

BE THE CHANGE

Grade: Primary		Topic: School-wide Introduction to Children's Rights	
Curriculum Area: Language, connections to Social Studies		Title: Discovering Children's Rights Through Children's Literature	
U.N. Rights of the Child Article(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 		Teaching Strategies <p>These lessons provide an alternate introduction to children's rights, using literature as the venue. They can be used singly or in combination, in any order. Stories are used as the springboard for discussion and deepened understanding. These lessons could provide structure to a school-wide fund-raising effort, with each class participating at a level that meets their time and interests.</p> <p>Introductory session</p> <p>Give the students each a Smartie, instructing them not to eat it yet. Ask students to describe the outside of the Smartie. (colour, shape, any irregularities). Record responses. Ask students to bite half way into their Smartie. Describe the insides. Through discussion, make comparisons with Smarties and people e.g. look different on outside/same on inside. Record some of their ideas. Read <i>For Every Child</i> aloud. Tell students a bit about the UN (organization created to represent the rights of all the people in the world, including special section for children called <i>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>. This book distills it to its main idea. Read, and invite comments and reflection. 🤔 Leave students with this thinking question; <i>Do you think all children in the world enjoy these rights?</i></p> <p>An alternative resource: UNICEF offers a stunning set of full-colour posters, based on children's universal rights, at a very reasonable cost. See the bibliography for ordering information. The same process described above could be used with the posters. For a more interactive approach, give students' post-its, and have them add statements to the images that capture their interest, beginning with <i>I wonder, I noticed, I think...</i></p> <p>Literature Sessions</p> <p>Review thinking question. Browse <i>A Life Like Mine</i> with students, to delve further. You could do this before each literature session. Appropriate sections are suggested for each text. Follow student interest, based on your observations of the introductory session to select the literature session that is most appropriate.</p> <p><i>The Right to Be Cared For</i> (see "Protection" in <i>A Life Like Mine</i>) Read aloud one of the following: <i>Homemade Love</i>, <i>The Name Jar</i>, <i>My Name is Hussein</i>, <i>My Name is Yoon</i>. Discuss the importance of one's name (identity, ownership, personhood). Invite students to tell the story of their own name. Why did they receive that name? Were they named after someone? What does their name mean? For homework, assign students the task of recording the story of their name, and bringing it in to share. (BLM_intro.lit1) Consider ways to display students' names using strong colours in a bold display.</p>	
Information Studies: Overall Expectations Inquiry and Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading for pleasure and information <p>Social Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how people in the community interact with each other and the physical environment to meet human needs Use a variety of resources to gather geographic information e.g. picture books Explain how communities interact with each other and the environment to meet human needs <p>For specific grade-level expectations, refer to <i>Information Studies: Kindergarten to Grade 12</i> (OSLA 1999).</p>			
Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>For Every Child</i> <i>A Life Like Mine</i> <i>Homemade Love</i> <i>The Name Jar</i> <i>My Name is Hussein</i> <i>For You Are a Kenyan Child</i> <i>The Whispering Cloth</i> <i>Mama/Papa, Do you Love Me?</i> <i>Sam and the Lucky Money</i> <i>The Have a Good Day Café</i> <i>The Skin You Live In</i> <i>One Green Apple</i> <i>Nadia's Hands</i> <i>Ruby's Wish</i> <i>Boxes for Katje</i> <i>Aani and the Tree Huggers</i> <i>The Carpet Boy's Gift</i> <i>The Treasure Chest</i> 			
BE THE CHANGE... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you feel students have a solid understanding of children's rights, give them an opportunity to fund-raise for one of the following organizations, in a way that reflects their newly developed awareness. <i>Free the Children</i> has opportunities at a wide range of levels of participation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sleeping Children Around the World Operation Christmas Child (Christmas) Free the Children 			

BE THE CHANGE

Topic: Introduction to *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (primary – literature focus)

Title: Discovering Children's Rights Through Literature

Teaching Strategies

The Right to Be Protected (see "Protection" in *A Life Like Mine*)

Read aloud one of the following: ***For You Are a Kenyan Child, The Whispering Cloth, Mama/Papa, Do you Love Me?*** Discuss the implications of "protection". Give the students each a post-it note, and ask them to illustrate what it means to them. Sort and group the post-its to come up with some headings. Compare those headings with the ones in *A Life Like Mine* on pages 64, 65. (love, care, freedom from work, protection from war, inclusion if disabled).

Extension: If using ***The Whispering Cloth***, you could discuss the stories a variety of cultures tell, using fabric. e.g. Kente cloth, quilts during Slavery, Guatemalan weaving. Students could tell their own stories using fabric cloth. The [Textile Museum of Canada](#) is a rich resource for delving deeper into this topic.

The Right to Participate (see "Participation" in *A Life Like Mine*)

Read aloud one of the following: ***Sam and the Lucky Money, The Have a Good Day Café, The Sawdust Carpets.*** Introduce the idea that small actions can have big implications. Invite students to share stories of times they have committed small acts of kindness. For one week, encourage students to engage in such acts. Each day, collect and share examples, and talk about the feelings associated with these acts. This session would work well with "Lest We Forget" (Remembrance Day), in conjunction with discussions on peace.

Extension: Students could trace and cut out their own hands, and record their acts on them. The hands could frame a display titled "Being the Change – one small, important act at a time". Older students could publish their responses in a graphic newsletter.

The Right to Freedom of Expression (see "Participation" in *A Life Like Mine*)

Read aloud: ***The Skin You Live In, One Green Apple, Nadia's Hands.*** Each of these books offers a different perspective on the topic of expressing yourself. Read more than one, and compare using a Venn diagram. An advanced group could try a triple Venn.

Extension: After reading ***Nadia's Hands***, students could collect stories of traditions from their own families and cultures, and combine them to create a book for the library.

The Right to Education and Play (see "Development" in *A Life Like Mine*)

Read ***Ruby's Wish***. Use the following drama strategy from ***The Treasure Chest***, (Toronto District School Board, 1999) "Role on the Wall"

A large outline of Ruby is drawn on chart paper. Students reflect upon her thoughts, feelings and qualities. Their ideas are recorded on the figures in some of the following ways:

- Consider Ruby's inner characteristics and outer characteristics
- Consider both the external and the internal forces working for and against Ruby
- Consider truths about the story in Ruby's time and in current times e.g. girls not going to school

The Right to Survival and Development (see "Development" in *A Life Like Mine*)

Two books that work well for this topic are ***Boxes for Katje***, and ***Aani and the Tree Huggers***. Other suggested titles are ***Cats in Kryzinski's Square*** and ***Rose Blanche***. ***Boxes for Katje*** (set in World War II) is a particularly nice springboard to the *Be the Change* section of these sessions, and could work well in the Winter holidays, when we typically focus on giving and sharing. ***Aani and the Tree Huggers*** would work well in the Spring, when we consider our Environment, and the impact of personal actions.

The Right to Rehabilitation and Care (see "Survival" in *A Life Like Mine*)

This activity would work best with older primary, or junior students. Read ***The Carpet Boy's Gift***. Use the strategy of ***Shape-Shifting**** (***Treasure Chest, TDSB***) to deepen students' experience of the text. **Divide students into partners. Each pair labels themselves A and B. As the teacher reads the text, A begins by creating a still shape. B then adds to this shape by creating a new shape. Once B has completed his or her shape, A travels to a new place in the room and shifts into a new shape. B follows and once again adds a new shape. Continue until it feels appropriate to end. Half the class can observe as the pairs in the other half dance. Share reflections on the experience.* Use selected statistics from ***Listen to Us! The World's Working Children Speak, Going to School in India, or If the World Were a Village*** to show the prevalence of child labour. The following websites also provide information:

[Facts on Child Labour](#), [UNICEF site – child labour](#), [Human Rights Watch](#) (grades 6+)

Encourage students to write an opinion piece about their findings, and share it in a public forum e.g. school newsletter, local newsletter, municipal newspaper, another class, or the school assembly.