

Unit 4



Focusing Internationally

Teacher Primer #4

The **history of the United Nations** goes back to the League of Nations, which was formed after World War I to ensure that another world war would not happen. It was the first attempt at forming a world coalition dedicated to keeping peace.¹

Tragically, the League of Nations was not successful in preventing World War II. It had, however, planted an idea in the mind of U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In 1941, he talked about forming a new international organization in which its members would be nations dedicated to maintaining world peace. Roosevelt called this new organization the United Nations. The plan that the two men wrote up during that initial meeting is called the Atlantic Charter.

The following year, plans for the United Nations continued. In Washington D.C., 26 countries signed the United Nations Declaration which was a promise to go through with plans of creating the United Nations after the war ended.

In 1943, the Moscow Declaration was signed by representatives of China, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Russia. It was another pledge to form the United Nations.

Initial plans for the United Nations were created in 1944 at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, which was again held in Washington D.C. In 1945, the pace of work on the nascent United Nations sped up. Early in the year, the Allied Powers drafted an agreement with Russia on the voting system that the Security Council would use. From April 25th to June 26th, the United Nations Charter was written at the San Francisco Conference. On October 24th, 1945, the United Nations Charter officially came into force. The United Nations was born. This day is now celebrated as United Nations Day.²

¹. *A World In Our Hands*. (Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 1995) 14-15.

². *What's the United Nations?* (New York: United Nations, 1993).

Unit 4 – Focusing Internationally

Goal: The purpose of this unit is to help the children learn about interdependence through working together and thinking together to solve small and global issues. They will also consider the UN charter and examples of interconnection.

Activity 1 (15 minutes)

The Tangled People Web (A.K.A: The Human Knot)

Have participants stand in a very close circle. Tell them to use their right hands to hold the hand of someone else in the circle. It can't be the person standing directly to the participant's left or right. Then tell them to do the same thing with their left hands. (If you have a large class, you may want to divide them into 2 groups.)

Explain to the participants that their job is to untangle themselves so that everyone's arms are uncrossed and at their sides. However, the participants cannot let go of anyone's hands. Allow the participants to take time to untangle themselves. (They will have to weave over and under each other's hands.)

Afterwards, have participants sit down and discuss what happened. What happened after you got yourself untangled? Were there more people who still needed help? Was it important for participants to work together? Did people help each other by giving them suggestions?

Explain that the United Nations sees the world as a big web in which everyone must help each other.

Activity 2 (10 minutes)

Defining Interdependence

Write the word interdependence on the board along with the following UU Principle: "We, the member congregations of the UUA covenant, to affirm and promote...respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are all a part."³ Explain that the people of the United Nations see the world as an interdependent place. Ask the participants what they think that means.

Explain that, just like in the Tangled People Web game, the United Nations believes everyone in the world must help each other when they have problems. What would have happened if someone let go of someone else's hand during the game? What would happen if people in the United States stopped caring about people who don't have clean water or enough food or education?

Interdependence means that every part of the whole depends upon the others. In terms of the world, it means that all the people of all the places in the world need to help each other to have healthy, happy lives.

Activity 3 – The Global Village Game (20 minutes)

You will need – copies of Appendices 10 and 11 for each person in the class

³. UUA Principles and Purposes. (Boston: UUA).

Divide the class into four groups. Give the groups ten minutes to discuss what they would do to help the people in the Global Village (Appendix 10) and to think about the discussion questions in Appendix 11.

Use another ten minutes for each group to present their ideas to the whole class one by one (2.5 minutes per group). You should make a copy of both appendixes and cut them out so that each group can have its own task in front of them.

Activity 4 (10 minutes)

United Nations Charter

You will need – copies of Appendix 12 for each person in the class.

Pass out the copies of the Charter. Explain that these are the conditions that countries must agree to when they become members of the United Nations. Tell the class that this Charter went into effect when the United Nations began on October 24th, 1945. This day is celebrated as the birthday of the United Nations.⁴

Discuss the charter. What concerns does the charter address? After reading this Charter, what do you think the United Nations finds important? Are the things you just did in the Global Village game related to what the Charter talks about? What does the Charter *not* address?

Activity 5 (5 minutes)

A Brief History of the UN

You will need - Copies of Appendix 13 for each person in the class.

Pass out Appendix 13, and have the class read it out loud.

Before dismissing class, review the day's lessons and activities. Were the participants surprised by some of the ways people are connected that we don't always realize? What were some examples of that interconnection? How does the UN Charter address that interconnection and how does the history of the UN show a commitment to that Charter and to that interconnection?

Don't forget to pass out the homework before they leave class if you desire to do so!

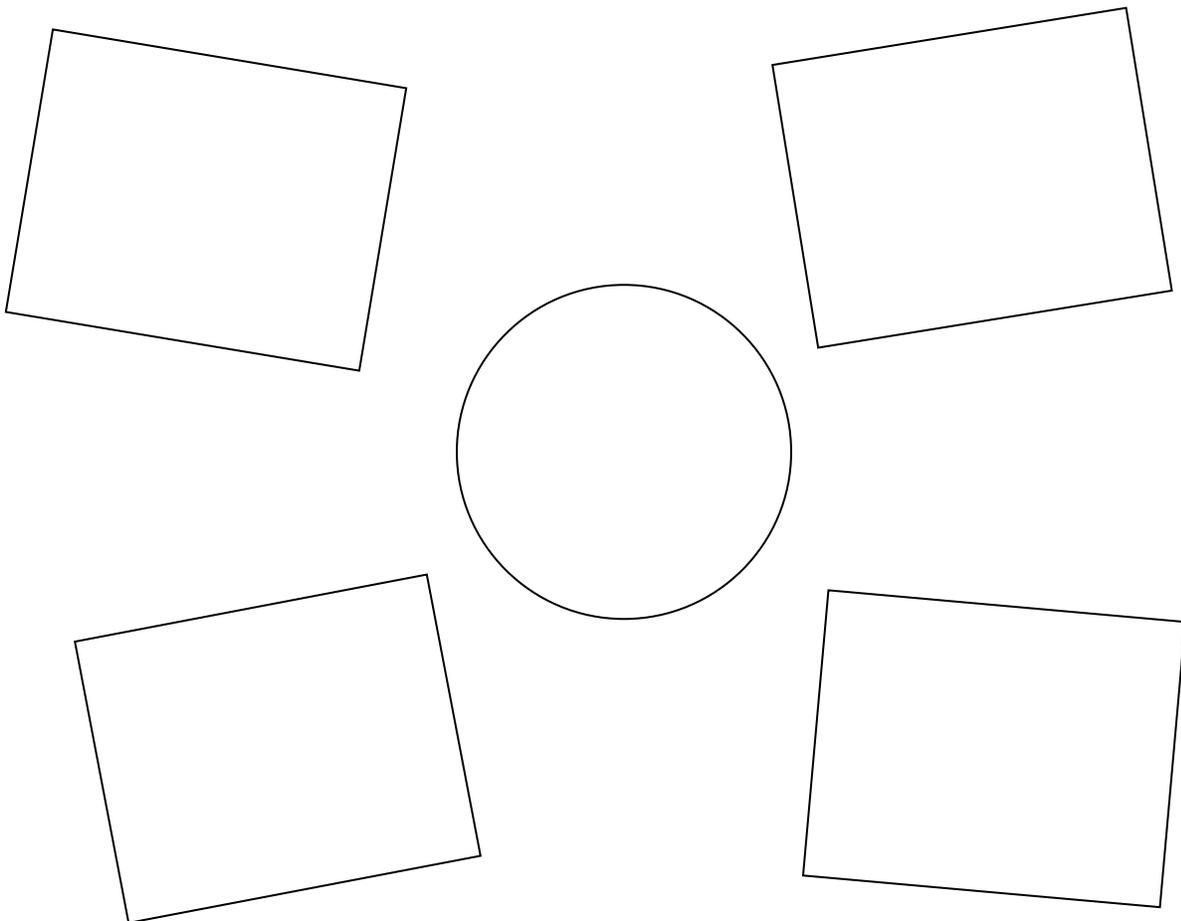
⁴. Hope For Tomorrow. (New York: UN Department of Public Information, 1985).

Homework

Web Making

What's important to you?

- 1. Draw a picture of yourself in the middle circle.*
- 2. Fill in the open spaces with pictures or descriptions of the things in your life that are important. You could draw friends, family, things you like to do, places you like to go, anything you can think of. (If you don't have enough spaces, draw more. If there are too many spaces, just fill up what you need.)*
- 3. Draw lines from your pictures to the things you've drawn.*
- 4. Smile, you've made your own web!*



Global Village

Group 1: Land Mines

Land mines are a kind of explosive used during war. When war is over, however, no one removes these landmines. They remain hidden in the ground. When people walk over them, an explosive goes off. Innocent people often lose limbs and are severely hurt because of these land mines.

Somiko is a 12-year-old girl who lives in a village in Sudan. There are many landmines around the village and the main road where she lives. Many people in her village have lost legs or arms because of these land mines. What can you do to protect Somiko and the others in her village from land mines?

Group 2: Drought

Micha lives in the country of Chad in Africa. There is a drought where he lives. It has barely rained at all for the past year. There is very little water. His family's and his neighbors' crops can't grow because there is no water for them to thrive on. What can be done to help Micha and his village?

Group 3: Education

Yuri and his sister, Juana, live with their family in a small village. They live on a farm and spend long days tending the crops. Yuri and Juana both want an education, but the nearest school is a very long walk away. They were only able to go there until the second grade. Then they both had to stop so that they could help out at home. Many of the other children in Yuri and Juana's village have had to do the same thing. What can be done to help Yuri, Juana, and the other children in the village get a better education?

Group 4: Child Labor

Odile's family is very poor. She is only 13, but she had to quit school so that she could work in a factory to earn some money for her family. She works very long hours and gets paid very little money. Now, her 8-year-old brother is going to have to start working too. The family really needs the money. What can be done to help Odile and her brother?

Appendix 11

Global Village Discussion Sheet (What the UN is doing)

Land Mines: The UN is working to remove land mines from the places where they are hidden, but it is a slow process. People have to be specially trained to remove the mines by hand without setting them off. This takes a lot of time and money.

The UN also helps to educate people about land mine safety, showing them how to identify a land mine so that they will be able to stay away from it.⁵

Drought: The UN helps to raise money and send aid to people living in places where there is a drought. For example, in 1985 there was a famine in Africa and 300 million people were starving. The Secretary-General of the United Nations (who was Javier Perez de Cuellar at the time) called a conference and organized groups to raise money and send people to help set up irrigation systems and ration food.⁶

Education: The UN helps set up schools for the people in places where there are none. They also organize tutoring systems so that people will work together to help each other to learn. The UN helps raise awareness to promote primary education around the world as one of their Millennium Goals.

Child Labor: The International Labor Organization (ILO) of the United Nations works to establish fair treatment for workers. They are also working to stop children from having to work long hours under extremely dangerous conditions. They eventually want child labor to be completely eliminated.⁷

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What are some problems that the UN might face in addressing the issues in your Global Village?
- What are some other ideas about what the UN can do to address these issues?
- What are some things the UU Congregations can do to raise awareness about the issues in this Global Village?



⁵. Land Mine Facts. (New York: United Nations).

⁶. Hope For Tomorrow. (New York: UN Department of Public Information, 1985)

⁷. A World In Our Hands. (Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 1995) 41.



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United Nations Charter⁸

Below are some excerpts from the United Nations Charter. Countries have to agree to this charter in order to become members of the United Nations. Read the excerpts below and then rewrite them in your own words on the lines provided.

We the Peoples of the United Nations Determined

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war...

... to reaffirm the faith in fundamental human rights...

... to promote social progress and better standard of life...

... to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another
as good neighbors...

... to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security...

Accordingly, our respective governments... have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations (The Charter was signed on June 26, 1945 in San Francisco).

⁸. A World In Our Hands. (Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 1995) 7.

Appendix 13

A Brief History of the United Nations ⁹

After World War I (1919)... The League of Nations was created to keep peace in the world so that another world war would not happen.

But in 1938... Another world war did happen. When World War II started, it was clear that the League of Nations was not working as the creators had originally envisioned.

In 1941... The United States President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, met on a boat with Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of England. World War II was still going on, but the two men agreed to create a new organization that would work to maintain peace after World War II was over. They decided they would call this organization the United Nations.

In 1944... The United States, England, the Soviet Union, and China had a meeting in Washington D.C. They created the beginning plans of the United Nations. This meeting was called the Dumbarton Oaks Conference.

In 1945... The San Francisco Conference was held. It lasted from April 25 to June 26. During the conference, representatives from 50 countries wrote the United Nations Charter.

October 24, 1945... The day the United Nations Charter went into effect. October 24th is celebrated every year as the UN's birthday. It is called **United Nations Day**.



Thanks!

Happy Birthday!



⁹. What's the United Nations? (New York: United Nations, 1993).