Lesson Plan 1: Human Rights, Responsibility and You

Goal: To provide students with a basic understanding of human rights

Objectives:
- Students will be able to define what it means to be human.
- Students will relate human rights to human needs.
- Students will have a basic understanding of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Students will be able to explain how they are responsible for upholding their own rights and the rights of others.

Essential Question: What are human rights?

Materials:
- Handout: Universal Declaration of Human Rights - abbreviated version (attached)
- Markers
- Large piece of roll paper

Activity 1: What Does It Mean to Be Human? (approx. 30-45 minutes)

1. **Trace Body.** Divide students in small equal groups. Ask for one student to volunteer per group to be traced. Have him or her lie flat on the large piece of paper while another group member traces the outline of their body. Use pencil and then when the outline is done, and the person stands up, have a different student outline in dark marker so that it’s visible.

2. **Name Character.** Ask each group to name their character. Write his/her name on the paper somewhere so others can see.

3. **Human Being Reflection.** Tell the groups to write different words that they feel answer the question, “What does it mean to be human?” For example, they may write words like *free, equal, individual, etc.* Leave a large blank space somewhere on the paper that will be explained later in the lesson.

4. **Share.** Have each student share one word that they thought represented the word “human.” Ask the group to generate one answer and write it on the board. Now ask the students to return their focus to their “person” and their group. Now, write the words “human rights” on the board.
5. **Ask** the students if they know what the words “human rights” mean to them. Generate a few ideas and list them on the board under the question, as you will define this more in the following activity.

**Activity 2: Small Group Discussion. Defining Human Rights and Responsibility**

1. **Define.** Ask the groups to come up with a definition for human rights in their own words. Once they have finished brainstorming, they should write their definition on another large piece of paper. Distribute the UDHR list at this point. Write a collective definition of the combined student ideas on the board or in a place visible to all. For example, “human rights are guaranteed to every person simply by being human.” Or, “human rights promote basic standards of living equally, with respect and in dignity.” Discuss the reason for the creation of the UDHR in 1948 and emphasize that it was the first international agreement made to protect people from inequality and oppression.

2. **Human Rights Reflection.** Choose five or six rights that will be easily understood by your students. Assign each group one of the human rights listed on the board or allow students to choose the human right that interests them most. Encourage students to fully explore their assigned right.

3. **Name and Display.** Once students are finished, ask them each to write their assigned right in the blank space on the collage from Activity #1. Display the human rights pieces of paper around the room, in a visible way. They will be used again later in this lesson.

4. **Regroup and Discuss.** Direct students to look at the human rights depicted on the collages around the room. Once they have looked for a few minutes, ask the following questions:
   - Which of these rights are necessary for survival? How are needs and rights related?
   - Which of these rights are necessary to live in dignity?
   - What would happen if you had to give up one of these rights?
   - Can you think of any other human rights essential to living in dignity?

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Source: The Advocates for Human Rights
Do you disagree with thinking of any of these things as a right? If so, explain your reasoning.

5. **Explain.** Explain to your students that they have a responsibility to respect the human rights of others and themselves. Ask students to share ideas about how they can express their understanding of the responsibility in upholding the rights of others and claiming rights of their own. For example, you may say “Every child has the right to an education. As a student in this class I am responsible for making sure I work to the best of my ability and ask for help if I don’t understand something.” Or a student may say “I am responsible for others in my class and will respect others’ right to an education by not interfering in their learning by talking too much.” You may want to mention bullying and discuss how respecting the human rights of others involves being responsible and standing up against those who bully.

**Activity 3: Lesson Closure** (10 minutes)

1. **Reflect.** Last, ask students to reflect on what they have learned. They may write and/or draw in journals. Allow ten minutes of quiet time to think and process these concepts. Recite the following quotation for students to consider while writing in their journals. The quotation is from Eleanor Roosevelt, Chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights that drafted the UDHR:

   “Where, after all, do universal rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seek equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

2. **Invite.** Request students to consider in particular the last line. What does “concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home” mean? How can we take action to protect human rights? How are we all responsible for the rights of ourselves and others?
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) List

Article 1
Right to Equality

Article 17
Right to Own Property

Article 2
Freedom from Discrimination

Article 18
Freedom of Belief and Religion

Article 3
Right to Life, Liberty, Personal Security

Article 19
Freedom of Opinion and Information

Article 4
Freedom from Slavery

Article 20
Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Article 5
Freedom from Torture and Degrading Treatment

Article 21
Right to Participate in Government and in Free Elections

Article 6
Right to Recognition as a Person before the Law

Article 22
Right to Social Security

Article 7
Right to Equality before the Law

Article 23
Right to Desirable Work and to Join Trade Unions

Article 8
Right to Remedy by Competent Tribunal

Article 24
Right to Rest and Leisure

Article 9
Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Exile

Article 25
Right to Adequate Living Standard

Article 10
Right to Fair Public Hearing

Article 26
Right to Education

Article 11
Right to be Considered Innocent until Proven Guilty

Article 27
Right to Participate in the Cultural Life of the Community

Article 12
Freedom from Interference with Privacy, Family, Home and Correspondence

Article 28
Right to a Social Order that Articulates This Document

Article 13
Right to Free Movement in and out of the Country

Article 29
Community Duties Essential to Free and Full Development

Article 14
Right to Asylum in other Countries from Persecution

Article 30
Freedom from State or Personal Interference in the Above Rights

Article 15
Right to a Nationality and the Freedom to Change It

Article 16
Right to Marriage and Family

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