

Prayers and Reflections

Opening Prayer

God of life and creation,
Word bringing peace,
Spirit bearing justice!

The nations of humanity,
in solemn assembly,
enacted as an everlasting memorial the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
We give you thanks and praise for
this witness of the dignity of the human person.

In the millennium to come,
may this Declaration be a firm foundation for peace and
justice.
Grant to the nations a spirit of wisdom and discernment
so that respect for these rights becomes the way of all
people.

Bless those who create and sustain
a culture of life and love,
with endurance, hope, and abundance.

We ask for these blessings,
confident in your providence through all time,
calling upon Mary our Mother
and all the martyred victims of injustice and oppression,
through your Son, Jesus Christ, Redeemer and Savior,
Amen.

Based on "A Prayer for the 50th Anniversary of the UDHR" by
Justpeace

Reflection

"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights remains one
of the highest expressions of the human conscience of our
time. [All over the world] men and women of conviction
and courage have appealed to this declaration in support of
their claims for a fuller share in the life of society."

Pope John Paul II, Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly of the
United Nations, 1995

"As its fundamental premise, [the Universal Declaration of
Human Rights] affirms that the recognition of the innate
dignity of all members of the human family, as also the
equality and inalienability of their rights, is the foundation
of liberty, justice and peace in the world.

All the subsequent international documents on human
rights declare this truth anew, recognizing and affirming
that human rights stem from the inherent dignity and worth
of the human person."

Pope John Paul II, Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1,
1999.

"The Holy See would like to repeat, once more, that
respect for the rights of human person, as they have been
elaborated in the Universal Declaration of 1948 . . . and by
many subsequent international texts, are not just options
among others, or a transient political programme. They
pledge the international community, and those responsible
within it, to ensure for human beings the requisites of their
dignity and their spiritual dimension, which belong to them
by the very fact of their nature. The rights of humans and
their fundamental freedoms are not granted by anyone.
They precede the positive law which is their expression."

Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran (Vatican's former Secretary for
Relations with States) Statement, November 17, 1993.

Closing Prayer

Lord God,
Make us peacemakers,
lovers of life and of all people
who stand up for rights that are compromised.

Show us how to see violations against others
just as we would see violations against our own selves.

Teach us how to stand up and be lights for the world.

In 1948, The United Nations, founded after World War II, adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), a vision statement that, while without the legally binding character of the later Human Rights UN covenants, had significant force in the international community. The UDHR includes the rights to work; to health; to education; to such basic needs as food and shelter; to freedom of thought and expression; to freedom from slavery, torture, and illegal arrest; and to equality before the law.



Activities

1. Begin with Opening Prayer and Reflection on Page 1 of this unit.
2. For this activity, Human Rights in the News: Identifying Human Rights Issues in Daily Life, you will need a large variety of copies of newspapers or news magazines from the past two years; large sheets of paper; tape or glue; scissors; and copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (on page 4-5 of this unit).
 - a. Divide participants into small groups. Each group receives copies of newspapers, articles, or news magazines and a sheet of poster paper.
 - b. Each group constructs a poster using items from the newspaper grouped under these categories:
 - human rights practiced
 - human rights not achieved/human rights denied
 - human rights protected
 - human rights in conflict
 - c. Participants should be encouraged to look not only for news stories but also for small features such as announcements and advertisements.
 - d. Participants identify the Universal declaration of Human Rights article(s) (on pages 4-5) related to their newspaper clippings and write the numbers on or next to the clippings.
 - e. A spokesperson from each group explains the groups selections.
 - f. Ask the whole class to discuss the types of human rights protections or violations that were the easiest to find and the hardest to find. Why were they easy or hard? Ask if some articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights came up more often than others, or none at all?
Human Rights in the News: Nancy Flowers, AIUSA Human Rights Educators' Network, (UDHR Resource Notebook).
3. The next activity, Rights Around the World: A Universal Declaration of Human Rights Jigsaw, will help to learn about typical rights abuses around the world.
 - a. Each participant gets a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (pages 4-5) and "Rights Around the World"(page 3).
 - b. Divide students into small groups. Each of these "research groups" is assigned a different set of 3-6 sentences from the "Rights Around the World" handout (page 3). For example, Group A takes sentences 1-6, Group B sentences 7-12, and so on.
 - c. The research groups take 15-20 minutes to find 2 or more articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that apply to each of the statements. (For example, take statement 12: "Advocates for democracy in China are killed during a peaceful demonstration." This indicates an abuse of Article 3 [right to life] and an affirmation of Article 20 [freedom to assemble].) Each participant makes his or her own list of articles based on the research group discussion. A guided practice as a whole class may be necessary before research groups actually begin.
 - d. Afterwards, discuss the participants findings. What areas of rights seem to be violated the most? What countries were violations prevelant. Do they consider some violations worse than others and if so, why?
Rights around the World: Patrick Manson, Amnesty International USA Human Rights Educators' Network, 1996 (Introducing Human Rights in the Middle School).
4. Have participants do the matching activity on page 6 about Catholic Teaching and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Ask if they had any trouble matching some of them, and if any of the statements could apply to multiple articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
5. Ask for some last thoughts on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
6. End with the closing prayer on page 1.



Rights Around the World

- 1) A person in the United States registers to vote.
- 2) The Chinese government punishes a couple for having a second child.
- 3) The government of Turkey burns down villages of Kurds - a people of southeast Turkey - and forces them to go to new towns.
- 4) A Brazilian child is denied a school education because the family can't afford it.
- 5) The Burmese military overthrows a democratically elected government.
- 6) A criminal in El Salvador is held in jail for months without being charged with any crime.
- 7) Burmese students demand that the ruling military allow for democratically elected government.
- 8) A woman in India is forced to marry a man whom she does not want to marry.
- 9) Garment workers in the U.S. are forced to work in unhealthy shops and go for months without pay.
- 10) A Native American asserts his right to collect eagle feathers for a religious ceremony.
- 11) Students in the Philippines gather to discuss current issues.
- 12) Advocates for democracy in China are killed during a peaceful demonstration.
- 13) Japanese-Americans during World War II are taken from their homes to live in camps.
- 14) A racist government in South Africa gives up power by allowing for universal suffrage.
- 15) An activist in Brazil starts a cooperative to provide food and education for homeless children.
- 16) Students in Germany regularly read the newspaper about politics in their country and human rights in other countries.
- 17) Native people on the coast of Nicaragua establish a university to maintain their cultural traditions and better the education of their people.
- 18) Students and teachers in Nicaragua are attacked by police while peacefully protesting government cuts in funding for education.
- 19) Parents of children with birth defects in the area of Chernobyl demand information from the Russian government on the effects of a nuclear accident.
- 20) Children in Pakistan are not allowed to go to school but are forced to work in carpet factories for little pay and long hours.
- 21) A teacher insults a student for incorrectly answering a question.
- 22) A black South African runs for public office.
- 23) A teenager defends a friend who has been insulted by peers because of religious views expressed.
- 24) Students in the U.S. and Canada write letters to Pakistan and India to end forced child labor.
- 25) Workers in Poland demand the right to form a union.
- 26) A terrorist group from Ireland bombs a public restaurant in England.
- 27) Ethnic Ogoni people in Nigeria protest the mining of oil in their traditional homeland.
- 28) Palestinians demonstrate for statehood.
- 29) Australian aborigines regain land taken by the government and are allowed to make official their names from traditional landmarks.
- 30) A woman in Saudi Arabia is punished for not wearing a veil over her face, which is against the law.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

*Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

*Article 4.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

*Article 5.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7.

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8.

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10.

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

*Article 16.

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17.

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

* is to identify articles to be used for the activity on page 6.



Universal Declaration of Human Rights (continued)

Article 19.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21.

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

*Article 23.

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

*Article 25.

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

*Article 26.

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27.

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28.

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29.

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30.

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.



Catholic Teaching and Human Rights

Matching Game:

Match these statements made by Pope John Paul II to the best corresponding article (from these choices) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 1, 2, 4, 5, 16, 23, 25, or 26. (see pages 4-5).

A) “Basic human rights [are] still not being met, especially in situations of underdevelopment. I am thinking here for example about the right to food and drinkable water, to housing and security, to self-determination and independence – which are still far from being guaranteed and realized”

Message of his Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2003.

B) “Peace is a fundamental good which involves respecting and promoting essential human values . . . the right to be respected, regardless of race, sex or religious convictions.”

Message of his Holiness Pope John Paul II for the XXV Annual World Day of Prayer for Peace, January 1, 1992

C) “Illiteracy is a plague, a heavy “handicap”, which comes in addition to that of hunger and other miseries. With illiteracy, not only is some aspect of the economy or political life at issue, but the very dignity of the human being. The right to education is the right to be fully human.”

John Paul II Angelus, Sunday, 13 September 1998.

D) “The Declaration was intentionally linked to the United Nations Charter, since it shares a common inspiration. As its fundamental premise, it affirms that the recognition of the innate dignity of all members of the human family, as also the equality and inalienability of their rights, is the foundation of liberty, justice and peace in the world. All the subsequent international documents on human rights declare this truth anew, recognizing and affirming that human rights stem from the *inherent dignity and worth of the human person*.”

Message of his Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace January 1, 1999.

E) “Yesterday, the World Day against torture was celebrated. May the common commitment of the institutions and citizens totally ban this intolerable violation of human rights which is radically opposed to human dignity.”

John Paul II Angelus, Sunday, June 27, 2004.

F) “Unemployment brings many evils to a community and to a nation. It causes economic and social inequality. It can cause such stress to the family and society that there follows a real breakdown of the institutions that should ensure human advancement. Those who have work may forget those who do not.

The problem calls for cooperation in planning and positive action by all agencies. Government departments, large companies and small businesses, employers’ federations, unions and their alliances – all of these have a crucial part to play in finding solutions.”

Address of John Paul II at the “Wilson Training Centre” Hobart (Australia), November 27, 1986.

G) “The trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offence against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights . . .

The alarming increase in the trade in human beings is one of the pressing political, social and economic problems associated with the process of globalization; it presents a serious threat to the security of individual nations and a question of international justice which cannot be deferred.”

Letter of John Paul II to Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran on the Occasion of the International Conference “Twenty-First Century Slavery - The Human Rights Dimension to Trafficking in Human Beings” May 15, 2002.

H) “The love with which God ‘loved the world’ (Jn 3:16), the love with which Christ loved each and every one ‘to the end’ (Jn 13:1), makes it possible to address this message to each family, as a living ‘cell’ of the great and universal ‘family’ of mankind”

1994 - Year of the Family, Letter to Families from Pope John Paul II.

Answers: A:25, B:2, C:26, D:1, E:5, F:23, G:4, H:16

