

Who Gets Medicine?

An Integrated Unit for Grades 1-5

Examining Human Rights Abuses in India

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Unit Overview:

Who Gets Medicine? is an integrated unit written for grades 1-5 focusing on human rights abuses in India. There is a danger that a discussion of human rights violations in the world could involve subjects that are extremely violent and not age-level appropriate for young students. For this reason, the unit will not discuss violence but will concentrate on a lack of medical care in India and issues of fairness which arise from that discussion. In addition, the unit will provide students with a brief introduction to India through literature, photography, and geography, as this will likely be their first exposure to the country. The unit will conclude with community action, which may vary by classroom but could include fundraisers, information preparation and distribution, or a letter-writing campaign.

Who Gets Medicine? is a standards-based unit, including standards from the language arts and history/social science curriculums as well as math and health.

Standards Included:

- History-Social Science: 1.1.1 Students understand the elements of fair play including the meaning of the Golden Rule.
- History Social Science: 1.2.1 Students locate the seven continents on maps.
- Language Arts: 3.2 Students will identify and describe elements of a story.
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- Mathematics: 1.0 Students organize, represent, and compare data by category on simple graphs.
- Health Standard 2: The student understands behaviors that stop the spread of disease and speed recovery from illness.

Objectives:

- Given a two-dimensional map, students will identify India and the continent of Asia with ninety percent accuracy.
- After graphing data regarding medical care around the world students will be able to read the data to explain that the country of India receives less medical care than our own country with ninety percent accuracy.

(Objectives Continued)

- Students will demonstrate their understanding of the golden rule by developing an action plan to address the lack of medical care in India.
- Students will be able to describe at least two aspects of Indian culture, which may include Indian folktales or geographical features and landmarks.

Procedure:

Session One – A Brief Introduction to India

Ask students what they know about the country of India. Do not expect that they will know much but do chart their prior knowledge on a piece of butcher paper, which should remain handy throughout the unit. Display the book, Folktales from India by A.K. Ramanujan to students. Do a short picture walk through the book with students, asking them to comment on the colorful pictures and costumes contained within. There are many recurring characters in the Indian folktales. Read a few of the short animal tales to students and discuss similarities. As a follow-up, have students react to the stories in their writing journals, draw pictures of the characters, or write their own folktales with similar styles.

Session Two – Video and Pictures

The goal of this session will be to provide students with pictures to give with their vague understanding of Indian culture. Begin by displaying still pictures for students through a book like India in Pictures (Visual Geography Series) by Lee Engfer. Discuss famous landmarks, geography and other notable sights of India with students. Add some of the most important items to the list of what students know about India. Now explain that you need to talk to students about something very serious in India and bring up the discussion of medical care. Explain that many people there are getting sick because they need medicine but are not able to get it. Show a very short, selected segment of the Doctors Without Borders promotional videotape for students. This should not be shown in its entirety but it would be appropriate for students to see a one minute clip of a doctor explaining how they go to the area where people need the most help. Begin the conversation with students about fairness. Is it fair that children in India are not receiving the medical care that we take for granted? Have them do a quick-write about this in their journals.

Session Three – Where Is India

Have students remind you of what we know about India. Consult the butcher paper chart for additional help. Explain that today we will discuss where India on a map. Using the technique of neurological impress teach students the map of the world (With this technique the teacher traces the world map in pencil on butcher paper and then inks it in while in front of students, discussing the locations of continents along the way. Since students cannot see the pencil marks, the world seems to appear before their eyes and leaves a longer lasting impression on students than a brief look at a pre-printed map). Located the seven continents with students, focusing most on North America and Asia

(Session Three Continued)

and then zeroing in on the United States and India. Have students take turns coming up to the map and identifying the two continents and two countries. Have students sum up what we have learned about the map and have them draw a rough picture of the world with the relative positions of the U.S. and India included.

Session Four – The Data

Review with students the locations of India and the United States on the map. Then distribute Doctors Without Borders' chart, "Who Gets Medicine" (see Handouts section below). Have students locate on this new map the locations of the two countries and ask them what students notice about the map. They should notice the different colors of the different locations. Discuss the legend on the chart with students and help them to read the map as showing a disparity in the amount of people who receive medicine in the two countries. Use this data to complete a simple graph with students on butcher paper in front of the room. Practice reading the graph with students to identify the lack of medicine in India. Return to the "Is It Fair?" question with students, discuss why not and possible solutions to the problem.

Session Five – Nutrition

Return to the graph and have students explain what it shows. Perhaps ask more complex questions such as how many more people receive medicine in the United States than in India? Discuss with students how it is that disease is prevented. Include hand washing, visits to the doctor, and medicine in the discussion. Then brainstorm with students the things that may be aching in India e.g. without soap and clean water hands cannot be washed to stop the spread of germs.

Beyond Session Five – Community Action

Brainstorm with students ways of making difference. These ways may include writing to senators to raise awareness, creating a short video to show to others at the school, conducting a small-scale fundraiser. As a class commit to one or more of these ideas and implement it in the classroom.

Handouts:

In addition to the books mentioned here, the chart of Who Gets Medicines from the organization Doctors Without Borders will be distributed to students. A copy is included below.

Evaluation/Assessment:

- Evaluate student comments and writing journals to see that students are able to describe India either culturally or geographically by stating at least two facts about it.

(Assessment Continued)

- Listen to student comments to ensure that students are able to explain why it is not fair that Americans receive medicine while Indians do not.
- Observe students as they carry out their action plans to ensure that they maintain their commitment to their original plans.

Handout from Doctors Without Borders

