

Preliminary session: Introducing human dignity and children's human rights

The Me + Us project comes out of an interest in, and commitment to, children's human rights. Perhaps you already know about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the children you work with may have some knowledge of rights as well, but here we offer a 'pre' Me + Us session to help frame the work you will be doing.

This session:

- Introduces the concept of human dignity and the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Recognises the importance of family, community and school life.
- Asks children to begin to share their opinions, feelings and ideas.

In advance of the session:

Inform the children that they will be taking part in a project about identity. Ask them to think about what identity means to them.

Set up:

You will need to establish part of the room as a studio area for the children to take photographs. Ideally this is a place with a camera, tripod, and preferably a backcloth and lights if you have them.



Children will also need tables to work on.


You will also need:

- Pencils/pens/markers
- Copies of the UNCRC for all group members
- Sheet of paper (A2 or larger)
- Large paper arrow and a paper fastener
- Strips of paper ~1cm wide
- Glue sticks
- Camera + photo studio equipment
- Notebooks/sketchbooks for each child
- Jack + Chloe maps (A3 or larger)
- Post-it notes
- Children's Human Rights PowerPoint

Facilitation Notes

- The **session outlines** provided are part guidance and part script. They are intended to help shape your work with the children, but can be adapted to suit the needs of the group.
- Each session includes key words that are important to the Me + Us project, which can be put up on a '**Word Wall**' after the group has decided on a meaning. The Word Wall should be displayed during each session to remind the group of what has been covered so far.
- The **Me + Us Investigator Notebooks** are for the children to keep and are a personal place where they can record their thoughts and feelings as they participate in the Me + Us sessions. They should be used during the activities, but the children should be encouraged to write and draw in them while they are away from sessions as well.
- Keep **discussions** informal and encourage good listening and open conversation. Remind children that there are no right or wrong answers. Me + Us is about sharing thoughts and feelings, developing opinions, and learning with and from each other.
- Throughout the session outlines there are **examples of children's work** from the original Me + Us project. These examples are for you as the facilitator to help guide you through the activities. If you want to share these examples or examples from the Children's Parliament website, ensure that you do so after the children have completed their own work. We want children to develop their own ideas and create unique pieces that are not guided by what's been done before.

Outline

Time	Activity	Word Wall
10 min.	<p>What do Jack + Chloe need to be healthy, happy and safe? Children need many things in life to ensure that they are as healthy, happy and safe as possible.</p> <p>Split the children into groups of 4-6 and provide each group with post-its and a Jack or Chloe map (printed as large as possible). Using the map, ask the children what Jack or Chloe needs to be healthy, happy and safe throughout his/her life. Do you need the same things all your life or do your needs change as you get older? Are some things more important than others?</p> <p>The children should brainstorm ideas and write them down on post-it notes and stick them to the point on the map when they are relevant (e.g. nappies by 'baby', nursery school by 'toddler', mobile phone by '12yo', doctor in the middle because you always need access to medical care).</p>  <p>After the brainstorm, ask the children to share a few things back to the group. What do they think is the most important thing children need?</p>	
10-15 min.	<p>Children's human rights are all right! Some of the things we need are so important they are called rights. Many of the things children included on their Jack + Chloe maps are probably considered rights.</p> <p>In 1989, the United Nations decided that a special convention was needed to outline the rights of children. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child lists that children from birth to age 18 should have.</p>	Rights

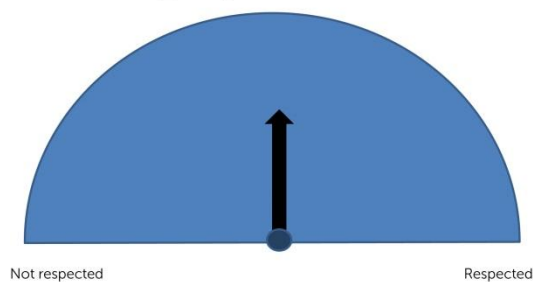
	<p>Some questions to start discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where have you heard of rights before? • To whom do rights belong? • What do rights mean for you? • What kinds of rights do you have? • What do you think is the most important right? • How would the world be different if all human rights were respected? • Looking at the UNCRC, are there any rights that stick out to you? Why? <p>Me + Us is especially concerned with Article 12, which says children should have a say when adults are making a decision that affects them and adults should take their opinions seriously.</p>	
10-15 min.	<p>What is dignity? Human dignity and human rights are closely linked. Rights give voice to and seek to realise everyone’s human dignity. Human dignity can be a difficult thing to describe, even for adults. It is often thought of as self-worth or an innate sense of value as a human being. It is something you feel inside and many children often place their hand on their chest to express how dignity feels.</p> <p>A few questions to get your discussion rolling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you heard the word ‘dignity’ before? Where? • How do you get dignity? Can you buy it? Earn it? • How do we show others that we have respect for their human dignity? • How do you act to show respect for your own dignity? • How do you feel when your dignity is respected? How do you feel if your dignity isn’t respected? • Why is dignity important? 	Human dignity Respect
20 min.	<p>Dignity-o-meter Based on your previous discussion of human dignity, ask each child to think of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an experience when their human dignity has been respected (e.g. ‘when friends stuck up for me when I was being bullied’ or ‘when my teacher told me I did well after working really hard on my maths’) • an experience when their human dignity was not respected (e.g. ‘when people were making fun of me on my FB wall’ or ‘when I was called a racist name at a football match’). 	

Once the children have thought of their examples, have them write them down on thin strips of paper.

As a group, decide where each example fits on the Dignity-o-meter (prepared beforehand on A2 paper), ranging from 'respected' on one side to 'not respected' on the other. Some examples might be far to one side and some might be in the middle.

When the group has decided where the examples fit, glue down the strips of paper to finish off the Dignity-o-meter.

Dignity-o-meter



**The Dignity-o-meter might be a useful tool to refer back to when discussing prejudice and stereotypes in Part 3.

10-15 min.

Agree or Disagree

Sharing opinions comes more easily to some children than others. Agree or Disagree is an easy and fun way to get all of the children expressing their opinions and can help build confidence in sharing their opinions in later Me + Us sessions. Remind children that respecting differences of opinion is important in this activity.

	<p>Assign one side of the room to be 'Agree' and the other to be 'Disagree'. The middle can represent 'Don't know/unsure'. Read the following statements and ask the children to move to an area of the room depending on whether they agree, disagree or are unsure about the statement. After each statement, ask a few children to say <i>why</i> they have chosen agree/disagree/don't know.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Margarita pizza is better than pepperoni pizza. 2. Playing outside is more fun than playing video games. 3. By age 10, all children should have a mobile phone. 4. Scotland is a good place to grow up. 5. Children should help with chores around the house. 6. Pupils should be able to wear whatever they want to school. 7. Children should always be told the truth. 	
25 min.	<p>What do you think? Interviews will allow the children to share more of their ideas and experiences with each other. Pair up the children and ask them to interview each other using the provided template (or create one of your own).</p> <p>Remind the group that the purpose of these interviews is to share with and to learn about each other, so we don't want just yes or no answers! Get as many details down as many details as you can.</p> <p>When the children have finished their interviews, have them report back to the group one thing they learned about their partner.</p>	Interview
25 min.	<p>Photography session By the end of this session, each child should have a photograph taken to be used during the next session.</p> <p>These can be head and shoulders shots or full-body shots, whatever the children prefer. This is a good opportunity to have the children practice using the camera.</p> <p>We suggest doing this at the same time as the interview. While the children are doing their interviews, pull aside a pair at a time and have them photograph each other.</p>	

20 min.	<p>For next time...</p> <p>Ask the children to bring in objects and photographs that are important to them. We recommend 10-15 items per child. They should represent lots of different aspects of their lives – from interests and memories to important people and future goals. These items need to be photographed or scanned by the end of Session 4; this can be done however best suits your group.</p> <p>Pass out sketchbooks – these are the children’s to write down questions or ideas, make sketches, whatever they want. The children should be encouraged to write and draw away from Me + Us too. Maybe start with an acrostic poem using their name:</p> <p>Just have to run Always eating grapes Music playing on my iPod Enjoy Doctor Who Sleep is good</p> <p>Sometimes silly Always athletic Routinely random Awesomely artistic Heavenly happy</p>	
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This session requires the following Me + Us props or resources:

- Jack + Chloe maps
- Children’s Human Rights PowerPoint
- United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Partner Interview Template