

## Lied Discovery Children's Museum



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Lesson Plan: “Alike and Different”

#### Introduction

##### ***What does it mean to be a refugee?***

A visit to ***Torn From Home: My Life as a Refugee*** helps to answer this question for students as they consider how it would feel to leave everything behind when forced to flee one's home. Using the perspectives of refugee children, the exhibition guides visitors through various interactive components which facilitate an understanding of refugee experiences: losing home, living in a camp, securing food and water on a daily basis, going to school, and resettling.

*Torn From Home: My Life as a Refugee* provides 8 to 12-year-old students with an introduction to the plight of refugees and the importance of human rights. Students explore the human side of today's refugee crisis and gain an understanding of the hardship and hope experienced by nearly 30 million refugees worldwide. The exhibition was developed in collaboration with international and local refugee aid organizations.

This lesson plan is designed to support student learning both in the classroom and in conjunction with an in-depth visit to the interactive exhibit, *Torn From Home: My Life as a Refugee*. Developed for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, this lesson asks students to explore connections between their lives and those of other children from diverse backgrounds – to consider how children, families, and homes in other parts of the world are similar to and different from their own. It is designed to encourage tolerance, understanding and empathy with children and families in refugee situations.

#### Educational Objectives

As a result of participating in this lesson plan, students will consider and discuss the following concepts:

- What is a family? How are families the same and different?
- What is a tradition? What are your family's traditions? What are some traditions of other families in other parts of the world?
- In what ways are all families alike? Do these similarities outweigh differences?
- What are “rights”?
- What are the differences between “wants” and “needs”?

## Learners

This lesson plan is designed for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, although it can be adapted to support or suit individual student needs and interests.

### The Importance of the Topic for This Age Group

Intolerance can be learned from a very early age and adult attitudes can be difficult to change. It is therefore very important to begin a good multicultural human rights education as early as possible. It is only through exposure, familiarity, and safe and open discussions that students can feel sameness and appreciate differences of the many cultures our society needs to embrace in an effort to promote unity and aid in conflict resolution. By starting with a topic familiar and comfortable to the young student, the rights of "self" and "family," the stage is set to venture forth to explore new ideas and expand knowledge. By giving students the background they need, we can expect our students to be tolerant and responsible citizens. They will be more willing to choose constructive problem solving over conflict and violence and be more empathetic and motivated to help those in need.<sup>1</sup>

## Materials

- Images of children, homes and families from around the world from magazines, newspapers and/or the Internet (for the group collage)
- Books (See information below.)
- Globe or world map
- Art Supplies: Butcher paper, construction paper, scissors, glue, crayons/markers, etc.
- 3 x 5" index cards & markers (20 cards will be needed for each group of 5 students)

## Resources

**Vocabulary:** For a list of pertinent vocabulary words, see the **Glossary of Terms** provided on the Education page at [www.TornFromHome.org](http://www.TornFromHome.org) or in educator materials available through host museums.

**"Refugees** are people who flee their country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group. A refugee either cannot return home, or is afraid to do so."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpted and adapted from Amnesty International Lesson "We are One Family":  
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/lesson-plans/we-are-one-family-my-family--your-family--our-families/page.do?id=1051076&n1=4&n2=79&n3=225>

<sup>2</sup> Definition of refugee from the 1951 Refugee Convention:  
[http://www.unhcr.org.ua/main.php?article\\_id=8&view=full](http://www.unhcr.org.ua/main.php?article_id=8&view=full)

**Books:** A **Recommended Reading** list is provided on the Education page at [www.TornFromHome.org](http://www.TornFromHome.org) or in educator materials available through host museums.

In addition, a selection of books containing pictures of children, families and homes around the world is included below. They may be used by the teacher in advance, and also with students to support discussions related to this lesson plan. (Book descriptions are taken from Amazon.com entries and are included here for informational purposes.)

Material World: A Global Family Portrait (1995)

*In honor of the United Nations-sponsored International Year of the Family in 1994, award-winning photojournalist Peter Menzel brought together 16 of the world's leading photographers to create a visual portrait of life in 30 nations. Material World tackles its wide subject by zooming in, allowing one household to represent an entire nation. Photographers spent one week living with a "statistically average" family in each country, learning about their work, their attitudes toward their possessions, and their hopes for the future. Then a "big picture" shot of the family was taken outside the dwelling, surrounded by all their (many or few) material goods.*

*The book provides sidebars offering statistics and a brief history for each country, as well as personal notes from the photographers about their experiences. But it is the "big pictures" that tell most of the story. In one, a British family pauses before a meal of tea and crumpets under a cloudy sky. In another, wary Bosnians sit beside mattresses used as sniper barricades. A Malian family composed of a husband, his two wives, and their children rests before a few cooking and washing implements in golden afternoon light. Material World is a lesson in economics and geography, reminding us of the world's inequities, but also of humanity's common threads.*

<http://www.amazon.com/Material-World-Global-Family-Portrait/dp/0871564300>

A few images are available online at: "World in the Balance" (NOVA)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/worldbalance/material.html>

If the World Were a Village: A Book about the World's People (2002)

*To make the idea of a world of 6.2 billion people more understandable, Smith suggests that children imagine the population of the world as a village of just 100 people. That's one person representing 62 million people in the real world. Surprising, even shocking statistics follow—for example, many kids in the U. S. take computers for granted, but only seven people in the global village own one. Each double-page, picture-book spread relates a few consciousness-raising facts about such topics as nationalities, food, language, and religion. With the aid of a calculator, even younger kids can do the math; the tricky part is to get children to really understand the ideas. Armstrong's large acrylic paintings, nice complements to the text, look like stained glass windows, with blocks of intense color outlined in thick black lines. This highly informative book will get kids thinking and asking questions, and it can easily be incorporated into a middle-school social studies curriculum. The endnote suggests related activities for home and classroom.*

[http://www.amazon.com/If-World-Were-Village-Worlds/dp/1550747797/ref=pd\\_sim\\_b\\_2](http://www.amazon.com/If-World-Were-Village-Worlds/dp/1550747797/ref=pd_sim_b_2)

Houses and Homes (Around the World Series) (1995)

*A striking photographic survey of housing around the world that will be a real eye-opener for many children. The lush, full-color photos, one to two per page, tell the real story, conveying nearly as much about those who live in these homes as they do about the dwellings themselves. Text is spare, delineating categories to unify the photo groupings ("Build your house with . . . wood or stone or straw or mud or anything at all. Weave it nail it tie it with rope.") rather than describing the houses. That's done in the index, which is comprised of a miniature of each photo, an identification of the country in which it was taken, and a brief description. A black-and-white map is appended with each location clearly labeled.*

[http://www.amazon.com/Houses-Homes-Around-World-Morris/dp/0688135781/ref=pd\\_sim\\_b\\_3](http://www.amazon.com/Houses-Homes-Around-World-Morris/dp/0688135781/ref=pd_sim_b_3)

### A Life Like Mine

*A Life Like Mine: How Children Live Around the World profiles 18 children and explores what life is like for them and other young people, spanning 180 countries. Organized into four sections-Survival, Development, Protection and Participation-the handsomely designed volume, with a bounty of photographs that transport readers to exotic lands, stems from the mission set forth by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Charts, maps and children's quotes add to the thoughtful and informative presentation.*

[http://www.amazon.com/Life-Like-Mine-DK-Publishing/dp/0756618037/ref=pd\\_sim\\_b\\_4](http://www.amazon.com/Life-Like-Mine-DK-Publishing/dp/0756618037/ref=pd_sim_b_4)

### Children Just Like Me

*The authors spent two years meeting and photographing youngsters from every continent and more than 140 countries. The volume is divided by continent, which is introduced with photos of children, their names, and nationalities. Then a double-page spread features pictures of each child's food, eating utensils, housing, school, friends, and family. The text gives the young people a chance to comment on their favorite games, friends, and hopes for the future. The final section includes excerpts from the Kindersleys' travel diary. This book is factual, respectful, and insightful. It provides just the right balance of information and visual interest for the intended audience.*

[http://www.amazon.com/Children-Just-Susan-Elizabeth-Copsey/dp/B00076VE1G/ref=pd\\_sim\\_b\\_5](http://www.amazon.com/Children-Just-Susan-Elizabeth-Copsey/dp/B00076VE1G/ref=pd_sim_b_5)

## **Approximate Time Needed**

This lesson will take three to four 45-minute class periods.

## **Preparation**

- If using this lesson plan as preparation to see *Torn From Home: My Life as a Refugee*, teachers are encouraged to review background material provided at [www.TornFromHome.org](http://www.TornFromHome.org) to become familiar with refugee issues and the content of the exhibition.
- Teachers are also encouraged to think about the subject of refugees, and consider how their students will react. Certainly, the notion of being forced to leave one's home, and the possibility of being separated from family members is frightening. The emphasis of this lesson plan is twofold: 1) identify similarities between families around the world, and 2) distinguish between needs and wants. The goal is to familiarize students with underlying

ideas to provide a base for beginning to understand more complex, and more difficult issues. Teachers must determine the comfort level of their students and adapt this lesson plan as appropriate.

- Visit the school or local library to select books about children and families around the world. (See list of suggestions above in **Resources**.)
- Gather images of children, homes and families from around the world in magazines, newspapers and/or the Internet. These will be used for the group collage.
- Gather 3 x 5" index cards & markers. Each group of 5 students will need 20 cards. (120 cards for a class of 30.) These will be used for the "Wants and Needs" cards.
- If not already in the classroom, locate a world map or globe for reference during discussions.

### **Procedure**

#### Activity 1: "We Are One Family"

(Approximately 2 class periods)

1. Have students draw a picture of their family and then have each student share their drawing with the class. When sharing, ask each student give an example of a "tradition" in their family such as a holiday activity, a particular type of food they cook at home, or a trip they take every year.

*What do they like best about this tradition? Why?*

2. Discuss and list how families can be the same and different, referring to individual students' pictures and traditions. Showing examples from *Material World*, or one of the other books listed above, talk about how different kinds of families live in all parts of the world – how they have different types of houses, possessions, and traditions.
3. As a group, make a written list of the basic similarities of all families, regardless of where they live. Make a list of differences. Compare lists.

*What do our lists tell us about families around the world? Why is this important to understand?*

4. Discuss with students that one important similarity between families (which may not be on the list) is that they all have "rights." Solicit definitions of "rights." If appropriate, refer to dictionary or other definitions (see also Glossary of Terms) and discuss. Make a list of the "rights" of families – encourage students' ideas by mentioning concepts such as: equality, safety, having/voicing opinions, and privacy. Examine list. Summarize by explaining that people's most basic needs, and family's most basic needs, are to: survive,

develop, be safe, and participate in their communities. These 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.

5. Divide the class into small working groups of 3 or 4. Have each group work together to make a large "A family is..." collage using butcher paper, the family pictures they drew, photos of other families from magazines, newspapers or the Internet. Also ask each student in the group to write down at least one key word or phrase that represents or defines what families are. Students can use words & phrases to establish themes for their collages. Allow sufficient time for students to discuss and develop their collages. When they are finished, ask students to write a brief description of their collage – identifying the theme, and why these images and key words were chosen. Have each group take a turn telling the rest of the class about their collage. If possible, exhibit completed collages & descriptions in a nearby hallway or in another space which allows them to be viewed by other students and teachers.

## Activity 2: "Wants and Needs"

(Approximately 1-2 class periods)

1. Referring back to Activity 1, review with students the list of some of the basic "rights" of families. Look back at the group collages and introduce the idea that in emergency situations, many families are forced to leave their homes as well as the "rights" and ways of life they are used to. [Depending on the comfort and knowledge levels of students, discuss what kinds of events might lead to "emergency situations." For the purpose of this activity, the emergency will be one caused by natural events.]
2. Arrange the students into groups of 5, telling them that they are each a family. Ask them to decide who will play the adult role(s) (parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, etc.), and who will play the children's roles. Give each "family" a blank set of 20 index cards and 5 markers. (These are the "Wants and Needs" cards.)
3. Tell the students that there is an emergency (such as a hurricane, wildfire, etc.) and that, as a family, they must flee to safety together. Since they must leave their homes, they need to take all the things they need and want in order to live at their new temporary shelter, when they find one. The family must decide on no more than 20 items to take. As a group (to avoid duplication of items) write the names of each item onto the "Wants and Needs" cards.
4. Announce to the families that because of limited space in their cars the family can only take 14 items instead of all 20. Have each family decide on six items to eliminate, and draw an "X" through those. Put the "eliminated" items aside.
5. Inform the families that the roads are too congested with other people who are fleeing and so their family cars cannot be used. Everyone will be walking. To lighten the loads to be carried, the family can only take a total of six items with them, instead of 14. Have

the students eliminate eight more items, leaving only the six that they consider most essential for their survival.

#### 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 the “families” 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?
6. If preparing to visit the *Torn From Home: My Life as a Refugee* exhibition, use the discussion to communicate that that millions of refugee children have had to make such choices in real life.

#### **Extensions: Suggested Pre- and Post-Visit Activities**

Teachers are encouraged to alter the activities described above as needed. Units can be streamlined or extended according to educational goals and time available.

This lesson is most appropriate as preparation for a visit to the *Torn From Home: My Life as a Refugee* exhibit, but it could be used to reflect on students’ thoughts and experiences following a visit.

If used prior to a visit to *Torn From Home: My Life as a Refugee*, the concept of refugees could be introduced by watching and discussing the video “To Be A Refugee,” as described in this UNHCR Lesson Plan: <http://www.unhcr.org/help/HELP/465164f72.html>

To extend the “We Are One Family” segment of the lesson, videos from the PBS series “Families of the World” could be shown and discussed: <http://www.familiesoftheworld.com/>

Connect the lesson plan to Geography curriculum by assigning students, or groups of students, countries to study. (As preparation to visit *Torn From Home: My Life as a Refugee*, groups can focus on some of the countries featured, including: Afghanistan, Chechnya, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Myanmar, and Sudan.) Have students prepare presentations about what family life is like in that country. It may be appropriate to compare & contrast two families, if the country’s population is diverse (economically, or otherwise). Books like *Material World* are very useful resources.

#### **Credits**

The activities in this lesson plan have been adapted and/or excerpted from units developed by Amnesty International and the United Nations Refugee Agency:

Amnesty International, “We Are One Family” lesson plan  
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/lesson-plans/we-are-one-family-my-family--your-family--our-families/page.do?id=1051076&n1=4&n2=79&n3=225>

UNHCR “Children’s Rights” lesson plan:  
<http://www.unhcr.org/help/HELP/459a79142.html>