



# I AM DAVID

## Gameboard Activity

Developed by  WALDEN MEDIA in association with  UNHCR  
The UN Refugee Agency

## Dear Educator,



I fell in love with the story of *I Am David* when I was first given the book by Walden Media. I'd always wanted to do a movie about a person seeing the world for the first time, and David's journey as a refugee – from the darkness of his oppressed past to his new life trusting people – seemed the perfect story to tell onscreen.

I've always been drawn to stories about outsiders; it's a theme that is explored in a historical and emotional context in *I Am David*. In order to place the story in a true historical setting, I did research working with an expert on the subject of prison camps. Thus I was able to discover that the allegorical gulag in Anne Holm's book was actually based on the Communist labor camps, which were run by the Soviet-dominated governments of Eastern Europe from 1944 to 1962. Little is known in our country about these camps, and I hope that this film engenders more study about this dark chapter of world history.

By discussing totalitarianism and beliefs that would force a child like David into a labor camp, students might gain a better understanding of world events. And by letting them see life from the point of view of a boy who has overcome a life stripped of comfort and security, it's my hope that they can get a better appreciation for the bounty – and freedom – many of us take for granted.

With thanks,

**Paul Feig**  
Writer/Director  
*I Am David*



### USING THIS GUIDE

The game and activities are designed for educators to help integrate the film *I Am David* into the classroom. All activities are targeted to students in grades 5-9 and comply with national content standards for social studies, language arts, and character education.

#### Learning objectives:

- To understand the definition of refugees and apply it to David's story
- To gain knowledge of the plight of refugees in the world today
- To acquire knowledge of the reunification efforts on their behalf worldwide
- To help students understand the mission and activities of the UNHCR
- To provide opportunities for students to volunteer and help support the UNHCR

## Classroom Connections

The following are enrichment activities that relate to the information shared in the game. You may choose to do one or all of these activities as a follow-up to watching *I Am David* and playing the *You Are David* game.

### Activity A:

#### Refugee or Immigrant?

##### Social Studies

Divide into two groups: one to research refugees and one to research immigrants. For each separate group, answer the following questions:

- What is the definition of a refugee? What is the definition of an immigrant?
- Identify one prominent figure in each of the following areas: history, popular culture, literature, sports and science who is or was a refugee or an immigrant. What was each figure's contribution or reason for fame/success?
- Share your group's findings with the rest of the class.

**Discussion:** Can a person be defined as both a refugee and an immigrant? How?

### Activity C:

#### Flashbacks

##### English/Language Arts

A flashback is a narrative device used in books and films to expand the story and reveal more information to the audience. Compare the use of flashbacks or memories in Anne Holm's book *I Am David* with the film. Write your own creative short story incorporating at least one flashback scene.

**Discussion:** Why do flashbacks have a larger place in the film than in the novel?

### Activity D:

#### Empathy and Action

##### Character Education

Find articles in newspapers and magazines about people who have lived in troubled countries for whom you feel empathy or sympathy. Find, for example, stories about children displaced by war or stories about a local community of refugees. Write a sentence or two that describes the situation and what, if anything is being done to help these people. Describe these situations to your class and put them on the board or overhead.

**Discussion:** What does it mean to be empathetic? What is the difference between empathy and sympathy? From one of the situations listed on the board or overhead, what is one situation that the class could volunteer to help out with? How?

### Activity B:

#### Why Go North?

#### Dissent and Punishment

##### Social Studies

Various groups of people within the last century were imprisoned for what they believed in, or simply for who they were. Research a group from the last century that has faced imprisonment for such reasons.

- Identify why they were imprisoned.
- Locate personal accounts online, in books, or through interviews of a friend or neighbor who may have personal experience with imprisonment for their beliefs or identity.
- Display your findings on a poster and present to your class.

**Discussion:** Who were David's parents? Why do you think they were imprisoned in Bulgaria? Find clues from the book and movie and connect them to historical information about prisoners in Bulgarian labor camps.

Just as David received help finding his way home to his mother, so has the UNHCR assisted refugees in Tunisia (1), helped Namibians return home (2), and provided relief to those made homeless by World War II (3).

Photo credits: S. Wright (photo 1), L. Astrom (photo 2), UNHCR (photo 3).



1



3



2

# 5 Ways You Can Make A Difference – Locally and Globally!



**The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) assists and protects about 20 million refugees worldwide. Here are some ways you can get involved.**



**1. Clear up the confusion.** There is a misunderstanding about refugees today. Some people believe that refugees are a threat. They are not. They themselves are threatened and need help and protection. Learn more about refugees and the world around you. Visit [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch).

**2. Be a friend.** Refugees are not always people living in remote parts of the world. There are over 400,000 refugees living in the United States today. Some refugee communities may be in your neighborhood. Reach out. Be welcoming. The United States has been a place of refuge since its establishment. Help keep it a safe and welcoming new home for those who need it most.



**3. Donate.** For refugee children living halfway around the world, the value is not only in the nature of the items or donations sent to them, it is also in the knowledge that somewhere someone cares. To learn more about organizing a fundraising event to help refugees, such as the annual “Have a Heart for Refugees” service-learning project, visit [www.unrefugees.org](http://www.unrefugees.org).

**4. Volunteer.** Volunteering for projects to raise awareness about what is happening elsewhere in the world helps everyone to think globally and act locally! Contact local refugee resettlement agencies in your community that help newly arrived refugees.

**5. Be creative.** Build awareness and community. Collect favorite recipes from refugee and local neighbors and put together a neighborhood cookbook. Organize a club to learn a song, poem, dance or saying from every culture represented at your school. Participate in UNHCR’s “Fourth Annual World Refugee Day Poster Contest,” sponsored by UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie. Organize a World Refugee Day event in your area. For more information on these and other ideas, visit [www.unrefugees.org](http://www.unrefugees.org).

Photo credits: A. Hollmann (top), K. Gaugler (bottom).

# you are David

*“Are you listening to me?  
You must escape from here tonight.  
It’s your only chance to stay alive.”*

Imagine that you are David. You’ve just escaped the labor camp in Bulgaria with the sealed envelope in hand. You find the bundle that has been hidden for you. Wrapped inside are the following items: a compass, a pocketknife, a bar of soap, and a half loaf of bread. You must head north to Denmark and avoid getting caught. Scared, cold, and alone, you run through the night. On your journey you come across people, places, and events that either set you back or help you toward your destination.

*“I know this camp is all you’ve ever known, but there is a world outside it. However, it’s a very dangerous world. Trust no one. Good luck to you.”*

## HOW TO PLAY

### Number of players:

- Two to six

### You will need:

- One die
- One pawn per player
- Five pennies per player – each penny represents an item from your bundle in addition to the sealed envelope.

### Objective:

- The goal of the game is to reach Denmark and reunite with your mother.

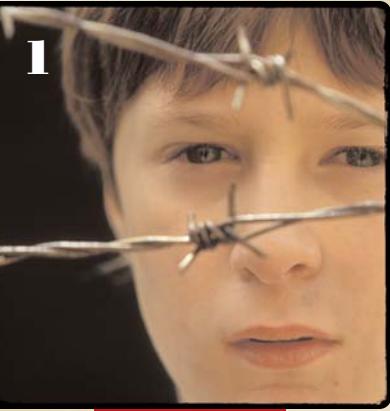
### Rules:

- The player who rolls the highest number on the die is first.
- The goal is to reach Denmark safely.
- Each time you use one of the items in your bundle, you must give up a penny.

(Board game adapted from UNHCR “When you are forced to flee” game.)

# GAME

START



1

### Read UNHCR Fact #101

What does it mean to be "persecuted"? Why do people who are fearful of being persecuted become refugees?

Classroom Connection:  
Activity A

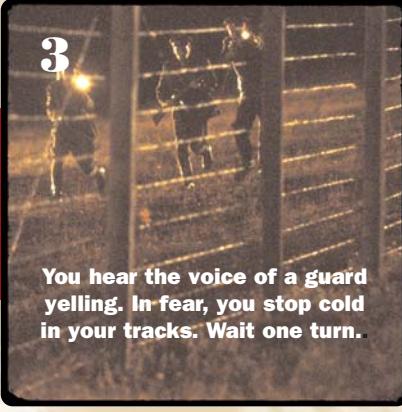
### UNHCR FACT #101

Who is a refugee?

Refugees are people who flee their country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group. A refugee either cannot return home, or is afraid to do so. (Source: UNHCR dictionary)

Now answer the questions in Square 2.

2



### UNHCR FACT #102

What is asylum?

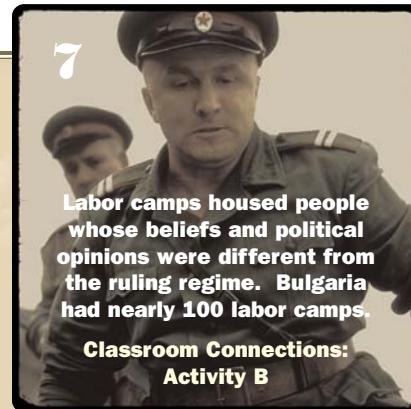
Asylum is somewhere one can go to find safety. To grant asylum means to offer protection in a safe country to people who are in danger in their own country. (Source: UNHCR dictionary)

Who are asylum seekers?

Asylum seekers are refugees who are applying for asylum in a second country.

Approximately 1,014,400 people applied for asylum worldwide in 2002 compared to just over 923,000 in 2001. Now answer the questions in Square 5.

7



Labor camps housed people whose beliefs and political opinions were different from the ruling regime. Bulgaria had nearly 100 labor camps.

Classroom Connections:  
Activity B

8



6

You've finished off the half loaf of bread. Give up one penny.



5

### Read UNHCR FACT #102

Calculate the increase in asylum seeker applications between the years 2001 and 2002. How would you explain this increase in the number of applications?

4



You've found the ship sailing to Italy. You slip aboard and stow away. Move ahead two squares.

9

Roberto the sailor has caught you hiding in the ship. You give him your pocketknife to keep him from turning you in. Give up one penny.

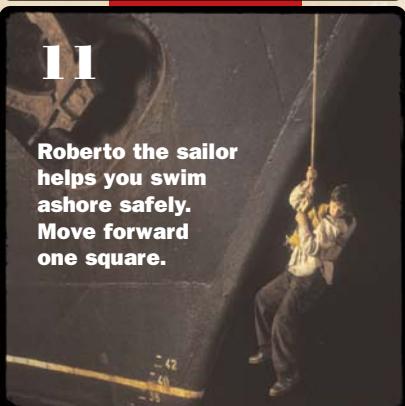


10



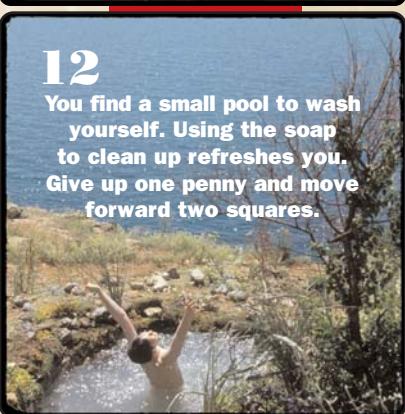
11

Roberto the sailor helps you swim ashore safely. Move forward one square.



12

You find a small pool to wash yourself. Using the soap to clean up refreshes you. Give up one penny and move forward two squares.

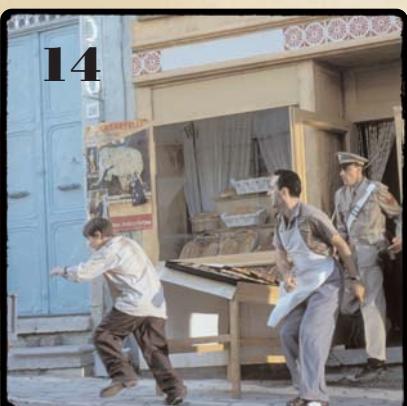


13

Name three character traits that describe David. Give examples from the book or film to support your answers.



14



19

Your plastered fake smile and mere pocket change won't buy any food. The grocer tells you to get lost. Lose one turn.

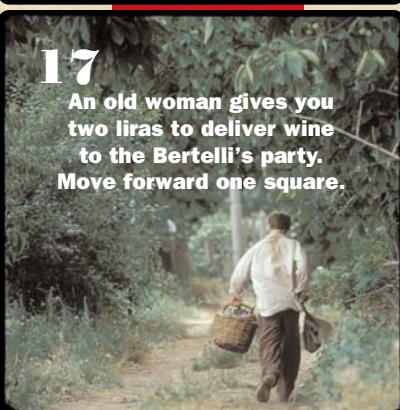


18



17

An old woman gives you two liras to deliver wine to the Bertelli's party. Move forward one square.



16

**Fact or Fiction?**  
The President decides how many refugees will be admitted to the United States.

Read UNHCR FACT #103

15

Scared by the police, you flee into the forest, fall, and break your compass. Give up one penny.



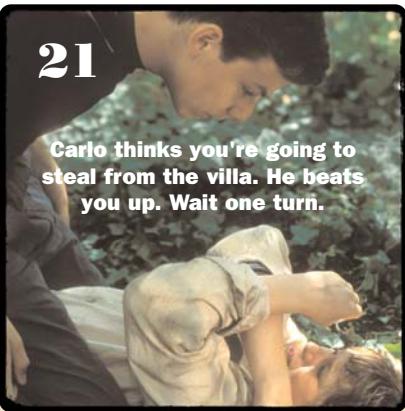
20



An American couple pays you to get gas for their car. Now you have enough for food. Take another turn.

21

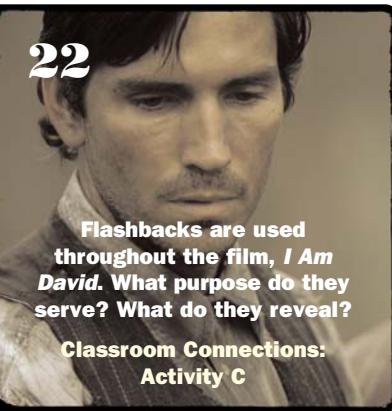
Carlo thinks you're going to steal from the villa. He beats you up. Wait one turn.



22

Flashbacks are used throughout the film, *I Am David*. What purpose do they serve? What do they reveal?

Classroom Connections:  
Activity C



23

You save Maria from the burning shed. Move forward one square.



24

Fact or Fiction?

Most refugees are children.

Read UNHCR FACT #104

**UNHCR FACT #104**

Most refugees are children.

**Fact.** Of the 20 million refugees under the care of UNHCR, 80% are women and children. More than half are young people. It is estimated that only one fifth of eligible children have access to basic education.

(Source: UNHCR Fact or Fiction:  
[www.unrefugees.org](http://www.unrefugees.org))

27

You meet Sophie, who is very kind to you. You trust her with the secret of your past. She wants to find a way to help you. Move forward one square.

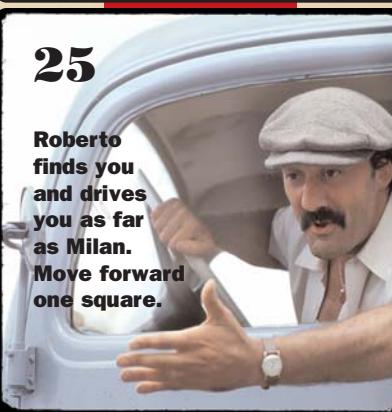


26



25

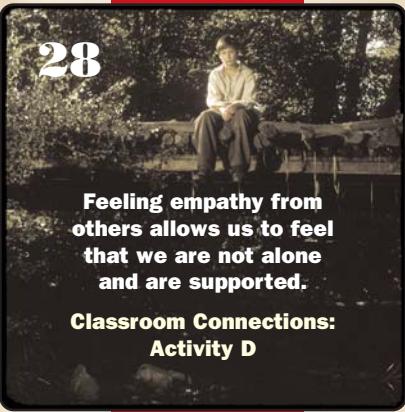
Roberto finds you and drives you as far as Milan. Move forward one square.



28

Feeling empathy from others allows us to feel that we are not alone and are supported.

Classroom Connections:  
Activity D



**To Feel At Home**

UNHCR's "Annual World Refugee Day Poster Contest" sponsored by UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie asks students to design a poster on what it means "To Feel At Home." What makes you feel at home? How can you help refugees and their families feel welcomed and at home in America? To learn more about the contest visit: [www.unrefugees.org](http://www.unrefugees.org).

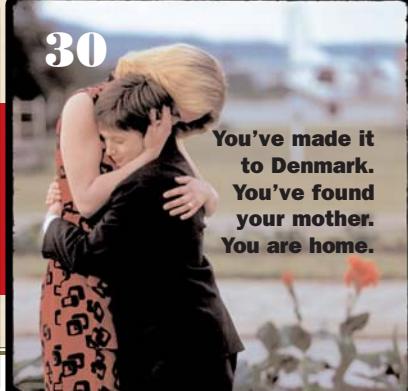
29

Sophie makes the connection between the Italian book, *Viaggio e Dolore* (or Journey and Sorrow in English) and you. Take another turn.



30

You've made it to Denmark. You've found your mother. You are home.



HOME

## About the Film

*I Am David* is adapted from Anne Holm's internationally acclaimed novel of the same name. It is the story of a 12-year-old refugee boy, David, who escapes a Communist concentration camp carrying a compass, a pocketknife, a sealed letter, a bar of soap, a half loaf of bread, and instructions to journey to Copenhagen, Denmark.

For the first time in his young life, David is thrust into the free world as he travels across Europe. His is a spiritual journey of discovery during which David loses his mistrust of humanity and finds the ability to smile, share, trust and ultimately, to love. *I Am David* addresses the cruelties, politics, and suffering of warfare while celebrating the resilience and abiding optimism of youth.

*Between 1945 and 1960, the ruling Communist governments ran forced labor camps, whose purpose was to re-educate members of their society whom they felt held beliefs counter to their own.*

*Life in these camps was harsh, and few ever attempted escape.*

*However, once in a great while, some did...*

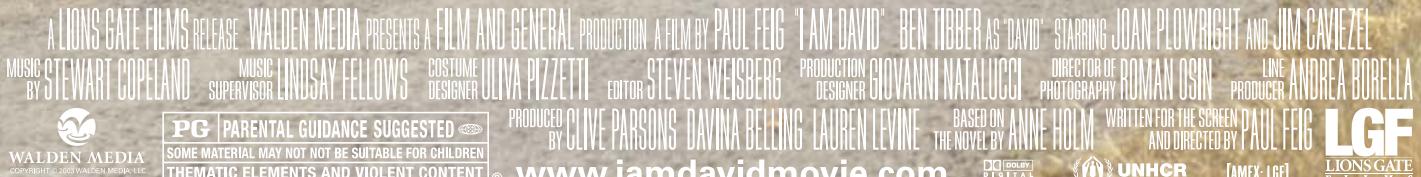
### Fast Facts

- Bulgaria was one of the “satellite countries” of Nazi Germany and joined the Axis alliance in 1941.
- I Am David* begins in post World War II Bulgaria.
- Post World War II Bulgaria was governed by a Communist regime that insisted on conformity and obedience from its citizens and severely limited their freedom.
- Ordinary citizens who opposed the ideology of the regime were thrown into labor camps to get rid of their “deviant” thoughts. This was done through hard physical labor, psychological harassment, torture, and even murder.
- After the war more than 50,000 children like David found themselves displaced, separated or orphaned from their families.

### About Walden Media

Walden Media believes that quality entertainment is inherently educational. We believe that by providing children, parents and educators with a wide range of great entertainment – from books and film, to live theater and interactive venues – we can capture young imaginations, rekindle curiosity and demonstrate the rewards of knowledge and virtue.

Walden Media brings you the following educational materials related to the film *I Am David* in partnership with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). It is our combined hope that these materials illuminate the plight of refugees throughout the world today. Perhaps David’s story will inspire you and your students to take action.



A LIONS GATE FILMS RELEASE WALDEN MEDIA PRESENTS A FILM AND GENERAL PRODUCTION A FILM BY PAUL FEIG "I AM DAVID" BEN TIBBER AS "DAVID" STARRING JOAN PLOWRIGHT AND JIM CAVIEZEL  
MUSIC BY STEWART COPELAND MUSIC LINDSAY FELLOWS COSTUME DESIGNER ULIVA PIZZETTI EDITOR STEVEN WEISBERG PRODUCTION DESIGNER GIOVANNI NATALUCCI DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ROMAN OSIN LINE PRODUCER ANDREA BORELLA  
PRODUCED BY CLIVE PARSONS DAVINA BELLING LAUREN LEVINE BASED ON ANNE HOLM WRITTEN FOR THE SCREEN BY PAUL FEIG  
THE NOVEL BY ANNE HOLM AND DIRECTED BY PAUL FEIG LGF  
SOME MATERIAL MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN THEMATIC ELEMENTS AND VIOLENT CONTENT  
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