

Lesson 6A - I Can Choose

Freedom of Religion or Belief

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

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18



Learning Points

1. All people have the right to believe as they wish.
2. People can express their religion or beliefs freely through teaching, practice, worship and observance.
3. People are free to change their beliefs or religion.

1. WELCOME (5 minutes)

Sing the song, "Be Our Best" chant (page 4)

2. REVIEW

Would someone like to tell us about your experience in acting out the family story of a person who did something difficult?

3. INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

Activity: Six photos (page 37)

Let's look at the pictures related to UDHR Article 18, Freedom of Religion or Belief. These photos show different children practicing different religions and beliefs.

Questions (Use the Talking Stick as needed.)

- What do you see in the photos?
- How did each child express her/his religion differently?
- How did this photos make you feel?
- What different religions or beliefs exist in your community?
- How do you express YOUR religion or belief?

4. DEVELOPMENT (5 minutes)

Show the Religion or Belief mini poster (page 38)

Write the words **RELIGION** and **THOUGHTS** on the chalkboard.

Have a student read Article 18.

Question: What do these words mean?

Vocabulary

- **Religion:** A set of spiritual beliefs and practices.
- **Thoughts or beliefs** are ideas and opinions.

Read Article 18 again together. Ask students to listen for 3 things as they read.

Questions

What three things did you notice?

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

As the youth respond with their answers, write them briefly below the word **RELIGION** on the chalkboard:

1. To have
2. To change
3. To teach

Question

What do these things mean about the way you are free to live your religion or belief?

5. CONCLUSION (10 minutes)

Activity: Share songs of worship.

Invite students to teach a song to the class that is meaningful to them when they worship. Join together in singing songs that express beliefs.

Let multiple people share songs.

Ask: Why is this song special to you? *If no one volunteers, share one of your own.*

6. CHALLENGE

- Find someone with a different belief or religion than yours.
- Ask them to explain it to you.
- Listen carefully and respectfully.
- Thank them for sharing.



Remember to fill in your brief **Facilitator Notes and Reflections** (page 67).

Activity: Six Photos - Freedom of Religion or Belief

Licensed through iStock



Article 18

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

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights



The Right to Freedom of Religion or Belief

UDHR 18 and CRC 14

Lesson 6B - I Can Choose

Freedom of Religion or Belief

You have the right to think and believe what you want, and to practice your religion, as long as you are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 14



Learning Point:

We should show respect for other religions and beliefs while exercising our own religion or belief.

Display the Class Rules and the mini poster (page 38)

1. WELCOME (5 minutes)

Sing the song, “Be Our Best” chant and verse 1 (page 4).

2. REVIEW

Who would like to share something new that you learned 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 (5 minutes)

Activity: News Flash—Religions Work Together

Read and discuss the news story (page 40).

Questions

- In what ways did these events surprise you?
- How do you feel about the way the Muslims reacted after hearing about the attack on the Catholic church?
- What would you have done?
- Who has the right to her or his own religion or belief?
- If you built a House of Religions, what would it look like – round, square, rectangular?

4. DEVELOPMENT (10 minutes)

Have a student **read Article 14 of the CRC** (page 40).

Point to the **Freedom of Religion or Belief** mini poster (page 38). As you explain that this Article tells us about our right to freedom of religion or belief.

Questions

- If we have the right to our own beliefs and religion, how should we treat people who have different beliefs than we do?



Remember to fill in your brief **Facilitator Notes and Reflections** (page 67).

- 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?
- How do we show respect if we don't agree?
- What are some beliefs that we may have in common?
- How do your parents guide you in religious matters?

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

5. CONCLUSION (10 minutes)

- How have people of other faiths treated you?
- How did it make you feel?
- Describe a time when you were not able to express your beliefs.
- How can you respect the beliefs of other people while practicing your own?
- What if people change their beliefs? Is that wrong? How can we still support them?
- 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.)
- How does respecting the religion or beliefs of others improve our lives?

Read Article 14 together as a class (page 40).

6. CHALLENGE

- 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.

See optional activities on page 40.

Article 14

You have the right to think and believe what you want, and to practice your religion, as long as you are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Activity: News Flash, Religions Work Together

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, Bahá'is 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.

(benjerry.co.uk/whats-new/2016/religions-work-together)

Optional Challenge Activity: Make a “How I Can Help” List

Many religions encourage their members to help others. Those who do not follow a religion often help other people, too. What are some ways you could do this? Talk with your family. Make a list of how you might work together to be helpers. Here are some ideas:

1. Do chores for a neighbor or family member who is elderly.
2. Volunteer for an organization that helps people.
3. Make a card for someone who is sick.

What else can you think of?

Licensed through AdobeStock



The Right to Freedom of Expression

UDHR 19 and CRC 13