



THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMANE EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 260  
SURRY, MAINE 04684  
207.667.1025  
[info@HumaneEducation.org](mailto:info@HumaneEducation.org)  
[www.HumaneEducation.org](http://www.HumaneEducation.org)

## DO YOU WANT SLAVERY WITH THAT?

**Grades:** 6 and up

**Time:** 60-90 minutes

**Materials:** A cotton shirt; a diamond ring (or a photo of one); a chocolate bar; a photo of a car; a small piece of an oriental rug (or a photo of one); a silk tie; excerpts from slave stories (see below); sample fair-trade items (coffee, chocolate, shoes, shirt, etc.)

**Relevant Subjects:** Social Studies and Language Arts

1. Take out the first six items/pictures and show them to students. Ask if any of the students own any items like these. (You can include yourself in this question and say that you have some of these things at home, too.) Ask if they can guess what these items have in common. Cotton, diamonds, chocolate, steel, oriental rugs, and silk are all products that may have been produced by slaves.

2. Explain that while most people think that slavery ended in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that was only one kind of slavery. Slavery still exists today in many parts of the world. It may not look similar to the slavery we learned about in our textbooks, but the results are the same -- and sometimes, much worse.

3. Present excerpts from the stories of modern-day slaves. Two good sources include:

[www.freetheslaves.net/slavery/stories/](http://www.freetheslaves.net/slavery/stories/)

[www.iabolish.org/slavery\\_today/slave\\_experience/index.html](http://www.iabolish.org/slavery_today/slave_experience/index.html)

**Alternative:** Use video clips sharing the stories of modern-day slaves. (See our Resources section for ideas.)

4. Ask students to share their reactions to what they have learned from the stories.

5. Ask students to brainstorm ideas about what they can do to help the situation. Ideas might include:

- finding out about the conditions under which the products they buy were produced
- informing others about what they know.

- buying fair-trade items. (Note: You may need to explain what "fair-trade" means and show samples that were not produced using slave labor.)
- writing legislators to encourage the passage of laws to protect people from slavery
- writing letters to companies whose products are made with slave labor or who invest in countries that condone slavery

Emphasize that they have the power to change their own behavior with respect to slavery. They may also be able to have an influence on their friends and family members if they talk to them about what they now know. They can contribute to spreading the word about the fact that slavery is still going on today.

### **Extensions:**

1. Have students make posters that bring attention to the problem of modern slavery. They can work alone or with a partner. Have them display their posters in school, or perhaps host an exhibit in a public arena, such as the public library.
2. Have students (alone or in small groups) choose a topic related to modern slavery, research it, and share their findings with their classmates.

### **Activity by Sarah Dwight-Gilroy (M.Ed. Graduate)**