



**ROBERT F.
KENNEDY
HUMAN
RIGHTS**

SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

**HUMAN RIGHTS
DEFENDERS WHO
ARE CHANGING
OUR WORLD**

NORTH KOREA: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

JOSEPH KIM

(HE/HIM/HIS)

Joseph Kim was born and raised in North Korea. He survived for three years living on the streets after losing his father, mother, and sister. In 2006, at age 15, Kim escaped to China, where missionaries and representatives from Liberty in North Korea (LINK) helped him make it to the United States. He was able to claim refugee status under the North Korean Human Rights Act, earned a degree from Bard College, and became a U.S. citizen.

Kim delivered a 2013 TED talk on the importance of hope, and he published a memoir, “Under the Same Sky: From Starvation in North Korea to Salvation in America.” Currently, he is expert-in-residence on the Human Freedom Initiative at the George W. Bush Institute in Dallas. The Human Freedom initiative develops leaders in emerging democracies, stands with those who still live under tyranny, and fosters U.S. leadership through policy and action. In his work there, Kim shares his experience living under an authoritarian regime, the denial of human rights in his native country, and why he believes human rights matter in all nations.

PRAISE JOO

(SHE/HER/HERS)

Praise Joo, also known as Chanyang Joo, belongs to the “Jangmadang Generation”—a segment of young people in North Korean society who began selling and trading goods in the gray markets after the public distribution system broke down. As many as 2 million North Koreans starved to death as a result, and many who survived did so by becoming entrepreneurs.

Influenced by information from the media, Praise Joo’s family decided to escape North Korea. Joo was 20 years old when she tried to escape by swimming across the Tumen River. When she arrived in China, she was imprisoned with other escapees. Eventually, with the help of a South Korean NGO, she was reunited with her family in South Korea in 2011.

Joo is currently active in both South Korean and Western media, speaking out about the religious persecution and human rights violations in North Korea. She has worked with Liberty in North Korea (LINK), an organization that helps North Koreans escape, and she is a regular participant on the popular Korean talent and talk show “Now on My Way to Meet You,” which aims to bridge the gap between North and South Koreans.

JINHYE JO

(SHE/HER/HERS)

Jinhye Jo was born in 1987 in North Hamkyung Province, North Korea. In the mid-1990s, when she was still a young child, her country experienced a period of mass starvation coupled with a general economic crisis. Her large, middle-class family was faced with a failed government food-distribution system and eight hungry mouths to feed.

Jinhye Jo, who had lost half of her immediate family, fled to China with her mother and younger sister. As refugees, they faced difficult detention conditions with tortuous interrogations and punishments, but finally escaped to the United States. They were aided by an NGO dedicated to helping North Koreans resettle in the U.S. with the proper health care, education, and basics that they critically needed. Since then, Jinhye Jo has passionately worked to make her difficult life experience matter. She has been an ardent public advocate, testifying before the U.S. Congress and the U.N. Commission of Inquiry. And she has spoken at numerous public events throughout the world. Her goal: to raise public awareness of the suffering in North Korea and to highlight the urgent need to facilitate resettlement efforts for North Korean refugees.

JIHYUN PARK

(SHE/HER/HERS)

Jihyun Park was born in North Korea to a middle-class family and graduated with a degree in math and science and became a teacher. But then the great famine struck her country, and her father and uncle starved to death. She and her brother fled to the border in 1998, fearful that they too would die if they did not escape. The siblings were separated as they crossed into China, and her brother was sent back to North Korea.

In China, Jihyun Park became a victim of human trafficking. For 5,000 yuan (the equivalent of \$750), she was sold into forced marriage to a Chinese farmer with whom she had a child. Chinese authorities arrested her in 2004, separated her from her 5-year-old son, and repatriated her to North Korea. There, she endured horrific conditions in a forced labor camp. When she could no longer work due to gangrene, she opted not to seek treatment. Instead, she trafficked herself again to Chinese brokers in an effort to find her son. With the help of a kind stranger, she and her son were finally reunited and escaped together to the United Kingdom in 2008.

Park continues to live in the U.K. with her husband and three children. She has been a producer for BBC Online Korea Radio and a voice for the voiceless as the North Korean outreach and project coordinator for the European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea (EAHRNK). Currently, as assistant director of Connect: North Korea, she manages Korean-language output, builds relations with North Korean refugees, and oversees special projects

NORTH KOREA: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

LESSON GRADE LEVELS 9 TO 12

FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- **ARTICLE 3:** Right to life, liberty, and security of person.
- **ARTICLE 5:** Right to freedom from torture and degrading treatment.
- **ARTICLE 13:** Right to free movement in and out of the country.
- **ARTICLE 15:** Right to nationality and the freedom to change it.
- **ARTICLE 19:** Right to freedom of opinion and information.
- **ARTICLE 26:** Right to education.

TIME REQUIREMENT

60 minutes

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What do you think of when you hear “North Korea”?
- How are human rights being violated in North Korea?
- What should the purpose of government be?
- What is the political system in North Korea?
- What is the capacity for people to engage in politics and government in North Korea?
- What is a defector?
- What are some of the motivations for North Korean defectors?
- How does (mis)information influence our lives?
- How have young human rights activists made a difference?
- How can you turn a bad experience into a positive one to help others?

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Determine students’ prior knowledge about North Korea.
- Critically examine and analyze the human rights violations in North Korea.
- Introduce students to four North Korean youth activists and human rights defenders: Joseph Kim, Jinhye Jo, Praise Joo, and Jihyun Park.

STUDENT SKILLS

- Critical media analysis.
- Inquiry and critical thinking.
- Active listening skills.
- Group discussion.
- Collaborative team-building.
- Examine and analyze the situation in North Korea through a human rights lens.
- Understand the impact that access to information and education has on the lives of North Koreans.

CONCEPTS

- Human rights
- Empathy
- Resilience
- Self-agency
- Youth activism
- Power

VOCABULARY

- Defector
- Collective punishment
- Authoritarian regime
- Propaganda
- Repatriation

TECHNOLOGY REQUIRED

- Computer and Internet access

MATERIALS

- Posters, pictures
- Quotes from defectors Markers/pens/paper
- Computers
- Speakers

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1

GALLERY WALK (15 MIN)

- As students walk into the class, they will see posters around the room with questions, pictures, and statistics that begin to introduce them to the lesson about the North Korean human rights defenders. (Find information on North Korea for this activity in Additional Resources.)
- **GOAL:** Determine students' prior knowledge. Get students thinking about what they know, do not know, and would like to know about North Korea and about the importance of defending human rights.
- After students have viewed the gallery, ask them to write answers to the following questions. Have a few share their responses when they have finished writing

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is your favorite website?
- What would your life be like without the internet? Your phone?
- What do you know about North Korea? Where did you find/receive that information?
- What have you heard about North Korea? Where did you find/ receive that information?
- What human rights are most important to you?
- Joseph Kim said, "Hope is personal." What does hope mean to you?
- What do you think Praise Joo meant when she said, "We have a saying: 'No matter what the North Korean government's policy is, we can find a way around it. People always find a way.'"

ACTIVITY 2

JIGSAW 4 NORTH KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (35 MIN)

- In groups of four to five (depending on your class size) have students read the narratives of defenders, watch videos of them, and engage deeply with their stories. After students have had time to "get to know" their defender, asked them to present a little about them to the rest of the class as well as share answers to the following questions:
 - What are three things you learned about the defender?
 - What are two things about the defender you would like to know more about, or what two questions would you like to ask them?
 - What did you learn about yourself during this process?

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

- Have each student share with the class one word that captures their experience in class today. If there is time, open up the discussion and reflection to the whole group with these questions:
 - What is something you learned today?
 - With whom will you share what you learned today?

BECOMING A DEFENDER

- First, to learn about the situation in North Korea, you should have completed the Speak Truth to Power lesson plan on *Changing the Narrative*.
- Then, share thoughts with your classmates:
 - Collect your classmates' responses from the questions provided in the lesson plan.
 - Then host a screening with classmates using any one of the compelling documentaries made by Liberty in North Korea (recommended start: *The People's Crisis*). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIZCvQQRoMM>
- Ask the same questions, and compare the students' responses on how they view the people of North Korea.
- Finally, to spread awareness of the situation in North Korea to others:
 - Invite activists from **LIBERTY IN NORTH KOREA** to speak at your school or community center. Invite classmates, parents, and teachers to attend.
 - You can speak on behalf of the North Koreans who are not able to, and spread their stories to the world, one person at a time.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

LIBERTY IN NORTH KOREA

www.libertyinnorthkorea.org

Uses multimedia and direct testimony to tell the story of inside North Korea and the route to escape.

BUSH CENTER

www.bushcenter.org/reports/northkorea/

Provides an overview of the human rights situation with videos and infographics.

COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

www.hrnk.org

Reports on life and the government of North Korea.

NORTH KOREA FREEDOME COALITION

www.nkfreedom.org

Uses grassroots efforts to raise awareness and save North Korean refugees.

LEARNING FOR JUSTICE

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/>

Founded in 1991 by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Learning for Justice is dedicated to reducing prejudice, improving intergroup relations, and supporting equitable school experiences for our nation's children.

SHORT HISTORY OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfptSUzp7Ac>

JOSEPH KIM'S TED TALK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLeeTVmVrtA>

JOSEPH KIM'S GEORGE W. BUSH PRESIDENTIAL CENTER INTERVIEW

<https://www.bushcenter.org/publications/articles/2020/05/democracy-talks--joseph-kim--north-korean-refugee.html>

JOSEPH KIM'S LIBERTY IN NORTH KOREA TALK

www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBygrYzv1j0

JINHYE JO'S THE WITNESS PROJECT INTERVIEW

www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6SBxzxBGxc

JINHYE JO'S FAMILY INTERVIEW

www.cnn.com/2012/03/24/us/north-korean-refugees/

JIHYUN PARK'S AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL INTERVIEW

www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMn2_2TxiSw

STORY IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TIMES

<https://www.ibtimes.co.in/north-korea-prisoners-ate-seeds-animal-dung-menstruating-women-beaten-washing-towels-622705>