UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

TEACHING ABOUT REFUGEES

AGES 6-9 | ACTIVITY GUIDE

Find more materials at: unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A note about inclusion of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in lesson-planning.



Before undertaking any activities on the topic of refugees, asylum, nationality and migrants please take some time to think about the students in your class. Are some of them refugees, in the process of seeking asylum, or are they stateless? If so, think about talking to them and their parents depending on their age.

If possible include ideas and feedback from parents and the children in sessions and refer to them to answer questions if and only if they have expressly explained that they are interested in answering questions or speaking about these issues.

Stateless persons do not have the nationality of any country. Statelessness can occur in many different situations. For example, certain ethnic or religious groups may be not recognized under national laws as citizens of that country, some children are born outside of the country of their parents' citizenship and are not able to obtain citizenship from their parents' country or the one they were born in. A number of countries globally have laws which do not allow mothers to pass their nationality to their children.

Stateless persons may have difficulty accessing basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment, freedom of movement and others. Without these things, they often face obstacles and disappointment.

Be careful while using words such as "country" and "nationality" if you have any stateless children in your class. Instead you may use the words "your home" or "your culture".

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Here are some activities that you can undertake with your classes to move their learning about refugees into taking action.

LEARNING OUTCOME

1 | Providing an opportunity for children and families to learn how to be together in a community.

Arrange a monthly breakfast before school hours between teachers, parents of recently arrived refugee families and wider school community.

LEARNING OUTCOME

2 | Understanding that coming to a new classroom is difficult.

Facilitate a discussion about what it is like to start in a new school as a new arrival in the country.

Step 1: Get the children to choose topics they would like to have guidance on. Topics could include: what to do when you come in the classroom, what to do when you go for break, what you need to bring to school, etc.

Step 2: The children can write a guidebook with pictures for new children about their new school and class.

Suggested closing statement for discussion – *"Coming to a new school can be hard and difficult. It is great that everyone is thinking about how we can help new children in our classroom. Thank you for your kindness."*

LEARNING OUTCOME

3 | **Learning how to work together to create something participative. Understanding that everyone's contribution is important.**

Undertake a collaborative creative activity with the theme of refugees and share it with their community, for example by inviting parents or doing a show for the school or other classes.

Example 1: Creating and holding an exhibition

Example 2: Dance recital or play

Example 3: Holding a poetry recital

Example 4: Writing a story book

Suggested closing statement for discussion – *"This has been a wonderful activity and everyone has contributed. It is a valuable way for us to learn how important everyone's contribution is."*

LEARNING OUTCOME

4 | **Providing an opportunity for children and families to learn how to be together in a community.**

Hold a welcoming evening or a monthly breakfast for new arrivals in the school at the beginning of the school year with games providing opportunities for the whole community to interact with each other. Children can choose games, make drinks and food or sing a welcoming song.

5 LEARNING OUTCOME

Learning how to work together to create something participative. Understanding that everyone's contribution is important.

Collaborate on a story or picture book with dictated stories by children or beginner writers for ages 7 - 8 - 9. The stories can be about:

1: personal experiences, or

2: about what they have learned about refugee children experiences in settling into their new school, community or location.

The book could be donated or the school library or a local library. Each child could have a copy.

Suggested closing statement for discussion – "*This has been a wonderful experience to create a book together and everyone has contributed. It is a valuable way for us to learn how important everyone's contribution is.*"

6 LEARNING OUTCOME

Empathize with the situation of newly arrived refugee children.

Write letters to refugee children who are about to start school about what they can expect on their first day or first week. Letters could be translated for children into their mother tongue.

Suggested closing statement for discussion – *"Thank you for offering these letters for these children who have newly arrived in the country. It is important to think about the situation of others when we can."*

LEARNING OUTCOME

7

Understanding the situation of new children seeking asylum in my country.

Some reception centres or reception networks have opportunities to learn about the asylum procedures in that country.

Step 1: Check on-line or contact a network or particular reception centre and see what options they have for understanding the reception center system and asylum process.

Step 2: Some centres may send a communications officer to visit your class or school and in some countries there may be an option to engage in exchange with other young people, for example sending letters or having an open football match or games-time.

Step 3: See what options there are in your area to learn on a more hands-on basis about the experiences of asylum-seeking children and students.

Suggested closing statement for discussion *can include a thanks to whoever has participated in a visit or activity.*

LEARNING OUTCOME

8

Understand that some children may have physical or social support needs that we can help contribute funds to address.

Undertake a baking event, talent show or other fundraiser and send money to a local organization that works with local refugees.

Suggested closing statement for discussion – *"Thank you to all children who have participated in the activity."*

LEARNING OUTCOME

9 | **Including our families in our classroom activities is a great way to understand how diverse and interesting our class is.**

Step 1: Invite parents to contribute ideas for an activity day, celebrating cultural differences, such as cooking, cultural activities, etc.

Step 2: Hold a circle-time or class meeting with a list of parents' ideas to see which ones children are interested in pursuing.

Suggested closing statement for discussion - *"Thank you to all children's parents for their participation."*

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