

Resources for Promoting Refugee and Immigration Ministries in your Congregation

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DVDs, Internet Videos, & Internet Games

Recommended for those that want to learn more about refugees around the world!

“Against All Odds”

This Internet game guides persons through the experience of being a refugee. The game was designed by the staff of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The challenges include escaping from a hostile town, guiding your character across a dangerous border, and staying alive in foreign lands with unfamiliar languages. Available at <http://www.playagainstallodds.com/>.

“as we forgive”

This 2008 video (53 minutes in length) tells the story of victims of violence in Rwanda forgiving and beginning to live alongside the perpetrators of the violence against their own family members. A clip and information is available at <http://www.asweforgivemovie.com/>.

Bird’s Eye Views of Refugee Camps

This Internet site provides bird’s eye views of UNHCR refugee camps using Google Earth. The site focuses on refugees and displaced people located in remote areas of Chad, Iraq, Colombia, and the Sudan. It shows the physical area of the camps and key parts of daily life. Available at <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c4d3.html>.

“Build a Village”

This Internet site features stories, games, and other activities for children of all ages, as well as alternative giving opportunities that support the work of Church World Service. The section of the Web site on “Helping in Times of Trouble” speaks specifically to refugee situations. Available at <http://www.buildavillage.org/home.html>.

“Burma VJ”

This video tells the story of Burmese journalists who risked their lives to help the world understand what has been happening inside the closed country of Burma. A clip and information is available at http://burmavjmovie.com/about_the_film/.

“Carly”

This 1999 children’s video was produced by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It is a seven-minute animated fable of a girl who must flee from her home when “fire falls from the heavens” and her home burns. All alone, she wanders other lands seeking food, a safe home, and human kindness. Recommended, also, for adults. Available at <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-6557501540675761569#> or at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oF1HGfg2bSo>.

“Sierra Leone’s Refugee All Stars”

This 2005 video tells the story of an inspiring group of musicians who form a band while living in a West African refugee camp. It juxtaposes the tragic events of civil war with the refugee’s daily struggle to keep hope and music alive. A clip is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EA4z2sd3fOI>. The DVD can be rented from your video supplier.

“Touch the World, Touch Sudan”

This 2007 set of resources on the Sudan was produced by the National Council of Churches. It contains four videos (4:20, 6:54, 11:05, and 8:32 minutes in length) about the situation in the Sudan, refugees who have left, and internally displaced persons. Available at http://www.nccusa.org/missioneducation/sudan/touch_sudan.htm.

Recommended for those considering refugee resettlement!

“A Future with Hope: Welcoming Refugees”

This 2007 video was produced by the Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program. Refugees, their church co-sponsors, and their employers tell what refugee resettlement has meant in their lives. Featured in the 15-minute video are the pastor of Central Christian Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the Sudanese family they resettled. A clip is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vz4RQ0bx3iY>. The DVD is available from RIM at no cost.

“God Grew Tired of Us”

This 2006 video was produced by National Geographic Films. The 90-minute video tells the story of some of the “Lost Boys of Sudan” who were resettled in the United States. It would be helpful in preparing congregations who plan to resettle refugees in understanding the cultural adjustments that refugees have to go through in coming to live in the United States. A clip is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoKHZ9EwmlE>. The DVD can be rented from your video supplier.

Recommended for those that want to learn more about Disciples’ border ministries!

“Beyond Borders: Faith and Action in the Arizona Desert”

This 2007 video (25 minutes in length) was produced by DisciplesWorld and contains information on four border ministries on the Arizona/Mexico border – Humane Borders, BorderLinks, Samaritan Patrol, and No More Deaths (two of which have Disciples connections). Humane Borders was founded by Robin Hoover, pastor of First Christian Church in Tucson, and Ken Kennon, a retired Disciples minister, is a Co-President of the board of BorderLinks. A clip is available at <http://www.beyondbordersvideo.com/beyondbordersvideo/HOME.html>. The DVD can be ordered at http://www.beyondbordersvideo.com/beyondbordersvideo/Buy_the_DVD.html.

“FACES: Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries”

This 2009 video shows the ministries of the Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries (SWGSM) on both sides of the Texas/Mexico border. The 29-minute video also tells the refugee story of SWGSM’s founder, Feliberto Perira. The ministries shown include a ministry to refugees; the efforts of mission work groups; an orphanage in Mexico; distribution of food, clothing, and toys; and the Casita project of building homes in Mexican colonias (poor communities with little infrastructure). The DVD is available from RIM at no cost.

Recommended for those that want to learn more about immigration issues!

“9500 Liberty”

This 81-minute video deals with the passage of an abusive anti-immigration law in Prince William County, Virginia in 2007. The film explores how the fear, ignorance, and insecurity of citizens, when coupled with politicians’ motives, can have a devastating impact on immigrants. A clip and dates of upcoming screenings is available at <http://www.9500liberty.com/>.

“A Surprise Visit”

This four-minute video clip tells about a Permanent Resident mother deported and separated from her citizen children. Available at <http://www.breakthrough.tv/video/a-surprise-visit>.

“abused – The Postville Raid”

This video tells the story of Postville, Iowa raid and the impact it had on undocumented families and the town in which they lived. A clip and information about the video can be found at <http://www.abusedthepostvilleraid.com/>.

“Crossing Arizona”

This 75 minute video shows opposing sides of the immigration debate in Arizona and the rising death toll in the desert. A clip is available and the DVD can be ordered at <http://www.crossingaz.com/>

“Dying to Live”

This 2006 video was produced by the University of Notre Dame. This 33-minute video is a look at the human face of Latin American immigration which explores who they are, why they leave their homes, what they face on their journey north, and what happens to them at the U.S. border. It looks at the issues from a faith (Catholic) perspective. Clips are available and the DVD can be ordered at <http://dyingtolive.nd.edu/>.

“Entre Nos”

This 81-minute video is the story of a woman and her two children who come from Colombia to New York to join her husband who came many years ago. Her husband then leaves for Miami and leaves the family behind to fend for themselves. Clips are available and the DVD can be ordered at <http://www.entrenosfilm.com/>.

“Ethical Issues at the Borderlands”

This 2009 video (56 minutes in length) of a lecture by Rev. John Fife at Yale Divinity School gives an overview of ethical issues in the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s and along the border today. Available at <http://www.yale.edu/divinity/video/fife.shtml>.

“Farmingville”

This 2003 video (78 minutes in length) shows two groups in one suburban town working on the issue of immigrants in the community. It highlights the paradox of communities wanting

immigrants deported while, at the same time, the community really needs their work. Available at <http://www.farmingvillethemovie.com/index.html>.

“Frozen River”

This 2008 video (97 minutes in length) tells the story of a New York mom, struggling to care for her family, who begins to smuggle Chinese and Pakistani immigrants into the country from Canada in order to earn enough to care for her children. A clip is available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90_D5nNNvQw. The DVD can be rented from your video supplier.

“Homeland Guantanos: The Untold Story of Immigrant Detention in the U.S.”

This Internet game with videos tells about U.S. detention centers and how people are treated, including the death of a Guinean tailor held in a jail for overstaying his visa, a pregnant woman kept in shackles during labor, and an Army veteran held for three years while fighting deportation. Available at <http://www.homelandgitmo.com>.

“ICED – I Can End Deportation”

This Internet game lets players experience the unfair nature of immigration laws on detention and deportation. Players try to avoid immigration officers, choose right from wrong, and answer questions on immigration. Detention will result from incorrect answers or poor decisions. The object of the game is to become a U.S. citizen. Available at <http://www.icedgame.com/>.

“In the Shadow of the American Dream”

This 42-minute video is from “Tom Brokaw Reports.” It deals with the myths and truths about undocumented immigration between Aspen and Vail, Colorado, focusing on a booming economy attracting workers willing to do unskilled labor. Available at <http://www.hulu.com/watch/7635/tom-brokaw-reports-in-the-shadow-of-the-american-dream>.

“In the Shadow of the Raid”

This video explores the devastating effects of the May 2008 immigration raid at the kosher meatpacking plant in Postville, Iowa. A clip and Information about the video can be found at <http://streetdogmedia.wordpress.com/>.

“In Their Boots: Second Battle”

This video is about the wives of two U.S. service members who cannot stay in the United States, even though their husbands fought for and, in one case, died for the United States. Clips and Information about the video can be found at <http://www.intheirboots.com/itb/episodes/archive/season-2/second-battle.html>.

“Letters From the Other Side”

This 73-minute video tells the story of the women and children left behind in Mexico when their husbands, sons, and fathers leave to work in the United States. Information about the film can be found at <http://www.newday.com/films/LettersFromtheOtherSide.html>.

“Lost Souls (Animas Perdidas)”

This PBS “Independent Lens” video tells of two brothers raised and educated in the United States and veterans of the military who were deported to Mexico. Information is available at <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/lost-souls/>.

“Made in L.A.”

This 2007 video (70 minutes in length) follows the story of three Latina immigrants working in Los Angeles a garment sweatshop as they embark on a three-year odyssey to win basic labor protections from a trendy clothing retailer. A clip is available and the DVD can be ordered at <http://www.madeinla.com/>.

“Papers: Stories of Undocumented Youth”

This 88-minute video tells the story of the approximately 2 million children who were born outside the United States and raised in this country. These are young people who were educated in American schools, hold American values, and know only the United States as home. The film focuses on the challenges these undocumented youth face when they turn 18 without legal status. A clip and Information about the film can be found at <http://papersthemovie.com/>.

“Restore Fairness: bring back due process to the immigration system”

This video (9 minutes in length) tells about problems with the U.S. immigration detention system, improper raids, and lack of due process for immigrants. Available at <http://restorefairness.org/2009/09/restore-fairness/>.

“Roots of Migration”

This Witness for Peace video tells the story of U.S. citizens who go to Oaxaca, Mexico to learn what causes people to migrate to the United States. Available in six parts starting at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5A1faTq9qml>

“Sin Nombre – Without a Name”

This 2009 video (96-minutes in length) tells the story of a young Honduran woman who joins her father and uncle on a journey across Latin America on their way to the United States. Along the way she crosses paths with a teenaged Mexican gang member. Together they rely on their faith, trust and street smarts to survive. A clip is available and the DVD can be ordered at http://www.filminfocus.com/focusfeatures/film/sin_nombre.

“The Challenge of Immigration: Framing a New American Conversation”

These videos of a series of lectures and conversations at Yale Divinity School focus on immigration and faith. Available at <http://www.yale.edu/divinity/video/immigration.shtml>,

“The Invisible Mexicans of Deer Canyon”

This 2006 video (73 minutes in length) shows the reality of undocumented Mexicans who line in shacks in the San Diego area. As housing developments take over more and more land, the Mexicans are forced out, their shacks destroyed, and they relocate to another area and start over. A clip is available and the DVD can be ordered at <http://www.invisiblemexicans.com/>.

“The Least of These”

This 2009 video (one hour in length) tells the story of the detention of immigrant families at the T. Don Hutto Residential Center, a former medium-security prison that re-opened in 2006 as a prototype family detention center. Prior to a recent closing as a family detention center, it housed immigrant children and their parents who were awaiting asylum hearings or deportation. A clip is available and the DVD can be ordered at <http://theleastofthese-film.com/>.

“The Visitor”

This 2008 video (104 minutes in length) shows the impact of detention on a young immigrant couple living in New York City and a college professor who becomes involved in the lives. A clip is available at <http://www.thevisitorfilm.com/>. The DVD can be rented from your video supplier.

“Well-Founded Fear”

This 2007 video was shot inside the U.S. immigration system. It shows how asylum seekers try to prove they have a well-founded fear of persecution and how immigration officers make decisions about their cases. Available on 12 clips (each about 10 minutes long) starting at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSyKSPUtuwA>. Extensive material and an interactive game that allows you to act as the asylum officer deciding who is granted asylum is available at <http://www.pbs.org/pov/archive/wellfoundedfear/>.

“Which Way Home”

This 90-minute video that tells the story of children in Mexico who try to cross into the United States. Information about the video can be found at <http://whichwayhome.net/>.

You Tube

There are hundreds of You Tube video clips on immigration issues. Here are links to a few of them:

- “Asylum Seeker Talks About Immigration Detention”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOT5dce-v_g;
- “Border Crossing”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fppe85TQ9Fc>;
- “Death by Detention”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvQ9L2PN0hl>;
- “Detention & Immigration on 60 Minutes”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXAycNaTCnE>;
- “Honor Student Beats Deportation”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EM5kDToQrV0>;
- “How to Solve Illegal Immigration”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nN1kp1ggWyM>;
- “Immigration Raid”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EG7cCxS5RH0>;
- “Impact of Illegal Immigration Sweeps on Children”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGNYTW0hvZ8>;
- “Know the Truth About Immigration Detention in the U.S.”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_HFEQwF9_c;
- “Letter to the President: US Youth on Immigration Reform”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjo92AE2Tso>; and
- “We Want to Stay Here – US Born Kids Face Deportation”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wm4oUshVLuk>.

 **Music** 

“The Immigration Hymn”

Tune: “When the Saints Go Marching In”

When the saints, go marching in,
When the saints go marching in;
Lord I want to be in that number
When the saints go marching in.

When hands reach out, cross border lines,
When hands reach out cross border lines;
Lord I want to be in that number
When hands reach out, cross border lines.

When fences fall, and bridges rise....

When we build, a global home....

When humankind, begins to share....

When rights for some, are rights for all....

When people move, as free as cash....

When the North, respects the South....

When open doors, replace closed minds....

Adapted from the original by Anthony Cosentino and Aurora Camacho de Schmidt (Advocates for the rights of immigrants). Permission to copy and distribute is hereby granted.

“Jesus was a Refugee”

Tune: “Alleluia” - # 106 in “Chalice Hymnal”

Chorus:
Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia, Alleluia!
Alleluia, Alleluia,
Jesus was a refugee!

Verses:
Let me tell you ‘bout the story
Of a well-known refuge-e,
Who was born in far off Israel;
Kings and shepherds came to see.

Then King Herod heard a rumor
‘Bout a rival; who was he-(e)?
Set about to kill all children
In the land from sea to sea.

Angel’s warning to the parents
Told the fam’ly, time to fle-e
Out of Judah into Egypt.
Jesus was a refugee.

A new ruler; Judah’s safer.
Jesus is a returne-e
To the rural town of Naz’reth
In the land of Galilee.

Could they make it in our era?
Get a visa; pay a fe-e?
Would the gov-ern-ment official
Believe, not doubt, their story?

Would their papers be in order
For the border guard to se-e?
Must they wait back in the desert;
Keep arrivals orderly?

Woe to you who ignore God’s will;
Keep away the refuge-e.
Think of Jesus; make them welcome;
Stand in solidarity.

Adapted from the original by Tom Clark (Coordinator of the former Inter-church Committee for Refugees Canada). Permission to copy and distribute is hereby granted.

“God, How can we Comprehend?”

Tune: “Jesus, Lover of My Soul” # 542 in the Chalice Hymnal

God, how can we comprehend – though we’ve seen them times before –
Lines of people without end fleeing danger, want, and war?
They seek safety anywhere, hoping for a welcome hand!
Can we know the pain they bear? Help us, Lord, to understand!

You put music in their souls; now they struggle to survive.
You gave each one gifts and goals; now they flee to stay alive.
God of outcasts, may we see how you value everyone,
For each homeless refugee is your daughter or your son.

Lord, your loving knows no bounds; you have conquered death for all.
May we hear beyond our towns to our distant neighbors’ call.
Spirit, may our love increase; may we reach to all your earth,
Till your whole world lives in peace; till we see each person’s worth.

All rights reserved. Copied from “Gifts of Love: New Hymns for Today’s Worship” by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, Geneva Press. 2001. Carolyn Winfrey Gillette gives free one-time use of this hymn to congregations that support Church World Service.

“Jesus Loves the Little Children”

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Red, brown, yellow, black and white,
They are precious in his sight.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Jesus was a refugee,
Into Egypt he did flee.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Refugees who flee their home,
They will never be alone.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Leaving culture, leaving friends,
Going to the earth’s far ends.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Those who fear for their own life,
Those who run from civil strife.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.
Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
From Sudan, Afghanistan,
Guatemala and Iran,
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Those who hunger, those who thirst,
Those who suffer from the worst.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.
Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Those who run and those who hide,
Jesus runs along beside,
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Written by Jennifer Riggs, Director of Refugee and Immigration Ministries. Permission to copy and distribute is hereby granted, but this song is mainly meant as a model to encourage children and youth to create new and/or additional verses.

“Would you Harbor Me?”

Sung by “Sweet Honey in the Rock” on their Album “Sacred Ground”
(available in you local CD store)

♪♪ Hymn Suggestions ♪♪

<u>Name of Hymn</u>	<u>Number in the Chalice Hymnal</u>
Here I Am, Lord	# 452
Called as Partners in Christ’s Service	# 453
Ours the Journey	# 458
Diverse in Culture, Nation, Race	# 485
Bless Now, O God, the Journey	# 489
Amazing Grace!	# 546
Kum ba Yah	# 590
Jesu, Jesu	# 600
Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah	# 622
Stand By Me	# 629
Lift Every Voice and Sing	# 631
To Us All, to Every Nation	# 634
God of Freedom, God of Justice	# 656
What Does the Lord Require of You?	# 661
Cuando el Pobre	# 662
Go Down, Moses	# 663
Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life	# 665
The Voice of God is Calling	# 666
For the Healing of the Nations	# 668
When Will People Cease Their Fighting?	# 675
O God of Every Nation	# 680
O for a World	# 683
God Made All People of the World	# 685
In Christ There Is No East or West	# 687
This Is My Song	# 722

Discussion Tools

Statue of Liberty – Discuss the meaning of the poem on the Statue of Liberty.

“The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus
 Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
 With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
 Here at the sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
 A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
 Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
 Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
 Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
 The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
 “Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
 With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
 Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
 The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
 Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost, to me,
 I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

If you were.... – Discuss the issues you would face if you were:

- A young Burundian girl who had to quit attending the refugee camp school in order to care for her younger brother and sister.
- An unemployed black youth in a community where a lot of refugees have been resettled.
- A Burmese refugee who has lived all of his life in the rural part of Burma and now lives in a big U.S. city.
- A lawyer trying to get the United States to grant asylum to refugees from Haiti, when the United States says they are leaving Haiti for economic reasons rather than political ones.
- The minister of a congregation whose church has previously decided not to sponsor a refugee and now is being called to help an Iraqi refugee come join his relative in that city.
- The member of a sponsoring congregation who has a Muslim from Somalia temporarily living in her home.
- An Iranian refugee in your city who had to leave his wife and child back in Iran and who knows it will take several more years before they can be reunited.

Describing refugees, immigrants, and “illegal aliens” – Divide into small groups and ask the groups to write down all of the adjectives or descriptive phrases that come to mind when they think of “illegal aliens,” immigrants, and refugees. Share the lists and note what adjectives appear commonly. Note which category (refugees, immigrants, or “illegal aliens”) gets sympathy and which category gets the most negative adjectives. Discuss why we view each category differently. Please point out that “illegal aliens” should more properly be called undocumented persons.

Reasons to leave – Discuss the following which was developed from the reasons refugees gave for leaving their native countries. (These reasons were the ones given by only a handful of the refugee cases resettled by Disciples congregations.)

Freedom is being in a country where:

- You can’t be incarcerated for refusing to be a spy.
- You have the right to a trial before sentencing.
- You have the right to choose whether or not you will join a political party.
- One half of your friends aren’t dead.
- You won’t be detained for suspicion of sympathizing with a minority ethnic group.

- The local officials don't have the power to confiscate your land.
- You have no fear of being beaten for your political opinions.
- You aren't forced to leave because of your religious beliefs.
- People who oppose the government leaders aren't decapitated.
- You aren't detained for providing medical supplies to an outcast ethnic group.
- You aren't imprisoned for what your brother did.
- You can join a union without repercussions.
- You aren't forced to stay in the army even after your official time of service is up.
- You aren't jailed for insulting the ruling political party.
- Your father won't be tortured to death in prison.
- A good education doesn't make you a target for political oppression.
- You aren't persecuted because you are from a wealthy family that was friendly to the old regime.
- Food is not kept from people because of their political opinion.

Who should get asylum? – Using the basic definition of a refugee (a person who fears persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion) judge the following brief case histories and determine which meet the necessary criteria for being granted political asylum in the United States:

- a.) A Russian miner who wants to escape the grinding poverty of his region for a better life in the United States.
- b.) A Colombian journalist who is fleeing her country after being threatened because of newspaper articles she has written.
- c.) An ailing Bosnian teacher who wants to move to Ohio to live with her son and daughter-in-law.
- d.) Members of an Iranian family who have left their country because they were being forced to convert to another religion.
- e.) An Indian doctor who has been offered a position at a New York hospital.
- f.) A young Vietnamese widow who seeks a new life for her children in the United States with distant relatives
- g.) Members of a Guatemalan family who witnessed the massacre of their entire village by government soldiers and were hunted down so they wouldn't reveal what happened.

Answers: a), c), e), and f) do not qualify. They might qualify to come to the United States through other immigration programs like family-reunification or employment-based immigration, but they would not get political asylum. The others meet the criteria for being granted political asylum, but that does not necessarily mean that they would be granted asylum. For example, g) would probably not get asylum because the U.S. government (for its own political purposes) has historically labeled those fleeing Guatemala as economic refugees.

Why would you come to the United States? – Discuss what it would take, other than persecution, to cause you to leave your home and go to another country so you could earn a living. We often have negative images of persons who come to the United States to earn a living, but we don't often think of what the situation might have been that caused them to leave home. How bad off would you have to be before leaving your family members behind and facing possible death in the desert or on the high seas? What would be the level of your desperation to start off on foot to reach a strange country? Who would you turn to for assistance in making it safely to a place where you could earn some money to send your family? What would your life be like in this new country where you are not really wanted?

What to pack – Discuss what you would take if you had to immediately flee your home as a refugee. Imagine you are fleeing for your life. You have 5 minutes to pack and you can take only what you can carry yourself. What will you pack? How did you feel making your choices under pressure of time? What did you take and why? What did you leave behind and why? What was the hardest thing to leave behind? Did you forget?

- Water – so you don't have to drink from a polluted stream
- Food – so you don't starve before reaching safety
- Pot – so you can cook the food
- Matches – so you can light the fire to cook the food
- Soap – so you can keep clean
- Blanket – so you can stay warm on cold nights
- Hat – so you can shade your head from the hot sun
- Plastic – so you can make a shelter from the rain
- First Aid Kit – so you can treat any wounds inflicted upon you
- Money – so you can bribe the border guards
- Birth Certificate – so you can prove who you are
- Address book – so you can write those who remain behind
- Photos – so you can remember the good times

Responding to the needs – Read and discuss the following:

I was hungry, and you formed a humanities group to discuss my hunger.

I was imprisoned, and you crept quietly to your church to pray for my release.

I was naked, and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.

I was sick, and you knelt and thanked God for your health.

I was homeless, and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God.

I was lonely, and you left me alone to pray for me.

You seemed so Holy, so close to God,

But I am still very hungry...and lonely...and cold.

Who gets protection? – The following is adapted from “The Right to Asylum,” UNHCR.

Imagine that you are a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Protection Officer. The following individuals appear in front of you asking for protection. You have to decide if they are refugees or not. Your decision will determine whether they are protected as refugees or sent back to their country of origin. Compare your decisions about each person with the answers at the end. **Note:** a refugee is a person who fears persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

Mr. H – Mr. H, a farmer with no political opinions, belonged to an ethnic minority in Magnolia. Many members of this ethnic group wanted their own independent state. In support of their ideas, certain members of the minority engaged in guerrilla activities. Due to his ethnic origin, Mr. H was threatened by some of his neighbors belonging to the ethnic majority. The local police simply turned a blind eye to these incidents. In addition, Mr. H received threats from extremist members of his own ethnic group who blamed him for not taking their side.

Ms. Q – For the past two years, Zania has been ruled by a military regime. The country's parliament has been dismissed and all laws are made by decree. As part of an ambitious plan to employ all able-bodied working men, the government ordered all women to leave their jobs and remain in their homes. Women who disobey this decree will be severely punished. Ms. Q, a doctor, had to abandon her profession.

Mr. C – Mr. C, a soldier in Magnolia, executed twenty prisoners of war. He claims that he was following his superior officer's orders. He did so fearing that he might be punished if he had not complied with the order from his superiors. A common punishment in this case would be

demotion and even detention. He is now wracked by remorse. He left Magnolia without permission and expects to receive a very long prison term if he returns.

Mr. R – As a member of a group opposed to the governing regime of his country, Mr. R secretly distributed pamphlets in the factory where he worked. The pamphlets called for an uprising of the people against the regime. He was discovered, arrested and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. In prison, he was repeatedly tortured by government agents who considered him a traitor. After two years, he managed to escape. However, during his escape he wounded one of the prison guards. As a result, the guard was left permanently paralyzed.

Ms. F – Ms. F is a citizen of Magnolia. She has been suffering from a serious disease for the past three months. Her doctor believes that she only has a few more months left to live. Her only hope is a new, but very expensive, medical treatment. Unfortunately, Ms. F is very poor. In addition, the Magnolian government has suspended all free health care services. All citizens are now required to pay the full cost of their medical care. Ms. F will never be able to afford the treatment that she needs to survive. However, in neighboring Ruritania, health care is still subsidized by the government. If Ms. F is allowed into Ruritania, she is guaranteed free health care and her life will be saved. If she is not allowed into Ruritania, she will die.

Answers: Now that you have made your decisions about protecting these persons, compare what you decided in each individual case with the following information about what a UNHCR Protection Officer would do.

Mr. H – Although Mr. H was not involved in the guerrilla activities, his neighbors still threatened him because he belongs to the minority ethnic group. In this case, his fear of persecution because of his ethnicity is well-founded. He is also in the unusual position of being persecuted by certain members of his own ethnic group for not supporting the independence movement. In other words, his political opinion (that is, not being involved at all) is at odds with others in his ethnic community and, therefore, his fear of persecution on political grounds is well-founded.

Ms. Q – Although the refugee definition does not specifically include gender-discrimination as grounds for refugee status, Ms. Q should still be granted asylum. UNHCR considers a person who is fleeing severe discrimination or other inhumane treatment to be eligible for refugee status. Ms. Q is being persecuted for not conforming to strict social codes. Since the government is the source of this discrimination, Ms. Q has no higher authority to appeal to for protection.

Mr. C – Mr. C should not be granted asylum. By killing prisoners of war, Mr. C has committed a war crime (according to the 1949 Geneva Conventions). By committing a war crime, the “exclusion clause” of the refugee definition applies to this case, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which forbids actions contrary to the “purposes and principles of the UN.”

Mr. R – Mr. R should be recognized as a refugee. His actions were political in nature, but one must also examine the crime he committed while escaping from prison. His crime was obviously serious. The next step is to strike a balance between the nature of the offense and the degree of persecution feared. To be considered as a refugee, the persecution feared must outweigh the seriousness of the offense. It appears that the crime was committed in order to escape persecution and so the “exclusion clause” of the refugee definition would not apply.

Ms. F – Ms. F should not be recognized as a refugee. Poverty and poor social conditions alone can never be grounds for granting protection as a refugee. Ms. F is not being persecuted for any of the reasons in the refugee definition. Although Ms. F belongs to the lower class, her membership in this social group is not in itself enough to be recognized as a refugee. There has to be some clear threat of persecution for belonging to this particular group. Also, Ms. F has not experienced a form of discrimination. The government health care policy applies to everyone. No one is being disproportionately mistreated for reasons in the refugee definition. However, if the government refused to provide medical treatment to Ms. F because of her ethnicity, then she might be recognized as a refugee.

Media watch – This activity will work best with a Sunday school class or youth group that meets on a regular basis. When there is a refugee crisis that is getting a lot of coverage in the news or media attention to immigration issues, follow the story in the media. Bring reports and clippings to share with the rest of the group as the situation changes. Consider making a scrapbook or bulletin board display using newspaper and magazine articles and pictures. Discuss the refugee or immigration situation and questions such as:

- What spin is the media putting on this situation?
- What part of the real story is not being told?
- What media (print, TV, radio) is giving us the most information?
- What is motivating the media to choose this coverage over other refugee/immigration coverage, which probably deserves equal coverage?
- What impact do the media have on U.S. citizens in terms of motivating them to respond to refugee situations or to form positive attitudes towards immigrants?
- What impact do the media have on your congregation in terms of motivating it to respond to this refugee situation or to form positive attitudes toward immigrants?
- Is there any coverage that shows how the church (anywhere in the world) is responding to this refugee or immigration situation?
- What is the story that eventually knocks coverage of this refugee or immigration situation off the front page?

Life in a refugee camp – Read and discuss the following that was adapted from “A 10’ x 10’ PLOT” by Howard Cameron (International Mission Volunteer for Presbyterian World Service in Bukavu, Zaire [now Democratic Republic of Congo])

What’s life like for a Rwandan refugee in a camp in Karl, Democratic Republic of Congo? What are 1,000,000+ refugees experiencing? Imagine this if you can:

Go out in your backyard and choose a 10’x10’ plot of ground. Choose well because that’s where you will live for a while. You can keep the clothes you are wearing. Get a 10’x10’ sheet of blue or white plastic, a cooking pot and a five gallon plastic jerrycan for water. Yellow seems to work best. Don’t fill it yet. That comes later.

Now, you and your family (if you still have one) leave the house and move to that 10’x10’ plot. Make yourself comfortable because that’s where you are going to be tonight, tomorrow and many more tomorrows while politicians and military leaders play out their games which will decide if you can ever go back in the house and assume a normal life.

You get no breaks or “time-outs.” You get no trips to the bathroom. Everything that happens, takes place on that 10’x10’ place of ground. If you are lucky, a neighborhood silt trench has been cut into the rocky volcanic soil. What about your privacy? You learn very quickly that privacy is between your ears. It’s a state of mind rather than a closed door.

You can’t leave your 10’x10’, except to go daily for a yellow jerrycan of water or a weekly ration of beans – 100 grams of beans per person per day. That means about three ounces of beans. You can handle that, except on the day when beans are handed out. Then you have to make a choice. The water is so far away and the food line is so long that there’s not enough time to do both. If your husband or wife was murdered before you fled Rwanda, you must choose water or beans. It will probably be beans, so that day, no water. Pray that you aren’t sick on bean day.

Are you beginning to get the feel?

Now, let’s put you in a refugee camp. Take your 10’x10’ plot and put it in the middle of a 100 acre field on a steep hillside. Scratch out a level spot with a stick. No shovel. Divide the rest of that field into 10’x10’ plots and fill them with 10,000 people. Rows are allowed with foot paths up and down the hillside. Understand that those others couldn’t choose their plot like you

did. They took what they could find. Or maybe the one they found was occupied by a family who just died. They took the bodies down by the road so they would be picked up, and they moved in.

The other refugees couldn't even choose their clothes. When they heard shooting and screaming down the street and realized gangs were shooting and hacking to death friends, neighbors and family, they ran with what they had on. Maybe they grabbed a pot and something else. Maybe they did not. They ran until they only had strength left to walk.

Some walked for six days with little or nothing to eat. Their water was roadside puddles, small streams and rain. Thank God for the rain. It was fresh and clean, and bone chilling. Finally, they crossed into the Democratic Republic of Congo. Some stood around and tried to understand what had happened. Some tried to mourn, but were too numb. Some simply lay down and died. The trauma and the trip killed them. Some quietly died from gunshot or machete wounds. Some were loaded on trucks, driven into rough hillsides to places called "camps" and told to find a 10'x10' home. They were given a blue plastic tarp and a yellow jerrycan.

And there they are.

Reflecting on immigration – Using the following information and questions to reflect on immigration to the United States, have someone read the text of each section. After the reading, open the discussion by reflecting on the questions after the text, one question at a time.

Experimental reflection: From time to time the debate around immigration concerns becomes one of the main public discussions. Facing serious economic, social, and environmental problems, people tend to search for easy explanations and solutions to these complex problems. Some political leaders, journalists, and members of the general public identify immigrants as the root cause of the problems. This often results in attempts to keep immigrants from receiving such basic human services as health care, education, and housing. Numerous groups form to support efforts to limit immigration. On the other hand, advocates for immigrants note that, rather than being the source of our nation's ills, the economic, social and cultural contributions of immigrants are fundamental to the solution of our nation's ills. These advocates call for solutions which address the fundamental causes of suffering in our communities. They also express concern that the anti-immigration sentiment has resulted in the exacerbation of racial and ethnic strife, the proliferation of "hate crimes" against people of color, and the increasing isolation of the immigrant community. *In what ways have you personally witnessed or experienced this mounting anti-immigrant sentiment or efforts to counteract anti-immigrant sentiment within your congregation, neighborhood, and community?*

Historical reflection: The United States was founded on the principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Our history is filled with admirable efforts to promote these principles. At the same time, the nation's history bears some blemishes, particularly with respect to its treatment of immigrants. For despite the fact that the early immigrants to the United States were pilgrims fleeing religious persecution, our history holds examples of anti-immigrant sentiment and activity. The rampant discrimination against Irish and Italian Catholics, the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and the internment of Japanese during World War II are just a few examples of the historical mistreatment of the newest arrivals to this country. *Where did your own family come from? In what ways were your relatives welcomed or discriminated against? What other examples of the treatment of immigrants do you know about from U.S. history? What do you think have been the underlying causes of the discriminatory treatment of immigrants throughout U.S. history?*

Cultural reflection: As members of a democracy, we expect that our leaders will be guided by the values and ideals of the American spirit. While belief in the fundamental values underlying that spirit (such as the promotion of the common good and the respect of the human rights of all persons) might remain constant, they are afforded different levels of emphasis and priority

dependent upon the social and economic climate. Given the intensity of the public debate that often revolves around immigration issues, it is clear that diverse and potentially conflicting values exist. *What values do you think underlie efforts to limit immigration? What values do you think underlie efforts to advocate for immigration?*

Political reflection: Some political analysts note that many of the social tensions in developing countries have been exacerbated by policies and practices of the U.S. government and U.S.-based multinational corporations. They point to countries like Guatemala, for example, where the U.S. government supported (and even bolstered) leaders who engaged in large-scale repression and where U.S.-based corporations contribute to the exploitation of the labor force in an attempt to foster profit-making. Analysts claim that the results of this repression and exploitation are poverty and civil strife, conditions which have significantly added to the immigrant flow into the United States. *Do you agree with this analysis? Why or why not? What are the underlying causes for the increased migration in the world?*

Economic reflection: We live in a global economy. Relationships between countries are marked by an interchange of resources and people. Yet, this relationship is not balanced. Experts agree that there is a desperate inequity in the distribution of wealth among nations. Affluent countries like the United States consume a disproportionate share of the world's resources. People from developing nations do not have access to sufficient resources, and thus are migrating to the more affluent countries. Some economists also contend that the U.S. economy largely depends upon the immigrant labor force (through the services they offer and the taxes they pay). *What do you see as the implications of living in a global economy? In your opinion, who benefits and who suffers from immigration caused by the global economy? How do they benefit?*

Social reflection: Our diverse heritage is a hallmark of the U.S. culture. Through the mingling of ethnic traditions and backgrounds, societies are both challenged and strengthened. We are called to speak with and listen to one another to build our community, rather than allow it to fracture. We are called to hear and respond to the voice of justice, especially for those who struggle against adverse conditions, so as to promote the progress of all peoples. *In what way is our society strengthened and challenged by our diverse cultural heritage? Are there models (institutions or communities) which you think offer signs of hope for mutual respect and acceptance of all people?*

Theological reflection: At the root of Judeo-Christian beliefs is the essential sacredness of all human beings. We believe we are united in one family of God, and that what happens to one member affects us all. Scripture reminds us that God's chosen people, themselves, were strangers in foreign lands. It also calls us to be especially mindful of the treatment of the most vulnerable people in our midst: the widows, the orphans, and the foreigners. *What does your faith perspective tell you about the treatment of immigrants in our midst? What does your faith perspective offer as guiding principles in the debate around immigration? What does your own faith perspective call you to do in response?*

See the Welcoming the World to our Doorsteps packet and pledge for more ideas on theological reflection at <http://www.discipleshomemissions.org/pages/RIM-WelcomePledge>.

Reflecting on the border – A group of students from George Washington University visited the Arizona/Mexico border and noted the following reflections from their experience. Use these reflections as the basis of a discussion of the issues raised and see if you agree with the observations of the students.

- We learned that most of the non-profit organizations on the border provide only band-aid solutions and that without band-aids or anyone to work on vaccines, it's hard to stop the bleeding.

- We learned that increasing the length of walls and number of border patrol agents does not stem the flow of immigration; it merely diverts it toward more hazardous, barren regions causing an increase in migrant death tolls.
- We learned that immigration rates are a function of the Mexican economy, not of the number of politicians that are tough on immigration.
- We learned that in order to help the less fortunate, we must always keep one foot in the world of hurt.
- We learned that, thanks to NAFTA, beans grown in Mexico and purchased in the United States are cheaper than beans grown and purchased in Mexico.
- We learned that the Wal-Mart in Nogales, Arizona (population 30,000) is the highest grossing Wal-Mart in the world.
- We learned that the vast majority of migrants intend to return to Mexico in less than a year.
- We learned that it's never illegal to save a person's life.
- We learned that local farmers cut deals with border patrol agents to let migrants through during harvest time.
- We learned that some local farmers form militias to hunt illegal immigrants during the agricultural off season.
- We learned that individuals with compassion for others and passion within have the potential to effect profound social change.

Assessing Attitudes – The purpose of this activity is to encourage participants to discuss their opinion and spark dialogue. Hang up signs around the room – one that says **agree**, one that says **disagree**, and one that says **not sure**. Tell participants there are two rules:

- When participants hear a statement, they must go stand under the sign if they agree, disagree, or are not sure.
- Participants are allowed to move from where they are standing if their opinion changes during the discussion.

Read each statement and ask people to stand under their chosen sign. Have two or three people in each group discuss why they agree or disagree. Sample statements can include the following or you can make your own.

- Immigrants deserve the same rights as citizens.
- It is fair to treat legal permanent residents differently from citizens.
- The U.S. immigration justice system is just.
- Without immigrants, this country would be nothing.
- Immigrant detention centers treat their detainees fairly.
- Raids on undocumented immigrants are just.
- It is right to deport undocumented parents of citizen children.

Role Plays/Games

Online role plays/games

“Against All Odds” – <http://www.playagainstallodds.com/>

“Homeland Guantánamos” – <http://www.homelandgitmo.com>

“ICED – I Can End Deportation” – <http://www.icedgame.com/>

“Well Founded Fear” – <http://www.pbs.org/pov/archive/wellfoundedfear/>.

See descriptions of these above under DVDs, Internet Videos, & Internet Games.

“Engaging Impasse on Immigration”

This Internet site contains descriptions of people to role play and questions for discussion after the role play. Available at <http://www.networklobby.org/nep/ImmigWorkshop3-2010.pdf>.

“Immigration Board Game”

This Internet site contains pieces of a board game about immigration that can be printed off and assembled for groups to play. It covers both legal paths to citizenship and what can happen to the undocumented. Available at <http://www.nwfc.org/immig/immigration.brd.game.htm>.

“Refugee Simulation Game - Australia”

This Internet site contains information about an Australian simulation game. It is recommended only for people over age 18, due to the traumatic nature of the refugee experience. Available at <http://www.tear.org.au/resources/items/refugee-simulation-game/>.

“Refugee Simulation Game – Mennonite Central Committee”

This Internet site contains information about a game that simulates the choices refugee families must make with limited resources. Available at <http://reliefsales.mcc.org/reliefsales/children/action/refugee/>.

Asylum seeker role play

Asylum seekers are persons who seek safety in the United States. They may be persons who already came to the United States on a temporary visa (like a student visa or a visitor's visa) but fear going home because of something that has happened that makes them fear persecution if they return. They may be fleeing persecution and arrive at an airport without a proper visa where they announce that they are seeking asylum. They may be fleeing persecution and cross a border hoping not to get caught, but asking for asylum if they are caught.

Many asylum seekers have to explain why they are seeking asylum and prove that they are fleeing persecution in their homeland without the ability to speak English and often without good translators to help them. This role play helps people understand how frustrating it would be to try to tell the basic facts about yourself, let alone your story of persecution, without the ability to speak the English language. After completing the role play take the time to reflect on the experience using the suggested questions for discussion.

Instructions to Participants: In order to better understand what it might be like to be a person seeking asylum in the United States, imagine that you have just fled your country where you were being hunted down to be killed by the authorities. Now you have arrived in the United States and you are being told to fill out this form to request asylum. Take care; your life may depend on how you answer these questions!

HULING PANGALAN/APELYIDO _____
 UNA AT GITNANG PANGALAN _____

KASARIAN _____

ARAW, BUWAN AT TAON NG PAGSILANG _____
 LUGAR NG PAGSILANG _____
 BANSA AT NASYONALIDAD _____

MAYROON BA KAYONG KAMAG-ANAK SA ESTADOS UNIDOS? _____
 KUNG MAYROON, ILISTA ANG MGA PANGALAN, TIRAHAN AT ANO ANG
 KASALUKUYANG STATUS NG IMIGRASYON _____

MAYROON BA KAYONG ABOGADO NA KUMAKATAWAN SA INYO? _____
 KUNG MAYROON, ILISTA ANG PANGALAN AT TIRAHAN _____

NABILANGGO BA KAYONG DAHIL ISANG KASALANANG MABIGAT? _____
 KUNG SAKALING NABILANGGO KAYO, IPALIWANAG PO NILA ANG DAHILAM _____

KASALAKUYAN KA BANG NAKAKULONG O NABINBIN? _____
 KUNG NAKULONG KAYO, ILISTA LAMANG ANG MGA LUGAR AT MAGKANO ANG
 PIYENSANG IBINAYAD UPANG MAKALAYA _____

PINAHIRAPAN KAYO BA SA SARILING BANSA SA ANONG DAHILAN? _____
 DAHIL BA MIYEMBRO KAYO NG ISANG GRUPONG PULITIKAL? _____
 DAHIL BA NAGPAHIWATIG KA NG IYONG PERSONAL NA OPINYON LABAN SA
 MAYKAPANGYARIHAN? _____
 DALA BA NG MAY KAMAG-ANAK KANG KABAHAGI SA GRUPONG POLITIKAL O
 KUMIKILOS? _____
 DALA BA NA IKAW AY MIYEMBRO NG ISANG RELIHIYON? _____
 DAHIL BA MIYEMBRO KA NG ISANG NAAPING GRUPO? _____
 DAHIL BA MIYEMBRO KA NG ISANG GRUPONG NAAPI DAHIL SA LAHI O KALAHI? _____

Follow-up discussion for asylum seeker role play: The questions you answered were in the Tagalog language spoken by people in the Philippines. The questions were:

- Last name
- First and middle names
- Sex
- Date of birth
- Place of birth
- Country of nationality
- Do you have relatives in the United States?
- If so, list names, addresses, and immigration status.
- Do you have a lawyer to represent you?
- If so, list name and address.
- Have you ever been convicted of a crime?
- If so, explain.
- Are you currently or have you been in detention?
- If so, list where you are detained or the amount of bond you posted to get out of detention.
- Were you ever persecuted for any reason in your country?
 - Because you were a member of a political group?
 - Because you expressed a political opinion opposed to the people in power?
 - Because you have family involved in political activities?
 - Because you are a member of a persecuted religious group?
 - Because you are a member of a persecuted social group?
 - Because you are a member of a persecuted race or ethnicity?

Consider what it must be like for persons who are fleeing persecution in their homeland to have to understand the U.S. asylum system and prove they are fleeing persecution in order to be able to stay legally in the United States. The trauma of persecution is made even greater by the trauma of having to prove that persecution, in a country and language that is unfamiliar.

Discuss the following questions:

- Do you think you answered the questions satisfactorily enough that the Department of Homeland Security would grant you asylum? (If you didn't, the Department of Homeland Security will soon be deporting you.)
- Do you think you would have done a better job if you had had a translator helping you? (You would want to make sure that you got a translator that spoke your dialect of English and not someone who only understood people with southern accents – if you are from the north.)
- Do you think you would have done an even better job if you had also had a lawyer helping you? If so, where would you get the money to pay for the lawyer? (There are only a few organizations that provide low cost lawyers for asylum seekers and thousands of asylum seekers seeking their assistance.)

Refugee role play

This role play will help participants "feel" what it means to be a refugee. It is recommended for groups that will give at least a full hour for the role play and discussion following. (Thanks to the Lutheran Ministries of Florida who designed the original from which this was adapted.)

Instructions for the leader:

Preparation:

Prepare copies of the Scenario for all participants. Prepare separate papers for each refugee identity you expect to assign. Prepare a few deportation notices ready to deliver. Plan what questions you will ask as you role play the interviews. Ask personal background questions but

especially focus on education, skills, health, and the reasons they can't return to the United States.

Directions:

- Distribute "Scenario" to all. Allow time to read.
- Give each participant a new identity to assume. Do **not** give anybody a list with all the identities on it. You need not fill all roles. Use as many as you have people. Cluster people as families, where appropriate. Allow time to read and think how to act out the identities.
- Allow time for people to share identities with each other and determine who gets to be interviewed first for possible sponsorship out of the camp. Say: "As camp commander I have just received word that we will be having an official from Greenland come to the camp tomorrow to interview applicants for resettlement in Greenland. We don't know if the official will have time to interview all or just a few of you, and therefore we want your group to choose an order in which families and individuals will go for interviews. The criteria for the decision about the order for interviews are your choice, but be realistic. Remember your decision could result in your family's languishing in the refugee camp for years or being returned to possible death in the United States if you find no place to go."
- Assume the role of the interviewer from Greenland, looking for persons to sponsor. If there is a person playing an African American identity among those to be interviewed, explain you only accept white refugees for Greenland. Make sure you only accept cases that will contribute to the Greenland economy (skilled, professionals). Ask about personal background, education, skills, and health. Physically remove those refugees to be accepted into Greenland, but keep them close enough so they can still observe. (You might want to give them some symbol of their acceptance into Greenland to further distinguish them from those left behind.)
- Have the remaining group re-determine the order in which they will be interviewed for sponsorship out of the camp when another country comes to choose people for resettlement.
- Come in representing the Mexican government and deliver a couple deportation notices. Explain that the persons you are giving deportation notices to have been judged to be economic refugees rather than political refugees. At this point, people frequently object. Don't tolerate objections. Physically remove them, but within hearing. (You might want to tape their deportation notices to their chest to further distinguish them from those left behind.)
- Have the remaining group again determine their order for interviews.
- Enter as interviewer from France. Explain that in France, the churches, rather than the government, are sponsors of refugees. Because fewer churches are now willing to become involved, none of the remaining refugees will be accepted. Tell them you will be back in a year and maybe then they will be sponsored.
- End role play and regroup for discussion of questions.

Scenario:

It is the year 2050. For five years, the United States has been deep in an economic depression, more severe than the depression of the 1930s. Three years of drought throughout the United States and Canada mean food shortages and spreading malnutrition.

Food riots over arriving food supplies are increasing, especially in cities. Middle class families seem least prepared to cope with the hardships. U.S. unemployment has reached 49 percent. Mental breakdowns are on the rise.

Grain-surplus nations of South America and Europe have been unwilling to sell the United States the surplus they keep for emergencies for their own people. The U.S. efforts to


import soybeans to supplement the U.S. diet have also failed. Grain-surplus nations continue to feed the beans to cattle which consume seven pounds of beans to produce one pound of meat.

The United States faces economic and political chaos. As a last resort, Washington suspends all Constitutional rights. For the first time in U.S. history, elections are postponed and then canceled. The food crisis is at the root of the discontent and disorder.

Mexico, on the contrary, is booming, still riding on oil discoveries of 2025. Mexico has enough food for its citizens and at first welcomes U.S. refugees as a source of cheap labor. Mexicans, however, soon clamor for their government to "shut the border" as the refugee flow becomes a flood. Because of the fear that Mexico will be overrun with refugees, the Mexican government has set up refugee camps. Mexico has begun to deport U.S. refugees from these camps on the basis that they are "economic" refugees rather than "political" refugees.

In this exercise, you will play the role of a refugee in the midst of this crisis. You are in a refugee camp in Mexico and the person leading this role play is your camp commander. Your identity will come from a real story of a real person with whom church refugee agencies have worked. Obviously the geography has been changed and other changes have been made to insure privacy of the people, but the circumstances are true to life. As you play this role, it is hoped you will begin to better understand what refugees experience.

Deportation Notice:

	
<p>GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION</p>	
<p>NOTICE OF DEPORTATION</p>	
<p>To: _____</p>	
<p>This is to inform you that 24 hours after the delivery of this notice, you and your family will be deported from Mexico to El Paso, Texas. Your request for asylum has been denied. We find against your claim to be a political refugee. You appear to have fled to Mexico for economic reasons. The guard delivering this notice will keep you in custody until you leave and will escort you to El Paso. You will be allowed to take one change of clothing with you when you leave. All else must be left behind.</p>	
<p>_____ Immigration Director</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>

Your assignment:

- To begin, you will be given a new identity. Become familiar with your story and character. Feel what it will mean to play this person. You are in a refugee camp in Mexico.
- As you participate, try to really think and act as you feel the person would whose identity you are given. Pay attention to your feelings.
- Introduce yourself to others in the refugee camp. Tell your story in your own words.
- After all have shared their identities, choose a spokesperson for your camp - preferably one who speaks Spanish and can communicate with Mexican officials. Also choose an order in which families and individuals will go for interviews to be sponsored out of the camp to be resettled in a new country where they can begin a new life. The criteria for the decision are your choice, but be realistic about who has the best chance to be sponsored out of the camp to be resettled in a new country where they can begin a new life. Remember, if you find no place to go, your family might remain in the refugee camp for years or be returned to the United States where you might face death.

Refugee identities to be assigned:

(Do not show participants this whole list. Use only as many identities as you have people.)

Kim:

Age: early 30s. Have been in camp six months. Earlier, your brother fled to a refugee camp in Guatemala. As retribution for his escape, you, as the oldest unmarried person in your family, were imprisoned for 8 months. When released from jail, you were demoted from an executive position to file clerk and told that would be your job status for the rest of your life in the United States. The police also detained you briefly for attending a Disciples worship service. The family urged you to escape alone to Mexico. You wrote your brother in Guatemala, but he says he has no money and can't help. You think he wants nothing to do with you. You have been severely depressed with crying spells and insomnia. You've considered suicide but haven't told this to anybody. You know Spanish but have told nobody and don't use it in the camp.

Joyce and two children:

Age: 37. Two children aged 5 and 7. Have been in camp 4 years. Husband is in prison in Ft. Leavenworth, KS for protesting the abandonment of constitutional rights in the United States. At his insistence, you fled to Mexico. You have no idea how long he will be imprisoned or if he will ever be released from prison. You speak no Spanish.

Gordon and Rachel Martin and three children:

Age: Adults in early 40s. Children aged 9, 13, and 14. Have been in camp 18 months. You used to have good middle class life. Gordon was a civil servant, a skilled accountant. Since the military took control during martial law, Gordon was fired for speaking against martial law. The family had discussed and been aware of what consequences speaking out might have. You lived in Texas, but fled to Mexico City. In Mexico City you were picked up and forced into the refugee camp. Rachel has been a housewife and has a 12th grade education. Only the 13 and 14 year old members of the family know Spanish. The family depends on them for translation in Mexico.

Miriam and two daughters:

Ages: Mother is 61, daughters are 21 and 30. Have been in camp 18 months. Miriam's husband and four other children died in food riots in Denver. People acted insane when only bread and milk were available in the grocery for three months. You escaped to Mexico with your remaining

two daughters. The older daughter left a husband and son in Denver. None of you speak Spanish. The youngest was in her first job as a secretary. The older one has been a housewife.

Oscar:

Age: 35. Have been in camp six months. You were in the U.S. Army. You got two weeks in the brig for questioning the lack of rights Americans have at present, despite Constitutional guarantees. Both you and your father have been labor activists. Repeatedly you've been detained without charge for 24-48 hours, then released. You were severely beaten the last time in jail. When you got out, you fled to Mexico City. Your wife and son are in Cleveland, in the midst of outright famine. You are skilled as a plumber, but speak no Spanish. You do speak a little French.

George:

Age: 29. Have been in camp three months. While you were away on a navy ship, your wife was jailed. She had been working for women's rights. As soon as you could, you rushed to the jail but they told you she died - of natural causes. Your wife had never been ill a day since you married eight years ago. She was only 28. She was obviously murdered. Because you heard diseases are rampant in the refugee camps and you feared you could not adequately care for her, you left a 3-year-old daughter with your brother's family in Philadelphia when you fled. You walked a month before finally reaching Mexico. You have only the skills the Navy taught you. You speak no Spanish.

Charles:

Age: 42. Have been in camp seven months. You were studying archaeology in Mexico City when the United States declared martial law. You immediately asked for political asylum. Your wife and four sons were in New Orleans. They left with 100 others on a shrimp boat bound for Veracruz, but the boat capsized. Seventeen women survivors were picked up by pirates, who just let the men drown. The women were robbed and raped and set adrift on a life raft. Your wife was among them when the U.S. Coast Guard rescued them and took them all to prison in New Orleans for attempted flight from the United States. You have an M.A. in archaeology. You have no mechanical skills. You do speak Spanish.

Ann and Dennis:

Age: early 20s. Have just arrived in camp. Dennis was in the army but being outspoken got him in trouble. He was sent to a re-education camp. He finally escaped, and you both fled with your preschooler. Near the border, a policeman shot and killed the child as you ran. You checked for a pulse but found none, and fearing to lose your own lives, left the child and kept running. Your first refuge in Mexico was a "holding center" but many there were being forced to return to the United States, so you ran again. You have finally reached the larger refugee camp near Mexico City where there is less chance of deportation. Dennis was in the infantry and is functionally illiterate even in English. Ann has been a night cleaning woman in offices. You both are pretty unskilled.

Diane:

Age: 58. Have been in camp one year. Your husband was a lawyer and politician, active in human rights. Shortly after martial law was declared, the police took your husband during the night. Two days later the police told you he died of a heart attack. You asked for an autopsy and a funeral. The police said it was too late - his body was already burned. You traveled from church to church in the United States until you finally reached Mexico after six months. Years ago you worked a while as a receptionist, but you speak no Spanish. You are African American.

Ralph and Grandfather Joseph:

Ages: Ralph is 23, Joseph 69. Have been in camp one month. You are African American and Christians. Ralph's father's business was nationalized, and his father was imprisoned. You all had worked there. At the border, a flippant Mexican guard asks if you are Christian. You know two friends of yours were murdered by border guards when they admitted being Christian, so Ralph answers "Hell no," and they let you pass. Ralph is an electronics technician and has worked in radio and TV construction and repair. He was in training in computer technology before martial law. Grandfather Joseph is sick. Neither of you knows Spanish.

Discussion questions to follow role-playing:

- How did it feel to be a refugee with little control over your future?
- How did you feel when Greenland wanted only whites and skilled persons as immigrants?
- How did you feel about the decisions of the camp about who should go for interviews?
- How did you feel about the deportations? If there is both famine and martial law in the United States and you flee, is it because of political persecution or economics? (Think about the link between food and politics).
- How did you feel (Martin family) depending on the children for translation?
- How did you feel when other nations refused to give up grain reserves or reduce beef consumption to help feed starving Americans? (Think about your own over-reliance on red meat, a diet which often provides far more than daily needs).
- How did you feel when the churches of France failed to respond and it looked like you would have at least a year more in the camp in minimal food, housing, and health conditions? (Think about U.S. churches who don't want to get involved with refugees.)
- What should you do now that you have a new understanding of what it means to be a refugee?

Activities for Children and Youth

Many of the above activities can also be used successfully with children and youth groups.

Disciples' Kids to Kids Packet – Check out our Kids to Kids “Fill the Backpack” Packet available at <http://www.discipleshomemissions.org/pages/RIMKidstoKidsFilltheBackpackMenu>. It is especially useful for congregations seeking a service project for their Vacation Church School.

Church World Service's Build a Better World – These colorful Church World Service Booklets contain activities for children which focus on refugee children. They are available from your local CROP office or from Church World Service, 28606 Phillips St., P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515. Phone: (800) 297-1516 ext. 222. (Up to ten copies are available at no charge.) Online versions are available at:

<http://www.churchworldservice.org/betterworld2/index.html>

(see especially the sections on Journey from Sudan, Journey to the Border, and Journey to Pakistan)

<http://www.churchworldservice.org/bbwafrika/index.html>

(see especially the sections on Journey to Angola, Journey from Somalia, and Journey to Rwanda)

Church World Service's Build a Village – This 2007 interactive Web site features stories, games and other activities for children of all ages, as well as alternative giving opportunities that support the work of Church World Service. The section of the Web site on “Helping in Times of Trouble” speaks specifically to refugee situations. It is available on the Internet at <http://www.buildavillage.org/home.html>.

Global Ministries material – There is material for youth and children on the Global Ministries Web site at: <http://www.globalministries.org/resources/youth-and-children/>. A couple of items relate to refugee situations:

- World Resources Simulation Game – see

<http://www.globalministries.org/resources/youth-and-children/worlds-resources-simulation-gam.html>.

- Shepherd's Field YMCA in Palestine helps traumatized refugee youth cope – see

<http://www.globalministries.org/mee/projects/shepherds-field-ymca.html>.

Appreciating America's Heritage: Immigration Resource Guide for K-12 Educators – This Internet resource is an instructional guide for teachers and provides lesson plans to introduce students to the topic of immigration. Available at <http://www.aifl.org/teach/teacherguide2007.pdf>.

Beyond the fire – This Web site (<http://archive.itvs.org/beyondthefire/>) contains the stories of 15 refugee teenagers who survived war in seven different war zones around the world.

Britain's Global Eye – This Web site contains material written for schools in Britain to raise students' understanding of global development issues. See: <http://www.globaleye.org.uk/>. Under “Back Issues” you will find several locations throughout the site that contain refugee information, such as: http://www.globaleye.org.uk/primary_summer/focuson/index.html
http://www.globaleye.org.uk/primary_summer/oncamera/index.html
<http://www.globaleye.org.uk/archive/spring2k/focuson/indexh.html>
<http://www.globaleye.org.uk/archive/spring2k/oncamera/indexh.html>
<http://www.globaleye.org.uk/archive/spring2k/focuson/unhcr.html>
<http://www.globaleye.org.uk/archive/spring2k/focuson/vietnam.html>

http://www.globaleye.org.uk/secondary_autumn04/focuson/index.html

http://www.globaleye.org.uk/secondary_autumn04/focuson/humantrafficking.html

Creating a Refuge From Bullying – This material provides examples of bullying experiences from teen refugees and explains steps that can be taken to help American teens understand teen refugees. Available at <http://www.africancommunitycenter.net/youthprogramnew.htm>.

My Backpack: An Educational Study Guide and Activity – This study guide’s objective is to foster the understanding of the differences between migrants, immigrants, and refugees, and to empathize with the experience of people on the move. Available at <http://www.nccbuscc.org/mrs/nmw/backpack.pdf>.

A Day in the Life of a Refugee Teenager – Can you imagine a day in the life of a refugee teenager? Many of the basic things we take for granted are not available to teenagers and their families who have fled their homes because of fear. Some teenage refugees have witnessed the torture or killing of their parents, siblings or close relatives. Others were separated from their families as they fled their homes and they live in refugee camps with other groups of youth or with a sibling, if they are lucky.

This exercise (developed by the staff of the United Church of Christ Refugee Ministries office) invited teenagers to describe their typical day and compare it with the typical day of a refugee. Break the teens into three groups, and ask each group to select a recorder and reporter. Give them several sheets of newsprint and markers. Ask each group to spend a few minutes listing their daily activities in one of the categories below, and then ask them to make a list of the activities they imagine their teen refugee is engaged in relating to their category. After a set time period, each group should report back to the larger group. End by talking generally about the issues of contrast between the two kinds of typical days.

Group A – Family Life/Home Life

Describe your home:

- Furniture;
- Appliances;
- Utilities;
- Personal items; and
- Clothes and accessories.

Who lives with you?

What are your favorite foods?

How much variety is in your diet?

How do you prepare your food?

Do you have a hospital near you? What aspects of health care are important to you?

How important is fresh water in your daily life? How much do you use?

What kind of jobs do you or your family members do to earn an income?

Group A – Mina’s Story

My name is Mina, and I am a Muslim from Sarajevo, Bosnia. In May 1992, two months after the war began; I left my home and homeland. My family’s home was across the street from a military barracks of Serbian soldiers. From my window, I could see tanks striking parts of the city, soldiers coming and going and snipers firing from windows. Many of my neighbors were killed.

My mother, father, two sisters, nephew, and I spent 24-hours a day in a bomb shelter. We were among 40 people – mostly women and children – hiding in a small, dark room, listening to the shooting and shelling.

My sister had been undergoing chemotherapy. But we knew that even if we got her to the hospital, there would be no treatment for her, as the hospital was already overburdened with so many wounded. So we decided to try to leave.

Our car and others were stopped by Serb soldiers. They ordered us to pull off to the side of the road. The soldiers began making lists of the children in our convoy, threatening to kill them first. We spent three nights in our car without food. Along the way, we were stopped frequently by soldiers who threatened our lives.

When we reached Croatia, the Croats put us into a refugee camp where we lived 40 to a tent. After 10 days, they told us we had to move on to another camp in eastern Slovenia. We felt much safer because there was no shooting in the area. As summer turned to autumn, more refugees arrived. New arrivals were housed in tents – in rain, snow, and extreme cold – without any heat. Sanitation was deplorable; 20 to 30 toilets and only 20 showers for 3,000 people.

I dreamt about continuing my education. I would not be able to attend a Croatian university, since I was not a Croat. I found out that a few scholarships were available in the United States for Bosnian students. I was awarded a scholarship at La Roche College in Pittsburgh, where after three years, I received my B.A. in Psychology in 1996. If the situation in the former Yugoslavia remains stable, I will return to my homeland at the conclusion of my graduate studies and be reunited with my family who are now in Denmark. (*From the U.S. Committee for Refugees – www.refugees.org*)

Group B – Social Life

What kind of things do you do for fun?

- Sports;
- Music you listen to or play;
- Clubs or groups you belong to;
- Social events;
- Lessons you take (i.e. music, dance);
- Travel; and
- Shopping.

How do you get to the activities you are involved in?

When you travel are you ever concerned about your safety?

How do you pay for the social events you participate in?

Group B – Shukri's Story

I love my home town, a little place called Zakho shared by Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Kurds alike. But six years ago, my nine brothers and sisters, parents and I fled our home in northern Iraq. The fighting had become too much. We left in the dead of the night for the safety of the Turkish border. I was 14. I remember mom waking us. "Get your clothes on;" she urged, "we're leaving."

We are Kurds, an ethnic group whose rebellion was crushed by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein after the Gulf War. There were rumors that Kurdish civilians were being gassed and that other chemical weapons had been used to annihilate women hanging laundry and children at play.

During my three years in refugee camps, I remember always being hungry and cold and never being in school. Three years is a long time for a child to be away from school, but our family of 12 had no choice.

We lived beneath two tents tied together. At first, the United Nations brought food and clothing, and sympathetic countries sent help as well. But the crisis dragged on, and the international relief effort dwindled. I heard of people being beaten and supplies being stolen by the Turkish soldiers controlling the camp. We could not leave the compound, and protests over the living conditions were put down immediately.

I love to draw, but in the refugee camp, pen and paper are unspeakable luxuries, as are toilets and refrigerated food. During those three years our family hoped against all hope that we might one day leave the misery of the camps.

In 1994, we were allowed to immigrate to northern Virginia, with opportunities for education and work. Here my dreams have been realized. My drawings and paintings have improved with the help of caring teachers. I graduated from Annandale High this year with a grade point average of 3.8. During high school, I worked as a dishwasher and cook in an Italian restaurant. My family and I appreciate the chance we have been given through living in the United States. (*From the U.S. Committee for Refugees – www.refugees.org*)

Group C – School/Education – Future Dreams

Do you attend school? Is your school attendance a privilege or a right?

What kind of school do you attend?

How is your school paid for?

Do you have a choice of classes? If so, what are some of your choices?

How large are your classes?

What are your extra-curricular activities?

What are the facilities and resources available in your school?

What languages do you speak? What languages do your family members speak?

What are your hopes and plans for the future?

- College;
- Trade School;
- Travel; and/or
- Work.

Group C – Theogene's Story

I think my family, like so many others, was the victim of the kind of political situation prevalent in Rwanda since 1959. My mother left with four of us in 1961 after our father was killed in what was considered the first serious human rights abuses in Rwanda.

We went to Burundi, then to Tanzania, and finally settled in Uganda where we lived in a refugee camp for most of my life. This is not a situation where people board aircrafts or move by car. In most cases, we moved on foot through thick jungles of East and Central Africa. Many perished in the harsh conditions.

In countries where the majority of the people are poor, the refugees are ultimately the most impoverished. In the beginning, we didn't even have land to grow our own crops and feed ourselves. My mother, brother, and sister had to work long hours to get food for the day. After 12 hours, we received a bunch of bananas.

In Ugandan refugee camps back then, there were no formal classrooms. Class was held under a tree. I learned to write not using a pen and paper, but by leaving imprints on my thigh with sharp pieces of wood or grass. The week was divided into two parts: days when you had to work for food and days which you had to go to school. We would work for food three days and have school another two.

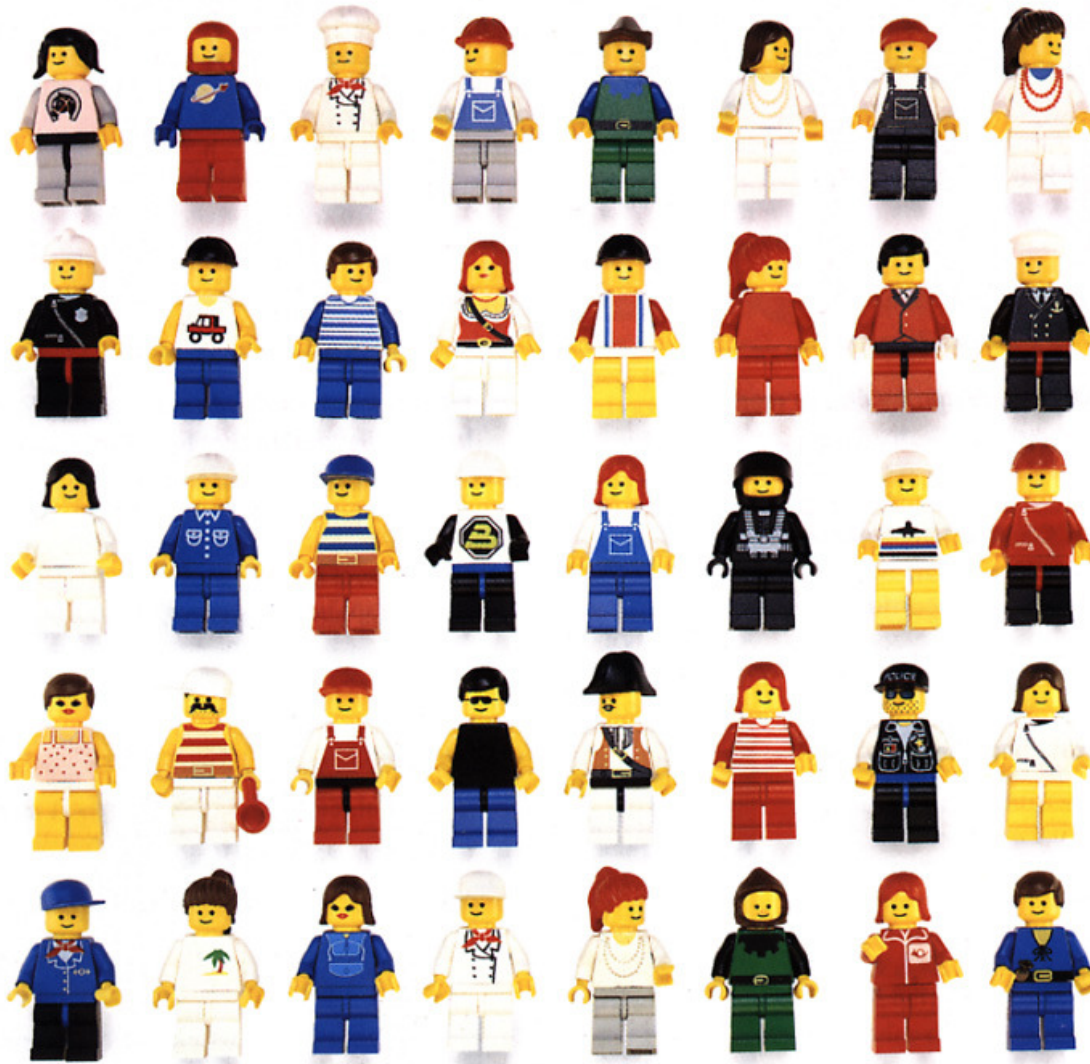
My mother was searching for a place where we would have the opportunity for education. She realized that the only resource you can count on for the future is education. She insisted that we walk with our head high. We grew up a happy family, because even when we were extremely poor, our mother convinced us that we had everything we wanted. Still, as refugees we lost our sense of belonging.

It is important for people to recognize that a refugee situation is not God-given. It comes out of our own inefficiencies and inactions. It is within our reach to change this situation. (Theogene became an ambassador to the United States from Rwanda, after spending his first 30 years in refugee camps.) (*From the U.S. Committee for Refugees – www.refugees.org*)

UNHCR material – There is a wealth of material for children and youth available on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ web site at: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4ab346796.html>. One example of this is “Spot the Refugee.” The teacher will need to make copies of the following poster and fold it just below the title so that the writing is hidden.

Instructions for “Spot the Refugee” – *Either the teacher can bring in several Lego model people, or ask the children to bring them in.*

1. Ask the students what makes a person a refugee – stress that people flee their countries out of a fear of persecution (very bad treatment) because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. (This part of the lesson need only take a few minutes.)
2. Set up the Lego people and ask the children what similarities all the Lego people share? (Responses could include: all the people have similarly-shaped heads; the facial features are usually the same – two black spots for eyes and a smile; they all have similar hands; etc.)
3. Pass out copies of the poster and ask them to keep the poster folded and look closely at the rows of Lego people. Ask them to suggest an identity for each figure, beginning from the first Lego person in the first row. After several have been identified, ask them how they decided on each identity.
4. Tell the children that the people who made the poster decided that one of the figures is a refugee. Ask the students to spot the refugee and describe how they came up with their identification. Do any of their reasons match the things that they said earlier about “what makes a person a refugee?”
5. Help the children understand the harm which can be caused by thoughtless name-calling and stereotyping of a whole group of people.
6. 6. Open the poster and read what it says. Then have the children answer the following questions:
 - What is the one difference between refugees and you and me?
 - What types of experience might refugees endure during their flight?
 - What events do you think could have happened to cause a person to flee and leave everything behind?
 - How would you feel if you were a refugee who had to leave your home, family and possessions behind and live in another country?



Models courtesy of The LEGO Group.

SPOT THE REFUGEE

There he is. Fourth row, second from the left. The one with the moustache. Obvious really.

Maybe not. The unsavoury-looking character you're looking at is more likely to be your average neighbourhood slob with a grubby vest and a weekend's stubble on his chin.

And the real refugee could just as easily be the clean-cut fellow on his left.

You see, refugees are just like you and me.

Except for one thing.

Everything they once had has been left behind. Home, family,

possessions, all gone. They have nothing.

And nothing is all they'll ever have unless we all extend a helping hand.

We know you can't give them back the things that others have taken away.

We're not even asking for

money (though every penny certainly helps).

But we are asking that you keep an open mind. And a smile of welcome.

It may not seem much. But to a refugee it can mean everything.

UNHCR is a strictly humanitarian organization funded only by voluntary contributions. Currently it is responsible for more than 26 million people around the world.



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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