



FREE THE CHILDREN
children helping children through education

VOW OF (SILENCE)

**ELEMENTARY
LESSON PLAN**

LESSON PLAN:

Vow of Silence in the Elementary Classroom

RATIONALE

This year, on November 30, youth around the world will participate in Free The Children's Vow of Silence campaign and stay silent in solidarity with children who are denied their human rights and their voice. In preparation for this important campaign, this lesson plan is designed to support educators as they dive deeply into children's rights issues.

This lesson consists of orientation, core, concluding and extension activities, followed by an assessment rubric and a Blackline Master. Each activity strategically builds on the next, providing students with a strong knowledge base of children's rights. Using dynamic student centered activities, students are encouraged to learn the facts and engage with the issues. The entire lesson plan takes up approximately 210 minutes of class time; however, if you have less time, you can select one activity from each section. After participating in this lesson, your students will emerge as children's rights advocates, ready to take action in Free The Children's Vow of Silence campaign.

DETAILS

- **Grade level:** elementary
- **Themes:** human rights, children's rights, poverty, humanity, diversity, technology, interconnectedness, childhood, adulthood, human rights documents and social justice.
- **Estimated time:** 210 minutes of class time.
- **Learning goals:**
Students will:
 - Become familiar with the concepts of human rights and children's rights.
 - Develop an understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
 - Participate in active group work and class discussions.
 - Perform independent research.
 - Create an ongoing human rights portfolio, contributing to a lifestyle of social action.
- **Canadian course connections:** The Arts, Language, Health and Physical Education, Social Studies, History and Geography.
- **American course connections:** Visual and Performing Arts, English Language Arts, Health Education, History and Social Science.
- **Resources required:**
 - Chart paper
 - Blackboard
 - Computers and internet
 - Newspapers, magazines and books
 - Writing utensils
 - Blackline Master 1 (B.L.M. 1)
 - Free The Children's Vow of Silence How-To-Guide
- **Assessment**
 - Appendix 1: Assessment Rubric for Student Projects

LESSON PLAN: ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES

Orientation Activity 1: A New Planet

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to introduce students to human rights by identifying the essential qualities that make us human. At the same time, this activity will demonstrate that rights are universal and don't vary based on superficial differences.
- **Instructional method(s):** group activity, class discussion.
- **Differentiated instruction:**
 - Students perform task independently.
 - Students research the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and learn the rights all humans have.
- **Canadian course connections:** Language, Social Studies, History and Geography.
- **American course connections:** English Language Arts, History, Social Science.
- **Estimated time:** 20 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. Divide the class into groups of four.
 2. Ask students to imagine the following scenario:
 - A small new planet has been discovered that has everything needed to sustain human life. No one has ever lived there. There exist no laws, no rules and no history. You will all be settlers there and, in preparation, your group has been appointed to draw up the human rights for this new planet.
 3. Explain to students that human rights are basic rights and freedoms that all people are entitled to regardless of their nationality, gender, race, religion, language, etc.
 4. Ask students to think about the basic rights they believe all people are granted (e.g.: freedom of speech, right to vote, etc.). Make a list of these rights on the board.
 5. Instruct students to work together to do the following:
 - Give their planet a name.
 - Decide on five human rights that should be guaranteed to the settlers of this new planet.
 - Determine how you will ensure these human rights are upheld.
 6. Ask each group to present their list to the class. As they do so, make a master list that includes all the rights the group mentioned, combining similar rights.

7. Discuss human rights using the following discussion questions:
 - Did your ideas around which rights were the most important change during the activity?
 - Are some rights more important than others? Why or why not?
 - What would life be like on this planet if rights were excluded?
 - Would it be difficult to ensure people are upholding these human rights? Why or why not?
 - What are some strategies you discussed around upholding these human rights?
8. Go deeper in your discussion on human rights. Ask students the following questions:
 - Have you ever heard of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? What is it?
 - Why was this document created?
 - What are some of the rights found in this document? List examples on the board.

Teacher Note: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was created in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly. This document lists the essential rights for all human beings and sets the standard for how we should behave towards one another so that everyone's dignity and basic needs are respected.

9. Explain to students that although all human beings have these basic rights, that does not mean they are always being granted. In many cases, rights are not upheld because of issues like poverty, discrimination, lack of education and more.
10. Tell students that in their daily life, they can play a role in ensuring people around the world are granted their rights. Ask them for suggestions on how to do this and write these suggestions on the board.
11. Before concluding this activity, make sure students have a preliminary understanding of human rights.

Vow of Silence Campaign Tips:

- **Spread human rights messages:** ask each student in the class to speak to at least five people in the school, telling them about human rights and sharing their ideas around how they can ensure people around the world are granted their rights. Use this as a prelude to the Vow of Silence campaign.

Orientation Activity 2: Mapping Human Rights in our Community

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to identify where human rights are represented and exercised in their community.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion, group work
- **Differentiated instruction:**
 - Decrease the difficulty of the activity by having students draw a map of the school or their classroom.
 - Students reference the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as they analyze their maps.
- **Canadian course connections:** The Arts, Language, Social Studies, History and Geography.
- **American course connections:** Visual Arts, English Language Arts, History and Social Science.
- **Estimated time:** 30 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. Divide students into small groups.
 2. Ask each group to draw a map of their neighbourhood. They should include their homes, major public buildings (e.g. city hall, schools, places of worship, etc.) and public services (e.g. hospital, fire department, police station, etc.), as well as other places that are important to the community (e.g. grocery stores, cemeteries, cinemas, gas stations, etc.).
 3. When the maps are complete, ask students to analyze their maps from a human rights perspective. Marking their findings on the map, they must answer the following suggested questions:
 - How are human rights represented in your community? (e.g.: there are schools in our community because we have the right to an education, etc.)
 - What human rights do you associate with the different places on your map? (e.g.: a post office can be associated with the right to information, privacy and self-expression and a school can be associated with the right to an education and freedom of speech.)
 4. When students have completed their human rights analysis, ask each group to present their work to the class.
 5. After all the groups have presented, encourage a class discussion using the following suggested questions:
 - Did any parts of the maps have a high concentration of rights? How do you explain this?
 - Did any parts have few or no rights associated with them? How do you explain this? Did we miss anything?

- What happens in your community when someone's rights are violated? (e.g.: report to teacher, seek help from community organizations, etc.)
 - Are there any places in this community where people take action to protect human rights or prevent violations from occurring? (e.g.: police station, school, etc.)
 - In what ways does your community support your human rights and enable you to develop to your full potential?
6. Display maps around the classroom as a reminder of human rights.

Vow of Silence Campaign Tips:

- **Appreciate your community:** display community maps around the school with short explanations describing the ways your community supports your human rights.
- **Raise awareness:** display maps around the school to raise awareness around human rights prior to the campaign.
- **Get students questioning:** post maps around the school with a series of questions about human and children's rights. Get students thinking about these questions and answer them on the day of the campaign.

LESSON PLAN: CORE ACTIVITIES

Core Activity 1: My Rights

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is for students to become familiar with international human rights documents and the unique rights of children.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion, group activity, individual project
- **Differentiated instruction:**
 - Students discuss rights in small groups and present them to the class.
 - Students write a short story about a chosen article from the UNCRC.
- **Canadian course connections:** The Arts, Language, Social Studies, History and Geography.
- **American course connections:** Visual and Performing Arts, English Language Arts, History and Social Science.
- **Estimated time:** 60 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. Begin a discussion on the topic of children’s rights by asking the following suggested questions:
 - What are the differences between children and adults?
 - Are children able to care for themselves the same way as adults?
 - Should children be granted the same rights as adults? Is this fair? Why or why not?
 2. Ask students to close their eyes and visualize the following scenarios:
 - Imagine your family couldn’t afford to send you to school. What would your future look like? How does this make you feel?
 - Imagine you didn’t have a place to live. How would you get by? How does this make you feel?
 - Imagine you weren’t allowed to play or spend time doing things you like. How does this make you feel?
 - Imagine you did not have access to clean water. What would you have to do? How does this make you feel?
 3. Ask students to share their thoughts and feelings on the different scenarios.
 4. When sharing is complete, tell students that all children have rights, special from adults, to ensure they are protected from such situations.
 5. Explain to students that a special convention was created for children (under the age of 18), setting out the rights of children. This document is called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As of November 2009, 194 countries have ratified the convention, including every member of the United Nations except Somalia and the United States of America.
 6. Cut out the boxes on BLM 1, placing them in a hat. Tell students that each piece of paper in the hat holds one right from the UNCRC.
 7. Divide the class into two teams.
 8. Tell students that they will be playing a game of charades and explain the following rules to the class:
 - One player from the first team will select a right from the hat and act it out for their team without using words. If their team guesses the right within the time limit (two minutes), they get a point.
 - After the time is up, or the clue has been guessed, the next team takes their turn. Simply repeat from there until all team members have had their turn.
 9. After each right has been identified, record it on the board and discuss its significance as a class.
 10. When the game is finished, ask students to select one of the following class projects:
 - Select one right from the UNCRC and write a creative story around this right.
 - Select one right and draw a picture of their interpretation of the right.
 11. When these projects are complete, put them on display around the classroom as a reminder of children’s rights and reflect on everything they have learned.

Vow of Silence Campaign Tips:

- **Advertise:** use drawings to advertise for campaign events.
- **Sign your name:** chose a children’s rights issue the class feels strongly about and create a school wide petition around this issue to be signed the day of the campaign.
- **Publish it:** publish creative stories in a school or community newspaper to draw attention to the Vow of Silence campaign.

Core Activity 2: Children Around the World

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to help students develop a connection with children around the world who have been silenced because their rights are not being upheld.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion, independent work
- **Differentiated instruction:**
 - Students search for examples of children’s rights on their own.
 - Students work in groups and are responsible for explaining one picture to the rest of the class.
- **Canadian course connections:** Language, Social Studies, History and Geography.
- **American course connections:** English Language Arts, History and Social Science.
- **Estimated time:** 30 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. Gather materials that display the lives of children around the world (e.g.: National Geographic magazines, books, newspapers from other countries, charity websites, pictures found on the internet, etc.). These examples should illustrate children being granted their rights and children being denied their rights. Suggested examples are children:
 - Going to school
 - Suffering from an injury
 - In front of a home
 - Reading
 - Working in dangerous conditions
 - Playing with friends
 - In an area of armed conflict
 - Seeking medical help
 - Living in inadequate housing conditions
 2. Explain to students that they are going to take a journey around the world to meet children from different countries. On this journey they will learn about the lives of these children and study children’s rights.
 3. Encourage students to search through all of the resources made available, collecting examples of children being granted their rights and children being denied their rights.
 4. As students search through the materials, encourage them to discuss their findings with their peers.
 5. After these examples have been gathered, collect them from the students and display them around the room, placing a sheet of chart paper with each display.
 6. Ask the students to take a writing utensil and walk around the room and visit each example.

7. When visiting each example, ask them to record their thoughts around the following questions on the chart paper:
 - What is happening in this picture?
 - What thoughts come to mind when viewing this picture?
 - What is right or wrong in this picture, based on the UNCRC?
 - Why do you believe this scenario is happening?
8. After the students have had a chance to visit each item, go over the examples as a class. Discuss students’ comments on the chart paper and allow for a discussion to take place using the following suggested questions:
 - What were the visual differences in the pictures between the children that were being granted their rights and those that weren’t?
 - What do you think caused each scenario?
 - How is a child’s life affected when they are not being granted their rights?
 - How does it make you feel when children are not being granted their rights?
 - What can you do to help make sure all children are being granted their rights?
 - If you could speak to these children, what would you say?
9. Before the conclusion of this discussion, ensure students are well versed in children’s rights issues and able to demonstrate the ability to identify instances where children’s rights have been denied.

Vow of Silence Campaign Tips:

- **Capture attention:** combine the examples that students collected and their chart paper comments on a school bulletin board to capture students’ attention and pique their interest about the campaign.
- **Educate others:** have students bring the examples into other classrooms, educating these classes on the issues and explaining the importance of the Vow of Silence campaign.

LESSON PLAN: CONCLUDING ACTIVITIES

Concluding Activity 1: Break the Silence

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to allow students to demonstrate everything they have learned about children's rights and take a stand for the children around the whole who are not being granted their rights.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion, group work, continuous project
- **Differentiated instruction:**
 - Provide students with one option for a final project.
 - Students work individually.
- **Canadian course connections:** The Arts, Language, Social Studies, History and Geography.
- **American course connections:** Visual and Performing Arts, English Language Arts, History and Social Science.
- **Estimated time:** 30 minutes of class time followed by group work sessions.
- **Steps:**
 1. Ask students to reflect on everything they have learned about children's rights. Write a list of these things on the board.
 2. Explain to the class that they are being given the opportunity to break the silence around children's rights and inform their peers and their community about everything they have learned.
 3. Divide the class into groups of four.
 4. Ask each group to go down the list and select one thing they learned about children's rights that they would like to teach others.
 5. Once each group has made a selection, ask them to determine how they would like to share their message. Project options include:
 - Create a news broadcast.
 - Write and perform a play.
 - Paint a mural.
 - Draw posters to display around the school.
 - Film a video.
 - Run a school event to raise awareness.
 - Write a speech and deliver it in front of the school.
 6. Allow groups time to work on their projects. As they work on the content of their project, also encourage them to think about how they are going to present their project to their peers and their community.

7. When projects are ready, ask each group to present their projects to the class, explaining how their project is going to break the silence around children's rights.
8. Encourage each group to carry out their projects outside of the classroom (e.g.: place their mural in the front hall of the school, play their news broadcast over school television monitors, etc.).
9. After projects have been carried out, reflect on their success and the reception of their peers and the community.

Vow of Silence Campaign Tips:

- **Promote the campaign:** use the Break the Silence projects (in whatever medium they come) to promote the Vow of Silence campaign.
- **Incorporate visual aids:** use these projects to support initiatives the day of the campaign.
- **Use education:** educate other classes in the school on children's rights issues by showing them completed projects and encouraging them to participate in the campaign.

Concluding Activity 2: Children's Rights Portfolio

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to lead a socially conscious life by taking deliberate action each week as they contribute to their "Children's Rights Portfolio."
- **Instructional method(s):** independent work, continuous project
- **Differentiated instruction:**
 - Students will re-tell their children's rights journey verbally as the teacher records.
 - Students are encouraged to seek out outside sources on their own time.
- **Canadian course connections:** Language, Health and Physical Education, Social Studies, History and Geography.
- **American course connections:** English Language Arts, Health and Physical Education, History and Social Science.
- **Estimated time:** 15 minutes of class time followed by independent work sessions.
- **Steps:**
 1. Announce to students that they are now on a children's rights journey. They are going to do this by keeping a children's rights portfolio where they will store resources they discover and record actions they take towards achieving a socially just world.
 2. Explain to students that a portfolio is a collection of work demonstrating an individual's journey and accomplishments in an area of learning.
 3. In their portfolio they will:
 - Record actions they have taken to raise awareness about human rights issues.
 - List actions they have taken to help others.
 - Include information they have learned about human rights issues.
 - Record any events they have been part of to contribute to human rights issues as well as the results of these events (e.g.: the Vow of Silence).
 - Write observations and reflections on things they may have seen that affected them.
 4. Make these portfolios part of your weekly activities by reserving a specific time each week for students to work on them. This will help bring global citizenship into their daily lives, committing to a lifestyle of social action.

Vow of Silence Campaign Tips:

- **Buddy up:** ask students to share their children's rights portfolio with a peer buddy in another class.
- **Share the lifestyle:** share stories, experiences and good news from students' children's rights portfolios over the school announcements to inspire other students to participate in the Vow of Silence campaign and commit to a lifestyle of social action.

LESSON PLAN: EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Extension Activity: Vow of Silence

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to provide students with an outlet for action by engaging them in the Vow of Silence campaign.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion
- **Differentiated instruction:**
 - Give students the Vow of Silence How-To-Guide and ask them to discuss campaign ideas in groups.
- **Canadian course connections:** The Arts, Language, Health and Physical Education, Social Studies, History and Geography.
- **American course connections:** Visual and Performing Arts, English Language Arts, Health Education, History and Social Science.
- **Estimated time:** 20 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. Ask students to reflect on all they have learned throughout the lesson about children's rights. Explain to them that it is easy to feel helpless when learning about issues such as these because it is difficult to determine how you can help. Explain to them that Free The Children's Vow of Silence campaign is a call to action, a tangible way that they can stand in solidarity with their peers around the world who have not been granted their rights.
 2. Introduce the campaign by viewing the following video:
 - An introduction to the campaign by Free The Children <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGRUDfFs0co> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55RhNlztnc&feature=relmfu>
 3. Keeping in mind all they have learned throughout the course of the lesson, ask students the following questions:
 - What are the goals of this campaign?
 - Why is this campaign important?
 - What are the steps to take to participate in this campaign?
 4. On the board, write the title "Communication". Ask the students to list all of the ways they communicate (e.g.: by speaking, by sending text messages, etc.) and record their responses on the board.
 5. Now go down the list and ask the students if they use each of the items in their daily life and if so, how? Record answers on the board.

6. Tell students to think back to all they have learned about children's rights during the course of the lesson. Then ask:
 - How would you feel if you were unable to use all of these forms of communication? How would this affect your day?
 - If you were to protest this by going silent yourself and restricting yourself from using any of these communication outlets, what kind of a message would that send to your peers?
 - What impact will your actions have on the school and the community?

Vow of Silence Campaign Tips:

- **Promote the campaign:** use the Break the Silence projects (in whatever medium they come) to promote the Vow of Silence campaign.
 - **Incorporate visual aids:** use these projects to support initiatives the day of the campaign.
 - **Use education:** educate other classes in the school on children's rights issues by showing them completed projects and encouraging them to participate in the campaign.
7. Distribute the Vow of Silence How-To-Guide and ask students to review the guide quietly.
 8. Discuss the logistics of the campaign by asking the following suggested questions:
 - What does it mean to take the Vow on November 30?
 - Who wants to participate in this campaign?
 - What are some ways we can show that we're silent?
 - How can we spread the silence?
 - How can we make it count and receive the best fundraising results for this campaign?
 - How can we break the silence when the campaign is over?
 9. Sign your group up for the campaign by filling out the registration form at www.freethechildren.com/vowofsilence and begin your planning!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to the above lesson plans, you may want to share the following useful online resources:

- Free The Children’s Vow of Silence webpage
<http://www.freethechildren.com/getinvolved/youth/campaigns/> Here you can register for the campaign and access resources and downloads.
- Free The Children’s Vow of Silence website
www.iamsilent.com An interactive, visually appealing website for the Vow of Silence campaign.
- Visit www.weday.com for statistics and resources.
- Global Voices articles about children’s rights:
 - Seeing a Future in UN Development Goals
<http://www.thestar.com/news/globalvoices/article/863512--global-voices-seeing-a-future-in-un-s-development-goals>
 - Unfulfilled Dream for Children of Juarez
<http://www.thestar.com/news/globalvoices/article/766573--education-unfulfilled-dream-for-children-of-juarez>
 - World’s Adults must Honour Vow to Children
<http://www.thestar.com/news/globalvoices/article/726368--world-s-adults-must-honour-vow-to-children>
 - India’s Children don’t have a Vote – or Clean Water
<http://www.thestar.com/news/globalvoices/article/635142--india-s-children-don-t-have-vote-mdash-or-clean-water>
 - Former Child Soldiers Face Psychological Battle
<http://www.thestar.com/news/globalvoices/article/627688--former-child-soldiers-face-psychological-battle>
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
http://www.canadiancrc.com/UN_CRC/UN_Convention_on_the_Rights_of_the_Child-Overview.aspx or <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>
- Ontario Human Rights Commission
<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/>
- Animated Cartoons: Click on “Online Cartoons”
<http://www.unicef.org/crcartoons/>

APPENDIX 1

Use the below assessment rubric to evaluate students' comprehension of issues and participation in the lesson plan activities. This rubric can be used in the following activities: Mapping Human Rights in our Community, My Rights, Children Around the World, Break the Silence and Children's Rights Portfolio.

Student Projects

Title of Project: _____

Student Name: _____

PERFORMANCE FACTORS	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 1
PRODUCING QUALITY WORK	Produces high quality work.	Produces quality work.	Produces good quality work.	Produces work with limited quality.
USING WORK TIME EFFECTIVELY	Always remains on task, showing exemplary adherence to boundaries and rules.	Consistently remains on task, showing respect to boundaries and rules.	Sometimes on task, showing inconsistent observance of boundaries and rules.	Sometimes on task, showing limited observance of boundaries and rules.
KNOWLEDGE OF TOPIC	Demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of concepts.	Demonstrates considerable knowledge and understanding of concepts.	Demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of concepts.	Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of concepts.
COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY	Expresses and organizes ideas and information with a high degree of effectiveness.	Expresses and organizes ideas and information with considerable effectiveness.	Expresses and organizes ideas and information with some effectiveness.	Expresses and organizes ideas and information with limited effectiveness.
ORIGINALITY	Presents or selects a fresh and original idea.	Presents or selects a somewhat original idea.	Presents a somewhat predictable response to the topic.	Presents a predictable response to the topic.



BLACKLINE MASTER 1

The Rights of the Child

Every child has the right to...

HEALTHY FOOD AND NUTRITION	MEDICAL TREATMENT	A LOVING AND CARING FAMILY
A SAFE HOME	CLEAN WATER	PLAY AND REST
A PROPER EDUCATION	PROTECTION FROM HARM	LOVE, CARE AND UNDERSTANDING
FREEDOM OF SPEECH	SAFE ENVIRONMENTS	MAKE DECISIONS
GROW TO THEIR FULL POTENTIAL	BE FREE FROM CHILD LABOUR	PARTICIPATE