

A CHURCH CURRICULUM FOR

# Immigrant & Refugee Ministry



## LEADER'S GUIDE

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This document is designed for leaders facilitating the refugee and immigrant ministry workshop. It includes full content, instructions, discussion prompts, and suggested questions. It can be used to guide group discussions, facilitate activities, and reference Scripture throughout each session.

### ANNOUNCEMENT TO PARTICIPANTS: QUESTIONS / WELCOME

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As we go through today's sessions, you may have questions or thoughts that come up. For things we may not get to right away, we invite you to write those questions down on the sticky notes or index cards provided. At the end of the training, we'll have a **Q&A time** to respond to as many as we can.

Feel free to write:

- Questions you're still wondering about
- Stories or experiences this brings to mind
- Things you're wrestling with or unsure about

You can drop your note in the designated spot anytime during the day.



# W.E.L.C.O.M.E. - A MINISTRY MODEL

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## W – WITH DIGNITY

Treat every person with **dignity and respect**. See them as individuals created in the image of God, not statistics or projects. **Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139:1**

## E – EMPHATHIZE

Listen to their story with **empathy** and with validation of their journey. Honor their vulnerability in sharing their trauma and listen well. **Romans 12:15, Galatians 6:2**

## L – LEARN

Take time to **learn** about their culture, faith, history, and values. A learner's posture shows humility and builds trust. **Proverbs 4:7**

## C – CONNECT

Build meaningful **connections** through hospitality, presence, and kindness. Offer your time, friendship, and help in practical ways. **Hebrews 13:2, 1 Peter 4:9-10**

## O – OPEN DOORS

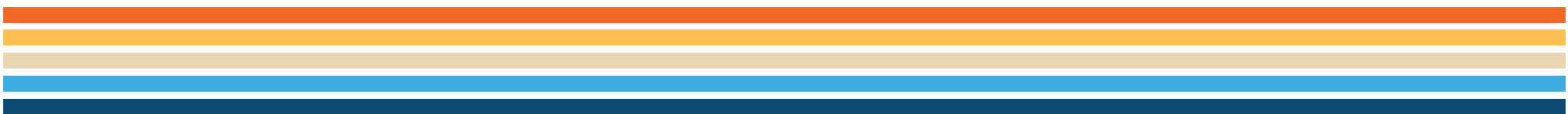
**Open doors** for them by helping them with language learning, local resources, church community, and the Gospel. **Isaiah 58:6-7**

## M – MODEL CHRIST

**Model the love of Christ** through your life. Let your kindness, love, and compassion show them Christ through you. **Philippians 2:5, John 13:15**

## E – ENGAGE IN PRAYER

**Engage in prayer** for and with immigrants and refugees. Prayer drives vision, compassion, and Spirit-led ministry. **Ephesians 6:18, Colossians 4:2**





## SESSION 1:

# UNDERSTANDING GOD'S HEART FOR IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

**Optional Icebreaker:** *Have you ever felt like an outsider? Share a moment of cultural disorientation or miscommunication.*



### OPENING REFLECTION

We never really know who the refugees and immigrants around us are, the journeys they had to embark on to get to the place they are right now, nor the losses, both material and human, that they have suffered. Some may be brothers and sisters in Christ, a part of the persecuted church, who have inspiring stories of resilience and faith. Others might be people who are lost and have never heard the good news because the Gospel was not accessible to them. They have access now, and they have receptive hearts. They now have the opportunity to hear the Gospel for the very first time, in a place where they have freedom that they hadn't experienced before. This is our opportunity to show Christ's love for them through our love and actions.



### BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

#### **Deuteronomy 10:18–19**

‘He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.’

#### **Matthew 2:13–15**

‘When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. ‘Get up,’ he said, ‘take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.’ So, he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod...’



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *What comes to mind when you hear the word ‘immigrant’ or ‘refugee’?*
- *Have you ever had a meaningful interaction or relationship with an immigrant or refugee? What did you learn?*
- *Why is it our duty as followers of Christ to love and welcome immigrants and refugees?*
- *How do you think Christians can play a role in welcoming and supporting immigrants and refugees?*



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- God loves and commands His people to love the foreigner.
- Jesus Himself was a refugee when His family fled to Egypt to escape Herod’s persecution. This was intentional, not incidental.
- Immigrants and refugees are image-bearers of God.



## DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- *Why does God call His Church to serve immigrants and refugees?*
- *What does it mean that Jesus Himself experienced life as a refugee?*
- *How can our understanding of Scripture on loving the foreigner shape our response on immigration and asylum?*



## ACTION STEPS/PERSONAL APPLICATION

- *How will you personally respond to the refugees and immigrants in your community after this session? (Think about practical ways you can show love, kindness, and care.)*

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## SESSION 2:

# UNDERSTANDING THE IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE EXPERIENCE

**Leader Note:** *In many cultures, counseling and openly discussing trauma is not common. Refugees and immigrants may carry deep wounds silently or feel shame in talking about them, especially those from honor/shame backgrounds. Be patient and focus on building trust.*



### OPENING REFLECTION

Refugees often endure multiple layers of trauma, not only in fleeing their home country, but also throughout their journey to safety. Many experience physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, betrayal, fear, and the loss of all they own. Some are even trafficked along the way. By the time they reach a “safe place,” they are often physically exhausted and emotionally depleted. The challenges don’t end upon arrival. Starting over in an unfamiliar country with a new language, culture, food, and social norms is overwhelming. Even if the new environment is objectively “better” or “safer,” the trauma of displacement and the weight of rebuilding from nothing remain deeply difficult.



### BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

#### **Leviticus 19:33-34**

“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

#### **Proverbs 31:8-9**

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

#### **Exodus 23:9**

“Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt.





**ACTIVITY:**

**IMMIGRANT VS. REFUGEE. WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?**

This activity helps highlight the differences between immigrants and refugees and the impact those differences can have on their experiences. The goal is to build awareness and empathy, preparing us to respond with compassion.

- 1. Begin by asking participants: “What differences do you think there might be between an immigrant and a refugee?” Allow a few people to share.
- 2. Then, present the table and read through it together.
- 3. Ask: “What stands out to you? How do these differences shape the challenges a refugee might face, and how might that affect how we respond as the church?”

Immigrant	Refugee
Expected	Unexpected
Planned change	Forced flight
Time to prepare	Left in crisis
Has contacts	Often alone
Pursuing opportunity	Fleeing trauma
Hopeful	Often afraid
Generally welcomed	Often judged



## UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA:

*“There’s nobody who has gone through more trauma and witnessed the worst that humanity has to offer than a refugee.”*

– Dr. Rajeev Bais



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *What do you think it would feel like to flee your home suddenly, without time to say goodbye to loved ones or gather your belongings? Consider the physical dangers, emotional toll, uncertainty, and fear they might experience.*
- *What does it mean to lose not only your home but also your possessions, savings, and sense of identity in the process?*
- *What challenges do you think immigrants and refugees face when arriving in a new country?*
- *What fears or hopes do you associate with the journey of refugees and immigrants?*
- *In what ways might refugees and immigrants be misunderstood or unfairly judged by the communities they arrive in?*

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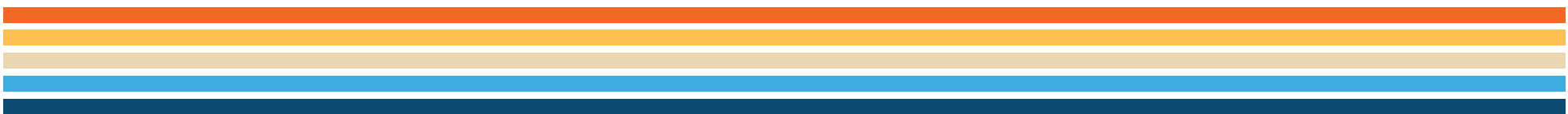
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## ACTIVITY:

### WALK IN THEIR SHOES – ASYLUM JOURNEY SIMULATION

#### Group Exercise / Empathy & Justice Simulation

**Purpose:** To deepen understanding of the asylum process by stepping into the lived experiences of real refugees. This exercise challenges participants to engage emotionally, think critically, and reflect spiritually on justice, compassion, and consequence.

#### Step 1: Individual Preparation

- Each participant will receive a real refugee story from our church in Central Europe. These are real stories from real people. (See pages 23-36.)
- Take 5-10 minutes to read and quietly familiarize yourself with the story. Try to internalize the emotions, background, and decisions of the person you're representing.
- You will be telling this story as if you are that person. This is a role-play exercise, so speak in the first person.

#### Step 2: Small Group Sharing

- Break into small groups of 3–4 people.
- One by one, each person will tell their story in the first person, as if they were the refugee seeking asylum.
- Listen carefully to each story. Ask clarifying questions if needed to fully understand each person's experience.



### Step 3: Group Decision

- As a group, discuss and decide who will receive asylum.
  - Only one person in each group can be granted asylum.
  - Your decision must be based on the content and context of the stories.
- Then, discuss the consequences for the individuals who did not receive asylum:
  - What risks will they face once they get back to their home country?
  - What emotional, physical, or spiritual impact might they face?

### Step 4: Group Reflection & Sharing

- Each group will briefly share the following with the whole group:
  - A summary of the stories told in your group
  - Who received asylum and why
  - The consequences for those who were denied asylum
  - Anything that surprised, challenged, or moved you during the process



### DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- *How did it feel to speak as someone else with a traumatic or difficult story?*
- *What made your group's decision difficult?*
- *What do you think this exercise reveals about the real-world asylum process?*
- *Where do you see God's heart in the lives of these individuals?*



## Special note

It’s important to remember that many refugees come from cultures where counseling or openly discussing personal struggles is neither common nor valued. While Westerners may quickly identify trauma and encourage therapy or open sharing, this approach can feel unsafe or shameful to many refugees.

In honor/shame cultures, people often carry their pain quietly rather than talk about it, sometimes denying or downplaying difficult experiences to avoid bringing shame on themselves or their families. For many who come from works-based religious backgrounds, like Islam, admitting hardship or weakness can feel like failure.

As leaders, we need to approach these differences with great patience and humility. Instead of pushing for immediate openness or labeling struggles, focus on building trust over time and creating a safe, welcoming environment. We must be patient as we walk alongside them in this journey, allowing them to share when they are ready, and supporting them unconditionally along the way.



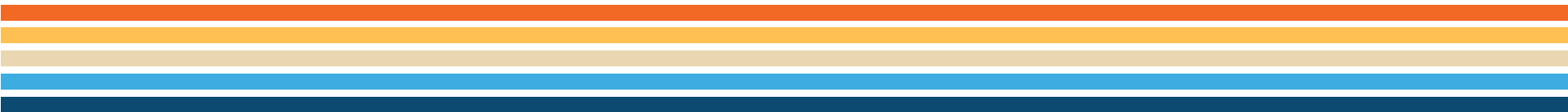
### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Refugees often endure trauma both during displacement and throughout the asylum process.
- Retelling their story repeatedly, which is needed in court and through the asylum-seeking process, can retraumatize them even further.
- Some are open to sharing; others may be guarded.



### DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- *How can the Church and community support immigrants and refugees as they adjust to a new life?*
- *Why is it important to understand and respond to the emotional and psychological challenges refugees face?*





### SESSION 3:

## STARTING PRACTICAL MINISTRY

**Leader Note:** *Serving refugees can be exhausting and often feels like it bears little visible fruit. Remind your group that consistency and mundane acts are powerful demonstrations of Christ's love. Discuss strategies for enduring well and supporting each other long-term.*



### OPENING REFLECTION

We've talked about how refugees are often forced to leave everything behind because of situations completely out of their control. The trauma they carry and the challenges of starting over in a totally new place, new language, new culture, new everything can feel overwhelming. As followers of Jesus, we're called to show up for them. Not just with kind words, but with real, meaningful action. Our mission is to support them as they work toward stability, healing, and a sense of belonging. In this session, we'll get practical. We'll explore simple, effective ways we can serve refugees and immigrants right where we are. We'll brainstorm together, look at real needs, and come up with a plan to live out Christ's love in ways that actually make a difference.



### BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

#### **Hebrews 13:2**

'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.'

#### **Matthew 25:35-40**

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothes? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'



## Facilitator Intro & Instructions

This activity is about moving from awareness to action. We've talked about the unique challenges immigrants and refugees face; now let's consider some practical ways we can come alongside them in everyday life. First, ask participants the Discussion Questions below. Allow a few responses, then, share the list of ideas with the group and read through it together.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *What are the most urgent practical needs refugees and immigrants face when they arrive in a new community?*
- *What everyday challenges might refugees experience that we don't often think about?*
- *What do you think is the best way to love and welcome immigrants and refugees in your community?*

### Practical Ways to Help:

- Introduce them to city life (parks, local events, markets)
- Teach English
- Include them in things you or your family already love doing like baking, taking your kids to sports events, going to the park. Invite them to be a part of activities that are enjoyable to you as well.
- Explain cultural traditions
- Offer rides (e.g. to school, the doctor, grocery stores)
- Help with translating or setting appointments
- Tutor their children
- Pray with and for them
- Offer friendship and listen
- Share the Gospel sensitively and respectfully

### Building Relationships

Think of activities you already enjoy like sports, coffee, family outings, and invite newcomers to join you. Incorporating them into your everyday life builds authentic community.

- Invite them for coffee, tea, or meals
- Be mindful of cultural norms (e.g. hijab, dietary restrictions)
- Introduce them by name, not by their refugee status
- Express gratitude when entering their home, bring a small gift like chocolate or flowers
- Text them later with appreciation or follow up (e.g. ask for a recipe)





## Special note

Ministry with immigrants and refugees requires long-term patience. Western culture often expects quick results, but working with refugees and immigrants is slow, relational work that doesn't always show immediate fruit.

At first, tasks like giving rides or helping with paperwork might feel exciting, but they can become routine over time. Yet it is in these small, consistent acts that we model Christ's love and faithfulness. By talking openly about potential frustrations or "threats" to perseverance, we can prepare our hearts to walk alongside our new friends with grace and endurance, even when progress feels slow.



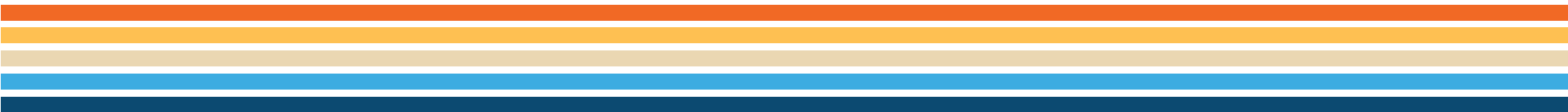
### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Refugees and immigrants face urgent practical needs upon arrival, including understanding local systems, language barriers, transportation, and cultural adjustment.
- Hospitality and practical support are key ways to demonstrate Christ's love.
- Meaningful, relational ministry goes beyond providing services, to building genuine friendships, listening, and offering consistent encouragement to help refugees feel truly welcomed and valued.
- Small, everyday acts like offering rides, helping with appointments, or sharing a meal can make a huge difference in refugees' sense of belonging and stability.



### DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- *How can you or your church show hospitality and build genuine relationships with newcomers in your community? Can you think of ways you or your church can help the diaspora in your community?*
- *What are some practical ways you could personally help them feel welcomed and supported?*
- *How can we encourage community members, who may be hesitant or fearful of refugees and immigrants, to become more open and welcoming?*
- *How can our ministry ensure ongoing support beyond initial welcome efforts to help build long-term stability?*







## SESSION 4:

# MINISTRY DO'S AND DON'TS - CULTIVATING HEALTHY ENGAGEMENT

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### OPENING REFLECTION

In ministry with refugees and immigrants, building trust and meaningful relationships requires sensitivity, respect, and patience. People arriving from traumatic journeys may feel vulnerable and cautious. Our role is not to interrogate or fix, but to walk alongside them with love and care. This session will help us learn practical guidelines: what to do and what to avoid in order to foster healthy, respectful relationships. By following these principles, we can create safe spaces where people feel valued and heard, reflecting Christ's love in our actions and attitudes.



### BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

#### **Philippians 2:3-4**

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *What do you think are some key attitudes or behaviors that help build trust when meeting someone from a different culture or background?*
- *Why might refugees or immigrants be cautious or hesitant to share their stories right away?*
- *How can we balance wanting to help with respecting someone's pace and boundaries?*
- *Why might someone be slow to share their story?*



**ACTIVITY:**

**MINISTRY DO’S AND DON’TS SORTING**

Objective: Help participants learn key guidelines for healthy, respectful engagement with refugees by sorting behaviors into “Do’s” and “Don’ts.” (See pg. 27.)

**Instructions:**

- 1. Break into groups of 4-5. You will receive a set of cards, each with a behavior or attitude written on it.
- 2. Sort each card into either a “Do” pile (healthy, respectful ministry practices) or a “Don’t” pile (behaviors to avoid because they may harm or hinder trust).
- 3. Discuss as a group why each card belongs in its pile and share examples or questions.
- 4. After sorting, review the full list together and reflect on how these guidelines can shape your ministry approach.



**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Which cards sparked the most discussion in your group? Why?
- How can you personally help create a “safe space” where people feel respected, not questioned or judged?
- Who will you invite into your life or home to begin building a relationship of trust and welcome?

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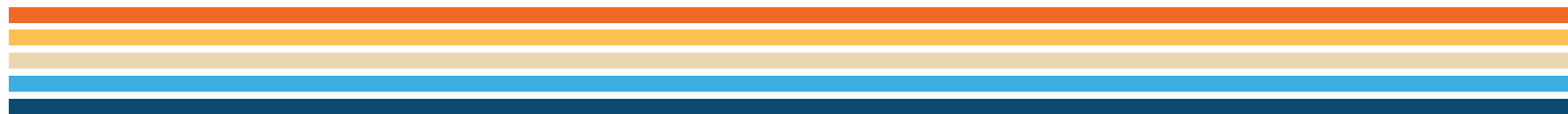
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## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Refugee ministry is most effective when we combine compassion with wisdom. These do's and don'ts help us serve in ways that honor others and reflect Christ's love.
- Treat refugees and immigrants with respect, avoiding assumptions or behaviors that diminish their value.
- Build trust by hearing their story, needs, and preferences before offering help or solutions.
- Serve faithfully without overpromising or taking on more than you can sustain.





## SESSION 5:

# DEVELOPING A MINISTRY PLAN

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### OPENING REFLECTION

Over the past sessions, we've gained a deeper understanding of the refugee and immigrant experience, explored how to engage with compassion and respect, and learned practical ways to serve. Now it's time to think creatively and make an action plan for you and your church. God has placed us in specific communities with unique opportunities and resources. This session will help us prayerfully and practically design ministry steps that reflect God's love and meet the real needs of displaced people around us.



### BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

#### **James 1:22**

Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says

#### **Proverbs 16:3**

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.



ACTIVITY:

MINISTRY PLANNING WORKSHOP

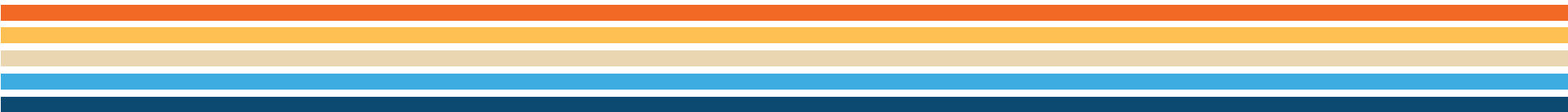
**Instructions:**

1. Break into groups of 3-5 people.
2. Brainstorm and list:
  - What are the needs you’ve observed or learned about in your community?
  - What resources, people, or skills do we already have that can be put to use?
  - What action steps can you begin taking?
3. Use the Ministry Planning Worksheet to guide your plan:
  - **Next Meeting Date:** When will you meet again to review this plan? Write it down now to help with accountability.
  - **Vision:** What is your purpose or goal?
  - **People:** Who will you serve? Who’s on your team?
  - **Action:** What will you do in the next 30–90 days?
  - **Resources Needed:** What support, training, or materials are required?
  - **Prayer Focus:** What are you trusting God for? Who can cover you in prayer?
4. Share your plan briefly with the whole group. (3-5 minutes per group)



DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- *What stood out to you as you planned?*
- *Which part of your plan feels most exciting? Most challenging?*
- *What is one thing you will commit to doing this week?*





## CLOSING Q&A + REFLECTION

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Before we close, we'll spend some time in open Q&A. This is your chance to ask questions, share final thoughts, or bring up things that have stayed with you during the sessions. I will also be collecting sticky notes or index cards with questions and read them.

Use this time to:

- Ask questions about anything we covered
- Share a key insight or takeaway
- Get input on ideas you're developing
- Clarify next steps in your ministry plan

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Dear God,*

*Thank You for this time of learning and growth through the training we received today. We are grateful for the knowledge and tools You've given to equip each person here for the work ahead.*

*As they leave this place, we commission them to go boldly and faithfully, putting into practice all they have learned. May Your Holy Spirit guide their steps, give them strength in challenges, and fill them with Your peace and courage. Use their hearts and hands to bring hope and love to the people they will serve. May this training be the foundation for lasting impact in Your Kingdom.*

*We send them now in Your name, Amen.*





# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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## ASYLUM SEEKER

A person who has fled their home country due to danger or persecution and is seeking international protection but has not yet been legally recognized as a refugee.

## REFUGEE

Someone who has been forced to flee their country due to war, violence, or persecution and has been officially recognized by a government or international body as needing protection.

## IMMIGRANT

A person who chooses to move to another country, usually for reasons such as work, education, or family. Unlike refugees, immigrants typically move by choice and with preparation.

## DIASPORA

A scattered population with a shared origin who have left their homeland but maintain cultural or emotional ties to it.

## DISPLACEMENT

The condition of being forced to leave one's home, often due to conflict, persecution, or natural disaster.

## TRAUMA-INFORMED

An approach to ministry or care that recognizes the emotional, psychological, and spiritual impact of trauma, and seeks to respond with safety, compassion, and sensitivity.

## PERSECUTION

Serious mistreatment or oppression based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or social group.

## HOSPITALITY

Biblically, this refers to welcoming and caring for strangers, not just entertaining friends. It's a spiritual practice rooted in the character of God.

## CULTURAL NORMS

Unspoken rules or expectations that guide behavior in a particular society (e.g., eye contact, greeting styles, gender roles).

## INTEGRATION

The process of adapting to a new society while maintaining one's own identity.



## RESETTLEMENT

The process of relocating refugees from a temporary place of asylum to a permanent new country, often coordinated by governments or agencies.

## MINISTRY OF PRESENCE

Serving others not primarily through programs, but through being with them — listening, showing up, and offering consistent friendship and care.

## HONOR/SHAME CULTURE

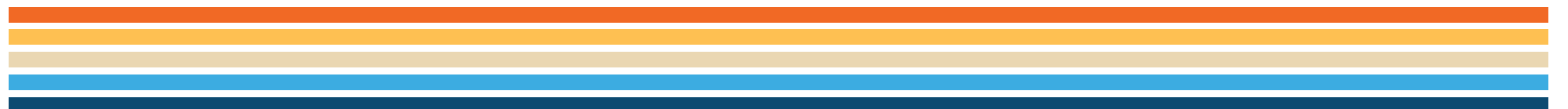
A cultural framework in which a person's identity and value are strongly tied to family and community perception. Maintaining honor (respect and good standing) and avoiding shame (disgrace or loss of face) are central. In these cultures, avoiding public embarrassment and preserving family or community reputation often guide behavior, decision-making, and social interactions.

## SANCTUARY

Literally, a safe place. Spiritually, a concept rooted in offering refuge and protection to those in danger.

## GLOBAL PARTNERS

The missions organization of The Wesleyan Church under which this curriculum was created. It supports missionaries engaging in cross-cultural, gospel-centered ministry worldwide.





# REFUGEE STORIES



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## PARISA

**Age:** 55

**Country of Origin:** Iran

You have three small children. After being invited to a small underground church service, you decide to leave Islam and become a Christian. But the constant pressure from family members and the lies you've had to tell become overwhelming. Fearing for your safety, you flee through Turkey into Greece, where you are fingerprinted by the police. From there, you continue your journey to Austria, where you apply for asylum.

### Reflection Questions:

1. What do you think this person felt as they left their home?
2. If you were in their shoes, how would you deal with the situation at hand? How would you feel?



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## JASMINE

**Age:** 14

**Country of Origin:** Syria

While living in Syria, soldiers broke in and ransacked your house. You were forced to flee and hide in the woods. This was the last straw in a long series of frightening events. Your parents knew you couldn't stay longer, so you left everything behind and escaped in the middle of the night. There were no goodbyes. Your parents said they would aim for Europe, where you would be safe.

### Reflection Questions:

1. What do you think this person felt as they left their home?
2. If you were in their shoes, how would you deal with the situation at hand? How would you feel?



# REFUGEE STORIES CONT.

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## SALAN

**Age:** 23

**Country of Origin:** Iraq

You have been a Muslim your whole life and joined the Islamic State at 17. However, after witnessing the faith of two captured Catholic missionaries, you decide this is no longer the life you wish to live. You flee to Europe, hoping to reach your cousin in Salzburg. But you are stopped and threatened by the police in Bulgaria, so you continue your journey to Austria and seek asylum.

### Reflection Questions:

1. What do you think this person felt as they left their home?
2. If you were in their shoes, how would you deal with the situation at hand? How would you feel?



## LEILA

**Age:** 25

**Country of Origin:** Iran

The abuse from your husband has become too much. He hits you and your children, and no one from either family is willing to help. You take your two small children, cross the Turkish border, and take a boat to Greece. In Greece, someone gives you a Bible. By the time you reach Austria, you have become a Christian.

### Reflection Questions:

1. What do you think this person felt as they left their home?
2. If you were in their shoes, how would you deal with the situation at hand? How would you feel?



# REFUGEE STORIES CONT.

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## SAHAR

**Age:** 27

**Country of Origin:** Iran

You are Kurdish and living in Iran, but constant harassment forces you to leave. Your brother lives in Germany, so you try to reach him. Instead, you are caught and fingerprinted in Austria. Knowing how hard it is to beat the Dublin system (refugees have to ask for asylum in the first country they get to, they cannot apply in a country of their choosing), you apply for asylum there. You still hope to see your brother again.

### Reflection Questions:

1. What do you think this person felt as they left their home?
2. If you were in their shoes, how would you deal with the situation at hand? How would you feel?



## YAHID

**Age:** 31

**Country of Origin:** Afghanistan

You are a musician and have been in Austria for three years on a student visa. You always planned to return to Afghanistan, but after becoming a Christian, it's no longer safe to go home. Your family disapproves, so you apply for asylum in Austria.

### Reflection Questions:

1. What do you think this person felt as they left their home?
2. If you were in their shoes, how would you deal with the situation at hand? How would you feel?



# REFUGEE STORIES CONT.

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## HAMID

**Age:** 27

**Country of Origin:** Iran

It was the hardest decision of your life to leave your wife and child, but harassment by the government forced you to flee. You traveled from Iran to Turkey, crossed into Greece, and finally arrived in Austria. In the refugee camp, someone invited you to church. You're not sure, but you know Austria is a Catholic country and it feels safe to go.

### Reflection Questions:

1. What do you think this person felt as they left their home?
2. If you were in their shoes, how would you deal with the situation at hand? How would you feel?



## MOHAMMED

**Age:** 20

**Country of Origin:** Afghanistan

You were born in Afghanistan but grew up in Iran. You accidentally attended a Bible study and were reported to the secret police. Fearing for your life, you fled alone to Turkey, then to Greece, where police caught and fingerprinted you. Eventually, you made it to Austria.

### Reflection Questions:

1. What do you think this person felt as they left their home?
2. If you were in their shoes, how would you deal with the situation at hand? How would you feel?





# REFUGEE STORIES CONT.

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## YASAMIN

**Age:** 21

**Country of Origin:** Iran

As a religious minority, you've faced persecution your entire life. Your mother sends you and your sister to Europe. You are caught and assaulted by police in Bulgaria. Knowing you can't stay, you escape the refugee camp and continue to Austria, where you hope for safety.

### Reflection Questions:

1. What do you think this person felt as they left their home?
2. If you were in their shoes, how would you deal with the situation at hand? How would you feel?



## RAHIM

**Age:** 25

**Country of Origin:** Iraq

You lived in Mosul under ISIS control for five months. When your neighbors reported you for shaving your beard, ISIS whipped you publicly. After recovering, you fled in fear and made it to Austria, where you now live with your aunt.

### Reflection Questions:

1. What do you think this person felt as they left their home?
2. If you were in their shoes, how would you deal with the situation at hand? How would you feel?



# REFUGEE STORIES CONT.

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## REZA

**Age:** 44  
**Country of Origin:** Afghanistan

You dated the daughter of a powerful local leader and started exploring Christianity. When you ended the relationship, she threatened to expose you. Fearing retaliation, you fled but were fingerprinted in Slovakia. Eventually, you reached Austria.

**Reflection Questions:**

- 1. What do you think this person felt as they left their home?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. If you were in their shoes, how would you deal with the situation at hand? How would you feel?





# DO'S AND DON'TS CARDS

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## DO CARDS



Treat them with the dignity and respect they deserve. They are people, not numbers or statistics.

Get to know the person first. Ask intentional questions about themselves, their family, and their culture.

Ask questions like: Where are you from? What is your favorite food? Do you have a family? What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

Briefly share about yourself—your name, what you study, your favorite food, etc. Build trust through two-way conversation.

Be mindful of your surroundings. Some may feel uncomfortable sharing certain things if people of the opposite gender are nearby, especially in Muslim-background cultures.

If they choose to share their story, listen carefully and respect their vulnerability.

Treat the Bible with respect. Don't put it on the floor or highlight/write in it.



# DO'S AND DON'TS CARDS

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## DON'T CARDS



Start a conversation by asking about their asylum status right away.

Push for answers. If they don't respond or change the subject, respect their comfort level.

Ask questions you wouldn't want to answer if you were in their position.

Assume they have to tell their story just because you want to help.

Compare your experiences to theirs. Avoid phrases like: "I understand, I've been to Mexico once," or "I know how it feels to miss family."

Assume you have all the answers to their questions.

Feel like you have to fix everyone's problems.

