Understanding people's experiences of migration

Topic: Refugees and Migration
Age group: 10-16
Type: Full lesson
Time:1hr

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Teacher Guide.

Learning outcomes

1. Learn about what it may feel like to be forced to leave home.
2. Apply your knowledge to practise empathy, through discovering the similarities we have with those who migrate.
3. Share how you can help refugees and people seeking asylum feel welcome in your community.

What you need

- Understanding Refugees and Migration PowerPoint
- Optional print resource (pg.4-6)

Definitions

Refugee: a person who – owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion – has left their home country. As a result, they are unable or unwilling to seek protection from, or return to, their home country.

Asylum Seeker: Someone who has left their home country and formally applied for recognition as a refugee in another country and is waiting for a decision on their application.

Empathy: The ability to understand and identify with the feelings of another.

Find out more about these terms here.

Curriculum links

Social studies, geography, sociology, civics, and philosophy. There are also links with subjects such as PSHE, citizenship education, and human rights education, which may be offered across the curriculum. Finally, literature or language arts courses may also be suited to the discussion-based approach and active pedagogies on which this session is based.

Background

This resource was co-produced by 6 ambassadors from the VOICES Network, these are people with lived experience of migration. They decided the key messages of the resource and created the activities around what they wanted young people in the UK to learn about the experience of being a refugee or seeking asylum in another country. Watch this video to find out more:

The ambassadors share their personal stories of migration throughout the resource.

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Activity 1: Starter (5 mins)

Ask learners to share the last choice that they made today or go through the options on the slide getting learners to vote.

Ask the follow up questions: Was it an easy choice to make or was it a big decision? Did your choice affect anyone else? How did you feel if you didn't like either option?

Key question:
What would it feel like to be forced to leave your home?

Activity 2: Learn (15-20 mins)

Play the animation. It is a story of a family of birds who are displaced when conflict forces them to leave their home to find safety in a new tree far away. As they watch, ask learners to note down the choices the birds make on their journey.

After the video, their answers can be shared to the wider group through discussion or written on post-it notes in a central place. Answers may include:

- Whether to stay in a place that is dangerous or leave their home to an unknown destination
- What route to take on their journey
- What form of transport they will take
- Whether to take the boat
- Whether to trust the new birds or go on without help
- Whether to stay in the first safe place they find to make a home or continue their journey until they find a nice community

Ask students to offer suggestions of what they believe the birds represent in the metaphor.

Finish with a reflective activity – choose option A or B prompts to write a paragraph alone or discuss the topic with a peer using a think, pair, share format.

Activity 3: Learn (10 mins)

After looking at the bird metaphor we will now hear the story of a Syrian refugee. Please listen before to ensure content is appropriate for your learners

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Play the podcast clip from Mada's journey. Ask learners to reflect on the difficult choices Mada made and share how listening made them feel.

Key question:
How do you feel after listening to the story?

Activity 4: Apply (15 mins)

Using the PowerPoint slides of the "messy room" ask learners to choose an image in the room. Click on the item and ask learners to describe the item and what it might mean to the person whose room it is.

Click again to find out the real story behind each item. Ask learners if this is different to what they thought or surprising.

Look at the "find out more"/"did you know fact" with the group – answer the questions as a group or follow up with any of the suggested tasks.

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Active version: Place real examples of the items or printed pictures of the items around the room. Ask learners to walk around and put their thoughts on each item on post-it notes or on a piece of paper next to it (of what the item is and might tell us about the person).

When everyone is finished, sit down and go through the PowerPoint slides discussing the stories and interesting fact behind each item.

Activity 5: Share (5-10 mins)

Key question: What can you do to help refugees and asylum seekers in your area?

Ask the learners to reflect on the end of the bird animation. How did the new community help build a new home for the family? How did the new community make them feel welcome?

Follow this by asking what small acts they could do to make refugees and asylum seekers feel welcome in their school or community. Learners may then discuss ideas with peers. Display the suggestions from the VOICES Network to scaffold the learning if needed.

Answers, thoughts and opinions should be shared with wider group.

Class pledge option: ask the learners to choose a small kind act each, per week, to do for one month. Stick this to the wall. Schedule a follow-up conversation with the group to see if everyone did their small kind act.

Ask learners how they can share their learning from today or their class pledge more widely within their school environment e.g. at an assembly. You could also explore achieving the School of Sanctuary award together.

Assessment opportunities

Activity 2 - summary paragraph.
Activity 4 - students can work on an individual or group project on a way to share small kind acts to a wider audience. Different mediums should be encouraged. Film, advert, podcast, poster etc.

Modifications

Learn – active version where students move around the room to view the objects.
Apply – outcome of the reflection after the video: for older learners option B and for younger learners option A (or thinking about the format of the output i.e. verbal or written).

Extra Resources

- Other Refugee and Migration themed resources
- Newsthink resources

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