

Centropa Lesson

Survival in Sarajevo

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Overview Information

Type of school: Israeli public school

Course taught in: English as a second language

Primary category the lesson belongs to: Language, Ethics

Grade level of students: 11th-12th grades

Total require time to teach lesson: double period

Lesson Summary

We began the lessons by discussing the religious communities living in Israel and students relating their own experiences of dealing with those communities. I then provided information about Serbia and Bosnia, locating them on a map and providing background about the 1990s war. Before watching the film, I wrote vocabulary they would need on the blackboard and divided them into groups – each group was assigned to answer questions related to one part of the film they were responsible for answering. The students watched the film and then discussed the following: the reasons the communities fought, what a fight can lead to, how to prevent it from happening again, and more. To conclude, students wrote a letter to one of the people in the film and listened to “Imagine,” John Lennon’s song.

Background Lesson Information

1. Context for Lesson – Since this is an English as a Second Language (ESL) course this lesson works on vocabulary and other skills for students grades 11-12 (17-18 year olds). If their English is not good enough they can watch the film once in English and once in Hebrew. (For German speakers, we also have it in German.) My students told me they are familiar with the topic from their history course.
2. Enduring Understanding – There are peaceful ways for ethnic and religious communities to resolve their differences.
3. Goals/objectives:
 - a. To understand the Bosnian conflict in the 1990s.
 - b. Students will learn to work cooperatively.
 - c. Improved English language comprehension (read English subtitles and answer questions), English language expression (discuss ideas in English), English language writing.
 - d. Students will think about how they resolve their own conflicts and those affecting their communities and apply new approaches the next time there is a conflict.
 - e. Students will learn that those in religious and ethnic groups with troubling relationships with other communities also have people in them willing to work peacefully together.
4. **Centropa Resources:** Survival in Sarajevo film in English:
<http://centropastudent.org/?typ=sprache&fLang=ENG&movID=44&nID=78&q=m>.

And possibly the same film in Hebrew:

<http://centropastudent.org/?typ=sprache&fLang=ISR&movID=44&nID=241&q=m>.

Here it is in German:

<http://www.centropastudent.org/?typ=sprache&fLang=AUT&movID=44&nID=39&q=m>

Other resources:

- Map of the former Yugoslavia and a map of the countries that exist there now
 - computer, projector, screen and speakers to show the film
 - version of John Lennon's song "Imagine" (Lilya used the Glee version)
5. What background skills or knowledge do students need to successfully learn the concepts, information and skills in the lesson?

Students need to be able to follow the narrator of the film in English, to discuss peace and war in English, and to express themselves and their own experiences through speech and writing on some level in English.

The Lesson

Please include a detailed description for teachers so they know how to teach this lesson and include the following:

1. Motivating the students: We began the lesson by starting with the students' own experiences of how different ethnic and religious groups handle conflict.
2. Pedagogy: class discussion, lecture, group work answering questions, writing and reflection.
3. The lesson.
 - 1) Students discuss in English the religious communities living in Israel, relating the topic as much as possible to their own experience of dealing with different communities. Weak students can speak in their mother tongue, if needed. Questions include:
 - a. What do you know about them?
 - b. How do you feel about them?
 - c. Do you have friends from these communities?
 - d. Ethiopian pupils can talk about things in their country of origin. Did all the communities live together well? Were there problems and, if so, what were they? And whatever the discussion leads to.
 - 2) The teacher provides information about Serbia and Bosnia, shows it on the map, talks about the war of 1990-s. Background information can be found at this web site: http://upload.centropa.org/upload/centropa-sarajevo/Centropa.org_Sarajevo/Sarajevo_home.html
 - 3) Teacher writes vocabulary from the film on the board:
 - A city under siege
 - Disintegrate
 - Search shelter

- Exodus
 - Righteous Among the Nation Award/Righteous Gentile
- 4) The class is divided into groups, each group gets questions to answer for one part of the film. If necessary, students can watch the film twice. Questions (listed by section of film) include:

A city under siege

- When did the war start?
- Why did it start?
- What happened at war?

Looking for Help, Looking to Help

- Where did people search shelter?
- What was La Benevolencija all about?
- What were the jobs that people did there?

A Community Goes to Work

- How did La Benevolencija operate during the war?
- Who helped?
- How did it help children?

Exodus

- What is the exodus in the film?

Muslims and Jews

- What did Zeynebe get a Righteous Gentile award for?
- How old was Denis when he left Bosnia?
- Where did he go to school?
- Did he return to Sarajevo?
- Where does he live now?

- 5) The students watch the film and, in their groups, answer their questions in English.
- 6) Then the entire class comes together to discuss the film. The teacher begins by making sure everyone understood what happened in the film. As students ask any clarifying questions those students who answered the questions in the relevant segment of the film should answer them.

Then, the teacher leads a discussion of what they learned in class. Some questions to discuss include:

- Why do communities fight?
- What are some examples of the consequences of different ethnic and religious groups fighting?
- What did the people in La Benevolencija do differently than those who end up fighting?
- What is the reason some people get along and others fight? What factors influence this decision?
- What lessons did you learn from this story?

4. Concluding Activity. As the class does this final writing assignment the teacher plays the song "Imagine," by John Lennon (Lilya used the one from the Glee cast, but any version will do.)

- 1) Option 1: Each student writes a letter to one of the characters of the film – Zeynaba or Denis or Rasha – that reflects what they've learned in the lesson, or something they wanted to tell them as they watched the film.
- 2) Option 2: Put yourself in the place of Denis or Rasha. They did not have cell phones or Twitter, but pretend that you were there with them and did have access to Twitter: what would you tweet? You have 140 characters to say something about what you would be going through. In the assignment you must include:
 - a. Give some background: at what point in the story are you sending this tweet? (When they are in Sarajevo? When they are in Israel?)
 - b. Your tweet.

(Students don't need to actually tweet; they can write them on a piece of paper, or put them on a class email list or web site.)

- 3) If the lesson is successful, the teacher may want to show the Centropa film about Guler Orgun, from Turkey, whose Sephardic parents converted to Islam, how she found her Jewish roots again – before she married a Muslim man. Here is the link:
<http://centropastudent.org/?typ=subtitel&fLang=ENG&movID=38&nID=78&q=m&PHPSESSID=d217d496747bdafafb6908aede7b602d>

Reflection

I taught this lesson to 11th graders. It was pretty successful. They watched the film with great interest. They also enjoyed working in groups. Our discussions led to the situation in Israel, as this problem is rather sensitive here. My main goal was to make them think if and how we can manage without having to be constantly involved in wars with neighboring countries, or inside our own country.