

THE GIRL CHILD

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL #3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Activity Snapshot:

Students will be randomly selected to participate in a simulation that demonstrates how some children in developing countries have limited or no access to a formal education.

Rationale:

Globally, there are 121 million children between the ages of six and 11 who are not in school. More than 65 million of these children are girls. Around the world, girls and women lack equal access to the opportunities and the rights that would give them a chance at a brighter future and a fulfilling life. Girls and women are disproportionately affected by everything that prevents successful growth and development within the family and nation—poverty, AIDS, violence, lack of education, lack of job opportunity and so on. Until girls and women have equal access to their rights, social, political and economic development will continue to suffer.

Objective:

- Students will be introduced to the issue of gender equality, specifically access to education.
- The objective of this activity is to generate class discussion about lack of opportunity for half of the world's population based on something over which they have no control—their gender.

Time: One hour, including time for debriefing

Steps:

1. Without explanation, separate students based on their birthdays—everyone born between January and June is in one group and July to December in another group. Ask one group to sit at the back of the room. Note: The random selection of students who sit at the back should include both girls and boys.
2. Tell this group they can not use pens, pencils or any other writing tools (but must try to keep up with the other group during the activity. If possible, take away all of their notebooks and textbooks. Conduct a regular mathematics or language arts lesson. (Note: Your lesson may be quickly interrupted by concerns raised by the group at the back.)
3. After the lesson, ask the group at the back how they felt to have been asked to keep up without any materials. Explain that the entire lesson has actually been a simulation and that they were divided into the two groups based on their birthdays. Ask them if it is fair that the group was divided based on something over which they had no control?

Closure:

4. Explain to your class that, in the developing world, millions of girls don't have the chance to go to school simply because they are girls. In some cases, those who are attending school do not have the same learning opportunities as boys. Girls and women are more likely to suffer from poverty because they do not get the education they need.
5. Now ask the group how they would feel if they had to sit at the back of the room everyday. What if they never got the chance to go to school?
6. Ask students to write a reflection on the activity. Students can be guided by the following questions: How did you feel during the activity (i.e. if they were not at the back did they feel privileged)? What did they learn from the activity? Is it fair that girls and boys are treated differently?

Extension:



Ask students to create a poster—either individually or in groups—that shows why girls should have equal access to an education. Encourage students to share their posters with the rest of the class.

Assessment Suggestions:

- Participation during discussions
- Depth of understanding as indicated in written reflection
- Extension poster activity based on criteria outline by the teacher during instructions