

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 marry or not to marry.

MATERIALS

- Talking Stick
- Class Roll and 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”
- 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 adult 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 & WARM-UP

(10 minutes)

- *Before Class:* Place the **mini posters** and **Class Rules** where everyone can see them.
- Greet the children warmly by name and show them where to sit.

Activity: Song, This Little Light of Mine! (at the back of the lesson)

This will be part of the Review.

REVIEW

Activity: Questions in a Box (with the Warm-up song)

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 everyone sings “**This Little Light of Mine.**” The facilitator yells “STOP!” after a couple of phrases or lines, and the youth holding the box must pull out a question and answer it. If the student doesn’t know the answer, the others can help. Then start the singing again and continue passing and stopping the box.

You don’t need to answer all the questions. The Welcome and Review should not take longer than 10 minutes total but should promote discussion.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

Say: Today and next week, we’re going to read and discuss two articles about our right to a family, and why that’s so important.

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 older and learn.”

Youth reads Article 5. (Found at the back of the lesson.)

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.

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

Read the Article together.

Ask: What do you think this article is saying? How does this relate to “evolving capacities”? (Take all answers.)

Explain: This means that you have the right to **receive guidance** from your parents and family to help you learn to use your rights properly as you **grow up and make good decisions**. This is in keeping with your “evolving capacities” as you develop and learn more.

- Not only is a family a beautiful thing, it is the most important unit of society.

DEVELOP & DISCUSS (10 minutes)

Activity: The Human Chair

Say: We're going to do an activity called the Human Chair. See if you can figure out how it's like a family.

FACILITATOR TIP: If your class is very large, you may wish to have only two or three groups come to the front to demonstrate the activity.

- Create groups of three youth each. Make sure the third person (the passenger) is smaller than the two people who create the "chair."

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

- Each one should take his/her own left wrist with his/her right hand.
- Each person then takes his/her partner's right wrist with his/her 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" people for balance.
- The chair pair slowly lifts together and walks forward with the passenger.



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

- Why did you need to cooperate with each other to feel safe and make this work?
- 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?
- Why would this be easier if you did it again?

(You would know how to do it, and you could do it faster and more safely – in other words, your *evolving capacity* would make you more skilled.)

- 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.)

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

CONCLUSION (5 minutes)

Discuss: What are some of the reasons why the Human Chair might be like the family?

(Each person has a different role, each has strengths that help others, we learn cooperation, each member is important.)

Ask: Who remembers what “evolving capacities” means? (It's how you grow and learn.)

- Why are families such a beautiful thing, no matter what they look like? (They help us grow and learn to make good decisions.)

CHALLENGE

Say: Share with someone in your family what you've learned about families today.

- The family is the most important unit of society
- They are a good place to be no matter what they look like.
- Tell your family about evolving capacities (how you grow and learn new skills and make good decisions).
- This week, teach your family and friends about the Human Chair, but be sure there's **an adult with you** to help you keep your balance, and so that no one gets hurt.

WELCOME & WARM-UP (5 minutes)

- *Before Class:* Place the **mini posters** and **Class Rules** where everyone can see them.
- Greet the students warmly by name as they come in and sit down.

Activity: Song, This Little Light of Mine! (at the back of the lesson)
Sing with enthusiasm.

REVIEW (5 minutes)

Ask: Does anyone remember what “evolving capacities” means?
(It means to grow up and learn new skills.)

Say: Someone please tell me why families are so important and such a beautiful thing.
(They help us grow and learn to make good decisions.)

INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

Say: Last week we talked about Article 5 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and your right to grow up in family.

- Today we’re going to learn more about your right to a family and to marriage.
- 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.

Activity: Read, The Girl Who Said “No” to Marriage

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

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

Say: Let’s read Article 16 together from the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

- When we finish reading it, tell me **four** areas in which the FAMILY is mentioned or affected.

SIMPLIFIED TEXT

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

Ask: What are the four areas here? Don’t forget to use the Talking Stick.

- Right to marry,
- Men and women have equal rights,
- Consent to marry,
- Basic unit with protection by government laws and regulations.

- How does this right relate to 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: What a courageous young woman! Balkissa worked with the legal system and went back to her family. She kept on trying. She didn’t give up, and things worked out.

- Today she is a doctor, and she is helping her family escape from poverty.
- Knowing about our human rights definitely helps us all.

DEVELOP & DISCUSS (5 minutes)

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?

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.

After the activity, ask the following questions:

- Does your age and maturity make a difference in the role you should have in making decisions about yourself? Why or why not?
- What are some of the decisions you are involved in with your family?
- What do you like about the way decisions are made in your family?
- What are some things you could do to have a greater role in decision making?

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

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.)

(Adapted from *Compasito: 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 (5 minutes)

Show the mini poster where everyone can see it: The Right to Marriage and a Family

Say: Families **are** a beautiful thing no matter what their make-up. They are usually the best place for children to grow up.

- With your evolving capacities, your attitude can make a big difference in 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 Balkissa, the girl who said “no” to marriage.

- What do they think about marriage that young?
- Discuss with them how you might be able to have more opportunities to make family decisions.
- We will share your family’s responses next time. Have a good week – I miss you already!

<p>FACILITATOR TIP: Be sure you show respect for each participant’s thoughts and home life situation.</p>
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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.)

Make two copies so you have one for each lesson.

REVIEW, Questions in a Box

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 treating each other unequally or without dignity or respect, or denying the rights of others.

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, people who have a physical impairment.

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 has 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

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 adult 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 . . .

- Whether you can smoke?
- 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?
- 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 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

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 song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_4vgwnbAfE