



Summary

This lesson introduces a multi-faceted look at Christian persecution. Students are invited to complete a country profile that shines a light on how Christians are suffering from persecution. Students conclude by hearing about opportunities to help persecuted Christians.

Essential Question

How can persecuted Christians learn from each other about living in this world?

In this question, students work to understand how Christian persecution is something that is inevitable and still a phenomenon that needs to be combatted.

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Engage the students through conversation

- Introduce Christian persecution with students by soliciting ideas from them about stories they may have seen or heard in current events. Encourage them to give examples of what they think persecution might look like. More often than not, a beginning knowledge of Christian persecution will centre on violence.
- Ask students for their ideas on which country is most hostile to Christians. Students may be surprised that the most violent country is not necessarily the most hostile to Christians. The most hostile to Christians is North Korea while there are several that are more violent. Discuss with the class where these other elements of persecution could arise from.
 - In addition to violence, there can be persecution in the areas of church, national, community, family, private life.

Explore what the Bible has to say

- Distribute *Handout 1 – Exploring What the Bible Says* and ask students to read and study each of the provided texts.
- Students should respond to each of the prompts provided on *Handout 1 – Exploring What the Bible Says*.
- Gather the class into groups of 4-5 and invite them to lead a small-group discussion on each of the prompts.

Explore the World Watch List

- Review the *Teacher Overview – Christian Persecution*
- The World Watch List (WWL) is produced annually by Open Doors – an organization dedicated to serving persecuted Christians worldwide.
- Distribute *Handout 2 – Spheres of Persecution*. This handout is invaluable for their project as it outlines in detail how Christian persecution happens. It begins with 'brokenness' → impulse → fuel for a persecution 'engine' → a 'driver' to inflict persecution → a Christian is impacted in one of five life spheres or by violence.
- Take some time to review this so the students have a high-level understanding of how Christian persecution happens.

Optional material

- Depending on your students' level of familiarity with Christian persecution, use the link <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/> to check several different topics like:
 - What is Christian persecution?
 - Where does Christian persecution occur?
 - Why Christian persecution occurs?
 - Why we serve persecuted Christians.
 - Theology of Christian persecution.

Exploring the World Watch List Map

- Review the World Watch List 2017 map available at any of the URLs provided with this lesson plan. The WWL 2017 map is also on page 6 of the included pdf from OpenDoors USA.
- <http://www.opendoorsca.org/world-watch-list/country-profiles/> is a link to an interactive map.

Task – Persecution Profile of a Country

- Distribute *Handout 3 – Persecution Profile*. Students must each individually choose a country and do a Persecution Profile on it. This assignment could be a simple poster project, a narrated and illustrated video, a news report, or a slide presentation.
- In this Persecution Profile they should include:
 - Demographic Statistics
 - A discussion on the country's ranking on the WWL (previous WWL rankings can be obtained via the interactive map at <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/01/2016-world-watch-list-drawn-from-world-headlines/>; by clicking on a country you can retrieve the 2014-2016 WWL rankings). Note well, that a drop in rankings doesn't mean they're friendlier towards Christians – it just means there are more countries more hostile. For example, China in 2017 is #39 but in 2016 was #33. Their level of hostility towards Christians remained at the same intensity level.
 - Include personal stories of Christians that are available on the website links provided with *Handout 3 – Persecution Profile*.
 - Provide a detailed look at how persecution is experienced by Christians in that country in each of the different spheres.
- After students have completed their report, post an artifact of their presentation around the classroom as a visible reminder of the persecution faced by Christians around the world.
- Included with this lesson are two pdf documents *WWL Country Profiles*, and *2017 World Watch List*. It provides approximately 450-500 word summaries on each of the countries as it relates to the different spheres. It is not available on a public website so the teacher will need to assume responsibility for printing and making available the relevant sections.
- Other resources for country profiles:
 - Find detailed country profiles here: http://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/country_profiles.php

- More country profiles can be found here:
<http://www.opendoorsca.org/world-watch-list/country-profiles/>
- Another source of country profiles can be found at:
<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/countries/>
- Another look from a different organization with videos is at:
<https://www.vomcanada.com/restricted-nations.htm>

Extension

- After the class has made each of their presentations, students should evenly divide the task of looking at Canada and seeing what kind of persecution exists in Canada. It may help to consider the brokenness → impulse → engine → driver model.
- Also consider the different spheres of where Christian persecution can enter. Answer the question: “Do Christians experience persecution in Canada?”
- Invite a speaker to provide areas of opportunity to help persecuted Christians. The City of Refuge is a Free Reformed Ministry aimed at assisting persecuted Christian refugees to resettle and integrate into Canada.