

# NORTH KOREA

## CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

---

**JOSEPH KIM**, a former “kotjebi” (term denoting a wandering orphan in North Korea), Joseph is now a college student and human rights activist living in New York City. Having grown up in North Korea during the great famine, he was orphaned by the age of twelve. His father succumbed to starvation, and his mother and sister fled to China in search of food and work, despite the risk of being jailed, sold into servitude, or worse—shot on sight; he never saw them again. Despite their fate, in 2003, homeless and hungry, Joseph opted for China, fortunately finding his way to one of the modern-day “underground railroads” that ultimately guided him to find refuge in the United States. Today, while learning English and studying international business, he remains actively engaged in raising awareness about the wide-scale suffering in North Korea. He has worked with Liberty in North Korea (LiNK), has been featured in well-known documentaries on North Korea, and has shared the plight of North Koreans to audiences in the U.S., South Korea, and abroad. His TED Talk speech was well-received amassing over a million views. He was a featured guest for the annual Human Rights Day at U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, Labor. Reminded during warm meals of his father’s untimely fate, Joseph channels his oldest nightmares into reason to continue raising the visibility of the human rights catastrophe still felt back home.

**JINHYE JO** was born into a middle-class family and lost more than half of her family to starvation, sex trafficking, or captivity. When the great famine hit North Korea in the 1990s, Jinhye and her family were faced with a failed government food distribution system and eight hungry mouths to feed. The family on the verge of starvation, Jinhye’s father crossed the Sino-Korean border into China to find work. There, he was captured by Chinese authorities for illegal immigration and tortured, eventually dying from his wounds while in captivity. Jinhye’s older sister, who also crossed into China to earn money for food, was disappeared and never heard from again, reportedly having been sex-trafficked. After Jinhye’s grandmother and grandfather both died from starvation, Jinhye, her mother, younger sister, and little brother left to seek work in China. Her brother was left behind in North Korea because no one was strong enough to carry him. They promised him rice and cookies when they returned, but when they were able only months later, he had perished alone in a field from starvation. Jinhye, her mom, and her sister fled to China, working for 10 years, during which they were repatriated 4 times to North Korea where the North Korean government imposed torture and harsh detention conditions. They finally escaped to the U.S. only after bribing their way out of North Korean political prisoner camps. In the U.S., Jinhye established North Korean Refugees in the U.S., an NGO dedicated to helping North Koreans resettle in the U.S. with proper health, education, and basic care among other critical needs and aiding North Koreans refugees escape from North Korea. She has been an ardent public advocate testifying before the U.S. Congress, the U.N. Commission of Inquiry, and numerous public events throughout the world to raise public awareness of the suffering in North Korea and to highlight the urgent need to facilitate resettlement efforts for North Korean refugees, who like herself can flourish once free.

**PRASE JOO** represents the “Jangmadang Generation”, a segment of young people in North Korean society who began selling and trading goods in the burgeoning gray markets after the Public Distribution System broke down. Influenced by information from foreign radio broadcasts and media, her family decided to escape in 2007 and 2009. Prase was captured twice during her own attempts to escape but with the help of a South Korean NGO (Serving Life International), she was able to bribe her way across the borders and eventually be reunited with her family in South Korea in 2011. Prase is currently active in both South Korean and western media, appearing in many different venues to talk about the situation in North Korea, specifically regarding religious persecution and human rights violations. She has worked with Liberty in North Korea (LiNK); appeared as a guest reporter with CGN (a South Korean Christian TV station); and worked with Radio Free Chosun (RFC) and Far Easter Broadcasting Corp. (FEBC). She is currently a co-chairperson of Worldwide Coalition to Stop Genocide in North Korea (WWCSGNK), a regular guest with Channel A, and also works as the Public Relations Manager for Serving Life International. Prase is a regular participant in the popular South Korean talent and talk show, “Now on My Way to Meet You”, which aims to bridge the gap between North and South Koreans. Prase has also been invited to speak at a TEDx event in the U.S.

**JIHYUN PARK** is a survivor of North Korea’s notorious prison camps and an outspoken advocate on issues of human rights in North Korea, particularly in the area of combating sex trafficking. After growing up in a middle class family where her mother operated a side business in the nascent black markets to supplement the family income, Jihyun graduated with a degree in math and science and became a math teacher. When the great famine took both her parents, she was sold into the sex trafficking ring in China. Several months later, Chinese authorities found her and repatriated her to North Korea, where she was sentenced to hard labor in a labor camp. She was sent home when she could no longer work; gangrene had spread through her leg and had been left untreated. Instead of seeking treatment, she trafficked herself again to Chinese brokers to find her son in China. She finally escaped to the United Kingdom with her son in 2008. She has spoken throughout Europe, including conferences, universities, and the United Kingdom House of Parliament. Her memoir is published by EAHRNK and her story featured by Amnesty International UK. She testified before the UN Commission of Inquiry in London in 2013. She continues to be a voice for the voiceless as the North Korean Outreach and Project Coordinator for the European Alliance for Human Rights in North Korea (EAHRNK).

# NORTH KOREA

## CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

**GRADE LEVEL: 9-12**

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE: FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE,  
FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

### UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

- **Article 3:** Right to Life, Liberty, and Security of Person
- **Article 5:** 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:** Freedom of Opinion and Information
- **Article 26:** Right to Education

### TIME REQUIREMENT:

60 minutes

### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- When you hear “North Korea”, what do you think of?
- 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:

- Generate students’ prior knowledge about North Korea
- Critically examine and analyze the human rights violations in North Korea
- Introduce students to the 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

### TECHNOLOGY REQUIRED:

Computer and Internet access

### VOCABULARY:

- **Defector**
- **Collective Punishment**
- **Authoritarian Regime**
- **Propaganda**
- **Repatriation**

### CONCEPTS:

- **Human Rights**
- **Empathy**
- **Resilience**
- **Self-Agency**
- **Youth Activism**
- **Power**

### 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 there will be posters around the room that have questions, pictures and statistics that begin to introduce students to the lesson about the North Korean human rights defenders. *Find information on North Korea for this activity in Additional Resources.*  
**Goal:** Generate students’ prior knowledge. Get students thinking about what they know, do not know, what they would like to know, questions they have about North Korea, and the importance of defending human rights.
- After students are finished viewing the gallery, ask them to sit and answer the following questions. Have a few share their responses when they have finished writing.

### 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 4-5 (depending on your class size) students will be asked to read the narratives of defenders, watch videos of defenders, and engage deeply into their stories. After students have had time to “get to know their defender” they will be asked to present to the rest of the class a little about their defender as well as share answers to the following questions:
  - What are three things you learned about the defender?
  - What are two things you would like to know more about the defender or what two questions would you like to ask them?
  - What is something that you learned about yourself during this process?

**NOTE TO TEACHERS:** Jigsaw teaching technique is used as a cooperative learning activity that allows students to work together, collaborate, employ active listening skills, and efficiently share learning and teaching responsibilities. This technique involves breaking students into small groups where they work together on a task and learn alongside one another.

### 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 the questions:
  - What is something you learned today?
  - Who will you share with what you learned today?

## BECOME 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 to 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](http://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/](http://www.bushcenter.org/reports/northkorea/)

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

### NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES IN THE USA

[www.nkinusa.org](http://www.nkinusa.org)

Dedicated to helping refugees escape and resettle

### COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

[www.hrnk.org](http://www.hrnk.org)

Reports on life and the government of North Korea

### NORTH KOREA FREEDOM COALITION

[www.nkfreedom.org](http://www.nkfreedom.org)

Uses grassroots efforts to raise awareness and save North Korean refugees

### SHORT HISTORY OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPtAkj000Ls](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPtAkj000Ls)

### THE BIG STORY

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIDPRK/Pages/ReportoftheCommissionofInquiryDPRK.aspx>

UN panel finds that crimes against humanity have been committed in North Korea

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES CONTINUED

### JOSEPH KIM

#### TED TALK

[www.ted.com/talks/joseph\\_kim\\_the\\_family\\_i\\_lost\\_in\\_north\\_korea\\_and\\_the\\_family\\_i\\_gained?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/joseph_kim_the_family_i_lost_in_north_korea_and_the_family_i_gained?language=en)

#### LIBERTY IN NORTH KOREA INTERVIEW

[www.libertyinnorthkorea.org/speaker-spotlight-joseph-kim/](http://www.libertyinnorthkorea.org/speaker-spotlight-joseph-kim/)

#### LIBERTY IN NORTH KOREA TALK

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBygrYzv1j0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBygrYzv1j0)

### JINHYE JO

#### THE WITNESS PROJECT INTERVIEW

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6SBxxBGxc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6SBxxBGxc)

#### JINHYE TESTIFIES AT UN RIGHTS PROBE

[www.news.yahoo.com/nkorea-defector-testifies-un-rights-probe-us-214222758--politics.html](http://www.news.yahoo.com/nkorea-defector-testifies-un-rights-probe-us-214222758--politics.html)

#### JINHYE'S FAMILY INTERVIEW

[www.cnn.com/2012/03/24/us/north-korean-refugees/](http://www.cnn.com/2012/03/24/us/north-korean-refugees/)

### PRAISE JOO

#### LIBERTY IN NORTH KOREA INTERVIEW

[www.libertyinnorthkorea.org/summit-speaker-joo-yang/](http://www.libertyinnorthkorea.org/summit-speaker-joo-yang/)

#### ON NPR'S PLANET MONEY

[www.libertyinnorthkorea.org/joo-yang-npr-planet-money/](http://www.libertyinnorthkorea.org/joo-yang-npr-planet-money/)

### JIHYUN PARK

#### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL INTERVIEW

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMn2\\_2TxiSw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMn2_2TxiSw)

#### STORY IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TIMES

[www.ibtimes.co.uk/north-korea-human-rights-united-nations-516329](http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/north-korea-human-rights-united-nations-516329)