

Lied Discovery Children's Museum



4th Grade Lesson Plan: “No Place Like Home”

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 4th graders, this lesson introduces the concept of refugees. Activities also encourage students to consider what constitutes a “home,” why refugees leave their homes and native countries, and what it would be like to lose everything that is familiar to you. It is designed to encourage tolerance, understanding and empathy with children and teens in refugee situations.

Educational Objectives

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

- What is a refugee?
- What factors (people, environment, belongings, etc.) make a place “home”?
- What events or conditions cause refugees to flee their homes and/or homelands?
- What are some of the countries refugees come from?
- What is asylum?

Learners

This lesson plan is designed for 4th 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 topics familiar and comfortable to the young student, such as 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.¹

Materials

- Student copies of the Activity Sheet for “Make a Little Difference” (text provided below in Activity Attachments), if using.
- If using, student copies of the *Time for Kids* article, “Sudan’s Lost Boys Find a Home.” (Text is provided below in Activity Attachments.) **It is recommended that teachers review the article in advance, as it contains serious content which may or may not be appropriate for students.**

(<http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kids/wr/article/0,28391,203483,00.html>).

- If using, a copy of the UNHCR video **To Be A Refugee**. (See ordering information below.)
- VCR & Monitor
- Books (See information below.)
- Globe or world map
- Computer with internet access (for viewing video clips)

Resources

¹ 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>

Vocabulary: For a list of pertinent vocabulary words, see the **Glossary of Terms** provided on the Education page at 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."²

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

Teaching Resources:

The **UNHCR** (The UN Refugee Agency) website is a rich resource for teachers preparing lessons for students about refugees.

<http://www.unhcr.org/help/4072c8174.html>

UNHCR Educational Kits, Teaching Guides and Videos are available, free of charge, upon request. To view selection, go to:

<http://www.unhcr.org/help/4083cb6c4.html>

Public Affairs Unit
UNHCR
94, rue de Montbrillant
1202 Geneva
Switzerland
E-mail: hqpa01@unhcr.org
Fax: + 41 22 739 7367

USA for UNHCR Teacher's Corner

<http://www.usaforunhcr.org/educationalresources.cfm>

National Geographic Expeditions

General Lesson Plan Search Results using "refugee" "lessons" "all grades" "geography"

http://thinkfinity.org/PartnerSearch.aspx?Search=True&orgn_id=4&subject=geography&partner=all&resource_type=lessons&q=refugee&grade=all

Amnesty International

Human Rights Education Lesson Plans

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/educate/lesson-plans/page.do?id=1102163&n1=4&n2=79&n3=225>

Lesson plans are targeted to elementary through high school students.

Approximate Time Needed

² Definition of refugee from the 1951 Refugee Convention:
http://www.unhcr.org.ua/main.php?article_id=8&view=full

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 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, military conflicts, death, and the possibility of being separated from family members is frightening. The emphasis of this lesson plan is twofold: 1) to define what a refugee is, and 2) to identify events and/or conditions that would necessitate leaving one's home and/or homeland. 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 for the classroom about refugees and children and families around the world. (See list of suggestions above in [Resources](#).)
- Request a copy of the UNHCR video **To Be A Refugee** (available, free of charge, from the Public Information Section UNHCR – see contact information above <http://www.unhcr.org/help/4083cb6c4.html>) If using the video, make copies of the accompanying activity sheet “Make a Little Difference” (see below in **Activity Attachments**).
- If using, make copies for students of the *Time for Kids* article, “Sudan’s Lost Boys Find a Home.” (Text is provided below in Activity Attachments.) **It is recommended that teachers review the article in advance, as it contains serious content which may or may not be appropriate for all students.**
- If using, preview video clips about refugees from Sudan. Go to: <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/places/countries-places/sudan/from-sudan-ggtu.html>
 - Obtain access to high-speed internet connection for viewing with students.

Procedure

Introductory Activity: “5 Minutes to Pack”

- I. Tell your students that they have 5 minutes to “pack their bags” before they must leave their homes, possibly permanently. Have them make a list of everything that they would bring with them, AND that they could carry themselves. Remind them that they have 5 minutes and no car. Give the students 5 minutes to write their response.

2. After the 5 minutes are up ask the students to share their lists with the class. Write down items in front of the class. Make indications of items that are repeated.
3. Discuss why certain items were chosen and why some were left off of the list.

If no one included it on their list, specifically ask the question, “Who brought identification?” Teachers should point out to the students that without any identification, there would be no way to prove who they were.

Activity 1: “Make a Little Difference” (Using UNHCR video: **To Be A Refugee**)

(Approximately 1 to 2 class periods, with Introductory Activity above)

- This lesson can be launched by asking the students the open-ended question "What do you think a refugee is?" Encourage the students to listen to each other's response to this question and then watch the video **To Be A Refugee**.
- The video is short (about 15 minutes) so there should be sufficient class time to stop the video from time to time to explain something, check the world map or globe, ask questions to check student comprehension, and to stimulate and encourage empathy for children who have had to flee their homes.
- After the video, to reinforce the ideas and information introduced, students can complete the accompanying Activity Sheet #1: “Make a Little Difference” (see below in **Activity Attachments**). Teachers can lead the students through the sheet, question-by-question, fostering discussion along the way. (Alternatively, teachers could use the questions to lead a class discussion, without having students complete the sheet).

Activity 2: “Why Do People Leave Their Home Countries & Where Do They Go?”

(Approximately 2 class periods, with Wrap-up Activity below)

1. Set up a large map of the world at the front of the classroom. In order to give the students a sense of orientation, spend a few minutes at the beginning of the lesson with the map. Ask students the following questions:
 - *Where are we on the map?*
 - *What is the name of our continent?*
 - *Let's identify the continents of the world.*
 - *On which continent would you find the countries of*
 - Afghanistan?*
 - Rwanda?*
 - Bosnia-Herzegovina?*
 - Liberia?*
 - Iraq?*

Somalia?
Sudan?
Angola?

2. Share with students that the reason they were asked about these countries is because they are countries from which many people have fled for various reasons.
3. Ask students to think of reasons why refugees leave their homes and/or countries. (Recall **To Be A Refugee** video.) Make a list. Discuss.

(Answers could include unemployment, economic hardship, disasters such as drought and famine, ecological degradation, persecution, or war.)

4. Give each student a copy of Activity Sheet #2: Refugees – Who, Where and Why? (see below in **Activity Attachments**) to complete. Students may work individually or in small groups. Alternately, it can be completed as a class exercise. Discuss definitions and answers. (Some assistance may need to be provided for question #2.)
5. Finally, to help the students see that the refugee crisis is a world wide crisis, they should identify on a world map, the countries that generate refugees, and the countries who have offered asylum to refugees. This exercise could also offers the students an occasion to practice their map reading, using co-ordinates given by the teacher.

Country of origin	Main country of asylum
Afghanistan	Iran/Pakistan/ CIS/India
Rwanda	Burundi/Tanzania/Uganda/Zaire
Bosnia Herzegovina	Croatia/F.R. Yugoslavia/Germany
Liberia	Guinea/Côte d'Ivoire/Ghana/Nigeria
Iraq	Iran/Saudi Arabia
Somalia	Djibouti/Ethiopia/Kenya/Yemen
Sudan	Uganda/Zaire/Kenya/Ethiopia
Angola	Zaire/Zambia/Congo/Namibia

Wrap-up Activity: “Finding Home”

1. Ask students for definitions of “home.” What characteristics or qualities make a home?
2. Recall earlier activities about refugees leaving their homes. How do they make new homes? Do they still want to return to their native homes?

3. Have students read the *Time for Kids* article, “Sudan’s Lost Boys Find a Home.” (See text below in Activity Attachments.)

OR

An alternative to the article is to watch online video clips about refugees from Sudan. Since these are highly visual pieces, and give a strong sense of cultural contrasts, they may be more effective tools for supporting discussion with students.

Go to:

<http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/places/countries-places/sudan/from-sudan-ggtu.html>

Recommended clips include:

From Sudan to the United States

Cultural Differences

Sense of Place & Community

4. Ask students to consider/discuss why the ‘Lost Boys’ want to return to Sudan, even though they have safe and comfortable homes in America?

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.

To extend research into families around the world, 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 recent events which have caused people to flee. Encourage them to include information about the numbers of people affected, and if possible, their current status.

To extend the discussion of refugee flight and asylum, teachers can continue with the UNHCR lesson entitled “Where do refugees come? Where do they go?”, which includes a “Geographical Bingo” game: <http://www.unhcr.org/help/HELP/4651bc052.html>

To focus more specifically on the Lost Boys of Sudan, teachers may wish to consult the National Geographic Lesson Plan designed to accompany the documentary film, *God Grew Tired of Us*: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/09/g68/index.html>

The Doctors without Borders Refugee Camp online interactive exhibit provides photos and information about life inside the camps: <http://www.refugeecamp.org/home/refugeecamp.htm>

Teachers might also search for organizations in their area that serve war refugees, and inquire about having a guest speaker come to the class. Some organizations working with refugees may also have volunteer opportunities for students to extend the lesson outside of the classroom. (Check with the museum hosting the exhibition, as they may have already developed connections and will be able to assist.)

Credits

The activities in this lesson plan are adapted and/or excerpted from units developed by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting:

UNHCR's Lesson plans for ages 9-11 in Geography: Refugees - Who, Where and Why?: <http://www.unhcr.org/help/HELP/465164ae2.html>

Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting: www.pulitzercenter.org/temp/Refugee%20Lessons.pdf

Additional source referenced:

BEYOND THE FIRE: "Comparing Life Experiences" Lesson Plan: http://www.itvs.org/beyondthefire/Lesson_plan1.html

Activity Attachments

(See below.)

Article: "Sudan's Lost Boys Find a Home"

<http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kids/wr/article/0,28391,203483,00.html>

Sudan's Lost Boys Find a Home

(Grades 4-6)

By Ritu Upadhyay

When Peter Wal and David Gai landed in Boston, Massachusetts, on a cold night last March, they had no money in their pockets. They didn't even have coats to protect them from the frigid air. Gai, 25, remembers staring at the leafless trees, thinking they were dead. "I thought if the trees couldn't survive in this place, how would we?"

Wal, 23, recalls asking strangers for help at the airport. But no one could understand his very formal, heavily accented English. "It wasn't what I expected," says Wal. In his small village in Africa, strangers were welcomed warmly. He was unprepared for this new world glazed in ice. Wal and Gai are refugees from the war-torn country of Sudan. They arrived in Boston after a journey that took nearly 15 years. They've known hunger, exhaustion, terror and tragedy.

The Lost Boys

In 1987, when Wal was only 7, his village was attacked by soldiers. He was tending cattle on a nearby field when he noticed a thick cloud of smoke rising from the village. Wal knew instantly that his home had become a casualty of Sudan's long and bloody civil war. "Almost everybody was gone. Dead bodies were everywhere," he says.

Wal fled to the east. Soon he joined hundreds of boys between the ages of 4 and 17 whose families had been killed in similar attacks. Like Wal, the boys escaped death because they were tending cattle when their homes were attacked.

For months the boys walked barefoot through wilderness seeking safety. Along the way, they took care of one another. Older boys carried younger ones when they got tired. Still, hundreds died of starvation and disease. Many others were attacked by lions or drowned trying to cross rivers.

After three months, the exhausted group arrived in Ethiopia, where they settled in a refugee camp. Aid workers called them the "lost boys."

In 1991, war forced the boys out of Ethiopia too. After another long trek, they ended up in a hot, dusty refugee camp in Kakuma, Kenya. There, they built their own mud huts but had no running water or electricity. United Nations workers provided one small meal a day and informal schooling. The boys were hungry for both. "I learned that education is the one thing that cannot be taken away, even if there is a war or floods," says Wal.

Coming to America

In 1999, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the U.S. government agreed to resettle

3,700 lost boys in the U.S. Now in their teens and 20s, most have already been placed in cities across the country.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC), a nonprofit agency that assists refugees, is helping Wal, Gai and other Sudanese adjust to life in Boston. Before arriving, the young men were given "cultural orientation" classes, where they learned how Americans live.

In Boston, the IRC found apartments for the refugees and gave them food and clothing. At first, it was a difficult adjustment. "We would come to an apartment and find raw meat in the microwave because they had confused it with the fridge," says IRC worker Stephanie Sluka.

Most of the refugees took low-paying jobs such as janitors and airport porters. But many dream of continuing their education. Last September, Wal moved in with a foster family so that he could go to high school at the Beaver Country Day School in Newton, Massachusetts. For the first time since he was 7, he had a family. "He is so eager to learn," says foster father Roderick Lewis.

John Kuol, 19, another refugee, also attends Beaver. Kuol and Wal had last seen each other in Ethiopia in 1988. "It feels like family having him here," says Kuol.

Even though the war in Sudan continues, many refugees hope to someday return to the home they only knew as children. Armed with educations, they want to help rebuild their broken country. "They call us lost boys, but we are not really lost." says Wal. "We know where we came from and where we want to go."

Activity Sheet #1: Make A Little Difference

1. All the people on the video are children. They come from different countries. Name all the countries of origin mentioned that you can remember.
2. Write down the reasons that the children gave for their running away from their own countries.
3. The refugee children live in refugee camps. What did the children say that they missed having?
4. How would you describe the faces of the refugee children as they speak about their lives?
5. How do you think the refugee children spend their days in the refugee camps?
6. Why do you think the video is entitled "Make a Little Difference"?
7. How can you make a little difference? How can you make a difference when you are grown up?

Activity Sheet #2: Refugees - Who, Where and Why?

"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."

1. Using a dictionary, find the meanings of the following words:

flee

.....

persecution

.....

race

.....

religion

.....

nationality

.....

civil war

.....

asylum

.....

2. a) Give an example of a conflict that has happened recently that has caused people to flee from their home and country.

.....

b) Where have the people fled to?

.....

c) What caused the people to flee?

.....

.....