



Human Rights Classroom Activities

What are these activities?

These activities are part of an educational resource designed to help to promote human rights, non-discrimination, and peaceful conflict resolution.

To help students become more familiar with human rights principles, the activities in this section support the integration of human rights values into the attitudes and behaviors of students Grades 7-9 and Grades 10-12

Please review the attached on how to facilitate discussion and use the suggested activities based on what is right for your group.

How do the activities work?

Each activity has as its starting point the experience of the students and provides them with the opportunity to live a concrete experience together in their group from which they can learn.

A group discussion is the last step of each activity, which engages the students in a process of critical reflection. The students have the opportunity to talk about what they experienced, reflect on their behavior in relation to human rights values, and propose ways of integrating human rights values into their lives.

Participating in an activity (*concrete experience*) followed by a group discussion (*critical reflection*) helps to build in the students an awareness of human rights values and reinforces positive behaviors based on these values (*action*).

Tips for Facilitation

Ensuring everyone can perceive

If a student is unable to see well, instead of selecting pictures from magazines, have the student name well-known men and women and place their names on the appropriate large piece of paper. Help him/her understand the pictures posted by describing them.

Pair the student with a classmate to prepare the strips of paper with characteristics.

Ensuring everyone can understand

Face students when giving instructions and ensure assistive devices are working.

Speak clearly, loudly or quietly depending on the effectiveness for the students.

Instruct students to face each other and speak clearly and confidently.

Repeat and reword instructions if needed.

Model the activity to clarify instructions.

Ensuring everyone can participate

If a student is unable to cut out pictures from a magazine with scissors, assign him/her an alternative task, such as sticking the pictures cut out by other students on the large pieces of paper.

Activity 1: Draw it Right

Time: 10-15 minutes

Human Rights Values: Rights, cooperation

Materials: 1 piece of large paper per group, 2 felt tip pens and a list of 10 rights

Purpose of the Activity

To experience teamwork and to think about:

- Children's rights
- How we can work together to increase respect for children's rights

Human Rights and Responsibilities

Right to know your rights (Article 42, CRC). For all of us to enjoy these rights, we need to learn about our rights and responsibilities.

Instructions

1. Prepare a list of 10 children's rights (see backside).
2. First, ask students if they know any of their rights.
3. Divide the group into 3 or 4 teams of 4 to 6 students per team. Ask each team to sit around a piece of paper that you have placed on the wall at one end of the classroom. Place yourself at the opposite end of the classroom.
4. Explain to students that this is a competition. The members of each team must identify the right drawn by their teammates. The first team to identify all the rights drawn wins.
5. Ask 1 member of each team to come to you. You will whisper a children's right in his/her ear.
6. The team members return to their respective teams and draw the right. The other team members must guess what they are drawing. When the right has been identified, another member of the team comes to you for the next right.
7. The activity ends when one of the teams has identified all the rights.

Group Discussion

After the activity, have students reflect on the experience. You can use the questions below as a guide. Make sure to give students enough time during the group discussion to think of their response.

Feel

- What did you like best about this activity?
- Did you know all the rights in this activity?
- Do you know other rights?

Think

- Do we all have the same rights?
- Can you think of some rights that are not always respected?
- Examples: Can all children go to school? Do all children get to see a doctor when they are sick?

Act

- We all want to enjoy our rights, but what do we need to do to make sure that this is possible?
- All of us have the right to express ourselves. In addition we all have a responsibility to make sure that everyone else in our group also has the freedom to express him/herself. How can we cooperate to make sure that this right is respected in our group?

Children's Rights

- **The right to go to school**
- **The right to practice a religion**
- **The right to a decent home**
- **The right to eat**
- **The right to medical care**
- **The right to play**
- **The right to express your ideas**
- **The right to safety**
- **The right to rest**
- **The right to a clean environment**
- **The right to live with your parents**
- **The right to privacy**

Activity 2: Action Reaction

Time: 35 minutes

Human Rights Values: Acceptance, respect, responsibility

Materials: Role cards (included) and red and green cards for voting

Purpose of the Activity

To experience conflict situations and to think of ways of resolving conflict peacefully.

Human Rights and Responsibilities

Right to non-discrimination (Article 2, CRC); right to know and exercise your rights (Article 16, CRC); right express your views (Article 12, CRC). In order to enjoy these rights, we need to respect differences, learn what our rights and responsibilities are, and learn to respect other people's right to their own opinions.

Instructions

1. Copy and cut out the role cards provided on the next pages. Choose role cards you feel are appropriate for the group.
2. Divide the group in teams of two. Assign one person on each team to be the 'Challenger' and the other person to be the 'Respondent'.
3. Explain to the group that the activity involves reacting spontaneously to different situations that may cause frustration and anger. The teams take turns improvising a situation according to the information on the role cards. The Challenger begins by picking a role card and reading it to him/herself. Then, the Challenger states what role he/she is playing in the situation and reads the statement on the card out loud to the Respondent. The Respondent must react spontaneously by improvising his/her reaction to the situation.
4. After each improvisation, the other students act as judges and decide whether the Respondent's reaction was appropriate. Give colored cards to each student 'judge' for voting. 'Red' means that the response was inappropriate and 'green' means that it was good. Ask the judges to comment. Listen carefully to the comments and, when appropriate, add in some of the possible solutions provided at the end of this activity.
5. To make sure the group understands, model an example using a role card. Ask the group whether your reaction was appropriate, invite additional comments and provide some of your own, based on the possible solutions provided.

Group Discussion

After the activity, have students reflect on the experience. You can use the questions below as a guide. Make sure to give students enough time during the group discussion to think of their response.

Feel

- What did you like best about this activity?
- Was it easy to respond quickly to conflict situations?
- What was the hardest part of this activity?

Think

- How did you react in these situations?
- What strategies did you use to handle the situations?
- Are there services in the community to help us find peaceful solutions to conflict?

Act

- How can you respond to conflict situations that arise at school or at home?
- How can we resolve similar situations without getting angry?
- How can we teach others to peacefully resolve conflict?

Activity 2 : Role cards (to be copied)

Role #1

Role: I am your friend.

Statement: "I saw you talking that lesbian at school. I don't want you to talk to her."

Role #2

Role: I am your friend.

Statement: "I saw a picture of me on your Instagram. You have no right to put my picture on instagram without my permission."

Role #3

Role: I am your basketball coach.

Statement: "You're wearing a head scarf. You can wear it off the court, but when you play basketball, you can't play with a hijab on!"

Role #4

Role: I am a police officer.

Statement: "Hey young man. Show me your ID."

Role #5

Role: I am a person walking down the street.

Statement: "Excuse me? You just pushed me. Watch where you're going. You're not the only one on the street."

Role #6

Role: I am your mother.

Statement: "I heard you went to see the nurse the other day at school. What was that all about?"

Role #7

Role: I am your teacher.

Statement: "Open up your locker right now! I want to see what's inside. I'm sure you have drugs in there."

Role #8

Role #8: I am a friend of your mother's.

Statement: "Young people today don't have any values anymore. They're totally irresponsible."

Role #9

Role: I am a school social worker.

Statement: "I'll have to call your parents. You have drug issues and we have to do something about it!"

Role #10

Role: I am your boss.

Statement: "I'm sure somebody's stealing stuff from the office. I've decided to install a security camera to keep an eye on everyone."

Role #11

Role: I am your friend.

Statement: "Check out that new kid at school! He just arrived from another country! What's he doing here anyway?"

Role #12

Role #12: I am your parole officer.

Statement: "I know that some of your friends are a bad influence. You shouldn't be hanging out with those people."

Role #13

Role #13: I am your foster parent.

Statement: "Why would you want to spend time with your biological family? Aren't we good parents?"

Role #14

Role #14: I am your respite worker/caregiver.

Statement: "I'm responsible for you when your parents aren't here, so you need to listen to me."

Role #15

Role #15: I am your educational assistant.

Statement: "I know that you don't like to do this, but to get better at it, you need to practice."

Role Cards: Possible solutions

Role #1: I am your friend.

Statement: “I saw you talking to that lesbian at school. I don’t want you to talk to her!”

Discuss discrimination and homophobia with students. Homophobia is fear of homosexuals or people perceived to be homosexual. Homophobia takes the form of hatred that often turns into physical or verbal abuse. Ask students to talk about the reasons why some people are homophobic. Ask them for possible solutions. For example, how can we respond to a homophobic person? How can human rights values help us?

Role #2: I am your friend.

Statement: “I saw a picture of me on your Instagram. You have no right to put my picture on Instagram without my permission!”

Before publishing a picture of a friend or stranger on the Internet, we need to get permission from them. Did you know that the media is not allowed to publish a person’s face without that person’s authorization? Ask students to suggest ways of requesting permission from other people to put their photos on Instagram.

Role #3: I am your basketball coach.

Statement: “You’re wearing a head scarf. You can wear it off the court, but when you play basketball, you can’t play with a hijab on!”

Nobody can be prevented from playing. That qualifies as discrimination. However, a person may be asked to wear a hijab specifically designed for sports.

Role #4: I am a police officer.

Statement: “Hey, young man. Show me your ID!”

When police officers have reasonable grounds to believe that a person has committed an offence, they may ask that person to identify him/herself (giving first and last names, address, date of birth and phone number). They may ask for an ID card, but, in Canada, as in other countries, there is no official ID card that people are required by law to have on them. The person might, therefore, not be carrying ID. However, it is important for all everyone, including youth, to provide their true identity and to cooperate when they are being questioned by the police. Lying about your identity is a criminal offence.

Role #4: I’m a person walking on the street.

Statement: “Excuse me? You just pushed me. Watch where you’re going! You’re not the only one on the street.” Ask students to share their views on this. Explore solutions together.

Role #5: I am your mother.

Statement: “I heard you went to see the nurse the other day at school. What was that all about?” Registered nurses cannot disclose any confidential information they have received. However, if the young person’s security or development is considered to be in danger, the nurse will have to contact social services. Youth have the right to privacy, but they also have the right to be protected from abuse.

Role #6: I am your teacher.

Statement: “Open up your locker right now! I want to see what’s inside. I’m sure you have drugs in there!” Teachers may search a locker if they have reasonable grounds to believe that there are drugs inside. On the other hand, a teacher is not allowed to search a particular student’s locker or all student lockers routinely.

Role #7: I am a friend of your mother’s.

Statement: “Young people today don’t have any values anymore. They’re totally irresponsible!” Ask students to share their views on this. Explore positive ways to respond to this kind of statement.

Role #8: I am a school social worker.

Statement: "I'll have to call your parents. You have drug issues and we have to do something about it!" Registered social workers cannot disclose any confidential information they have received. However, if the young person's security or development is considered to be in danger, the social worker will have to contact social services. Youth have the right to privacy, but they also have the right to be protected from abuse.

Role #9: I am your boss.

Statement: "I'm sure someone is stealing stuff from the office. So I've decided to install a security camera to keep an eye on everyone." Ongoing video surveillance of employees violates the right to privacy, honor and reputation, as well as the right to fair and reasonable working conditions. For security reasons, a camera could be installed at the entrance of a building. When employers believe that someone is stealing from them, they can call the police.

Role #10: I am your friend.

Statement: "Check out that new kid at school! He just arrived from a reserve! What's he doing here anyway?" Discuss discrimination and racism with students. Ask students to discuss the reasons why some people make racist/discriminatory comments and why they are directed at certain groups. Ask them for possible solutions. Reinforce the idea of open, diverse communities where everyone has a place and should be respected regardless of where they come from or their cultural background. Get students to identify some of the strengths of a diverse community.

Role #12: I am your parole officer.

Statement: "I know that some of your friends are a bad influence. You shouldn't be hanging out with those people." Discuss what being on parole means, and how it affects the choices of youth on parole. Ask students what type of circumstances lead to a young person being put on parole. Also ask whether they think that his/her rights, for example the right to choose their friends, are the same when he/she is on parole.

Role #13: I am your foster parent.

Statement: "Why would you want to spend time with your biological family? Aren't we good parents?" Discuss what being part of a foster family means. Explore positive ways of responding to this kind of statement.

Role #14: I am your respite worker/caregiver.

Statement: "I'm responsible for you when your parents aren't here, so you need to listen to me." A respite worker or caregiver has the responsibility to ensure that no harm comes to you in the absence of your parents or guardian. Explore positive ways of responding to this kind of statement.

Role #15: I am your educational assistant.

Statement: "I know you don't like to do this, but to get better at it, you need to practice." Discuss the role of an educational assistant in a classroom.

Activity 3: Gender Matters

Time: 35 minutes

Human Rights Values: Respect

Materials: Magazines, list of characteristics, markers, glue, tape 2 large pieces of paper, strips of paper, scissors

Purpose of the Activity

To think about gender stereotypes, roles and issues.

Human Rights and Responsibilities

Right to non-discrimination (Article 2, CRC); right to privacy (Article 16, CRC); right to express your views (Article 12, CRC). In order for everyone to enjoy these rights, it is important to respect differences, as well as other people's privacy and views.

Instructions

1. Ask students to cut out pictures of men and women from magazines, flyers, catalogues or newspapers.
2. Have students glue the pictures of men on a large piece of paper and the pictures of women on another. Display both of these on the wall.
3. Give each student 3 or 4 strips of paper and a marker.
4. Ask the students to think of characteristics they associate with men and women and have them write these in large print on the strips of paper. Then ask them to stick the words next to the pictures. If necessary provide examples from the list of characteristics below.
5. Explore the question of stereotypes associated with men and women by asking students to explain why they chose those characteristics.

Group Discussion

After the activity, have students reflect on the experience.

You can use the questions below as a guide. Make sure to give students enough time during the group discussion to think of their response.

Feel

- Describe in 1 word the activity you have just done.
- Do you agree with the characteristics associated with men? With those associated with women?

Think

- Why do we associate particular characteristics with men and others with women?
- Are these characteristics always accurate? Why or why not?
- Are some of the characteristics that describe you different from those traditionally ascribed to women or men?
- What are the consequences of stereotyping?

Act

- How can we promote a more positive image of both men and women?
- What could you do if someone doesn't respect you or someone else because you are different?
- What can we do to change gender stereotypes and discrimination within our class or when we are with our friends or family?

List of Characteristics Words

- Dependent
- Independent
- Sensitive
- Submissive
- Dominant
- Good at cooking
- Strong
- Takes care of his or her appearance
- Considerate
- Faithful
- Courageous
- Discrete
- Gentle
- Good at business
- Spiritual
- Hot
- Sexy
- Brave

Activity 4: On a Tight Rope

Time: 35 minutes

Values: Acceptance, responsibility

Materials: 3 pieces of string or rope (each 1 meter long each), post-its, talking stick, large pieces of paper, tape and markers

Purpose of the Activity

To express individual views on the human rights of youth.

Human Rights and Responsibilities

Right to know your rights (Article 42, CRC); right to express your views (Article 12, CRC). In order to enjoy these rights, we need to learn what our rights and responsibilities are, and learn to respect other people's views.

Instructions

1. Hang 3 pieces of rope horizontally, one above another on the wall. Write "yes" at one end of the 3 pieces of rope and "no" at the other end.
2. Enlarge, if necessary, and copy and cut out the 3 statements listed at the end of this activity and tape a statement above each piece of rope. Each piece of rope then represents that statement about youth rights.
3. Give 3 post-its to each student. Read the statements out loud. Everyone must 'vote' as to whether or not they think the right expressed in each statement is respected at school, at home and in the community. Students can answer "yes" or "no" or nuance their responses by sticking their post-its wherever they want along the rope.
4. Ask students to explain their answers and to give examples.
5. Ask the group to suggest ways to ensure the right referred to in each statement is respected.
6. Write down the solutions proposed by the students on a large piece of paper and tape it on the wall.

Group Discussion

After the activity, have students reflect on the experience.

You can use the questions below as a guide. Make sure to give students enough time during the group discussion to think of their response.

Feel

- How did you like this activity?
- Is it easy to discuss youth rights?

Think

- What did you learn from this activity?
- What are the most important rights for young people?
- Which rights are most at risk in our school or community?

Act

- You have come up with ways to ensure that our rights are respected. Can some of these ideas be put into practice?
- How can you educate other young people and adults in our community about the rights of youth?

Statement on youth rights (to be copied)

Youth can express their views and be heard

You have the same rights as adults.

All youth are treated equally.

Activity 5: Our Values

Time: 30 minutes

Human Rights Values: Human rights values

Materials: 4 large pieces of paper, markers

Purpose of the Activity

To encourage young people to think about their own values and human rights values.

Human Rights and Responsibilities

Right to express your views (Article 12, CRC). In order to enjoy this right, we need to learn what our rights and responsibilities are, and to learn to respect other people's views.

Human Rights Values:

- **Cooperation** is working together to achieve a common goal.
- **Respect** is recognizing that every person is important and must be treated with dignity. In the context of human rights, respect does not need to be earned; it is the right of every person in all circumstances.
- **Inclusion** is recognizing that every person is a full member of society and of the group.
- **Respect for diversity** is recognizing and appreciating individual differences.

Instructions

1. Write one of the following human rights values on each large piece of paper and place them in 4 different places around the room. Human rights values: **cooperation, respect, inclusion, and respect for diversity.**
2. Ask students to stand next to the value that is most important to them. Form a team with the students who have gathered around the same value.
3. Ask the teams to discuss what the value they have selected means to them in their daily lives, and to give concrete examples.
4. Have the teams prepare a short skit to illustrate the human rights value they have chosen.
5. Have each team present their skit. After each skit, the rest of the group comments on the skit and discusses the value that was demonstrated.
6. For each skit, read the definition for the corresponding human rights value provided below. Ask students if they agree with the definition.

Group Discussion

After the activity, have students reflect on the experience. You can use the questions below as a guide. Make sure to give students enough time during the group discussion to think of their response.

Feel

- What did you like or dislike about this activity?

Think

- Why are these human rights values important in our school? In our daily lives?
- Some adults say that youth don't have values. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- Are there values which deserve to be more widely recognized and better respected?

Act

- What can we do to promote these values and ensure that they are better respected?

Activity 6: The Love Web

- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Materials:** A ball of yarn

Purpose of the Activity:

To think about relationships, love, self-respect and respect for others

Human Rights and Responsibilities

Right to express your views (Article 12, CRC). In order to enjoy this right, we need to respect and listen carefully to others.

Instructions

1. Explain to students that in this activity they will create a symbolic web that represents the bonds we form with those we love and care about. During the group discussion, students will create a “‘spider’s web’ using a ball of yarn.
2. Ask the class to form a circle.
3. Take the end of the ball of yarn and hold it in your hand. Start the activity by completing the following sentence: “To love someone means ...” You could say, for example: “To love someone means you don’t want bad things to happen to them.”
4. Throw the ball to another student, while holding the end of the yarn. The web will begin to take shape.
5. The student you throw the ball to also completes the sentence “To love someone means ...” and then throws the ball to someone else.
6. When everyone has caught the ball and the web is formed, ask students to think about something that can end a relationship (eg. with a close friend, family member, boyfriend/girlfriend). After giving an example, each person cuts off a strand of yarn so that, at the end, the web is completely destroyed.

Group Discussion

After the activity, have students reflect on the experience.

You can use the questions below as a guide. Make sure to give students enough time during the group discussion to think of their response.

Feel

- How did you like this activity?
- Is it easy to talk about love?

Think

- Why do we need to be loved?
- What do self-respect and respect for the other person mean in a relationship?
- What do freedom and equality mean in a relationship?
- Are conflicts or misunderstandings a normal part of a relationship?
- Is violence acceptable in a relationship? Why or why not?
- How can we deal with disagreements without using violence?

Act

- What can you do when someone you love or care about doesn’t respect you?
- What can you do when someone tells you that they are in an abusive relationship?