

## REFUSE TO STAND IDLY BY

On-line Resource: <http://www.tolerance.org/> Grades 6 to 8, Grades 9 to 12

### Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- identify 10 crucial global issues.
- list some simple social justice actions they can take.

### Essential Questions:

- What are some crucial global social issues facing us today? Why is it importance to take action?
- Why are many people slow to take action for social justice?

### Enduring Understandings

- Many crucial global issues exist today, including poverty, hunger, and human rights. If people take action, they can work to solve these problems.
- Although we live in an information-rich society, many people are slow to act for social justice. They may feel helpless in the face of huge problems, or that they don't know what they can do to make a difference.

### Materials Needed:

- One copy of the Global Issues handout for each student
- One copy of the Resources handout for each student (or per groups of students)
- One copy of the Words of Hope handout for each student

### Vocabulary

capacity [kuh-pah-sih-tee] (noun) the ability to perform or withstand something

corrosive [kuh-roh-siv] (adjective) having the quality to destroy something

social justice [soh-shuhl juhs-tis](noun) a fair society with equal human rights

tumultuous [tuh-muhl-choo-uhs] (adjective) marked by loud, emotional disturbance

### Suggested Procedure

1. Put students into groups of four. Give each student a copy of the Global Issues handout. Tell students to brainstorm what they believe the most crucial issues are that we face as a world today. Give them a couple of ideas to get them started—for example, poverty and war.

2. After each group finishes its list, instruct the students that in the first column marked “Importance 0-5” they must come up with a number of how important the issue is— with 5 being the highest. (Obviously, the numbers will be high or the issue would not have made the list. Expect 4s and 5s.) To help the groups reach consensus, have all students present their opinions via a show of fingers: One finger, not important. Five fingers, very important. Add the fingers and divide by four; that average will represent the group’s opinion.

3. In the second column marked “Knowledge 0-5,” have students write a number for how much they think they know about this topic. They live in an information-rich world where the TV news, social media, radio and Internet offer them information constantly. Expect anywhere from 2s to 4s. After students are done, speak to the reality that they seem to know quite a bit about issues.

4. In the last column, “Action 0-5,” ask students to choose a number that reflects what they are doing about the issue. They will be mostly 0s and 1s. Some students will be active in a few causes.

5. Ask students: Why are so many people slow to take social action? Why do so many people who are concerned about problems still do nothing at all? Lead a conversation with students about why taking action is important and what they can do. Give everyone a copy of the quotes handout. Invite a number of students to read quotes out loud to the rest of the class. Then have a class-wide discussion about the meaning, tone, and word choice of each quote. Feel free to use any of the quotes as writing prompts.

### Extension Activity:

Do Something: Divide students into small groups and offer examples of actions and causes that they can participate in immediately. Give students copies of the Resources handout for ideas. Then have students brainstorm 10 simple social justice actions that they can take this very week. What kinds of actions can they take that will begin, if modestly, to address local, national or global problems? Offer some starter ideas, such as the following:

- Smile and be kind to classmates with whom they don’t usually interact.
- Volunteer at a local community organization.
- Bake cookies for the elderly couple or needy family in their neighborhood.

Have students report back to the class, either orally or through a writing assignment, attesting to what they did and how it was received or made them feel. Ask students if they plan to continue to be involved with this cause. Also ask if the Resources handout has inspired them to participate in any other action opportunities.