

CHILD MARRIAGE
FREE WORLD

TEACHERS' PACK

CHILD MARRIAGE FREE WORLD: THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART!

By taking part in the campaign, you are joining schools, children, and communities all over the world in making a commitment to end child marriage.

We've created the following resources to support teachers to raise awareness of the impact of child marriage with their students, both male and female, during the school pledging event:

In this document:

- 1-side Lesson Preparation sheet
- Adaptable Lesson and Assembly plan
- Frequently asked questions

Additional documents:

- [Background Information on Child Marriage](#) leaflet
- [Sample presentation](#) for teachers.

Every year millions of children, mostly girls, are forced to marry whilst they are still a child. It has devastating effects on the child's education, health, childhood, and future. By raising awareness among your students, you are supporting their empowerment and ability to make informed choices about their futures.

If you require further information or support, please visit childmarriagefree.world or email us: campaign@childmarriagefree.world

Thank you again for joining us!

The Child Marriage Free World Campaign Team

SCHOOL LESSON/ASSEMBLY PREPARATION SHEET

1. PREPARATION

Teachers may wish to read the background information contained in on the [Child Marriage Free World website](#) and the [Background Information on Child Marriage](#) leaflet designed for readers 12 and above which explains the causes and consequences of child marriage, your rights under the law and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to be protected from child marriage.

In addition, teachers may wish to consult our database to find out what the rate of child marriage is, and what the laws on child marriage are in your country – simply visit childmarriagefree.world/laws and find your country.

2. TEACHER MATERIALS

- Teachers are welcome to create presentations from the [background information](#). We have an example presentation available [here](#) for those teachers that would like to adapt one.
- If your class or assembly will be taking the Child Marriage Free World Pledge, you may wish to have the wording of this available in the room.
- If any teachers, parents or other adults are present and want to take the pledge they can take the non-child version.
- If you want your participation to be seen along with other schools all over the world in the international awareness campaign you could also organise someone to take pictures to send to the Child Marriage Free World team.

3. STUDENT MATERIALS

- If in class, large paper and marker pens.
- If in assembly, pen and paper.

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND SKILLS ENHANCED

- Greater knowledge of child marriage, its causes, and its impacts.
- Critical thinking on the children's rights and how they are impacted by child marriage, and ways to take action to prevent it.

A photograph showing several hands raised in the air, with a brick wall visible in the background. A red speech bubble-like shape is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'ADAPTABLE LESSON & ASSEMBLY PLAN'.

ADAPTABLE LESSON & ASSEMBLY PLAN

This lesson and plan is provided as a resource for teachers, but it is fully adaptable.

A. OPENING: BASIC AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF CHILD MARRIAGE (10 minutes)

Ask if anyone wants to share what they know about child marriage; take a few answers and then provide the input from [What is Child Marriage](#), [Where Does Child Marriage Happen](#), and [Is Child Marriage Legal](#) on the website or in the [Background Information](#) leaflet.

The key points below are available in a PowerPoint presentation [here](#).

What is Child Marriage? Key points to consider:

- Child marriage is a formal or an informal union where one or both people are under the age of 18.
- Child marriage is much more likely to happen to girls than to boys. An estimated 640 million women alive today were married before their 18th birthday, compared to 115 million men.
- Worldwide, one in five young women were married as children, many aged 12, 13 and 14.
- Child marriage is reducing slowly, but in some parts of the world, it is increasing among girls from poorer backgrounds.
- Child marriage is a violation of rights and a form of violence against girls (or gender-based violence).

Where Does Child Marriage Happen? Key points to consider:

- Child marriage happens in every region of the world, but to varying degrees.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, 30% of young women were married as children. However, some countries in the region have much higher rates than others - for example, in Niger the rate is as high as 76%, compared to Rwanda (6%) and South Africa (4%).
- Overall, India is home to a third of all women (of all ages) worldwide who were married as children.
- Where you live in a country matters: girls who live in rural areas are more likely to be married as children, compared to girls who live in towns and cities.

Is Child Marriage Legal? Key points to consider:

- Although most countries have a legal age of marriage set at 18, many have exceptions which allow legal child marriage.
- The most regular exceptions include having the consent of parents or guardians, getting permission from a judge or government official, and the legal recognition of marriages conducted under cultural or traditional practices.
- Fewer than 40 countries around the world set the legal age for marriage at 18 with no exceptions.

B. GROUP OR PARTNER DISCUSSION: THE CAUSES OF CHILD MARRIAGE (20 minutes, or 10 minutes if in assembly)

Divide the class into small groups, or if in assembly, ask students to speak to the person next to them, and ask them to write down why they think child marriage happens. If in class, each group could have a large piece of paper and some markers to write out or illustrate their responses.

- In class: after 10 minutes, ask the groups to put their sheets up on the wall, and ask each group to present one of their responses.
- In assembly: ask for volunteers to give a response.

Provide your input from '[Why does child marriage happen?](#)' on the website or the [background information](#).

The key points below are available in a PowerPoint presentation [here](#).

What are the causes of child marriage? Key points to consider:

- Gender inequality is a main cause of child marriage. This is discrimination against women and girls usually based on the differences between genders, like physical and biological differences, and differences in development and ways of thinking.
- Gender inequality is also driven by cultural and societal beliefs that girls are inferior or less valuable than boys.
- Poverty is another major cause of child marriage: girls who are from the poorest families are much more likely to be married as children than girls who are from the wealthiest families.
- Child marriage also causes poverty: girls are married off early and do not complete their education, making them less likely to be able to get decent work later in life. Daughters of girls who were married as children are also likely to be vulnerable to child marriage, continuing the cycle of poverty.
- Living in an area where there is conflict or which is vulnerable to climate disaster impacts also makes girls more vulnerable to child marriage - this usually happens because parents believe their daughters will be protected from violence if they are married.
- Weak laws and government systems: even if the law states that the legal age of marriage is 18 with no exceptions, governments have to spend money to make sure that the law is enforced. They must also provide services which stop girls getting married - such as child protection, or access to safe, free education so that girls are able to go to school.

C. TEACHER INPUT: WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF CHILD MARRIAGE? (10 minutes, or 5 minutes if in assembly)

Teachers can highlight the [impacts of child marriage](#) using the [example presentation](#) or other visual aids. In the [Background Information](#) leaflet, detailed explanations of different impacts are provided.

Teachers can choose how much detail to provide based on the age range of the students participating. Below are key points from the background information, from which teachers can select based on students' ages.

What are the impacts of child marriage? Key points to consider:

- Child marriage denies girls many of their basic human rights, and it puts their health, education, and wellbeing at risk.
- If girls who are married used to be in school, child marriage usually ends their formal education. Not going to school limits girls' ability to understand their rights or to learn about the law and stops the development of their learning and skills.
- When a girl enters a marriage, she usually ends up taking on many hours of household chores for her husband and his family. This means child marriage forces many girls to become child labourers.
- In societies where child marriage occurs, physical violence against women and girls by their husbands is more likely to happen. This is because of the power dynamics between a girl and a husband who is usually an adult, and likely to be much older than her.
- Child marriage also makes girls vulnerable to sexual abuse and rape. Usually, child marriages occur when a girl is below the legal age of consent for sexual relations, which would mean that a husband having sex with a wife under this age is rape. However, very few countries make sexual relations between an adult man married to a child illegal.
- When a married girl becomes pregnant, her health is put at risk. Her body may not yet be developed enough to cope with pregnancy, creating a higher chance of health complications, and even death as a result of early childbirth or complications related to childbirth. Early childbirth also risks the health and survival of the baby.
- When girls are married and are denied their rights, especially to education, their ability to ensure their own children receive their rights is limited.

D. STUDENT INPUT: HOW CAN WE END CHILD MARRIAGE? **(5 minutes)**

This session can be used to reinforce the messages from the rest of the lesson or assembly.

Ask students to consider the different causes and impacts of child marriage, and to think about ways to tackle these which could stop child marriages happening. Ask students to volunteer their ideas about ending child marriage, and explain that these ideas can include things to ask governments for, as well as things that they can do in their communities.

If you are choosing to encourage the students to add their own points to their pledge to make it a firmer commitment, this is a good time to do this.

The wording in bold in the pledge (below) has to be read for it to count as part of the global pledge, but teachers and students can adapt the other text as part of the lesson if you want. You can also put the name of your state and country instead of the word 'country' in the pledge.

While teachers may wish to give some examples from the [background information](#), all ideas are welcome! If you wish to record students' ideas, you can submit these to the Child Marriage Free World team alongside any photos from your event, and the team will use these in their international advocacy.

E. TAKE THE PLEDGE: HANDS UP TO END CHILD MARRIAGE!

At the end of the session, ask all the students if they want to pledge to end child marriage. If they do, ask them to put their Hands Up to End Child Marriage! With one hand raised straight up in the air, they should read the Child Marriage Free World pledge. This is included in the example presentation [here](#), so it can be read from a screen. Alternatively, you can write it on the board or read it out and ask students to repeat after you.

Adults can participate by reading their own pledge text out whilst putting their hand straight up too.

THE PLEDGE FOR **CHILDREN:**

I will not stay silent. I pledge to do all I can to end child marriage in my country and the world.

I will:

- Complete school as I have the right to education
- Decide for myself as an adult who I marry
- Protect other children by safely reporting child marriages.

FOR **ADULTS:**

I will not stay silent. I pledge to do all I can to end child marriage in my country and the world.

I will:

- Report anyone who marries a child
- Protect all children from adults who want to marry them
- Make my community child marriage free.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE CAMPAIGN

1. CAN I ORGANISE THE EVENT ON ANY DAY?

Yes, events can be organised any time.

2. HOW DO I REGISTER OUR PLEDGES?

Visit www.childmarriagefree.world/for-schools/registration or email campaign@childmarriagefree.world with your name, the name of your school, the date of the planned lesson and how many children you expect to take part.

3. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO ON THE DAY?

Follow the lesson or assembly plan in the way you feel is appropriate and make a note of the number of children and adults that choose to take the pledge at the end.

If you are able to take a photo of the pledge being taken, or if the children and adults add their name to a board or piece of paper, then please send us a copy. Please make sure that the children's parents have given consent for their children to appear in photos as we would like to share them on our website and on social media.

The number of participants and your photos and videos can be uploaded to www.childmarriagefree.world or can be emailed to campaign@childmarriagefree.world

4. HOW DO CHILDREN AND ADULTS ACTUALLY TAKE THE PLEDGE? HANDS UP TO END CHILD MARRIAGE!

We are encouraging everyone to raise one hand straight up in the air when they recite the pledge. They can do this sitting down or standing up as you prefer.

Older children may want to add other text to the pledge they make. As long as the core words in bold of the pledge are included and they make a clear commitment to end child marriage then they have taken part in the global pledge.

OTHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. WHAT DOES 'SAFELY REPORTING' MEAN?

We are encouraging everyone to commit to reporting a child marriage if they are invited to a ceremony or informed about one. For children, the wording is to safely report child marriage meaning to a trusted adult such as a teacher or via a national helpline that can alert the authorities in countries where child marriage is illegal.

2. WHO CAN TEACHERS REPORT A CHILD MARRIAGE TO?

The ways to report a child marriage depend on which country you are in, because the laws around child marriage and support systems for children are different in each country.

For example, if you live in a country where child marriage is illegal with no exceptions, you can report a planned child marriage to the police or a child welfare service. You can find information regarding child marriage laws in countries with some of the highest rates of child marriage on our website [here](#).

If you cannot find your country on the list, you can check the [Child Marriage Atlas](#), created by Girls Not Brides.

Even in countries which do not make child marriage completely illegal, you may still be able to report it to a national helpline, usually to support women and girls who are at risk of violence. UN Women signposts to many of these helplines [here](#).