

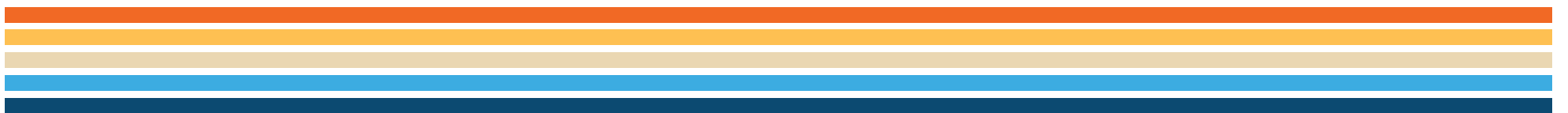
A CHURCH CURRICULUM FOR

Immigrant & Refugee Ministry



STUDENT HANDOUT

This document is designed for participants in the refugee and immigrant ministry workshop. It provides key session content, discussion questions, and space for personal reflection and notes. Use it to engage with the material, reflect on your personal application, and capture insights as you learn how to serve refugees and immigrants in your community.





SESSION 1:

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S HEART FOR IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES



OPENING REFLECTION

We never really know who the refugees and immigrants around us are, nor the journeys they had to embark on to get to the place they are right now. 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, but they do 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 NOTES:

Dotted lines for writing discussion questions.



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?

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What does it mean that Jesus Himself experienced life as a refugee?

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How can our understanding of Scripture on loving the foreigner shape our response on immigration and asylum?

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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



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.'



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS NOTES:

Dotted lines for taking notes.



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?

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Why is it important to understand and respond to the emotional and psychological challenges refugees face?

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ACTION STEPS/PERSONAL APPLICATION

- *How can you apply the insights from this session to support immigrants and refugees in your community?* (Think about ways you can respond with empathy, create safe spaces, or offer practical help to those who have experienced trauma.)

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SESSION 3:

STARTING PRACTICAL MINISTRY



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.'



- 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?

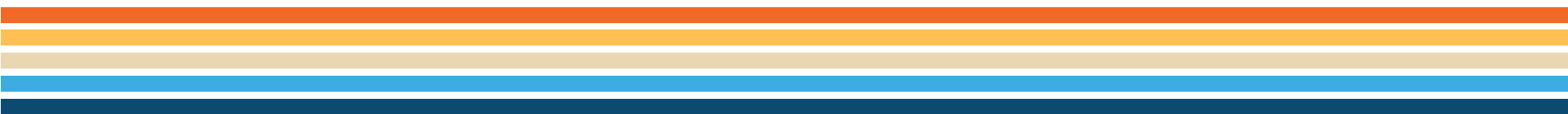
How can we encourage community members who may be hesitant or fearful of refugees and immigrants to become more open and welcoming?

How can our ministry ensure ongoing support beyond initial welcome efforts to help build long-term stability?



ACTION STEPS/PERSONAL APPLICATION

- *How can you apply the insights from this session to support immigrants and refugees in your community?* (Think about ways you can respond with empathy, create safe spaces, or offer practical help to those who have experienced trauma.)





SESSION 4:

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



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 NOTES:



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



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.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS NOTES:

Dotted lines for discussion notes.



ACTION STEPS/PERSONAL APPLICATION

- *How can you apply the insights from this session to support immigrants and refugees in your community? (Think about ways you can respond with empathy, create safe spaces, or offer practical help to those who have experienced trauma.)*

Dotted lines for action steps.





MINISTRY PLANNING WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to help your group create a simple and actionable ministry plan to engage with refugees and immigrants in your community. Be realistic, specific, and prayerful.

VISION

What is the purpose of your ministry plan? What do you hope to accomplish?

PEOPLE

Who are you planning to serve? Who will be on your ministry team?

NEEDS

What are the most urgent or important needs you hope to meet?

ACTIONS

List 2–3 concrete steps your group will take in the next 30–90 days.

RESOURCES NEEDED

What support, partnerships, training, or materials will you need?

REGROUPING

When will you meet again to talk about all these things?



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HOW TO RESEARCH LOCAL RESOURCES FOR IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE MINISTRY

This guide will help you discover and map key services in your area that support immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Whether you're in a rural community, small town, or large city, this process can help you identify existing resources and build meaningful partnerships.

STEP 1: KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

Start with these categories:

- ESL (English as a Second Language) programs
- Immigration legal aid or nonprofit attorneys
- Refugee resettlement agencies
- Multilingual or trauma-informed health clinics
- Mental health support (including culturally competent providers)
- Housing or employment services
- Food pantries and community kitchens
- Churches or ministries serving refugees
- Public schools with high immigrant enrollment



STEP 2: START ONLINE

Search using Google with keywords like:

- “refugee services near me”
- “free ESL classes in [your city]”
- “immigration legal aid [your county]”
- “nonprofits helping immigrants [your state]”

You can also check:

- United Way 211 Directory (<https://www.211.org/>)
- Local library or city hall community boards
- FindHello App (<https://www.findhello.org/>)
- Refugee Council USA (<https://rcusa.org/members/>)
- Immigration Advocates Legal Directory (<https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/>)

STEP 3: CALL AND ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

Reach out directly to organizations and ask:

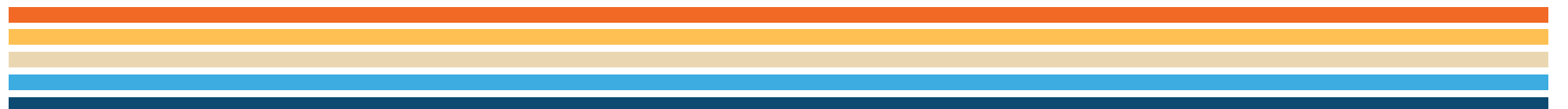
- What services do you offer for immigrants and/or refugees?
- Do you partner with churches or volunteers?
- What languages are spoken at your office?
- Do you have any printed materials or flyers?
- Can I refer people to you directly?

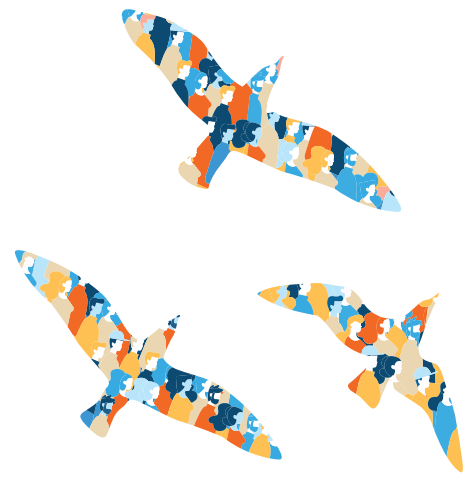
STEP 4: MAP IT OUT

Once you've gathered your information, make a shared Google Map or printed list. This becomes your local 'ministry toolbox' and can be updated regularly.

BONUS TIP: WORK AS A TEAM

Invite people from your church or training group to research one category each. Share what you learn, then compile it into a local resource directory.





GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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.

