

Family, A Beautiful Thing

RIGHT TO MARRIAGE AND FAMILY



AGE: 11 – 16 years

LEARNING POINTS

1. The family is the basic unit of society and should be protected.
2. Parents and families have a role in supporting and guiding their children.
3. When you are legally of age (usually 18 years old), you have the right to get married or not get married.

MATERIALS

- Talking Stick
- Class Roll
- Class Rules
- Song: This Little Light of Mine
- Questions for the review, cut up and prepare **before the class begins**
- UDHR Article #16
- CRC Article #5
- Pencil for each participant (optional)
- Paper for each youth (optional)
- Chalk or marker
- Chalkboard or flipchart
- Story: The Girl Who Said “No” to Marriage
- Questions, “Who Decides?”
- Mini poster, The Right to Marriage and a Family (from Lesson Y-2)

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF Human Rights

RIGHT TO MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Article 16

1. Men and women of full age . . . have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

SIMPLIFIED

1. *Every grown-up has the right to marry and have a family if they wish. Men and women have the same rights when they are married, or when they are separated.*
2. *No one can force you to get married.*
3. *The family is the most important unit of society and should be protected.*

THE CONVENTION ON THE Rights of the Child

PARENTAL GUIDANCE AND EVOLVING CAPACITIES

Article 5

Governments should respect the responsibilities and rights . . . of parents or families to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights . . . in the present Covenant.

SIMPLIFIED

Your family has the main responsibility for guiding you, so that as you grow and your abilities increase, you can learn to use your rights properly. Governments should respect this right.

WELCOME AND WARM-UP

Greet the students by name as they come in and sit down. Sing with enthusiasm.

Song: This Little Light of Mine! Sing with enthusiasm.

REVIEW: Questions in a Box (10 minutes)

Before class, cut out the Review questions at the back of the lesson. Fold them in half and put them in a box or hat or other container.

How to play: Participants stand in a circle and pass the box around while music is playing or someone sings a song. When the music stops, the youth holding the box must pull out a question and answer it. If the child doesn't know the answer, the others can help. Then start the music and continue passing the box.

This won't take very long but should promote discussion.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

Say: Today we're going to read and discuss Article 5 from the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Article 16 from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Ask: Who will read Article 5 for us?

Explain: Before _____ (name of student volunteer) starts, let's listen for a very interesting idea called "evolving capacities." It means "as you grow and learn."

Youth reads Article 5. (Found at the back of the lesson. Use whichever of the following texts are most **age-appropriate** for the students.)

FULL TEXT: Governments should respect the responsibilities and rights . . . of parents or families to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights . . . in the present Covenant.

SIMPLIFIED TEXT: Your family has the main responsibility for guiding you, so that as you grow and your abilities increase, you can learn to use your rights properly. Governments should respect this right.

Say: Let's read that together one more time.

Read the Article together.

Explain: Or in other words, you have the right to be given guidance by your parents and family to help you learn to use your rights properly as you grow up and learn more about making good decisions.

Activity: The Human Chair

Say: Let's do an exercise in cooperation. See if you can figure out how it's like a family.

- Create groups of three children each. Make them slightly different from each other, for example, two boys and a girl, two girls and a boy, one short and two tall children.

- If there's an extra person, he or she can coach. Or two extras can take turns being a passenger in another group.

How to play: Ask two of the children in each group to do the following:



- Each child should take his/her own left wrist with his/her right hand.
- Each child then takes her/his partner's right wrist with her/his left hand. (The facilitator should demonstrate this.)
- The partner then takes the right wrist of the other person with her/his left hand. Their arms are now a square-shaped "chair."
- When the pairs have each created a "seat," they should pick up the third person.
- The person being picked up (passenger) should lower herself into a sitting position.
- The "chair" pair should stand behind her and lower their bodies as well, bringing the "chair" down for the passenger to be seated.
- The passenger then sits on the "chair."
She puts her arms around the shoulders of the "chair" children for balance.
- The chair pair slowly lifts together and walks forward with the passenger.
- If there's time, give everyone a chance to be a chair, as well as a passenger.

Ask: Was it easier or harder to carry someone with the help of another person? Why?

- Did you feel stronger with another person?
- What do you think would happen if one of the chair people lost their grip?
- What would happen if the passenger started bouncing around or hitting the chairs?
- If you didn't feel safe, who could you talk to about safety? (Another adult that you trust, such as your mother or your leader at school or one of your friends.)

Discuss: What are some of the reasons why the Human Chair might be like the family? (Each has a different role, each has strengths that help others, each member is important.)

(Adapted from: *Play It Fair Toolkit*, Activity 34. Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights, 2008.)

DEVELOP (20 minutes)

Activity: Read, The Girl Who Said "No" to Marriage (15 minutes)

Say: I'm going to tell you the true story of a very courageous young woman. While you listen to this story, think about her situation, and what you would do in this case.

After the story, ask: What do you think of this story? What stood out in this story to you?

- Were Balkissa's parents right to try to make her marry her cousin? Why or why not?

Say: Let's read another right together. It's Article 16 from the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

- When we finish reading it, I want you to tell me **three** areas in which the FAMILY is mentioned or affected.

Ask someone to read the full text or the simplified text, whichever is best for your class.

FULL TEXT

1. Men and women of full age . . . have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

SIMPLIFIED TEXT

1. Every grown-up has the right to marry and have a family if they wish. Men and women have the same rights when they are married, and when they are separated.
2. No one can force you to get married.
3. The family is the most important unit of society and should be protected by the government.

Ask: What are the main points here?

(Right to marry, consent to marry, basic unit with protection from government)

Ask: How does this right tie into Balkissa's story?

- Why were her parents trying to force her to marry her cousin?
(They were poor and it was part of their culture and their family tradition.)
- Why didn't her mother or her father help her when she told them how she felt?
(Her mother had no power, and her father was afraid of his older brother.)
- How did she finally solve her problem?
(She found another adult who would listen, and who encouraged her.)
- How did the government help her? (They upheld the court's decision.)
- Why was the court able to help her?
(They knew that Balkissa's uncle was breaking the law because Article 16 of the *Universal Declaration* said no one should be forced to marry.)

Say: Balkissa worked with the legal process and went back to her family. She kept on trying, and she didn't give up, and things worked out.

Explain: Knowing about our human rights definitely helps us all.

Activity: Brainstorm

Ask: Have you ever heard of a brainstorm? That’s right! It’s when we all share a whole bunch of ideas very quickly. That’s what we’re going to do right now.

Divide the youth into two groups.

Say: Even if families are not the same, parents and other adults can do a lot to support and take care of younger family members. Children also have responsibilities.

- Let’s talk about that for a few minutes.

Draw a vertical line down the center of the chalkboard. Draw another line across the top. Write “How family helps the children” on one side, and “How children help the family” on the other side.

Ask: What are some of the things that families do for their children?

How Family helps children	How Children help Family

- Have each group think of 5 things, such as, helping prepare meals or cleaning the yard or taking care of younger siblings.
- Ask Group A for an idea, and which side of the chart to put it on.
- Ask Group B for a different idea, and which side it should go on.
- Continue asking one group and then the other until all the ideas have been shared.
- Don’t take any longer than about 5 minutes.

Ask: Do you see some things you had not thought of before? (Allow student answers.)

- What are some of the ways you can help in taking care of the family?
- List their answers on the other side of the board.

Guide the children to recognize that: **No matter what they look like, families work best when every member makes a contribution.**

Explain: Your family helps you prepare for adulthood.

Ask: At what age are you legally considered to be an adult in this country?

- By law, in most countries you are an adult by age 18, and sometimes as young as 16. That’s when you are considered to be in charge of yourself — whether you still live with your family at that time or not.
- With each passing year, you begin to do more things for yourself. This is known as **“evolving capacities,”** and it means you have more decision-making opportunities and responsibilities as you mature and gain the knowledge and skills to make good choices.

- This process slowly prepares you for adulthood when you will have the right to make decisions for yourself. **Evolving capacities** means you will have more responsibility for taking care of yourself as you get older and mature.

Explain: We are going to play a game about making decisions, about who has the responsibility for decision-making in a family. There are no right or wrong answers. Every family makes decisions differently.

Activity: Who Decides? (10 minutes)

How to play: The facilitator will read a list of decisions that should be made (found at the back of the lesson).

- After each question, ask the group to think about who should make the decision.
- If the student thinks that the PARENTS should make the decision, she or he should hold up ONE HAND with their fingers extended.
- If the student thinks the YOUTH should make the decision, then he or she should hold up ONE FINGER.
- If he or she thinks the YOUTH AND THE PARENTS should make the decision together, the student should hold up BOTH HANDS.

Explain that you will tell them when some decisions are protected by law. However, most situations have no right or wrong answer; rather, a family can decide for itself.

Read the questions one by one. You don't need to use all of them, but with the local culture in mind and depending on how much time you have, choose at least 6 to 10 questions to spark thought and conversation.

Discussion (10 minutes)

After the activity, ask questions such as:

- Does your age and maturity make a difference in the role you should have in making decisions about yourself? Why or why not?
- Are you involved in making decisions in your family? Which decisions are they?
- Do you like the way decisions are made in your family?
- Are there some decisions you would like to participate in that you do not?
- What are some things you could do to have a greater role in decision making?
- Do you think there are some human rights that concern children and their families? What would some of those be?

Explain: By learning decision-making within your family, your *evolving capacity* grows, and you are developing the skills you need to live on your own some day.

Ask: What do we call this process where you have more decision-making rights and responsibilities as you get older? (*Evolving capacities*)

Explain: Exactly! Of course, some of the decisions we just discussed are very difficult ones to make, even for adults.

Ask: Even though you might be ready to make such decisions for yourself and perhaps for your own family someday, why is it generally a good idea to consult your parents and other helpful adults who care about you? (Accept all answers.)

Explain: If you feel you do not currently have enough decision-making responsibility, consider whether discussing the matter with your family will help. If it will not help, then remember how you feel now, and commit yourself to help your own children someday to enjoy their rights related to personal decision-making.

(Adapted from *Compassito: Manual on Human Rights Education for Children*, edited and co-written by Nancy Flowers. Council of Europe, 2nd edition, January 2009. Activity 37, p. 193.)

CONCLUSION (10 minutes)

Show the mini poster, The Right to Marriage and a Family (from Youth Lesson 2), and place it on the wall or where everyone can see it.

Say: Families are usually the best place for children to grow up, and your attitude can make a big difference.

Explain: As a child, you do not yet have all the adult rights, but someday you will. When that day comes, you want to be ready.

- Your attitude will make a huge difference, as will your “evolving capacity,” or in other words, your decision-making abilities.
- As your ability to make wise decisions grows through experience and knowledge, talking and discussing ideas and decisions with your family will help you be prepared to take responsibility for your own life.

CHALLENGE

Say: Share the story with your family about the girl who said “no” to marriage, and talk to them about it. What do they think about marriage that young?

- We will discuss their response next time.
- Have a good week – I miss you already!

FACILITATOR TIP: Be sure you show respect for each participant’s thoughts and home life situation.

FACILITATOR NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

How do I feel about what happened with today's lesson?

What would or should I do differently next time?

(Adapted from Keating-Chetwynd, Sarah, ed., *How All Teachers Can Support Citizenship and Human Rights Education: A Framework for the Development of Competences*. Council of Europe, 2008, p. 61.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS

(Reviewing Lesson 3, "Is This Discrimination")

WHAT DOES THE WORD "**DIGNITY**" MEAN?

WHAT IS **DISCRIMINATION**?

NAME AT LEAST **ONE GROUP** THAT MIGHT SUFFER FROM DISCRIMINATION.

WHAT ARE SOME **SIMILARITIES** AND **DIFFERENCES** BETWEEN THE LIVES OF WOMEN AND MEN?

WHAT DOES THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS SAY ABOUT **WHO GETS TO HAVE HUMAN RIGHTS**?

ANSWERS

Dignity means worthy of respect and consideration.

Discrimination is **not** treating each other with dignity or equal value or equal rights.

Groups that might suffer from discrimination: Women and girls, people of different religions, people of a different race or different country, people who speak a different language.

Similarities and Differences: After the youth answers, ask: How do you feel about them? Are they "fair"? Let some of the other children answer also.

Who gets to have human rights: We all do, no matter who we are.

THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

ARTICLE 5

FULL TEXT

States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the ***evolving capacities*** of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

ABBREVIATED TEXT

Your family has the main responsibility for guiding you, so that as you grow and your abilities increase, you can learn to use your rights properly. Governments should respect this right.

SIMPLIFIED TEXT

You have the right to be given guidance by your parents and family to help you learn to use your rights properly as you grow up and your ***abilities increase***.



The Girl Who Said “No” To Marriage

One day when she was 12 years old, Balkissa Chaibou came home from school and learned that her father had promised her as a bride to her cousin when she turned 16. Balkissa had no say in the matter, and she would have to stop school and start a family when they got married.

Balkissa is from Niger, where child marriage is not uncommon. Her parents were poor and they had five daughters, so they were in favor of the marriage since that meant one less child to feed.

But Balkissa loved school, and did not want to marry her cousin and stop going to school. When she turned 16, and the wedding preparations began. Balkissa decided to fight for her rights - even if that meant taking her own family to court.

Her mother could not help Balkissa because women have no power in Niger. So Balkissa went to her father and agreed to marry her cousin if she didn't have to live with him until after she graduated from college. But her father couldn't help her, either, because in his family's tradition, the older brother could make decisions for the children of his younger siblings. And her father's older brother was her uncle, the man who was the father of her cousin that she was supposed to marry. Her uncle refused to even consider Balkissa's request. So the wedding preparations continued.

Next Balkissa asked her school principal for help. He sent her to an organization that helped her by taking legal action against her father and uncle for defying one of her human rights by forcing her into a marriage she did not want.

When they went to court, however, Balkissa's uncle denied the accusation, and claimed it had all been a misunderstanding, so the case was dropped. Balkissa thought she had won!

But then her uncle threatened to kill her unless she married her cousin! Balkissa quickly escaped to a women's shelter. Finally the uncle realized he might end up in jail, so he gave up and went back to his own country. Balkissa was able to go home in safety.

Her mother and father now want nothing to do with forced marriage.

Balkissa speaks to school groups, as well as to tribal chiefs. She explains that forced early marriage is often linked to terrible violence in marriage. It is also true that young mothers who have babies at such an early age frequently die because their bodies are not yet ready for pregnancy.

Balkissa is now in medical school and knows that her family is counting on her to succeed. She encourages other girls to follow her example. "I'm not saying don't marry," she tells a group of schoolgirls. "But choose the right moment to do so." She tells them to study as hard as they can even though it's hard. "Studies are your only hope,"

(Adapted: Sarah Buckley, BBC News, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35464262>)

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

ARTICLE 16

FULL TEXT

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SIMPLIFIED TEXT

1. Every grown-up has the right to marry and have a family if they wish. Men and women have the same rights when they are married, and when they are separated
2. No one can force you to get married.
3. The family is the most important unit of society and should be protected.

WHO DECIDES?

Who Should Decide . . .

- What you wear?
- What you eat?
- Whether you can smoke?
- How late you can stay up?
- Where you live, especially if your parents are divorced or separated?
- How you spend any money you may have?
- Whether you can stay home alone?
- When and why you can leave the house?
- The medical care you receive?
- Whether you go to school?
- Whether you can have your own mobile phone?
- Whether you can have a job?
- Who you have as friends?
- Who and when you should marry?
(The law protects children from underage marriage. According to international law, you cannot marry until after age 16.)
- Whether you join the military?
(International law protects you from serving in the military until age 18.)
- Whether you go to the mosque/church/temple/synagogue, etc.
(International law gives you the right to practice your preferred religion, even as a child.)

This Little Light of Mine

11

This little light of mine - I'm gonna let it shine!
 This little light of mine - I'm gonna let it shine!
 This little light of mine - I'm gonna let it shine!
 Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Everywhere I go - I'm gonna let it shine!
 Everywhere I go - I'm gonna let it shine!
 Everywhere I go - I'm gonna let it shine!
 Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

This little light of mine - I'm gonna let it shine!
 This little light of mine - I'm gonna let it shine!
 This little light of mine - I'm gonna let it shine!
 Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

To hear the music:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vofUBWT8GIU>