I go to school again. In the camp, there is food and medicine. And the sound of planes no longer frightens me because I know they are carrying food, not bombs. But when I hear the planes I remember my father and brothers in my village and I am sad. I think the day I ran away, they forgot I loved them. I would like to go home."

## Activity Sheet: Jacob's Story

1. **Where did Jacob and the other boys come from?**

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2. **Were there many boys or just a few who made the trek to safety in Ethiopia?**

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3. **Write down the reasons why Jacob and the other children felt that they could no longer stay in their home town, even in their home country.**

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4. **List all the possibly dangerous things that you can think of that could have happened to Jacob on his trek.**

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6. **Jacob is a refugee child. What do you think makes him a refugee?**

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7. **If you could be his fairy godmother, how would you provide for Jacob?**

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