



Centropa Lesson Plan
Civil Society – Whose Job is it to Guarantee We All Live in One?
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2015 Milton Wolf Prize Winner

Course - 8th Grade Jewish Social Studies

Categories: Social Studies – Human Rights – Civic Responsibility

Total teaching time: thirteen 50 minute periods, including 6-7 work periods on the film projects

Teacher Bio – I teach all of Middle School Judaics – history, culture, theology, Rabbinics, Bible, and Prayer – at the Jewish Day School of Metropolitan Seattle. We are a community day school and teaching using the Inquiry Cycle in all disciplines. I have been teaching at JDS for 10 years. I was introduced to Centropa through a Winter Seminar in LA about five years ago. I use Centropa resources in a variety courses and ways. I have attended two Winter Seminars and the 2014 Summer Academy. I write all my own curricula and love having Centropa as a resource to support me in so many different areas. I am a USHMM Teacher Fellow and have also studied at Yad Vashem.

Lesson summary – This lesson is designed to introduce students to the UN Declaration of Human Rights and to help them realize the need for individual civic responsibility to assure that these rights are reality for all humans. The lesson uses *Survival in Sarajevo* as an example of this responsibility in action and its impact during the Siege of Sarajevo. It is meant to be done as a Border Jumping exchange and was adapted by me from a lesson by Victor Gurevich to be done in conjunction with his students. The Border Jumping/exchange component allows students to see if the same rights are at risk in other communities or if the focus is different and also that this responsibility is global. This lesson was done as a “going further” project at the end of a unit, but can also be done as a stand-alone unit.

Background Information

Context – The core ideas of this unit are based on a project presented by Victor Gurevich at CSA 2014 and was designed to be a Border Jumping project done with Victor’s students.

This “going further” project/mini-unit was done at the end of a unit on the emancipation of Jews under Napoleon focusing on how a minority culture responds to getting equal rights entitled “Rejection? Accommodation? Assimilation? It was connected to this unit through the idea of once you have equal rights, what is your responsibility to assure that everyone else’s rights are upheld and provided for. Part of the Enduring Understanding for this larger unit was “Knowing your core values will help you make wises choices.” As Jews, one of our values should be creating a just society. It was also connected with a discussion about how getting rights doesn’t mean you will keep them or that everyone agrees you should have them. *Survival in Sarajevo* provides a beautiful example of a community coming together to provide for the basic rights – and needs – of their members at a time when there was not government to do this. This was also at a time when their larger society was divided –

lethally – along “tribal” lines but yet these people all worked together to preserve life – regardless of ethnicity or religion. After looking at The UN Declaration of Human Rights, this example of shared humanity trumping what separates us, helped to move the students to thinking about their personal responsibility.

Enduring Understanding – All humans are responsible for assuring the Human Rights of each other. We must all work to create “an existence worth of Human Dignity” for each other.

Goals/Objectives –

- Introduce students to the UN Declaration of Human Rights
- Encourage students to consider the difference between the rights they enjoy and those that others are able to experience
- Students will realize that many human rights are not being upheld – even in their own communities
- Students will become familiar with NGOs and social service organizations working to fill the gap between government provided assistance to the less fortunate and the reality of their needs
- Students will become familiar with iMovie and learn how to create a short film using still shots, short video clips and narration.
- Students will realize their responsibility towards their fellow humans and be motivated to act to assure “An existence worth of Human Dignity” for all humans
- Through the Border Jumping exchange, students will see that which rights are at risk may vary, or may be the same, in different communities and countries, but that in all places organizations and individuals work to help address this
- Will work on Common Core standards of **summarize the central ideas, make inferences, and collaboration and coordination** through group work

Resources –

- Copy of UN Declaration of Human Rights –
- http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf
- Quotes related to human rights – MLK, Nelson Mandela and Pirkei Avot are what I used (pages 11-13 of “Civil Society Flipchart,” PDF attached).
- Copy of “Every Human has Rights” or a similar book for “tuning in” on the topic of rights.
- *Survival in Sarajevo* to watch - http://www.centropa.org/centropa-cinema/survival-sarajevo-friendship-time-war?language=All&subtitle_language=All
- Access to the internet to research NGOs and social service organizations in your area.
- Software and hardware for making films.

Needed Skills – While I adapted this project to connect to my unit on Emancipation and equal rights, it could be done as a stand-alone project on civic responsibility and the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Skills are needed to make the films but part of the lesson was an introduction to iMovie, using iPads for film making and the skills needed for that work. You do not need to use iMovie, but would need to be sure students knew how to use whatever software was employed. My students were not aware of the UN Declaration prior to this unit and all that they needed to know was covered in the lesson as laid out. For those

in non-English speaking countries doing this as an exchange, English would be a needed skill.

Lesson Plan

“An existence worth of Human Dignity”
(Article 23 UN Declaration of Human Rights)

(I use an ActivBoard in my classroom and have attached the “flipchart” I created, and used, for teaching this unit. It is marked up so you can see our process. I am happy to provide a clean copy of it as well.)

Tuning in – (one 50 minute period)

What is Civil Society – what do these words mean – discussion and brain storm

Read “Every Human has Rights”

Finding out – (2-3 50 minute periods)

Go over UN Declaration of Human Rights with the class – read each article and discuss what it means and if they think it is happening – students are to track on the articles that they think are not happening and why/where

Sorting out - (1/2 – 1 period)

Students are to pick three articles that they said are not happening – preferably in the US and in Seattle more specifically and see if they can think of a NGO that is helping to meet this right if the government is not

Drawing Conclusions – (2 periods)

Discuss what rights are not met by the government and how they are met (or tried to be met) by other groups – what does this tell us about the different groups responsible for a civil society – Share and discuss quotes from MLK, Mandela and Pirkei Avot to generate discussion and introduce different points of view

Watch *Survival in Sarajevo* and discuss what these people did to help create “an existence worthy of Human Dignity” for their community members at a time of great danger and despite the divisions in their society

Students are asked to reflect on what “an existence worthy of Human Dignity” means to them and write a short reflective response showing they can **summarize the central ideas** of our discussion and **make inferences** about their personal responsibility

Going Further/Taking Action (Concluding Project) – (5-7 periods)

In small groups – based on their choice of a human right not being met by the government – students will **collaborate and coordinate** to:

- Select an organization that is providing a human need/right here in the Seattle area
- Research this organization and what they do/who they serve/how they are funded
- Make a video or other multimedia presentation about the organization and its work

There is an outline of the assignment below that can be used as a student handout. Add any exchange information and a deadline.

Border Jumping – (depending on exchange 1-2 periods for viewing and responding to other group’s videos)

Share our videos with classes in other countries and compare what needs are not met in each place and the organizations helping to fill that gap. My class’s videos are posted in the Border Jumping area on Centropa.org and were shared with Victor Gurevich and viewed by his students. The plan is for my students to receive videos from Victor’s students to view and discuss.

Reflection

Teaching this lesson was really very rewarding. My students are primarily from families that are comfortably well off and for them to see what rights others are promised but may not be able to actual enjoy, was a powerful experience. For them to see that some of these rights, such as slavery, are being denied right in their own hometown was very eye opening. They worked very hard on their films and were very excited to be helping educate others about these problems and to be suggesting a way to help. I would recommend that you really take the needed time to discuss each right and make sure that the students understand what is being guaranteed and what that might look like. Rushing through the rights will not have the powerful impact that really discussing them will. Giving some background on the war in Bosnia and the siege of Sarajevo prior to watching Survival in Sarajevo will also help the students to fully appreciate what they are seeing. Doing this project with my students and them watching each other’s films and learning from them was great. The Border Jumping exchange adds to the power of the exercise but can be hard to coordinate. Don’t rely on the exchange to do the teaching – make sure what you do on your own is “complete” and that the exchange will be extra. Clear communication and coordination with exchange teachers will help – but we all know that plans fall through. All in all, for my students, who, thank God, rarely need to give a thought to their own rights and how to be sure that they are secure, this project was a great education in the reality for many in the world and made them feel more responsible towards their fellow human beings.

Civil Society - UN Declaration of Human Rights Project Going Further for Emancipation Unit

In your group you will determine what are the issues related to the article of the UN Declaration of Human Rights on which you selected to focus. Once you have determined the issues, you will research and find an organization which helps to meet this need or correct this lack of rights. This group should work in the Seattle area ideally and at least in Washington State.

You will research this group and their work. You will need to create a video or other compelling visual presentation to show:

1. What article you are addressing
2. Why you feel it is not being upheld or fully met by the current US government or society laws/practices – what are the issues or problems which exist that prove it is not being upheld?
3. What organization did you select that helps to fill this gap
4. What does the organization do to fill it
5. Who in the organization does this work/How do they do it
6. Who are they serving/helping
7. How are they funded
8. Evidence of their success
9. What the world would look like if this right was always upheld

Completed videos will be shared with the students at _____ and online on the Centropa Border Jumping site. Keep in mind the *Survival in Sarajevo* video and how it told its story. You can watch it again if that is helpful. http://www.centropa.org/centropa-cinema/survival-sarajevo-friendship-time-war?language=All&subtitle_language=All –

Deadline –