



A lesson for Humanities students (Upper Primary/Lower Secondary) on the Rwandan Genocide, based on the Story of Jean Louis Mazimpaka

You can listen to Jean Louis speaking in a podcast on our main website.

Objectives

All pupils to understand that Jean Louis was a person like them, that something terrible happened to him in 1994 and that his survival is a **Legacy of Hope**.

Starter:

Give students envelopes which contain a set of statement cards, found at the end of this document and the “Same as me” and “Different from me” line. You should also give them a copy of the testimony of Jean Louis but this should be in a sealed envelope which students should not open until instructed.

Tell students that the cards contain statements about a young person called Jean Louis. **Ask** them to think about the statements and decide whether each one could apply to them or not. **Ask** them to place the cards along the line, in the position they think is most fitting on or between the statements “Same as me.” and “Different from me.”

Stage one:

Discuss with the students their conclusions and focus on the perceived similarities and differences between members of the group and Jean Louis

Explain that the teenager is called Jean Louis, that he lived in Rwanda, Africa and was 17 years old in 1994

Ask students to locate Rwanda on a map of the world or a globe.

<http://www.mapsofworld.com/rwanda/rwanda-location-map.html>

Instruct students to open the sealed envelope which contains Jean Louis testimony. Ask them to read it individually or in small groups.

Stage two:

Ask students to highlight in different colours sections in Jean Louis' story that:

- Are shocking
- Talk about trauma and loss
- Show how people resisted
- Are hopeful

Conclusion

Lead a summative discussion on Jean Louis' experiences, working through the sections indicated above. Use the final point to draw attention to a **Legacy of Hope** and action for the future.

I am a teenager	I like football	I live in a country that sees itself as having different ethnic groups
I enjoy being with my friends	I join clubs outside of school	I am part of a family
I mix with lots of different types of people	I have ambitions for the future	I am part of an ethnic minority which has experienced discrimination

Same as me _____ Different from me

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What happened to Jean Louis in April 1994?

We heard on the radio that Tutsis were being attacked, and that roadblocks were being erected, but we weren't worried for ourselves - we didn't think it would reach where we lived in Nyamasheke in the south-west.

We were wrong. The killings in my town didn't start until a week after the president was killed, but on 15 April a friend, the husband of a teacher, was killed. People with machetes came to steal from his house, and they killed him. Still we thought we were safe and that this was a one-off, but the next day in the neighbouring town another teacher and his family were killed and we started to get worried.

A friend warned me our family was next - he was part of the militia, but I used to give him medicine for free and we played football together. We took his warning seriously and that night we stayed with a Hutu friend who had a Tutsi wife. When we went to look at our house the next morning, there was nothing left - everything had been stolen.

We went to the church. Refugees started arriving, too - mostly Tutsis, but some Hutus. Some had machete wounds. They were crying, hungry, desperate and confused. Some of us suggested escaping in boats over Lake Kivu to the Democratic Republic of Congo, but the older people, including my parents, still believed we'd be OK, that we wouldn't be attacked in a church.

On 18 April the militia arrived and we saw them preparing to attack. We gathered all the old people, women and children in the buildings and formed four fronts outside to protect them. Young girls found stones for us to throw, and we kept them away for four days. By then it wasn't just the militias, it was the rest of the population as well, including the friend who had warned us - everybody had been brainwashed by the militia to join in. They had machetes, sticks, clubs and grenades. I remember seeing one of my friends hit by a grenade - it scattered his body parts all around.

With some friends I managed to hide in a building that housed a herd of cows. I didn't know whether my parents were dead or alive, but there was no time to look for them and no time to think about it. We had to concentrate on hiding. We stayed hidden while the militia stole the cows. When they were gone, we decided to swim across Lake Kivu.

There were 12 of us - the other 11 drowned. I couldn't think about it, I had to keep swimming. After two nights I reached the other side. A fisherman gave me food and I went to find my uncle who lived there.

A year later, I went back to Rwanda. I was traumatised. I didn't want to go back to school, but a priest convinced me to. After school, I got a job but I wanted to leave. I had two cousins who survived, but everyone else was gone. I couldn't take the loneliness any longer, so in 1999 I came to the UK.

I met my wife, another survivor, through friends. We got married in 2005 and now have a daughter. It's hard for survivors to speak about what happened, and my wife doesn't like to talk about it to strangers. But it helps me, because I am doing something to continue the memory of what happened. I speak to groups about it through the charity [Survivors Fund](#). People are shocked that it happened, that they didn't know. It is exhausting, but that is what we have left, the story of our loved ones.

Extension:

- **Use** web links or listen to our podcast to explore Jean Louis's story further.

Web Links

Podcast: <http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/item/282/>

<http://survivors-fund.org.uk/>

<http://hope-survivors.org.uk/>