

# FAMILY, A BEAUTIFUL THING

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. No one can force you to get married. The family is the most important unit of society and should be protected.

*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 16*

## ★ Learning Points

1. The family is the most important unit of society and should be protected.
2. When you are legally of age (usually 18 years old) you have the right to marry or not marry.

### WELCOME (5 minutes)

*Teacher preparation: Display the mini-posters.*

**Song: “Be Our Best”**

### REVIEW (5 minutes)

- Would someone tell us about your experience using the Talking Stick with your family?
- Turn to the person next to you and share the story of someone who did something difficult.

### INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

**Have a student read UDHR Article 16.**

Ask students to listen for at least four important things about the family as the student reads.

*Question: What did you hear?*

Accept all answers.

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 or separated.
3. No one can force you to get married.
4. The family is the most important unit of society and should be protected.

### Activity: “Balkissa”

*The Girl Who Said “No” to Marriage*

Show the picture of Balkissa and read the story found at the back of the lesson.

Explain: While I read the story, think about the people and what they say, **because we will act it out afterwards.**

### DISCUSSION (15 minutes)

#### Activity: Drama in the Family

*Instructions at the back of the lesson.*

#### Questions

- Who can help us act it out?
- Who are the people in this story?
- Who can remember what happens in the story?

#### The Play

1. Assign characters.
2. Talk through each action.
3. Allow students to create their own dialogue based on the story.
4. Have them come to the front of the room and step forward whenever it is their turn to speak.

**Read Article 16** together again.

### CONCLUSION (5 minutes)

- Why would it be important for families to counsel with each other?
- How did knowing about her human rights help Balkissa?
- What are the laws in your country about child marriage?
- How does knowing about your human rights help you in your life?

### CHALLENGE

1. Counsel with your family about the family story that you shared at the beginning of class today, and how it was resolved.
2. Invite your family to consider other possible solutions.
3. Ask them to act it out with you.

Remember to fill in your brief *Facilitator Notes & Reflections*.



## Article 16

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*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

### **BALKISSA: THE GIRL WHO SAID “NO” TO MARRIAGE**



When Balkissa was 12 years old, her father promised her as a bride to her cousin when she turned 16. She did not want to marry her cousin and quit school. But when she turned 16, marriage preparations began. She asked her parents to stop the marriage, but her mother had no power. Her father couldn't help her because in their tradition the oldest uncle, who was her cousin's father, had the right to make these decisions for the children of his siblings.

Where could she get help? Balkissa asked her school principal what to do. He told her about a group who helped her take legal action against her father and uncle for forcing her into a marriage she did not want. In court, Balkissa's uncle claimed it had been a big mistake. 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. Fortunately, her uncle realized he might end up in jail if he carried out his threat, and he finally gave up. In the meantime, Balkissa's mother and father decided they wanted nothing to do with forced marriage.

Balkissa continued with her education, even going to medical school. Now she speaks to school groups, encouraging girls to follow her example. "I'm not saying don't marry," she tells them. "But you should choose the right moment to do so." She explains that forced early marriage often is linked to terrible violence in the marriage, and to the deaths of premature babies and of the young child brides who get pregnant before their bodies are ready for pregnancy.

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

### **THE PLAY**

**Actors:** Father, Balkissa, Mother, Principle, Lawyer, Uncle, Judge

Actors talk through each action and create dialogue. They come to the front of the room for the drama.

Action 1: **Father and Balkissa.** What does Father tell Balkissa? How does she respond?

Action 2: **Balkissa, Mother and Father.** What does Balkissa ask her mother and father to do? What does each say in response?

Action 3: **Balkissa and Principal.** What does she ask him? Where does he send her? Why?

Action 4: **Balkissa, Lawyer, Judge and Uncle.** What does the Lawyer ask Balkissa? What does she say? What does the Judge say? What does her Uncle say?

Action 5: **Uncle.** What does the Uncle threaten to do? Why does he finally change his mind?

Action 6: **Facilitator and Balkissa.** Facilitator asks Balkissa, "What did you do after the trial?"  
"What do you tell other girls now about marriage?"