# PRIMARY LESSON PLAN 1 - CHILDREN AND THE SYRIAN CRISIS

**Objectives**

- To understand the terms migrant and refugee
- To begin to understand the current refugee crisis and why people are leaving their countries (in particular Syria)
- To examine how children especially are being affected

**Resources**

Information sheet, Write the Future Primary School PowerPoint presentation

***Note to Teachers:***

*If there is an asylum seeker or refugee in the class it would be advisable to speak to the child and his/her parents in advance of engaging with this unit of work as it may be a sensitive issue. It is also advisable to watch the content of the videos in the Write the Future Primary School PowerPoint presentation before showing them to your class to ensure the content is suitable for your group of pupils.*

**Introduction**

Write the words migrant and refugee on the board.
Explain to the class that migrants and refugees are different:

- Migrants are usually described as people who want to come to another country for a better life and standard of living
- Refugees are fleeing wars and persecution and want to come to countries like Ireland so they and their families are safe

Ask the class if they can think of any countries where migrants and refugees are coming from? Note these on the board.

Discuss Ireland's own history of migration. For example, during the Famine many people migrated to America and in recent years, when there were fewer jobs in Ireland, many young people migrated to Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

**Whole Class Activity**

Explain to the class that they are going to focus on Syria and Syrian refugees. Talk through the following:

- Syria is a country in the Middle East and has a population of almost 23 million
- The Syrian conflict began in March 2011 when citizens took to the streets to protest the undemocratic nature of their government. The authorities used brutal methods to try to stop the demonstrations, and this led to civil war breaking out across the country
- Before the war Syria was a middle income country where people led ordinary lives. Children went to school. People lived in houses with running water, electricity, gas and the internet

- Many ordinary Syrian people have been caught up in the violence during the war and have been forced to leave their homes to escape to safety in other parts of Syria and other countries
- The UN's Refugee Agency (UNHCR) says more than four million people have fled Syria to neighbouring countries (mainly Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan), and over half of those are children (updated figures can be found here: http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php)
- Now, some of these refugees are making the dangerous journey to Europe
- Some countries in Europe have said they will accept refugees
  - Ireland has pledged to take 4000 refugees

Show the class some of the videos and images from the Write the Future Primary School PowerPoint presentation. These represent how children in particular have been affected by the current crisis.

Ask them to think about the following:
- What it might have been like to live in Syria before the war
- How it would feel to live in a country where there is a war
- What it would be like to leave your home because of a war
- If a refugee student came to your school, how would you treat them? What kind of questions (if any) would you want to ask them?
- If you meet a child refugee who doesn't speak your language, how will you communicate with them?

**Group Activity**

Using "think→pair→share", each pair answers one of the following questions:
1. How do you think the children felt living in Syria during the war? How do you think they feel now they have left their homes?
2. What do you think the children miss the most now that they have had to leave Syria? Why?
3. What would you miss the most if you had to leave the place where you live because of war? Why?

How to 'think→pair→share':
1. **Think:** ask pupils to think about their question on their own for two minutes
2. **Pair:** give pupils five minutes to discuss their answers in pairs before writing down their combined answer. If there is an odd number of pupils, one group can work in a group of three
3. **Share:** pupils share their answers with the rest of the class

**Individual Activity**

Using what they learned in the Write the Future Primary School PowerPoint presentation, and the information sheet provided, ask the children to write a paragraph to explain to their classmates what is happening in Syria and why people are fleeing to other parts of Syria, neighbouring countries and Europe. Ask them to focus on how the children involved in the conflict are being affected. For example, they may like to write about the experience of the two young boys in the video.

**Extension Activity**

Using a map of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, plot some of the routes the refugees fleeing Syria are taking.
Children can create a poster with the map at the centre and around the outside stick newspaper clippings/headlines about those journeys and images of the refugees.

**Plenary**

Ask some of the children to read their paragraphs to the class. Allow some of the class to feedback on the work saying one thing that was done well and one thing that could be improved on going forward.

**Useful Websites**

www.goalglobal.org
www.bbc.co.uk/newsround
http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php

# PRIMARY LESSON PLAN 2 – WHAT CAN WE DO?

**Objectives**

- To understand some of the work GOAL does in Syria and with Syrian refugees
- To write a letter with a particular purpose and to expand and clarify his/her thoughts on a particular idea or topic
- To argue the case in writing for a particular point of view

**Resources**

Four sheets of flip chart or poster paper, post-it notes, Write the Future Primary School PowerPoint presentation

**Introduction**

Recap on Lesson 1.

Using the Write the Future Primary School PowerPoint presentation, look at the work GOAL does particular in Syria.

Explain to the class that GOAL's programme in Syria is the largest in their history. The current focus is on delivering food and non-food items such as blankets, supporting bakeries to increase the availability of affordable bread, repairing houses, fixing water networks to provide safe water, and supporting livelihoods.

Watch the video from the Write the Future Primary School PowerPoint presentation (slide 5) with the class again to revisit the work GOAL is doing in Syria.

**Whole Class Activity**

Ask for ideas of why we write letters and the different types of letters that they can think of – thank you, sorry, chat, formal, complain, congratulations, etc.

Introduce the idea that different letters are written for different purposes. Would a letter to tell the President about a class trip be the same as one we would send to a friend? Discuss the differences between formal and informal letters (tone and use of language, use of personal pronouns, first/third person).

On the board note down letter features – address, opening line and examples, closing line and examples, use of paragraphs, date, etc.

Explain to the class that they will be writing letters to voice their opinion on the Syrian crisis and what can be done to help those who've been displaced inside and outside of Syria because of the conflict. The letters will be written to someone in the local community, for example a local politician, the school Principal, a local celebrity, the Parish Priest, who the child believes can help them to make a difference in relation to the issue.

## Group Activity

Using four sheets of flip chart or poster paper, write one of the following on the top of each page:

- People who can help (who you will address your letter to)
- What can be done to help?
- Why we need to help?
- Persuasive words or phrases to use in your letter

In small groups, ask the children to write some suggestions for each of the headings on post-it notes. Allow a few minutes for each of the headings.

Ask one member from each group to come and stick their post-it notes on the sheets of paper and read them out to the class. This will provide an inspiration bank for the pupils when they come to write their letters. You may want to discuss some of the suggestions and whether they are applicable or appropriate*.

*While suggestions of fundraising and collecting money is fantastic, try to steer the children to think of other ways they can make a difference.

## Individual Activity

Pupils should write letters addressed to their intended audience.

Letters should:

- Be written in persuasive language
- Be no longer than 500 words in length
- Be written as a formal letter, using an appropriate layout (using an address, formal sign off, addressing the letter appropriately, etc.)
- Show knowledge of what the pupil has learned about the current refugee crisis
- Give the pupil's opinion on the current crisis
- Make reference to the work GOAL currently does (if appropriate in the context of the letter)
- Clearly indicate a positive (and realistic) suggestion for making a difference

## Extension Activity

Try a hot-seating activity with, for example, the class asking questions to a child who has had to leave their home, a mother who had to bring her family to a refugee camp, and an aid worker for GOAL working in Syria.

## Plenary

Review some of the ideas the class had for making a change and helping the people of Syria. As a class, decide on one action and how together you can make a difference.

## Useful Websites

www.goalglobal.org
www.bbc.co.uk/newsround
http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php

# CURRICULUM LINKS - PRIMARY

*English*

**3rd & 4th Class**

Writing: creating and fostering the impulse to write
- choose the audience for which to write
- see his/her writing valued
- observe the teacher modelling different writing genres
  - writing about a personal experience
  - writing a letter
  - writing a description

Writing: developing competence, confidence and the ability to write independently
- develop an appreciation of how the intended audience should influence the nature of a piece of writing
- learn to revise and re-draft writing

Writing: clarifying thought through writing
- write in a variety of genres with greater sophistication
  - letters
- write about an idea to explain it to someone else
- expand and clarify his/her thoughts on a particular idea or topic through drafting and re-drafting

Writing: developing emotional and imaginative life through writing
- express his/her reactions to particular experiences in writing

**5th & 6th Class**

Writing: creating and fostering the impulse to write
- experience interesting and relevant writing challenges
- see his/her writing valued
- observe the teacher modelling different writing genres
  - letters

Writing: developing competence, confidence and the ability to write independently
- write independently through a process of drafting, revising, editing and publishing
- choose a register of language appropriate to subject and audience

Writing: clarifying thought through writing
- write in a variety of genres with greater sophistication
  - letters

- write for a particular purpose and with a particular audience in mind
- argue the case in writing for a particular point of view

Writing: developing emotional and imaginative life through writing
- express in writing reactions to the experiences of others

***SPHE***

**3rd & 4th Class**
Myself and the wider world

- Developing citizenship - Local and wider communities
  - appreciate the diversity of people or groups within communities and the importance of mutual respect, empathy and understanding for living together in peace and harmony
  - examine how justice, fairness and equality may or may not be exemplified in a community
  - explore some of the issues and concerns in the local or national community
  - discuss the role of leaders and organisations that serve the community at different levels and the influence that they have

**5th & 6th Class**
Myself and the wider world

- Developing citizenship - National, European and wider communities
  - recognise and acknowledge the various cultural, religious, ethnic or other groups that exist in a community or society and explore ways in which these differences can be respected
  - explore how justice and peace can be promoted between people and groups, both nationally and internationally
  - realise and begin to understand the unequal distribution of the world's resources
  - begin to explore the concept of democracy

# INFORMATION SHEET

- Syria is in the Middle East and has a population of almost 23 million
- It is bordered by Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Israel and Lebanon
- The Syrian conflict began in March 2011 when citizens took to the streets to protest the undemocratic nature of their government. The authorities used brutal methods to try to stop the demonstrations, and this led to civil war breaking out across the country
- Many ordinary Syrian people have been caught up in the violence during the war and have been forced to leave their homes. Many have fled to other parts of Syria while more than four million have fled to other countries. Over half of those who fled are children
- The violence in Syria began in March 2011, and since then, it is estimated that more than 250,000 people have died in the conflict
- Refugee camps have been built in Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and the Republic of Macedonia
- There are approximately two million Syrian refugees living in Turkey. It is estimated that 217,000 live in government-run camps
- A further eight million people, 50% of them children, have had to leave their homes and move to other parts of Syria
- GOAL has been a leading humanitarian actor in Syria since 2012, with current projects helping over one million people. GOAL are now also working with Syrian refugees in Turkey
- Now, some of the refugees are making the dangerous journey to Europe
- Some countries in Europe have said they will accept refugees
  - Ireland has pledged to take 4000 refugees

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