

Lesson 6A–Freedom of Religion and Belief

Freedom of Religion and Belief

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Learning Points

1. Students will discuss why Freedom of Religion is important.
2. Students will identify the various rights related to elements of practice of thought, conscience and religion.
3. Students will state why it is important to be able to change their beliefs or religion.

Lesson 6A—Freedom of Religion and Belief

Lesson Outline

1. Welcome

Select a song, poem, or activity from your country or culture.

2. Review

After sharing the story of Balkissa, did you find other possible solutions?

Share any research you found about marriage laws in your country. How do those laws work with human rights?

3. Introduction

Read UDHR, Article 18, and show the Right to Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion mini poster. (p. 41)

Questions

1. What are thoughts? *Ideas and opinions*
2. What is conscience? *Inner feelings telling you what is right or wrong in thoughts and behavior*
3. What is religion? *A set of spiritual beliefs and practices*
4. What are beliefs? *Trust, faith, or confidence in someone or something*
5. Why was it important to include an article about freedom of thought, conscience, and religion in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*?
6. What conflicts have you observed related to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion in families and your community? How could respecting others' beliefs help resolve these conflicts?
7. Why is it important to be able to exercise this right alone or in community with others, in public or private?
8. Why is it necessary to be able to manifest our religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance?
9. Does everyone have access to this freedom? What if someone's religion or belief is different from those around them?

4. Development

Activity: Six Photos - Freedom of Religion or Belief (p. 42)

Questions

1. What do you see in these photos?
2. How did each person express his/her religion differently? Be specific.
3. What different religions or beliefs exist in your community?
4. How do you express your religion or belief?
5. When was a time you were not able to express your beliefs?
6. How can you respect others' beliefs while practicing your own?

7. How does respecting others' beliefs make everyone's lives better?

5. Conclusion

Read or have a student read UDHR, Article 18 again.

This right guarantees that we can do three things.

- **To have**—We all have the right to our own thoughts, beliefs, and religion.
- **To change**—We can change our religion or belief if we want to do that.
- **To manifest**—We can teach, practice, or worship as we wish.

Questions

1. Why is it important that we have the right to our own thoughts, conscience, religion, and beliefs?
2. Why is it important to be able to change our religion or beliefs?
3. Why is it important to be able to manifest our religion or beliefs in teaching, practice, worship, and observance?

6. Challenge

- If possible, find someone with a different belief or religion than yours. Ask that person to explain their religion to you.
- Ask your parents about an experience with someone who has a different belief or religion.
- Listen carefully and respectfully.
- Thank them for sharing.



Right to Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion

Lesson 6A–Freedom of Religion and Belief

Development

Activity: Six Photos–Freedom of Religion or Belief

Christian



Hindu



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Muslim



Atheist (No Religion)



Jewish



Buddhist



Lesson 6B– Freedom of Religion and Belief

Freedom of Religion or Belief

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 14

You have the right to think and believe what you want and to practice your religion as long as you do not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Your parents should guide you on these matters.

Convention on the Rights of the Child (Child Friendly Version)

Learning Points

1. Students will identify their rights related to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
2. Students will describe how they can exercise their rights in connection with worship and observance, while respecting the rights of others to do the same.

Lesson Outline

1. Welcome

Select a song, poem, or activity from your country or culture.

2. Review

What did you learn when you talked with a person who has a different belief or religion than yours? If no one responds, share an experience of your own.

3. Introduction

Activity: News Flash, Religions Work Together

Read and discuss the news story.

Following an attack on a Catholic church in France, Muslims across the country attended Catholic Mass in solidarity with those affected. Their action sent a powerful message of community togetherness, showing that hatred has no place in either religion.

This uniting of faiths doesn't only occur after a tragedy. The House of Religions in Switzerland brings an impressive eight religions together under just one roof. There are spaces for Sikhs, Baha'i and Jews, as well as a Christian church, a Hindu temple, a Turkish Alevi cemevi, a Buddhist center, and a Muslim mosque, all of which open out into a dialogue room where meetings and community events can take place for members of all beliefs.

By focusing on the good things we share, we can help spread the word that our differences are less important than the things we have in common: values of love, compassion, respect, fairness, and equality.

Questions

1. In what ways did these events surprise you?
2. How do you feel about the way the Muslims reacted after hearing about the attack on the Catholic church? What would you have done?
3. Who has the right to his/her own religion or belief?
4. How can we increase tolerance for a variety of religions?
5. What do you think a House of Religions should do?
6. If you built a House of Religions, what design would you use?

4. Development

Have a student read Article 14 of the CRC on page 43. Show the Right to Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion mini poster (p. 41).

This Article tells us about our right to freedom of religion or belief.

Questions

1. If we have the right to our own beliefs and religion, how should we treat people who have different beliefs than we have?
2. What about people who don't want to have any religion at all? Do they have the same rights as people who have a religion?
3. What is an example of someone who was not allowed to practice their religion?
4. How do we show respect if we don't agree?
5. What are some beliefs that we may have in common?
6. How do your parents guide you in religious matters?

Guide students to remember that we are all equal in dignity and respect.

5. Conclusion

Questions

1. How have people of other faiths treated you? How did it make you feel?
2. Can you describe a time when you were not able to express your beliefs? Explain your feelings.
3. How can you respect the beliefs of other people while practicing your own?
4. What if people change their beliefs? Is that wrong? How can we still support them?
5. What are some values that most people have in common no matter what their religion or belief?
Kindness, love for others, honesty, helpfulness, protection from robbery and murder, etc.
6. How does respecting the religion or beliefs of others improve our lives?

6. Challenge

- Design your own House of Religions.
- This week, make a list of some of the values we all have in common no matter what our religion or belief. Share the list with your family or a friend.
- Many religions encourage members to help others. Those who do not have a religion often help other people, also. Talk with your family or a friend about ways you could help someone in your community. *Ideas: Help a younger child learn something new. Help an elderly person with a task. Join a service group.*