



# REFUGEE SUNDAY

## WORSHIP & ACTIVITY GUIDE

LEAD YOUR CONGREGATION, school or ministry group to connect with the hearts of migrants and refugees rebuilding their lives and reflect on God's call to welcome the sojourner. Whether the people in your congregation are new to assisting refugees, have a history of newcomer ministry, or are newcomers themselves, you can create a meaningful experience using the ideas below and online resources found at [lirs.org/refugeesunday](http://lirs.org/refugeesunday). Refugee Sunday activities can be a good fit for your regular worship, Bible study, Sunday school, and youth activity. Consider inviting back former refugees that the congregation has assisted, place articles on how you celebrated Refugee Sunday in the church newsletter or online, and blog about your experience. Make it one Sunday or a series of Sundays! Choose any Sunday that works best for your congregation.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR WORSHIP

- Include a petition in the prayers for migrants and refugees, and ministry through LIRS.
- Include a refugee story or reflection that shows how God was part of the sojourner's journey in the sermon.
- Include a petition in the prayers for migrants and refugees, and ministry through LIRS.
- Use the litany in the bulletin insert provided to contemplate how the body of Christ can walk alongside migrants and refugees.
- Collect a special offering for LIRS's ministry, which you can mail with the envelopes and form that came with your Refugee Sunday poster.
- Feature the journey of refugees by showing the video "Courageous Journeys." "Courageous Journeys" and other videos which tell the stories of those seeking safety and protection can be found in the worship materials at [lirs.org/refugeesunday](http://lirs.org/refugeesunday). Invite a former refugee and/or a member of the congregation who has volunteered with refugees to speak, or turn Omar Almuqdad's story from "Courageous Journeys" into a skit or chancel drama.

### LEADER'S REFLECTION

IF YOU ARE LEADING or facilitating a conversation around any of the suggested activities for your Refugee Sunday, spend a few moments alone thinking about how it feels to be a refugee: After being forced by conflict or persecution to flee from your home and living for years in a refugee camp, you arrive in the United States with little more than the clothes on your back. You are grieving for your homeland and loved ones lost. You feel like an outsider - invisible and unwelcome - overwhelmed by all you need to learn to rebuild a life for your family.

Now imagine how it would feel to be recognized, loved, and valued by a community and a church as a person with dignity. To be seen not as a "refugee" but as a human being of value and worth in the eyes of God. To have someone walk alongside you as a friend, and to be a friend. To belong.

Walking alongside newcomers for what LIRS calls "the long welcome," is at the heart of ministry with migrants and refugees. It is inspired by God's call to love sojourners as ourselves (Leviticus 19:33-34), and strengthened by Christ's own example of extending mercy to people of other nations like the Canaanite women (Matthew 15:21-28) and the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24-30).

How is the spirit of welcome already seen in your congregation or group? What possibilities are there to deepen or start connections with migrants and refugees? Refugee Sunday, or a gathering about refugees at any time, is a great way to celebrate what's already happening, learn more, and to prayerfully consider ways to make a difference.



### LEADING A REFUGEE SUNDAY DISCUSSION (IN SUNDAY SCHOOL OR BIBLE STUDY)

**PREPARATION:** A week or more before your Refugee Sunday, ask a participant(s) to view the video, "Courageous Journeys" or "The Journey," which can be found in the worship materials at [lirs.org/refugeesunday](http://lirs.org/refugeesunday), and come prepared to share one important fact or tell one of the stories highlighted in the videos as an introduction to your discussion. Encourage them to create a visual to help facilitate the conversation. If your congregation or group is already involved with newcomers, or are newcomers themselves, highlight and celebrate these acts of welcome. If you are a newcomer or your congregation/ group includes newcomers, highlight a personal story and spend the most time focusing on welcome and belonging.

### PEOPLE ON THE MOVE IN HISTORY

- Name as many "people on the move" in the Bible as possible, people who crossed a border for trade or protection, were trafficked across a border, or exiled to another country. Who was sold or captured into slavery? (Joseph, the slave girl of Naaman)
- Responses may also include Abraham (for trade), Joseph (trafficked) and later his brothers (during famine), the slave girl of Naaman (captured), Ruth (followed loved one), David (fleeing Saul), and the Holy Family (fleeing Herod), and others. List on a board or paper if desired.

### PEOPLE ON THE MOVE TODAY

- Are you hearing stories in the news about people on the move today? What's happening in Syria and the Middle East right now?
- Now think of people on the move in the history of your family. Was anyone born in another country? Your parents? Grandparents? If the group is comfortable sharing, list all the countries or nationalities represented in family journeys.
- What's your own experience being 'on the move'? What's the hardest part of getting to know a new place? Who made you feel welcome? When did you feel like you belonged in the new place? How have you helped someone else feel welcome?
- So from Scripture and our own lives we can see that being 'on the move' is a pretty normal part of life and can be an important part of God's plan. There are millions of people on the move today. Some move by choice, others are forced. Lutherans have been helping people forced to move, like refugees, for over 75 years.

### WRAP UP

- What did you learn about refugees in this discussion? What was the biggest surprise about refugees? How are people helping? How can your experience of being welcomed help you welcome others? What do you want to learn more about or consider doing? How can we protect, embrace, and empower people on the move in our own communities? Ask congregants to consider signing the petition and volunteering opportunities they can engage in to make migrants and refugees feel welcome. Close with a prayer for refugees and everyone who helps them feel like they belong in the United States.



Lutheran Immigration  
and Refugee Service

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Please contact us at [refugeesunday@lirs.org](mailto:refugeesunday@lirs.org) to let us know what you are planning for your Refugee Sunday and how LIRS can provide assistance and support your efforts. We would also like to know how your event went, and, as always, photos are much appreciated!

### FEEDBACK

LIRS would love to hear how it went.

Please take a moment to let us know what worked and how we can help you get more involved.  
[refugeesunday@lirs.org](mailto:refugeesunday@lirs.org)

**Share Your Celebration #refugeesunday**



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**LIRS INVITES YOU** to walk alongside migrants and refugees on a courageous journey to rebuild their lives in this land of freedom. Give today and make a lasting impact in the lives of those seeking safety, as they flee from dangerous places around the globe. Challenge your congregation to collectively raise \$750, \$500, or any amount that you are led to support.

**Yes, we will:**

- Empower refugees with a gift of \$750, which can provide job training for 7 people\*
- Embrace unaccompanied children with a gift of \$500, which can connect them to crucial services
- Protect migrants and refugees from violence and persecution with a gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my gift to Visa/MasterCard—Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name as it appears on card \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service. Make your secure online donation at [LIRS.org](http://LIRS.org) or call 877-291-1061.

\*Gifts made to LIRS support our entire mission of service and justice. To protect, embrace, and empower migrants and refugees in welcoming communities, LIRS uses your gift where it can have the greatest impact in the full scope of our work.

Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service • 700 Light Street, Baltimore, MD 21230 • (410) 230-2700 • [LIRS.org/refugeesunday](http://LIRS.org/refugeesunday)

### UNIFORM DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Financial and other information about Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service's purpose, programs and activities can be obtained by contacting Donor Services at 700 Light Street, Baltimore MD 21230, by calling 877-291-7061 or for residents of the following states, as stated below. Florida: SC No. CH36256 A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE, WITHIN THE STATE, 1-800-HELP-FLA. Maryland: For the cost of postage and copying, from the Secretary of State. Michigan: MICS No. 46165. Mississippi: The official registration and financial information of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service may be obtained from the Mississippi Secretary of State's office by calling 1-888-236-6167. New Jersey: INFORMATION FILED WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CONCERNING THIS CHARITABLE SOLICITATION AND THE PERCENTAGE OF CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED BY THE CHARITY DURING THE LAST REPORTING PERIOD THAT WERE DEDICATED TO THE CHARITABLE PURPOSE MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY BY CALLING (973) 504-6215 AND IS AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET AT <http://www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/charfrm.htm>. New York: Upon request, from the Attorney General Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271. North Carolina: Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 1-888-830-4989 (within North Carolina) or (919) 807-2214 (outside of North Carolina). Pennsylvania: The official registration and financial information of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Virginia: From the State Office of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23218. Washington: From the Secretary of State at 1-800-332-4483. West Virginia: West Virginia residents may obtain a summary of the registration and financial documents from the Secretary of State, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305. CONTRIBUTIONS ARE DEDUCTIBLE FOR FEDERAL INCOME TAX PURPOSES IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAW. REGISTRATION IN A STATE DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION OF LUTHERAN IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICE BY THE STATE.