

I Repair Sasha's Home

SUMMARY:¹

The students will draw a home that was left behind by someone affected by armed conflict or their own house and they will brainstorm on ways in which they can repair the chosen home and/or make it a happier place to live in. The students will use stickers and coloring pencils to draw or add items, pets, plants and people showing certain behaviors in the home to make it a better place for life. They will write supportive messages for children who had to leave their homes, or to each other (i.e. the children from their own class/group).



Main age group(s) for activity or activities

10-12



Time needed

1 X 60 minutes



Materials needed

Papers, pens, coloring pencils, stickers



Objectives

- To help students develop an awareness of the importance of supporting children growing up affected by armed conflict.
- To help students realize that it's possible to draw strength and inspiration to make a change from positive past experiences and important items we cherish.
- To help develop the awareness of the importance of focusing on here and now in order to create positive change for ourselves or others.
- To help raise awareness of the little things that can contribute to a happier and more dignified life.

Resources

A Burning House

This is a drawing of a destroyed, burning house. I live on the fifth floor and I see a lot of burning houses. The red color represents the fire that makes a house go up in flames.

Whenever I take a walk with my family, I see many destroyed buildings with holes in their roofs. I often think about the people who lived there and who had to flee, having lost everything.

When the war started, I began to worry about all the “booms” that make the windows tremble. Now, I am still afraid of shelling, but I hug my sister and our cat and that makes me feel better.

My sister is celebrating her birthday soon. I wish there wouldn't be any shootings on that day—we would go visit the circus and everything would be good on that day.



Sasha (F), b. 2008 (Ukraine)

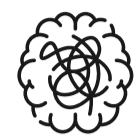
¹ This Activity Plan can be realized together with another Activity Plan from the “Teachers for Teachers” section of the Peace and Justice Education Resource Center called “The Worry Sack” which is also focusing on the experience of a girl named Sasha from Ukraine, and on her personal story and object housed at the War Childhood Museum's Collection.

CATEGORIES



Themes

Being a child in war/everyday life in war, destruction, rebuilding (lives), helping, seeking and finding support



Emotions and feelings

Sadness, worry, fear, hope, fulfillment, compassion



Types of objects

Drawings



Methodologies

Discussion, brainstorming, individual work, art

Short Background

In the story about the burning houses, Sasha can see real burning houses or destroyed buildings in her neighborhood. There are many reasons that can cause children to lose their home, to have to leave it behind, or to have to repair it. Perhaps some of them never even lived in a home.

The reasons can be armed conflicts, natural disasters, the separation of the parents, etc. It's possible that students the teacher/educator is working with will know someone in this situation, have seen stories about this experience on TV or perhaps they have experienced it first-hand.

Students have to know that 1) we can choose to select and focus on the positive moments lived at the home left behind in our memory, 2) we can remember favorite objects inside the home left behind and draw strength from them 3) it's important to focus on here and now to be able to create positive change in my home today, and 4) there are little things that oneself can do so that life can be a little bit happier and more dignified, wherever one might live.

Prep work by teacher/educator

Before the activity the teacher/educator can read the additional/optional materials mentioned in the references at the end of this Activity Plan. They should also explore the different contexts in which children have to leave their home behind or in which families have to repair or rebuild their homes. These situations can be wars, natural disasters, separations etc.

It is advisable for the teacher/educator to be informed if any of the students in the group have experienced a loss of home in the family. If this is the case, the teacher/educator should communicate the theme of the class with their parents/guardians in advance and make sure to create a safe space in which the student(s) in question are not spotlighted and not asked direct questions; they should feel safe to only share if they themselves initiate sharing.

Activities

Step 1

The teacher/educator puts students into groups of about 5 and they read Sasha's story (printable version of the story and object photo are available in the Annex 1 of this plan) . Then the teacher/educator will ask the students if they know anyone who has lost their home. The teacher/educator can talk briefly about different situations in the world that might lead to loss of home.

Then the teacher/educator asks this question:

- 1 Imagine that this is either Sasha's home (option 1) or your own home (option 2) that you have to repair. What do you choose?

After the students choose an option, the teacher/educator proceeds to explain:

It is really important to focus on the here and now and to recognize all the ways in which we are able to help Sasha or ourselves feel better by making a positive change!

Option 1

If the students choose the first option, the teacher/educator continues with these questions:

- 1 What good memories, objects/items or pets do you think Sasha has had in her home? Imagine for a few moments.
- 2 Is there any object, word, sticker or painting you can add to the drawing of her home to help repair it?
- 3 What could we do to help Sasha repair her home? Are there additional ways of supporting her?

The teacher/educator suggests to the students to use the stickers they have prepared in advance, the students choose some of them, cut and stick or they draw, write and paint things too. The teacher/educator can give ideas: glue on the 'healing and lollipop stickers', write positive messages, clean the room, paint flowers, plant seeds, sing a song, hug someone, etc.

Option 2

If the students choose the second option, the teacher/educator continues with these questions:

- 1 Is there a time in the past from your own home that was especially good and that you would like to remember? Think a little bit.
- 2 Is there a favorite or desired object/item or a pet from your home that you would like to draw or add to your drawing to help make it happier?
- 3 What little things can you do or add to your home to be happier wherever you live now?

The teacher/educator suggests to the students to use the stickers they have prepared in advance, the students choose some of them, cut and stick or they draw, write and paint things too. The teacher/educator can give ideas: glue on the 'healing and lollipop stickers', write positive messages, clean the room, paint flowers, plant seeds, sing a song, hug someone, etc.²

Afterwards, the teacher/educator leaves time to share their ideas and drawings.

² The teacher/educator can use websites such as [Freepik](https://www.freepik.com) to create the stickers (choose the free filter and words like, 'homes in good conditions', 'house parts stickers', 'pets', 'healing' or 'lollipops', 'posters', etc.).

Step 2

The teacher/educator places on the floor all the drawings they made. The teacher/educator asks:

- 1 What words of support could we say to Sasha (option 1) or to the students in our group (option 2) to make her/ourselves feel better?

After brainstorming, each student writes a message in a speech or thought bubble on the whiteboard/blackboard.

The educator takes a photo of the drawings and messages to put it in the class folder and each student can take their work home or keep it in their class folder.

Step 3

To finish the activity, the teacher/educator asks:

- 1 What can you do to feel better at home today?

Write one word that sums it up on a piece of paper, put it in your pocket and try to fulfil this intention by the end of the day. Take the paper out of the pocket once you have fulfilled it. You can do it. Try it!

Follow-up possibilities

The teacher/educator can read some poems written by children whose childhoods were affected by war. For example, UNICEF's "Poems for peace"³ which have been viewed more than 26 million times since 2020. Students can also write their own poem after reading some of these poems in class, or they can draw or use some stickers to illustrate the poem they heard.

3 UNICEF, "Poems for peace" available at <https://www.unicef.org/children-under-attack/poems-for-peace> (Accessed: May 21, 2023, 15.30 h)

ANNEX 1

A Burning House

This is a drawing of a destroyed, burning house. I live on the fifth floor and I see a lot of burning houses. The red color represents the fire that makes a house go up in flames.

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When the war started, I began to worry about all the “booms” that make the windows tremble. Now, I am still afraid of shelling, but I hug my sister and our cat and that makes me feel better.

My sister is celebrating her birthday soon. I wish there wouldn't be any shootings on that day—we would go visit the circus and everything would be good on that day.



Sasha (F), b. 2008 (Ukraine)

REFERENCES

Additional materials in English and other languages for teacher/educator:

1. NSPCC Childline - Speak Out Stay Safe, available at <https://tinyurl.com/bdhrtw9b> (Accessed: June 10, 2023)
2. UNICEF, “Natural disasters “, available at <https://www.unicef.org/topics/natural-disasters> (Accessed: May 21, 2023)
3. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, “Talking to children about war“, available at <https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/talking-to-children-about-war.pdf> (Accessed: May 21, 2023)

Additional/optional materials in English for children:

1. Sesame Street, “General resilience“ available at <https://www.cfchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/resources/sesame-street/img/general-resilience/doc/educator-activity-guide.pdf> (Accessed: May 21, 2023)

Additional/optional materials in Spanish for teachers, parents and children:

1. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ACNUR Comité Español, “La crisis de refugiados contada para niños“ available at https://www.observatoriodelainfancia.es/oia/esp/documentos_ficha.aspx?id=5572 (Accessed: May 29, 2023)
2. Fundación La Caixa, “Érase una vez... un volcán “ available at <https://fundacionlacaixa.org/es/pobreza-infantil-erase-una-vez> (Accessed: May 29, 2023)
3. Sesame Street, resources in Spanish (on traumatic experiences) available at <https://sesameworkshop.org/search?s=&type=resource&topic=traumatic-experiences-en&language=es> (Accessed: May 29, 2023)