

**What are Human Rights?** Conveys the universality of human rights, the concept of rights and illustrates the role of human rights in various contexts. (Grade 3)

**Lesson Title:** Human Beings/Human Rights

**Reference:** *Human Rights Resource Centre*, University of Minnesota. ([www1.umn.edu](http://www1.umn.edu))

**Overview:** Through brainstorming and discussion, this activity leads participants to define what it means to be human and to relate human rights to human needs.

**Materials:** Whiteboard or chart paper, chalk or markers

**Suggested Activities:**

### **PART A: What Does It Mean to Be Human?**

1. Write the words "HUMAN" and "RIGHTS" at the top of chart paper or a blackboard. Below the word "human" draw a circle or the outline of a human being.

Ask students to brainstorm what qualities define a human being and write the words or symbols inside the outline. For example, "intelligence," "sympathy."

2. Next ask students what they think is needed in order to protect, enhance, and fully develop these qualities of a human being. List their answers outside the circle, and ask students to explain them. For example, "education," "friendship," "loving family." (Note: Save this list for use in Part B)

3. Discuss:

- What does it mean to be fully human? How is that different from just "being alive" or "surviving"?
- Based on this list, what do people need to live in dignity?
- Are all human beings essentially equal? What is the value of human differences?
- Can any of our "essential" human qualities be taken from us? For example, only human beings can communicate with complex language; are you human if you lose the power of speech?
- What happens when a person or government attempts to deprive someone of something that is necessary to human dignity?
- What would happen if you had to give up one of these human necessities?

4. Explain that everything inside the circle relates to human dignity, the wholeness of being human. Everything written around the outline represents what is necessary to human dignity. Human rights are based on these necessities.

### **For younger children –**

1. Ask children sitting in a circle to think of a quality about themselves that they consider a good quality. Using a talking stick or simply speaking in turns, ask each to describe that quality briefly.

- Note that everyone has good qualities.
- If children have difficulty generating qualities about themselves, ask "What are some qualities we admire in people?" and write a list of responses on the board. Have each child pick one that is true for her or him.

2. Ask some of these questions:

- Do you respect in others the quality you like about yourself?
- Do you respect good qualities in others that you do not have?
- Do all human beings deserve respect? Why?
- How do you show respect for others?

3. Ask children if they can remember a time when they felt hurt because someone did not respect them.

- Did someone say something insulting or hurtful to you?
- Why do people sometimes say bad things to each other?
- What is dignity? Is your dignity hurt when others do not respect you? How does it feel to you?

4. Ask the group how human beings differ from other living creatures. Emphasize that human beings communicate with words, not just sounds, and that they decide many things about their lives.

- Use the outline in Part A.

5. Ask, "What does it mean if we say that all human beings deserve respect because they all have human dignity?"

6. Explain that after a terrible war, World War II, all the countries of the world agreed in 1948 on a document that said the world would be more peaceful if everyone respected the dignity of every human being. These words are contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

7. Ask children to think of one example of how life in their community could be more peaceful if people showed greater respect for each other.

8. Have children work in pairs or alone to illustrate one way they could show respect to someone. Share these ideas with the rest of the class.

**Lesson Title:** Needs and wants

**Reference:** *Thinking Global: Global Perspectives in the lower primary classroom*  
Rebecca Reid-Nguyen

**Overview:** This activity helps students come to an understanding about the things all people must have in order to be healthy and safe, and the non-essential things or wants.

**Material:** Large pieces of paper and pens

**Suggested activities:**

- Brainstorm the things people needs in order to grow up healthy and safe. List them on the board or large piece of paper
- Discuss the difference between needs and wants. Needs are the things that we have to have and not having them will affect how we grow and live. Wants are the things that are nice to have but we can still be healthy and safe without them.
- Decide which items on the list are needs and which are wants.
- Try ranking the needs and wants from the most important to the least important
- Make a display of needs using the heading “ All people need....” Illustrate with pictures or a collage.
- Look at the united nation list of the Rights of the child and compare how the class list to these. The UNICEF’s site is a good one with pictorial explanation of the Rights <http://www.unicef.org/voy/meeting/rig/righome.html>

Further lesson ideas can be found in *Thinking Global: Global Perspectives in the lower primary classroom* pp. 124-28