



LA SILLA ROJA
A journey toward justice



Friends of
Fe y Alegría
in the United States



HIGH SCHOOL

Lesson 4: Sembradores de
Optimismo - Venezuela

We will now travel with La Silla Roja to Venezuela and discover the work of Fe y Alegría through the program “Mothers as Peace Promoters.” Based on a documentary short created by HBO Latin America and Triana Media, this unit seeks to introduce the causes and consequences of conflict and examine what we can do to become peace promoters at the local and global levels.

ACTIVITY



Goals

- 1) **Learn** about the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and the work of Fe y Alegría to promote peace.
- 2) **Inspire** students to critically analyze and understand the importance of education in contributing to the fulfillment of the right to peace.
- 3) **Act** by reflecting on our responsibility to commit to building peace in our local communities and at the global level.



Time required

60 minutes



What is Fe y Alegría?

Fe y Alegría is a popular education movement founded in Venezuela in 1955 thanks to Father José María Vélaz, SJ and Abraham and Patricia Reyes. Today, the movement serves more than 1.5 million students in 21 countries. In Venezuela, Fe y Alegría serves over 345,000 students in 681 schools and community centers across the country.

Despite all that has been achieved over the past 60 years, there is much work that remains to be done, especially given the current context in Venezuela.

What is Sembradores de Optimismo?

"Sembradores de Optimismo," produced by HBO Latin America and Triana Media, is an initiative that seeks to raise awareness about the work of organizations that are implementing some of the most innovative educational projects in Latin America. Specifically, this lesson plan is based on the experience of Fe y Alegría Venezuela through the project “Mothers as Peace Promoters.”



Instructions

To begin, start a brief dialogue about how students define peace. To expand the debate, we can introduce the concept of “positive peace”:

“Positive peace: authentic peace, opposes not only war but also all forms of discrimination, violence or oppression that prevent the development and achievement of dignified living conditions for all. To achieve positive peace, we have to work for it at all levels of life: in social realities but also in educational spaces.”

[Cultures of Peace and Conflict Resolution Project, Fe y Alegría.](#)

Following this dialogue, let's watch the video.

Click play



Instructions

Following the video, and in order to better understand the reality of education in Venezuela, it is important to reflect on the current situation in the country. To begin this activity, before offering information, ask students to reflect on what they already know about Venezuela: do they have a lot of information, little understanding, etc.

Then, show them a map and invite them to point out where the country is located.

Share with them the following data and also invite them to research in groups what is taking place.



Some basic data on the current humanitarian crisis in Venezuela:

FOOD SECURITY/HEALTH

- Imports of foods (meat, fruit & bread) have decreased by 99%
- Estimated weekly cost of basic groceries for a family costs 22x the state minimum salary
- 87% of Venezuelans have difficulty purchasing food
- 30% of Fe y Alegría Venezuela students eat only 1-2 meals per day
- Infant mortality rate is 45% higher than it was in 2013
- 75% of medicine deemed essential by the World Health Organization is unavailable

VIOLENCE

- Caracas is ranked as the most violent capital city in the world, with the highest global homicide rate
- Overall, Venezuela's homicide rate is 90 per 100,000 individuals, surpassing Honduras
- Countrywide kidnappings are higher than in Colombia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Libya or Afghanistan

AS A RESULT, EDUCATION HAS BEEN SEVERELY AFFECTED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- The dropout rate has doubled since 2011
- 25% of youth are currently out of school
- One-third of teachers miss class to attend to personal matters (stand in food lines, etc.)
- Students who are enrolled in school have missed 40% of class as a result of missing teachers
- Schools have become the targets of attacks, both by government and opposition forces.
- Theft is also on the rise, as schools are targeted for their resources (food, technology, etc.)

- Human Rights Watch: <http://ow.ly/b7ZD30dGfYv>
- La Vanguardia (Spanish): <http://ow.ly/fFsl30dGg8B>
- InSight Crime: <http://ow.ly/LpCl30e1xpP>
- Amnesty International: <http://ow.ly/1lr530dGg15>

 Reflection questions

Once students have watched the video, read the current data and the research they collected in groups and invite them to reflect and share using the following questions:

- Did you know as much about Venezuela as you originally thought?
- What feelings emerge when you learn more about what is currently taking place in the country?
- Why do you think Fe y Alegría invests in this education program in Venezuela?
- Do you think these problems happen in other places? Why?
- What could you do to help address these issues?

Through these questions, we can initiate a dialogue with students, inviting them to reflect on their previous knowledge of Venezuela and encouraging them be informed as active global citizens and seek more information about countries beyond their own and about issues facing our global community. Afterwards, introduce an activity that can help to promote analysis of the **causes and effects of violence**. To do so, divide the class into three teams. Each will have to develop a concept map of the causes and effects of violence using a large posterboard. Give each group a poster, and at the center they will put the problem to be analyzed. To develop the concept map they will have to use the assigned mandatory words.

Group 1: Analysis of violence in everyday life

Problem: Bullying, gender violence

Words: empathy, communication, gender, care, education

Group 2: Analysis of violence at the community level

Problem: Gangs, Xenophobia

Words: exclusion, discrimination, cooperation, local, global

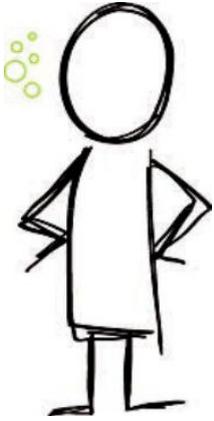
Group 3: Analysis of violence in the world

Problem: Forced displacement due to armed conflict or generalized violence

Words: injustice, extraction, ecology, responsibility, global

To close, offer time so that students can review each of the maps and explain them to each other. Finally, start a discussion to share their perceptions on peace and how they are called to be peace promoters at the local level (in relationships with others, respect for diversity, listening, etc.) and at the global level (our ways of consuming, responsibility for the messages we perpetuate, prejudice, stereotypes, etc.)

"Mini Me"



Take some time at the end of the activity to fill out the "Mini me" handout found in the introduction. Write down what you have learned, feelings that you experienced, and an individual or group action that you will commit to once the activity has been completed.



- Fe y Alegría Sembradores de Optimismo: (www.feyalegria.org/sembradores)
- "Schools of the Future" Venezuelan School Nutrition Program: (www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVcMF-ODI8g)
- Venezuela's Humanitarian Crisis, Human Rights Watch: (<http://ow.ly/O0do30dCZuz>)

Thank you for taking the time to use this resource with your students. You are contributing to shaping holistic and committed citizens of tomorrow's global world. For more information, please visit www.feyalegria.us/our-work/global-education

