

# Moving to a different place

## Summary:

this is an activity for pupils to explore what it might feel like to be a refugee

## Objectives:

to reflect on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, using imagination to understand other people's experiences;  
to recognise and challenge stereotypes

## Activities (from Global Link, Lancaster [www.globallink.org.uk](http://www.globallink.org.uk)):

### **1. Causes of conflict exercise, using drama.**

Time needed for group of 30 children : 1 hour 15 minutes (the smaller the group the better)

(5 mins) Get each pupil to think of a conflict situation they've been in recently; it might be an argument with a friend, a teacher, a member of their family, or it might be a situation where they felt unhappy about something or felt that something was unfair. Get them to think about how many people were involved in each situation.

(3 mins) Divide the class up into groups that require 2 actors, groups that require 3 actors and groups that require 4 actors. It's probably not advisable to exceed that number.

(10 mins) Each pupil describes to the other members of their group their situation of conflict or upset. The group has to choose one story where something could have been done differently to minimise the damage caused by the conflict. They must improvise a scene which they will show to the rest of the group. The child whose story is being used could play the central protagonist.

(optional: 10 mins) If there is time, each group can perform their scene in 'freeze-frames'. This means 3 or 4 silent pictures that represent what is happening in a particular important moment in the scene. The other groups watch and try to guess what is happening in the 3-4 scenes.

(15 mins) Each group can then perform the same scene again, using words to act out the full story.

(15 mins) After each enactment, the teacher should ask the children: could the central protagonist have done anything differently to avoid, or minimise the impact of the conflict? Instead of getting the children to tell the others what could have been done differently, invite them to take the place of the central protagonist to act out what they would have done differently. They can then re-enact the performance, this time with someone else in the key role. The other actors should react to the new protagonist in character.

15 mins discussion time. How does it feel to be in conflict? Do people run away from conflict? what kinds of things might make you want to run away from your home? What kinds of things might make you want to run away from your country? Where would you want to go if you had to leave your country?

## **2. Why do people move?** (taken from 'A Resource Book for Primary Schools' by the Refugee Council)

Time needed: 30 minutes. You will need some small pieces of paper or 'post-its' and pens.

The class should be divided up into pairs. Each pair should write on a piece of paper or 'post-it' the reasons that people move their homes. Children should include ideas from their own life and abroad.

The class should then come together to make a single list of why people might move home. Then using the list, the class should help sort out the reasons into two columns.

reasons that people move.....reasons that people move  
because they want to.....because they are forced to do so

This sorting exercise can be used to introduce the idea that refugees are one group of people who move against their will.

## **3. Refugee stories in Holy Books** (p27 of A Resource Book for Primary Schools' by the Refugee Council) for RE.

You will need books of Bible stories and library readers about Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. Using the information provided children should research refugee stories in holy books such as the bible, Koran and Ramayana. Children can write about

- the Prophet Mohamed's journey from Mecca to Medina
- the story of Rama and Sita in the Ramayana
- the journey of Moses and the Jewish people out of the Land of Egypt
- the attack of the Land of Israel by the Assyrian army and the removal of Jewish people to exile in Assyria
- the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem by the armies of Babylon and the removal of 10,000 Jewish families to exile in Babylon
- the flight of the infant Jesus, Mary and Joseph to Egypt to escape the murder of all children under 2 years by King Herod.

Children can extend this work by making a strip cartoon to illustrate the story of Moses, or the flight of the infant Jesus. It is not advisable to draw the story of the Prophet Mohamed's journey to Medina as Islam forbids the use of pictures to illustrate religious stories.

## **4. What would you take and what would you leave behind?**

Time needed: 30 minutes

Each child will need paper and pens.

The activity looks at what refugees might take and leave in their journey to safety. Introduce the activity by explaining that the Karen refugees may have had to leave their homes very quickly because their village faces attack by the Burmese military. Often refugees may not know where they are going and how long they will be away. Some Karen refugees, for example, have not seen their homes for 10 years, and don't know when they will ever return.

Pupils should imagine that they are in danger and that they have decided to flee to neighbouring Thailand. They have 10 minutes to pack ten items in a small bag that they can carry, through the jungle and for many days.

Each pupil should draw what they would have to take with them. After they have done this, the class can make a list of things that they value that they would have to leave behind. They should include non-material things, like friends, in their list.

Outcome:

pupils begin to feel enough empathy with refugees to move prejudiced and stereotyped attitudes