

Topic: Rights and Religion

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| Lesson: But wearing that is one of my human rights! | KS or Year Group: KS3 |
| Resources: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Resource 1 – Universal Declaration of Human Rights2. Resource 2 – Main news story3. Resource 3 – Other cases | Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human rights are revised.• Students look at a case of rights being contested (L7).• Students are aware of a diversity of views on a topical issue and begin to understand identities and diversity (L6). |

National Curriculum

Key Concepts: 1.1c, 1.1d, 1.2

Key Processes: 2.1a, 2.1c, 2.2a,b & c

Range and Content: 3a, 3b, 3i

Curriculum Opportunities: 4a, 4b, 4j

Lesson overview

Students use the UN Declaration of Human Rights to explore and debate the case of a Sikh schoolgirl who wanted to wear a bangle which is a religious symbol.

Starter

- The lesson assumes that students understand the concept of a ‘right’, so it would be prudent to check understanding of this first.
- Distribute **Resource 1 – Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. Briefly run through the list of rights and then ask students if they can give examples of some of the rights listed. For example, number 7 means that no matter what your race, ethnicity or nationality, you should be treated in the same way.

Main activity

Activity 1:

- Describe the main news item to students and distribute **Resource 2 – Main news story**.
- Allow some initial discussion. Cut out and create cards from the other case histories on **Resource 3 – Other cases** and distribute these cards to different groups in the class. Ask students in each group to discuss their reactions to each item in turn, weighing up the relative merits of each case with the UDHR in mind.

Activity 2:

- This activity is the debate, and how it is approached will depend on the class and their previous experience of debates.
- Option 1 – for confident debaters. Split the class into two – one half in favour of the girl being allowed to wear the bangle to school and one against.
- Option 2 – for less confident debaters. Split the class into groups of four: in each four there will be two students arguing for each side of the debate. (If this works well and students are able, then Option 1 can be adopted after the ‘mini debates’: all of the pairs arguing ‘for’ group together and all of the ‘against’ group together to create a two-sided whole class debate. Ensure that every pair has the opportunity to give their point of view and responds to the opposing arguments.)
- The class prepares arguments for their side of the debate – emphasise that they should raise points from the UDHR to support their case, and draw on the other case studies to make their arguments.
- If the students struggle to formulate arguments, the teacher can supply an ‘item and comments’ sheet so that students can read web-posted opinions on the issue to stimulate ideas for discussion.
- The debate is held.
- Ask for a show of hands to determine the final outcome of the debate (for or against).

Plenary

- Recap the debate held: what were the main arguments made by each side and which were ultimately the most powerful or persuasive?
- Ask students to consider whether the debate changed their point of view from their initial thoughts prior to taking part.

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Aim high

More able students could debate from a point of view that is not their own (L7) – a much harder task.

Assessment

Students should write up a summary of the main case discussed. They might add in the BA case as well, giving their opinions about the relative merits of both cases. They can complete this work by writing a synopsis of the debate – describing which side they argued for, the points raised by both sides, the concluding decision and whether they agreed with it.

Check the web

http://news.sky.com/skynews/Home/UK-News/Sikh-Teenager-Sarika-Singh-Wins-Bangle-Case-Against-Aberdare-Girls-School/Article/200807415059063?lpos=UK%2BNews_0&lid=ARTICLE_15059063_Sikh%2BTeenager%2BSarika%2BSingh%2BWins%2BBangle%2BCase%2BAgainst%2BAberdare%2BGirls%2527%2BSchool

Article about girl winning the right to wear a piece of jewellery at school, with reader comments

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/7529694.stm>

Article about girl winning the right to wear a piece of jewellery at school

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7530726.stm>

Cites other religious symbols cases

http://www.planet-science.com/sciteach/debating/pdfs/DS_TeacherGuide.pdf

Debate guide and links to other debating resources

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson304b.shtml

Includes assessment frameworks for student participation in debates and debates rules

Summary of key learning

- Students become aware of diverse views and traditions.
- Students examine the question of rights and why / how they are sometimes contested.

Resource 1 – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

When we talk about human rights we usually mean the basic rights that any individual should have.

For example, we would not necessarily say that everyone in the world should have the right to own a car but many people would say that everyone should have a right to a fair trial if they are arrested.

The list that follows was created after World War Two. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948.

1. All humans are free and equal in dignity and rights.
2. All people are entitled to rights without distinction based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, opinion, origin, property, birth or residency.
3. All humans should have the right to life, liberty and security of person.
4. All humans should have freedom from slavery.
5. All humans should have freedom from torture.
6. All humans should have the right to be treated equally by the law.
7. All humans should have the right to equal protection by the law.
8. All humans should have the right to effective remedy by competent tribunal.
9. All humans should have freedom from arbitrary arrest.
10. All humans should have the right to fair public hearing by independent tribunal.
11. All humans should have the right to presumption of innocence until proven guilty at public trial with all guarantees necessary for defence.
12. All humans should have the right to privacy in home, family and correspondence.
13. All humans should have freedom of movement in their own country and the right to leave and return to any countries.
14. All humans should have the right to political asylum in other countries.
15. All humans should have the right to nationality.
16. All humans should have the right to marriage and family and to equal rights of men and women during and after marriage.
17. All humans should have the right to own property.

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18. All humans should have freedom of thought and conscience and religion.
19. All humans should be entitled to freedom of opinion and expression and to seek, receive and impart information.
20. All humans should have freedom of association and assembly.
21. All humans should have the right to take part in and select government.
22. All humans should have the right to social security and realisation of economic, social and cultural rights.
23. All humans should have the right to work, to equal pay for equal work and to form and join trade unions.
24. All humans should have the right to reasonable hours of work and paid holidays.
25. All humans should have the right to adequate living standard for self and family, including food, housing, clothing, medical care and social security.
26. All humans should have the right to education.
27. All humans should have the right to participate in cultural life and to protect intellectual property rights.
28. All humans should have the right to social and international order permitting these freedoms to be realised.
29. Each person has responsibilities to the community and others as essential for a democratic society.
30. Repression in the name of rights is unacceptable.

Based on <http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm>

Resource 2 – Main news story

Sikh Girl wins bangle law battle

Sarika Singh, a follower of the Sikh religion, took her school to court, arguing that they were discriminating against her on the grounds of religion. Sakira wanted to wear her Kara bangle (a slim steel bracelet) to school because it was a symbol of her faith, but the school said it broke their no jewellery rule.

The High Courts ruled in favour of Sakira, saying the school was guilty of indirect discrimination under race relations and equality laws. Sakira will, therefore, be returning to school wearing her bangle.

The Kara bangle is seen as vital to the Sikh religion as it demonstrates ‘God’s infinity’ and is like a ‘handcuff to God’.

The judge rejected claims by the school that the bangle could be seen as a ‘symbol of wealth’. He said many watches which were allowed at the school were more expensive than the simple steel Kara, and more noticeable.

Liberty (a Human Rights campaign group who backed Sarika) argued that the school had breached race relations, equality and human rights laws. They said it also went against a 25-year-old Law Lords’ decision which allowed Sikh children to wear items representing their faith, including turbans, to school.

Anna Fairclough, the Singh family’s solicitor, said: ‘It’s a shame that each generation has to fight the same battles. This battle was already fought 25 years ago and Sarika shouldn’t have had to go through that again’.

(based on BBC News article

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr//1/hi/wales/7529694.stm>)

Resource 3 – Other cases

Denbigh High School, Luton

Shabina Begum, who was told she could not wear the jilbab (a head-to-toe veil and dress) to school, won a court of appeal battle against her school in 2005.

However, this decision was overturned by the school's own appeal to the House of Lords. It was judged unanimously that the school had taken 'immense pains' to devise a uniform policy respecting Muslim beliefs, as girls were permitted to wear the hijab, a headscarf, as well as trousers and a tunic.

Icknield School, Luton

When a Muslim student due to start secondary school in Luton discovered that hijabs were not on the list of approved uniform and made a complaint, her school was forced to review their rules. As a result, girls have been able to wear their headscarves to school since 2004.

Millais School, Horsham

Pupil Lydia Playfoot lost her High Court case against school authorities who had asked her to remove a 'purity ring' she wore to demonstrate her belief in not having sex before marriage. The 2007 inquiry found that she had not suffered any discrimination from her school's request.

Madani High School, Leicester

In 2006 the Madani High School in Leicester announced that non-Muslim girls at the faith school would be required to wear headscarves regardless of their religion. The school, which is required by law to accept 10 per cent of non-Muslim students, said that all pupils would be required to cover their heads whilst at school.

Robert Napier School, Gillingham

A 13-year old Catholic pupil, Samantha Devine, was banned from wearing a crucifix on a chain because it breached her school's health and safety rules. Instead, the school suggested she wear a small lapel badge as a marker of her faith.