

Journey from Home

Grades 4 – 6

Background

Sometimes disasters cause people to leave their homes and become displaced. Two years of insufficient rain has led to the worst drought in East Africa in decades.¹ Crops and livestock are dying. Drought combined with ongoing conflict and rising food prices, has left over 13 million people without food, water and income. Thousands have left their homes, journeying on foot in search of water and food. This activity gives students a glimpse into the challenges and needs of those who must journey from home to find better living conditions.

Students will

- differentiate between wants and needs
- demonstrate understanding of basic human rights
- understand that the rights of those impacted by disaster are often not protected
- generate and exchange ideas and use critical thinking skills

Materials

- A set of 16 wants and needs cards for each pair of students

Time 45 minutes

Instructions

1. Begin by asking: Do you know of anyone who suddenly had to leave their home? What happened? What are some other events that might cause people to leave their homes?
2. Organize students into pairs. Ask students to imagine the following scenario:
A disaster has occurred in your town. You must pack up and leave immediately. It is uncertain if nearby towns have been destroyed or if the roads are blocked. To be safe, you decide to travel by foot. Ask students to brainstorm with their partner and make a list of things they would bring on their journey. Put the list aside for later.
3. Give each pair a set of *Wants and Needs Cards*. Read out loud the story *Journey from Home*, asking students to respond to the story, as directed, using the cards.

Discussion

- Which items were hardest or easiest to give up and why?
- How did you feel when you didn't have a choice in deciding which items to give up?
- When you had nothing left, what four items did you decide to ask for and why?
- What is the difference between a need and a want?
- Examine the list you made of items you would take if you had to suddenly leave your home. With your partner decide which ones you would still take with you. Explain your decisions.

Explain that a need can also be considered a basic human right – something every person is entitled to in order to survive and live a meaningful, healthy and safe life. Help students learn more about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child with GEAR activities on rights and responsibilities.

¹Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/samuel-witten/lives-in-the-balance-no-t_b_934000.html

Journey from Home

1. You wake up one morning to see your family's belongings packed. You realize that your family is leaving town. It doesn't come as a complete surprise because many families have been leaving lately. You want to find your best friend and say good bye, but your family is anxious to get moving. Looking over the packed items you realize there isn't much there.

Instruct students to spread out the Wants and Needs Cards and examine them. Explain that these are the things the family is taking with them. Tell students they may take with them two more items from their own brainstorm list. Students may draw the items on the two blank cards.

2. As you head out of town you realize you no longer have a place to live, a school to attend, a health clinic to go to when you're sick and friends to play with.

Ask students to remove and set aside four cards from their pile: safe shelter, education, health care and friends.

3. After walking for several hours, it becomes evident that you cannot go on carrying such a heavy load. You must leave four of your possessions behind.

Instruct partners to negotiate to eliminate four cards and add them to the set-aside pile.

4. As evening approaches, your family needs to find a safe place to rest. You meet a stranger who invites you to stay in her house in exchange for three of your items. Is she trustworthy? Decide if you will stay with her or sleep unprotected outdoors.

Instruct students who decide to stay to remove three cards from their pile and skip to instruction #6. Only those who decide to move on will respond to #5.

5. It has become too dark to see. Your family must stop and spend the night in a field. While you sleep, bandits silently make away with some of your possessions.

Randomly take three cards away from groups that spent the night in the field and place them in the group's set-aside pile.

6. After a long week of walking in the scorching sun your brother's feet are cut and sore with infection. He falls ill and must be carried. Your family must leave some items behind in order to carry him.

Instruct all pairs of students to remove 4 cards.

7. Your family finally arrives in a small village with a medical clinic. In exchange for medicine for your brother, you must give the local physician the last of your possessions.

At this point students should have no cards left.

8. You find no food or water in this small village and must move on. Just when you think you can no longer continue your family meets up with a huge crowd of people. You join the long line-up leading to a tent where some men and women are giving out supplies and directing people where to go. If you could ask them for any four items, what would they be?

Tell students to examine their original pile of cards and decide which four items they would ask for.

Wants and Needs Cards



Nutritious Food



Clean Water



Play and Recreation



Video Games



Fast Food



Protection from Harm



Spending Money



Fashionable Clothing



Safe Shelter



Friends



Family who cares for you



Education



Personal Computer



Freedom to express your opinion and be listened to



Health Care



Music