

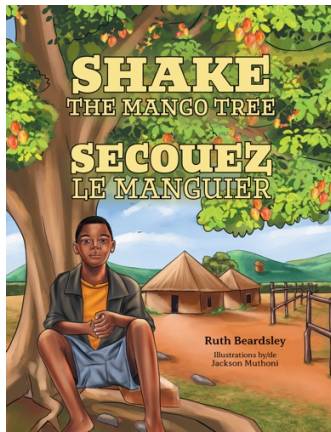
## Teachers Guide

# Shake the Mango Tree

By Ruth Beardsley

For readers 7+

---



### About the Book

Shake the Mango Tree is a true story of a child in Congo. The book is written in the third person.

*Rupat is forced to flee through a hole in the fence, unsure of what lay ahead, he embarks on a perilous journey to find safety in a refugee camp. Along the way there are moments of sweetness, mangoes that nourished his body and spirit.*

### Teaching Notes

These background notes have been created to support students aged 7+ to explore the characters, storyline, and issues in the book including refugees, human rights, family separation, resettlement, social justice, resourcefulness, global interconnection, problem solving and diverse cultures.

The book aims to raise awareness of issues related to refugees, in classrooms and community programs across the country.

The notes include:

- Characters- questions and talking points
- Themes-discussion questions on the themes and their importance
- Activities
- Resources

## **Characters**

### **Rupat**

What would it be like to have to flee from your family and farm in a hurry?

What is it like for Rupat to be all by himself?

Do you think he will ever see his parents and siblings again?

### **Cendrinne**

What must it have been like for Cendrinne to meet Rupat?

When you look at the family before they come to Canada what do you see?

## **Themes and Activities**

### Geography

Research the various countries mentioned in the book

Congo, Burundi

Compare lifestyles in those countries

City life, farm life, resources

### Environmental Studies (Geography/Science)

Research how the environment has changed over the years in these countries and the sub

Sahara in general

Are these changes sustainable without international aid and changes?

**Activity - Pack Your Bags** - A group activity to explore and discuss what the differences if you were leaving for a trip, moving to a new country and fleeing. The discussion would focus on importance of items chosen or left behind and the change in your sense of belonging

Think of three different scenarios, if you had to pack for:

- a) Trip/Vacation
- b) Moving to a new country
- c) Fleeing your home and country

What would you include in your bag in each scenario? What are the most important items?

Describe why each item is important.

What are you leaving behind?

- a) home
- b) family members
- c) possessions

Describe how would this change your sense of belonging to your community, school, family and country.

UNICEF also has a few activities on their website under knowledge and technical resources page.

### **Treatment of Refugees**

Discussions could include:

Lack of water

Lack of food

Separation, loss of family members

No chance to go to school

Myths about refugees

What have you heard or read?

Is it fact or opinion?

How could you find out if the facts are true?

### **Mango Resources**

See my website for Mango nutritional facts, trivia games and more.

## **Review Human Rights – Convention on Rights of the Child**

Shake the Mango Tree enhances the conversation around the rights of the child.

Compare the rights Canadian children have vs Rupert in the middle of the book.

### **Activity**

Using color version of Convention of the Rights of the Child

1. Circle what rights Rupert had in the beginning of the story
2. Circle in different color what rights Rupert had in the middle of the story
3. Circle in a different color what rights Rupert had at the end of the story

Discussion: How is the refugee camp a bridge between the rights being met in the middle and end of the story.

Children's Rights are Human Rights here in Canada and in every country around the world

A simplified version is available to download from Unicef: [Simplified Rights of the Child - Unicef](#)

Right to safety – Article 3

Right to an identity -Article 6

Right to a family – Article 16

Right to own property – Article 17

Right to a home – Article 25

Right to healthcare – Article 25

Right to food and water – Article 25

Right to an education – Article 26

These rights are further defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child

## **Call to Action**

What could governments do to help families find each other?

Is there an organization in your community that works with newcomers? Find out what they do and is there a way you could contribute as a class.

## **Random acts of kindness you could consider for refugees and newcomers:**

Learn how to say a person's name correctly.

Let a refugee know they are not alone by including them.

Volunteer to teach your language or learn a few words in their home language.

Share refugee stories and spread awareness.

Speak out for refugee rights.

Support a refugee owned business.

Encourage other schools to teach about refugees.

Help refugees integrate by offering your friendship.

## **Current facts about refugees - Source: UNHCR**

**123.2 million people will be forcibly displaced or stateless in 2025** according to UNHCR's estimations.

Children make up 41% of the refugees in the world

Source Countries for Refugees: Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, Myanmar

Children account for 29 per cent of the world's population, but 40 per cent of all forcibly displaced people.

## **Curriculum Based Outcomes**

In British Columbia

Grade 5 Social Studies

Grade 6 Social Studies

Grade 10 Social Justice

**January 2026**