

# Lesson Plan: *Boys, Toys and the Big Blue Marble*

(Marquise Lepage, Productions Virage, 2007, 52 min)

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## Plan at a Glance

### Levels of education

High school and college

### Objectives

To raise student awareness of human rights and the different realities that boys around the world face; to analyze these problems and try to find some solutions, even partial ones.

### Linkage with training programs in Quebec schools

Subject Areas	Broad Areas of Learning	Cross-curricular Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Social Sciences</li><li>- Personal development</li><li>- Languages</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Citizenship and community life</li><li>- Health and well-being</li><li>- Environmental awareness and consumer rights and responsibilities (depending on the options)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To construct one's identity</li><li>- To use information</li><li>- To solve problems</li><li>- To exercise critical judgment</li><li>- To communicate appropriately</li><li>- To use creativity (depending on the options)</li></ul>

### Structure of proposed activity

Activity #	Goal	Principal Steps
Activity 1 (75 min)	To put the film in context then watch it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Initial questions</li><li>- Establish context</li><li>- Watch documentary</li></ul>
Activity 2 (75 min)	Analysis of problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Initial question</li><li>- Round table discussion on problems</li><li>- Choose topic for assignment</li></ul>
Activity 3 (75 min)	Analysis of solutions and summing up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Initial question</li><li>- Presentation of students' written work</li><li>- Group discussion on solutions and roles of each person</li><li>- Summing up</li></ul>

## Activity 1: Set Context and View Film (75 min)

Step	⊕
<p><b>1. Initial questions (to whole class)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do all children in the world have the same rights? Do you think that everyone's rights are respected?</li> <li>- In your opinion, are there any differences between the problems faced by girls and boys in the world?</li> <li>- What is one of your typical days like (what do you do from morning to night on an average day)?</li> <li>- Does child labour still exist? In what forms?</li> <li>- How do we manage to agree on what rights the children of the world have?</li> </ul>	14 min
<p><b>2. Establishing context</b></p> <p><b>Rights of the Child:</b> As a follow-up to the last question, talk about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>1</sup> (UNCRC).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Point out that it was ratified in 1989 by every country except the United States and Somalia.</li> <li>• Give an overview of the Convention's major broad categories or give some examples of the rights enshrined in it.</li> </ul> <p><b>Documentary:</b> <i>Boys, Toys and the Big Blue Marble</i> was filmed in 2007 and deals with the difficult realities faced by boys in the world. A similar film was made in 1999 by the same documentary filmmaker, Marquise Lepage, entitled <i>Of Hopscotch and Little Girls</i>, dealing with the harsh realities faced by girls around the world.</p>	5 min
<p><b>3. Structure of the three activities</b></p> <p>Activity 1: View the film            Activity 2: Round table discussion and assignment            Activity 3: Reading or interpretation of the students' written work and discussion</p>	2 min
<p><b>4. View the documentary</b></p>	52 min
<p><b>5. Instructions for the next activity</b></p> <p>Round table discussion on various issues raised in the documentary.</p>	2 min

<sup>1</sup> An abridged version of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child can be found on this site: [http://rehydrate.org/facts/convention\\_summary.htm](http://rehydrate.org/facts/convention_summary.htm)

**Activity 2: Analysis of Problems (75 min)**

Step	⊕
<p><b>1. Initial question</b></p> <p>The documentary concludes with: “The earth may be round like a ball, but to many children, it’s not a place of fun and games.” What do you think of this statement?</p>	5 min
<p><b>2. Round table discussion with entire class (or group discussions) on the problems raised in the documentary</b></p> <p>If possible, place the desks in a circle around the classroom to create a genuine round table atmosphere. Ask questions to encourage discussion. Ask the students to express their opinions and then to discuss everyone’s opinions as a group. The students should raise their hands and wait to be called on before speaking and all discussion should be carried out in a respectful fashion. Once a student has finished speaking, he or she transfers the right to speak to the next person (from among those who have their hands raised). The teacher’s role is to bring subjects to the fore and use questions to keep the discussion going. Annex I provides a list of topics for possible discussion (with a summary and sample questions). Although solutions do not become the primary focus until Activity 3, some possible solutions can already begin to emerge at this stage to provide the students with some examples.</p>	60 min
<p><b>3. Choosing a topic for the assignment</b></p> <p>Write a list of the various topics addressed by the documentary on the board (Annex I).</p> <p>Explain the students’ assignment. Using the educational fact sheet in Annex II and working either individually or in a team, the students have to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) choose a topic from the proposed list;</li> <li>2) analyze the problem;</li> <li>3) find out which rights enshrined in the CRC are being violated;</li> <li>4) find what they think are solutions;</li> <li>5) think about the following question: “In your opinion, who has a role in improving this problem?”</li> <li>6) write three to five paragraphs on their topic. Their text must include not only parts of the problem, but of solutions as well. The text may take the form of poetry or prose, or even <i>slam</i><sup>1</sup> or rap. They can write it either from the “I” point of view, as an observer of those realities, or as if they were “standing in their shoes” — as if it were the child experiencing these realities who was sending us a message.</li> </ol>	10 min

<sup>1</sup> The term “slam” poetry has its origins in the expression “slam a door.” In oral and public poetry, it is a question of grabbing the listeners by the collar and “slamming” them with words and images to shake them up, to affect them emotionally. (See <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poetry\\_slam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poetry_slam)>).

**Activity 3: Analysis of Solutions and Summing Up (75 min)**

Step	⊕
<p><b>1. Initial question</b></p> <p>In the song in French at the very beginning of the documentary, we hear the words: “And joy in this world depends on everyone.” What do you think of this?</p>	3 min
<p><b>2. Presentation of the students’ written work</b></p> <p>The students present their poem, prose, slam or rap in front of the class.</p>	40 min
<p><b>3. Group discussion on the solutions and the role of each person (including their own)</b></p> <p>The song at the very end of the documentary says: “All the children in the world should live in love, and the love in this world depends on <u>you and me</u>.” Who can change the situations in the film? And what can each of us do to help?</p>	20 min
<p><b>4. Summary</b></p> <p>Go back over the activity (the three activities). Ask the students to summarize:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) the problems;</li> <li>2) the solutions;</li> <li>3) the role of the different social actors for change (citizens, media, business, NGOs, governments, etc.);</li> <li>4) their own role.</li> </ol>	12 min

**References**

**Documentary *Boys, Toys and the Big Blue Marble***

[www.nfb.ca/collection/films/fiche/?id=56025](http://www.nfb.ca/collection/films/fiche/?id=56025)

**Documentary *Of Hopscotch and Little Girls***

[www.nfb.ca/collection/films/fiche/index.php?id=33878](http://www.nfb.ca/collection/films/fiche/index.php?id=33878)

**Convention on the Rights of the Child**

[rehydrate.org/facts/convention\\_summary.htm](http://rehydrate.org/facts/convention_summary.htm) (abridged)

[www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm) (full)

**To know more**

**UNICEF (Canada)**

[www.unicef.ca](http://www.unicef.ca)

**Free the Children**

[www.freethechildren.com/index.php](http://www.freethechildren.com/index.php)

## Annex I: Principal Topics Addressed in the Documentary

### CHILD LABOUR

"One hundred and forty million boys around the world work for nothing or next to nothing. A quarter of them are under 10 years old." We see them in the documentary working as miners from dawn to dusk, as child soldiers, for their marabout [holy man], or for a system that has captured them and is using them for drug trafficking or sexual exploitation. Some people believe that slavery has been abolished, but it still exists in these different guises.

#### **Suggested questions for round table discussions**

- In the documentary Reinaldo says: "For me, it's normal that children work." What do you think about that?
- Is it always bad for a child to work? For example, is it bad if children help their families in the fields, without being forced to do so, and they receive an education?
- Who benefits from the labour of these children? (Think about the children working in the mines, the "beach boys" and the child soldiers.)
- What are the consequences of child labour? (Possible replies include health, injuries, death, violated rights, deprivation of education, etc.).
- Does child labour exist here? What is the minimum working age?

### POVERTY

The reason why most children in the world have to work is poverty. They have trouble affording food, clothes and proper shoes. They often become responsible for supporting their families at a very young age. To eliminate or reduce child labour it is also important to think of ways to help children and their families escape their poverty.

#### **Possible questions for round table discussion**

- Where do we find poverty in the world? Are the countries considered poor populated only by poor people or do rich people live there too? What are the causes of this inequality?
- Is there any poverty here? (Point out the fact that poverty is relative: people are poor with respect to their environment.)
- When we compare ourselves to other people and their possessions, do we tend to compare ourselves with the richest people or the poorest? Are we sometimes not thankful enough for what we have?

### VIOLENCE

Many children and teenagers around the world are exposed to violence. This is particularly true of children living in the favelas of Brazil, who are witnesses to or even victims of shootings connected to drug trafficking. It is also true of child soldiers in many countries, who are forced to participate in the war and risk torture if they refuse.

#### **Possible round table questions**

- What kinds of violence do the children in the documentary face? (Beaten by their masters; tortured and sometimes even killed; forced to wage war; witness to shootings, etc.).
- What are the possible consequences for these young people in being victims, witnessing atrocities or even being perpetrators of shootings?
- Are children here exposed to violence? In what forms? (Violence in the family, at school, gangs, on television, in video games, etc.).

### **SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

“Between 2 and 3 million children in the world are victims of sexual abuse. An increasing number are boys.” Just in Sri Lanka, “Every year, 10,000 ‘beach boys’ are abused by tourists, or are recruited into the rings run by local gangs...” They are kidnapped while innocently walking on the beach. Now they are afraid to go to those places. As one of boys interviewed said: “I didn’t tell my parents what happened. I was too scared that they’d beat me. I was ashamed.” Thus, they often live with their secret in silence, lest they be victims a second time.

#### **Possible round table questions**

- Who do you think is responsible for the sexual exploitation of young people? (Local mafia, tourists, government, etc.).
- One boy confides to the filmmaker that “they take mainly boys from poor neighbourhoods where kids don’t have parents to look after them.” Do you think that poor children are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation?

### **CHILD SOLDIERS / WAR**

“There are 300,000 child soldiers in over 30 countries throughout the world. Most of them are boys.” These children are forced to participate in wars that they do not necessarily approve of or understand. They are forced to commit terrible acts under threat of being tortured or killed themselves if they refuse to follow orders. In the meantime, they are robbed of their childhood, their games, their education and their families. One of the boys in the film put it well: “Children shouldn’t be in the army; they should be at school and be happy.”

#### **Suggestions for round table questions**

- Do you think that child soldiers agree with the wars in which they are forced to participate?
- Do you think they are aware of the issues involved in those wars?
- What are the potential consequences for child soldiers who participate in a war?

**OTHER TOPICS** can also be discussed with the students. For example:

- **Criminality** (crimes committed by child soldiers, drug trafficking in the favelas, etc.).
- **Safety and health** (exhausting physical work, injuries, overall health, psychological well-being, torture and even—in some cases—death)
- **Consumption of alcohol or drugs** (child soldiers who drink to forget their misery, young people in the favelas who fall victim to drugs, etc.).
- **Theft of their childhood / Pushed prematurely into adulthood** (often cannot play like other children their age; duty to support the needs of the family, separation from the family in some cases, etc.).
- **Gender differences** (between the problems faced by boys and girls in the world)
- **Geographic and social differences** (between the problems experienced by some young people here and elsewhere)
- **Religion** (different religions might have different perceptions of human rights or of certain problems. What does the Convention say about the rights of the child and religion?)
- **Dreams** (These children have dreams too. What might they be? Do you think they will be able to achieve them? Etc.)

**Annex II: Educational Fact Sheet for Written Assignment**

(Add other sheets if needed)

**1. Topic chosen**

**2. Analysis of the problem**

**3. Which rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>1</sup> are being violated?**

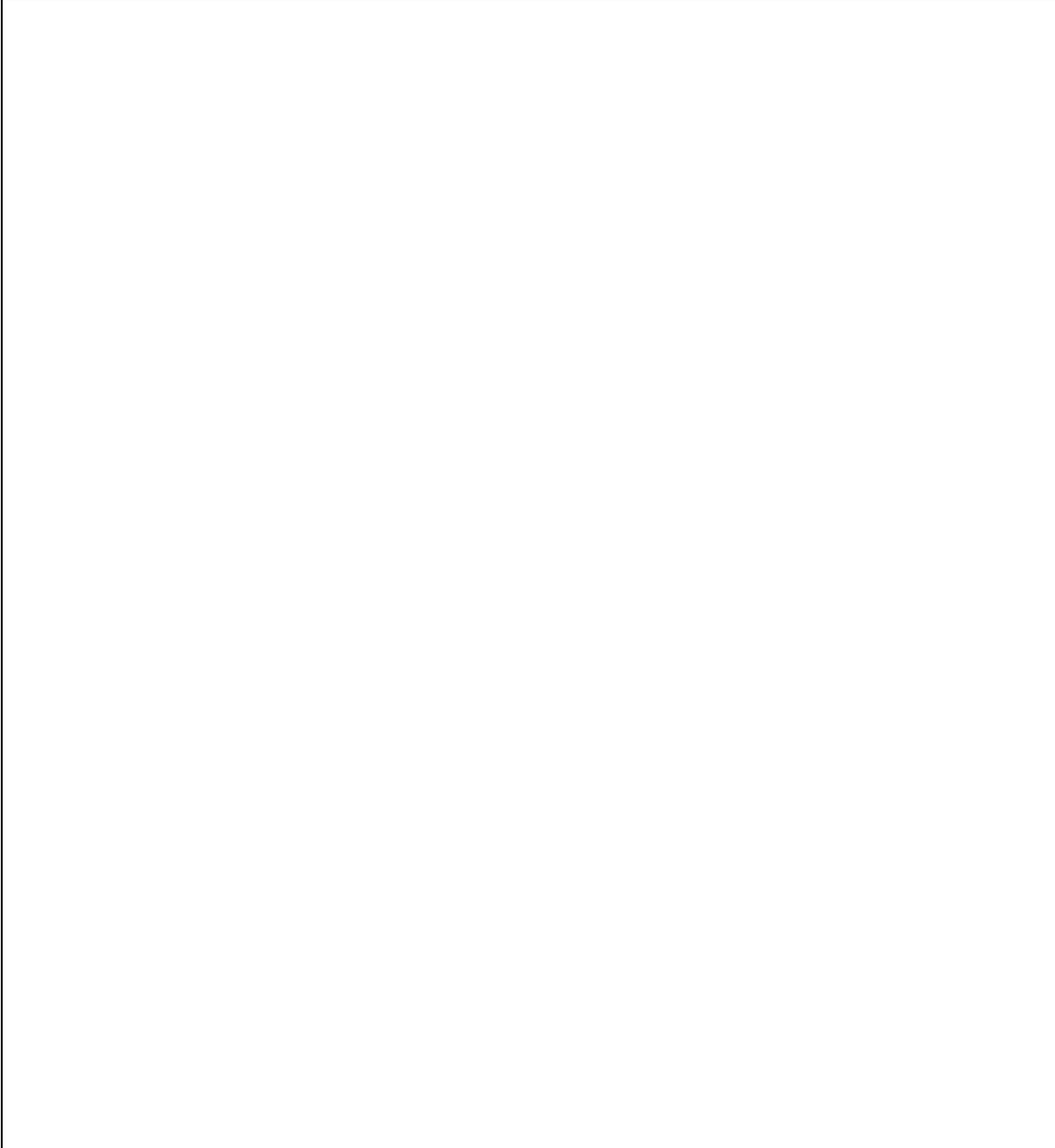
**4. Some solutions**

**5. In your opinion, who has a role to play in improving this problem?**

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<sup>1</sup> You can refer to the abridged version of the CRC on this site:  
[http://rehydrate.org/facts/convention\\_summary.htm](http://rehydrate.org/facts/convention_summary.htm)

**6. Write a short text (three to five paragraphs) that includes an explanation of the problem but also incorporates some solutions. Your text can be in the form of poetry, prose, *slam*<sup>1</sup> or rap. You can write it either from the “I” point of view, as an observer of those realities, or else you can write it as if you were “standing in their shoes” (as if you were the child experiencing these realities).**



**7. Present your written work to the class (reading, slam or rap)**

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