

RIGHTS SITES NEWS

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOM

A Publication of The Advocates for Human Rights



Human Rights Education

The Human Rights Education Program is designed to introduce international human rights and responsibilities to K-12 students. It uses the framework of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to help students understand and appreciate common human values, to encourage them to apply international standards to their own lives, and to support positive student action to remedy human rights violations in their own communities.



Girls' Rights Edition

"We ask justice, we ask equality, we ask that all the civil and political rights that belong to citizens of the United States, be guaranteed to us and our daughters forever."

~ Susan B. Anthony, Declaration of Rights for Women, July 1876

March 8, 2009, International Women's Day (IWD) is dedicated to the celebration of women's social, economic and political achievements worldwide. In the U.S., this official day of observance is rooted in women's efforts to campaign for rights to work, vote and hold public office, culminating on March 8, 1908, when 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter work hours, better pay, voting rights and an end to child labor. Today, International Women's Day marks an occasion for celebration as well as critical reflection on the world's progress towards achieving gender equity.

In the U.S., women still face violence, systematic discrimination and inequality. *Taking the Lead: Girls' Rights in the 21st Century*, a nationally representative survey, chronicles how outmoded stereotypes place roadblocks in the paths of young girls. Of the almost 36 million girls age 18 and under living in the U.S., approximately 60% of them say that they experience stereotypes that limit their right to be themselves. Importantly, girls experiencing these gender barriers have a lower quality of life and less confidence in their futures. As teachers and parents, we know that education is fundamental to changing the status quo. Education can empower young women and give them the skills and confidence to counter damaging stereotypes, violence and discrimination.

In honor of IWD this issue is dedicated to the promotion and advancement of the rights of women and ensuring that every girl and young woman has the right to be herself and achieve her full potential.

FEATURED RESOURCE: TOOLKIT ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN

The Advocates is pleased to announce the release of its newest toolkit on the rights of women. The kit includes the following:

- **Rights of Women in the U.S. Fact Sheet** - outlines the rights of women according to international and national law and analyzes how the U.S. is doing in fulfilling those rights.
- **Rights of Women Quiz** - short multiple-choice quiz to gauge students' knowledge and get them interested in women's rights.
- **Women's Rights National Resources** - a list of organizations working to protect the rights of women.
- **Take Action on the Rights of Women** - an idea list of different ways to get involved in advocating for the rights of women.
- **Lesson Plan: Rights of Women and Girls in the United States** - a lesson that challenges students to critically analyze how far women have come in the U.S. and what more still needs to be done.
- **Rights of Women in the United States Power Point** - a presentation that outlines the facts on the rights of women in the U.S.

The Rights of Women toolkit is free and downloadable at www.discoverhumanrights.org.

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Lesson: Rewriting Gender Stereotypes

Grade Level: 3-7

Time: 1-2 class periods

Goal: To identify gender stereotypes and examine their effects

Objectives:

- Students will identify and critically examine gender stereotypes.
- Students will explore the relationship between stereotypes and discrimination.

Materials: Children's fairy tale, chalkboard/whiteboard/flip chart and markers, paper and pencil, various forms of media (books, magazines, newspapers, etc.).

Essential Question: How do gender stereotypes impact me?

ACTIVITY 1: DEFINING GENDER STEREOTYPES

1. **Model.** Take a familiar story (e.g. from a novel, film, television series or folk tale) and retell it in whole or in part with the gender of the characters switched. (Download the sample reversed fairy tale Cinderella at www.eycb.coe.int/compassito/chapter_4/4_19.asp.) Ask children what was unusual about this story.
2. **Define and Discuss.** Define the word stereotype and give examples. Have students brainstorm stereotypical characteristics and activities of women and men and compare that list to the original folk tale. Can they think of other folktales or children's stories that reinforce these stereotypes? Then ask them to list those characteristics and activities in the revised story that are non-stereotypical. Ask them if they can think of stories that have non-stereotypical characters.

ACTIVITY 2: IDENTIFYING STEREOTYPES IN THE MEDIA

1. **Research.** Explain to students that their mission will be to research gender stereotypes in the media. Based on available resources, any of the following forms of media could be used: textbooks, children's books, anthologies of fables and fairy tales, magazine articles, movies, cartoons, commercials, or television clips.
2. **Analyze.** Ask students to consider the following questions for the material they are working with:
 - Did you notice any stereotypes about women and men/boys and girls?
 - Are female characters shown as brave decision-makers, physically capable, adventurous, creative and interested in a wide range of careers?
 - Are male characters shown as humane, caring people, who can be helpful, who express their emotions, who are free of the fear that others might not think them "manly"?
 - Do the men and women respect each other as equals?
 - Do the men take an active part in parenting and housekeeping tasks?
 - Do the women take an active role outside the home and, if so, in other than traditionally female occupations (e.g. teachers, nurses, secretaries) or unpaid or poorly paid jobs?
3. **Create.** Ask the students to select one of the stories or media pieces they read or saw and rewrite it to make it more gender-equal. This activity may be done with individuals or small groups. Students may choose to switch the gender roles of the characters involved or they may choose to change the professions and activities that the characters engage in throughout the story.
4. **Share.** Give the students the opportunity to share their stories in pairs or small groups.

ACTIVITY 3: DEBRIEF AND TAKE ACTION

1. **Discuss.** As a group discuss the following questions: 1) How does limiting what boys and girls can do affect them individually? How could it affect a family? A society? 2) Do you think gender roles/stereotypes are changing and if so, how? 3) Have you ever tried to challenge gender roles? What happened? 4) Why do gender roles/stereotypes limit a person's human rights? 5) What can you do to challenge gender roles? What can we do in the future so that boys and girls can act more freely the way they want to?
2. **Action:** Develop a contract for gender equity in the classroom. Ask students for specific examples of what can be done to ensure that boys and girls are treated equally in the classroom.



CREATING GENDER EQUITY IN THE CLASSROOM

With all that teachers have to juggle in the classroom, why worry about gender? Gender has a big impact on each young person who sits in your classroom. Students are unconsciously pushed and pulled into different gender categories, being forced to “act like a girl” or “act like a boy”. We put children in these gender categories when we place expectations on their behavior and give them messages about how a girl or boy “should” act. Without knowing it, teachers and the classroom environment may send these messages to students. As children become teens they receive even more messages about gender. For example, girls are traditionally pointed toward subjects in school such as English or history while boys are encouraged to excel in math and science. Boys are often told to “man up” and play sports while girls are often pushed to be caretakers and sensitive. By supporting these gender stereotypes, we are putting youth into categories that are harder to break out of the older they get. Teachers can send healthy gender messages to their students. Here are some suggestions to help you get started.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR CLASSROOM GENDER NEUTRAL

- Display pictures of both girls and boys doing non-stereotypical activities.
- Have open discussions on gender stereotypes and work them into whatever subject you teach.
- Talk about gender stereotypes in the books students read or talk about male and female scientists.
- Encourage boys and girls equally to succeed. Show them that gender will not dictate who they become.
- Refrain from promoting unhealthy gender messages in and out of the classroom. For example, if you’re a coach, don’t use gender terms in a derogatory manner to discipline male athletes, such as “You throw like a girl!” or “Don’t be such a sissy!”
- Examine your gender choices. Do you put all the girls in a group? Are boys given different projects than the girls? Do you call on more girls than boys?
- Encourage both girls and boys to explore what makes them happy, whether that is sports, music, science or video games.
- Use language that is not gender restricted. Talk about professions in a non-gendered way. For example, use the term police officers instead of policemen and the term flight attendant instead of stewardess.
- Educate yourself on gender. There are many layers to it and knowing some basic definitions will help you be better prepared.

DEFINITIONS TO KNOW WHEN TALKING ABOUT GENDER:

- **Biological Sex** refers to being categorized as either male or female based on anatomical parts.
- **Gender** is a psychosocial construct most people use to classify a person as male, female, both, or neither.
- **Gender Identity** is a person’s sense of their own gender. Since most people conform to societal gender norms, they have a Gender Identity congruent with their Biological Sex. However, gender, like sexuality, is fluid and can change over time, in individuals and in society. For some people, Gender Identity, Biological Sex and how they outwardly communicate their gender to others do not correspond with each other.
- **Transgender** is an umbrella term used to describe people who have gender identities, expressions or behaviors not traditionally associated with their Biological Sex. Transgender also can mean anyone who transcends the conventional definitions of “man” and “woman”.



SAFE & RESPECTFUL
RELATIONSHIPS FOR ALL

To learn more about how you can create a safe and respectful classroom please go to www.safeandrespectful.org/.

Source: *Safe and Respectful Relationships for All*. http://www.safeandrespectful.org/teachers/gender_home.html

TEACHER RESOURCES ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

AFT Tools for Teachers

www.aft.org/tools4teachers/women/suffrage.htm

Several resources to help provide ideas for women's rights lessons.

Dove Campaign for Real Beauty

www.dove.us/#/cfrbl

A campaign that counteracts the damaging narrow definition of beauty as promoted by the media. The campaign serves as a starting point for societal change by redefining and widening the stereotypical view of beauty. Their "girls only" section features quizzes, games, and a self-esteem zone.

Educating Jane

www.educatingjane.com/Women/womenLP.htm

A national site for girls, their parents and educators dedicated to helping girls grow with self-esteem, self-awareness, and involvement in the world. Features lesson plans, book lists, and resources for girls.

Federal Resources for Educational Excellence

http://free.ed.gov/subjects.cfm?Subject_id=26&res_feature_request=1

This site provides multiple resources and ideas for teaching about different topics on women's rights.

Garden of Praise – Biographies for Kids

<http://gardenofpraise.com/leaders.htm>

Biographies of historical figures, including several women in history, with fun activities for kids like word searches, jumbles, crossword puzzles, and coloring sheets.

Girls Inc.

www.girlsinc.org

A youth organization dedicated to inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. (See full description on p. 7).

Lesson Planet

www.lessonplanet.com/search?keywords=women's+rights&rating=3

Over 2,000 highly rated women's rights lesson plans available.

PBS Teachers: Women's Rights

www.pbs.org/teachers/thismonth/women/index1.html

This site provides several activities and online resources to teach students from grade 3 up to grade 12 about women in Congress, women's suffrage, women around the world, and the possibility of a woman president.

Stop Violence Against Women

www.stopvaw.org

StopVAW provides women's rights advocates with information and advocacy tools focused on ending the most endemic forms of violence against women.

Teacher Planet: Women's Rights Theme Page

www.teacherplanet.com/resource/womensrights.php

Several lessons and units, worksheets and other resources for women's rights curricula.

TeacherVision-Women's Rights, Suffrage and Equality

www.teachervision.fen.com/gender-studies/suffrage/6717.html

Provides many different activities and lessons to teach children about the various aspects of women's rights.

Tolerance.Org – Vote Quest

www.tolerance.org/teach/printar.jsp?p=0&ar=443&pi=apg

An interactive game for ages 8-10 that teaches about the struggle for women's voting rights.

United Nations – Women Watch

www.un.org/womenwatch/

Regularly updated sources on current events regarding women's rights. Provides information and resources on gender equality and empowerment of women.

University of Minnesota Human Rights Library

www1.umn.edu/humanrts/links/women.html

Several legal resources for different women's rights issues.

WIC – Women's History in America

www.wic.org/misc/history.htm

Brief blurbs on women's roles in U.S. politics and the workforce, early views on women, feminist movements, etc. Biographies and famous "words of wisdom" also provided.

Women in World History

www.womeninworldhistory.com/

This unique site is full of information and resources to help you learn about women's history in a global context.

Women's Justice Center

www.justicewomen.com/links_women_rights.html

Links to websites in English and Spanish about women's rights and violence against women.

Women's Resources on the Internet

www.ibiblio.org/cheryb/women/wresources.html

Several websites listed by and for women on various subjects. Examples: Art, health, law, science, sports, etc.

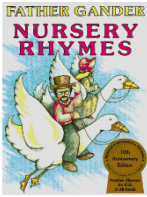
16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html

An international campaign to increase the visibility of violence against women as a human rights violation. Includes a toolkit with activities and action items for groups that want to get involved.

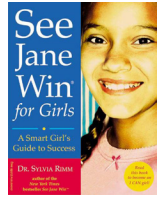


READING SUGGESTIONS: RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

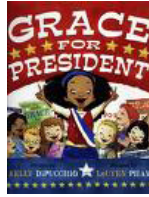


Father Gander Nursery Rhymes: The Equal Rhymes Amendment by Douglas Larche. A non-sexist version of Mother Goose rhymes. Jill and Jack both jump over the candlestick, and cooperation is emphasized. This book is an international best-seller. Ages 2-5.

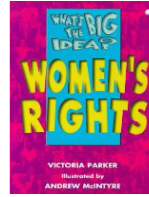
See Jane Win For Girls by Sylvia Rimm. A useful self-help book and practical guide to life that offers basic tips on how to improve academic and social skills, along with quizzes and activities. Success stories and inspiring quotes are scattered throughout. Ages 9-13.



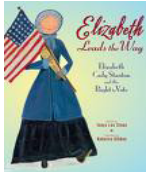
Grace for President by Kelly DiPucchio. When Grace learns that no girl has been president in the U.S., she decides that she will become the first by running for class president. However, she encounters trouble when her running-mate claims to be the best “man” for the job while she is striving to be the best “person.” Ages 4-8.



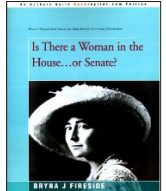
What's the Big Idea? Women's Rights by Victoria Parker. This book shows girls and boys how relevant the issue of women's rights is to them. Introducing the fundamental reasons behind the struggle for women's rights, it looks at how women's progress has changed society and discusses the issues that have arisen as a result. Ages 9-12.



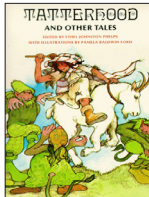
Elizabeth Leads the Way: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Right to Vote by Tanya Lee Stone. The inspiring story of an extraordinary woman who changed America forever because she wouldn't take “no” for an answer. Ages 4-8.



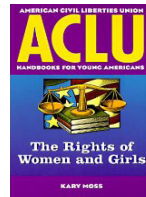
Is There a Woman in the House - or Senate? by Bryna Fireside. Absorbing profiles of 10 women members of Congress. Chronicles their childhoods and career setbacks as well as successes. Ages 9-14.



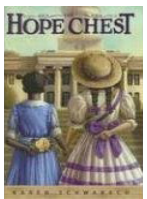
Tatterhood and Other Tales by Ethel Johnston Phelps. Fun, absorbing folktales featuring strong, brave, and/or clever girls and women. These are not made-up tales - they are actual folk tales from around the world. A rich treasury for family reading. Ages 5 and up.



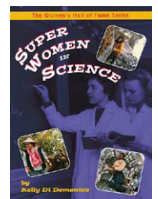
ACLU Handbook: The Rights of Women and Girls by Kary Moss. Providing inspiration and practical advice for women today, this book documents the court cases and legislation that have brought women closer to full realization of their rights. Grade 9 and up.



The Hope Chest by Karen Schwabach. Violet decides to find her older sister Chloe after she left home for New York. Violet finds Chloe in Nashville in the company of suffragists, fighting to get the vote for women. This story is about a girl's journey to find out what is right. Ages 9-12.



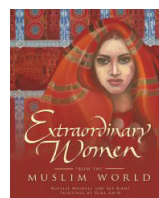
Super Women in Science by Kelly Di Domenico. Profiles of 10 women scientists from around the world. This is part of the Women's Hall of Fame Series. Other titles in the series include: Amazing Women Athletes and Fabulous Female Physicians. Ages 9-14.



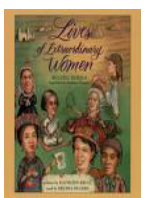
New Moon Girls is a safe, educational, advertising-free bi-monthly magazine for girls by girls. The magazine aims to develop girls' full potential through self-discovery, creativity, and community in an environment designed to build self-esteem and promote positive body image in the important tween years. Ages 8-12.



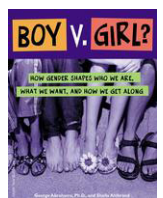
Extraordinary Women from the Muslim World by N. Maydell and S. Riahi. Illustrated by H. Amin. This book tells the stories of thirteen women who overcame adversity to make their unique contributions to society, art, politics, literature, spirituality and human freedom. Grades 5-9.



Lives of Extraordinary Women: Rulers, Rebels (and what the neighbors thought) by Kathleen Krull. Biographies of women throughout history, including many who fought for women's rights, and their contributions. Ages 9-12.



Boy v. Girl? How Gender Shapes Who We Are, What We Want, and How We Get Along by G. Abrahams and S. Ahlbrand. This book examines the gender stereotypes and expectations that kids experience in their everyday lives. Ages 12 and up.



TVbyGIRLS: SUPPORTING YOUNG WOMEN AND THEIR COMMUNITIES



TVbyGirls is a Minneapolis-based organization for girls ages 10-18, centered around the principles of promoting compassion and social justice through media production. Their programs are by girls, for everyone, and encourage young women to use their creativity, leadership and intellect to challenge defeating images in the media and empower other young women. Founded in 2001, TVbyGirls works to fight the images of greed, jealousy, cruelty and self-centeredness so rampant in entertainment and replaces these with true-to-life stories that are authentic and inspiring to women and girls today.

By putting the cameras into the hands of young women, TVbyGirls addresses issues that are important to girls. Examples of past projects include silver Telly Award winning “What’s up with the Hijab?” and bronze Telly Award winning “Siblings or Why I wish I were an only child.”



One of the current projects, “Undercover”, is a collaboration of Muslim, Jewish and other American girls working to reveal the stereotypes and judgments experienced by one another. The girls involved also explore the influence mainstream media may have on the perceptions others have of different religions.

TVbyGirls provides long-term and short-term workshops for girls to attend. All programs allow the participants to create video projects which will be shared with an audience. The organization also offers workshops for teachers and parents, allowing them to bring the TVbyGirls experience into the classroom and home.

The TVbyGirls programs directly support and encourage young women and their communities. Associate Director Rebecca Richards Bullen comments, “We believe our youth have the potential to create a more compassionate and connected future if we create the venues for cross cultural work and understanding. ... We see increased self-esteem, success in academic performance and their wider view of future directions.” To find out more about TVbyGirls, please visit www.tvbygirls.tv or to get specific information about the workshops, contact them by e-mail at info@tvbygirls.tv.



ESSAY CONTEST 2009

The Campaign for U.S. Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) invites youth throughout the U.S. to participate in its second **nationwide essay contest** to raise awareness of the CRC among youth and to engage them in thoughtful reflection on the potential impacts the Convention would have on children and youth in the U.S.

Open to U.S. students in grades 6-12. Applicants must currently reside in the U.S. The top five winners will receive airfare and accommodation for two to participate in the Campaign’s National Symposium at the Georgetown University Law School in Washington, DC on June 1-2, 2009. Winners will share their essay with event participants.

Important Dates: March 20, 2009: Essays must be received in the CRC Essay Email Account by 12:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time. Mid-Late April 2009: Essay contest winners will be announced.

To enter, download the Essay Contest Instruction Kit and Essay Contest Application at http://childrightscampaign.org/crcindex.php?sNav=youth_snav.php&sDat=youth_dat.php.

FEATURED WEBSITE: WWW.GIRLSINC.ORG

Girls Incorporated is a national nonprofit youth organization dedicated to inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. With roots dating to 1864, Girls Inc. has provided vital educational programs to millions of American girls, particularly those in high-risk, underserved areas. Today, innovative programs help girls confront subtle societal messages about their value and potential, and prepare them to lead successful, independent and fulfilling lives. Their informal education programs encourage girls to take risks and master physical, intellectual and emotional challenges. Major programs address math and science education, pregnancy and drug abuse prevention, media literacy, economic literacy, adolescent health, violence prevention, and sports participation. Through their research and advocacy programs, Girls Inc. informs policymakers about girls' needs locally and nationally and educates the media about critical issues facing girls. In addition, the organization teaches girls how to advocate for themselves and their communities, using their voices to promote positive change. Their website features numerous resources for teachers and parents including fact sheets, activities, quizzes, and a Bill of Rights for Girls! Be sure to check out the **Know Your Rights: An Action Kit for Girls** and look for the local Girls Inc. affiliate in your state. For more information, please visit <http://www.girlsinc.org/girls-inc.html>.



CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY!



International Women's Day (IWD) is on March 8th, 2009. IWD is a major day of global celebration for the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. In some countries like China, Russia, Vietnam and Bulgaria, IWD is a national holiday.

Celebrate in your classroom! For information and fun ideas for your classroom to celebrate IWD with a focus on women, peace and politics, go to www0.un.org/cyberschoolbus/womensday/index.asp.

Celebrate in your community! Find a list of events across the nation at www.internationalwomensday.com/.

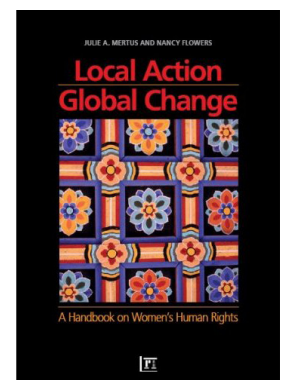
Celebrate with The Advocates for Human Rights!

The 14th Annual International Women's Day Celebration: TRANSFORMING THE WORLD THROUGH WOMEN'S VOICES.
Saturday, March 14th, 2009 8:00AM - 3:30PM at Coffman Union, University of Minnesota.

For more information, go to www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/International_Women_s_Day6.html.

FEATURED CURRICULUM: LOCAL ACTION/GLOBAL CHANGE

Local Action/Global Change: A Handbook of Women's Human Rights is an integrated set of fourteen teaching and learning units. Together, they are designed to identify key issues in women's and girls' human rights, define concepts, outline methodologies for achieving women's rights, and offer a wide range of activities to facilitate teaching, learning, and discussion. Included in every chapter are key objectives, background information, discussion questions, special issue boxes, strategies and examples for taking action, and learning activities. Also included are key UN documents and international law bearing on women's human rights. Handouts, checklists, assessment forms, and activist organizations round out the range of reference materials provided. User-friendly, jargon-free, authoritative, and packed with hands-on information, the handbook is an essential resource for anyone working in the field, including teachers, students and activists. **Local Action/Global Change** is available through Amazon.com.



MARCH

- 8 International Women's Day. www.unac.org/en/news_events/un_days/women1.asp
- 21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. www.un.org/depts/dhl/racial/
- 22 World Water Day. www.unesco.org/water/water_celebrations/

APRIL

- 4 International Day for Mine Awareness and Mine Action. www.mineaction.org
- 7 World Health Day. www.who.int/world-health-day/2007/en/index.html
- 23 World Book and Copyright Day. www.un.org/Depts/dhl/book/index.html

MAY

- 3 World Press Freedom Day. www.unac.org/en/news_events/un_days/press.asp
- 15 International Day of Families. www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/
- 17 World Information Society Day. www.un.org/events/infoday/2006/
- 21 World Day for Cultural Diversity, Dialogue and Development. www.un.org/depts/dhl/cultural_diversity/
- 29 International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. www.un.org/events/peacekeepers/
- 31 World No-Tobacco Day. www.who.int/tobacco/communications/en/

To find human rights events in your area, go to
www.discoverhumanrights.org/Human_Rights_Events_Calendars_by_Region.html

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Rights Sites News is published quarterly by the Education Program at The Advocates for Human Rights to promote human rights education in the classroom and highlight the achievements of its Rights Sites Teachers. We welcome suggestions and comments.

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To sign up for our list-serv and receive periodic e-mail updates about opportunities related to human rights education, please send your name and your e-mail address to: efarell@advrights.org.



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