

Sunday School Plan

5 - 10 Year Olds

In this section, there is a selection of activities that could be used during the service, or when the youth group meets during the week.

Talk - (10-15 minutes)

- **Objective**

To help children understand what a refugee is, God's heart for them, and what He wants us to do to be His hands and feet towards them.

- **Key Verse**

"Which of these three, do you think proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?!" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise." -Luke 10: 36-37

- **Opening Question**

When you and your family get ready to go on a trip, what has to be done before you can leave? What do you need to bring with you?

(Leave time for answers)

Yes, there are a lot of things that need to be done before you and your family can leave for your trip. You need to pack clothes, your toothbrush, stuffed animals, and make sure all the lights are turned off in your home before you are ready to leave.

Have any of you had to leave your house really quickly and maybe didn't get a chance to take everything you wanted? Maybe, you overslept and had to leave quickly and forgot something for school. Can you remember what is that your forgot?

(Leave time for answers, and feel free to share a short story of your own when you forgot something that you needed on a trip or for your work day.)

It can really ruin our trip or our day when we forget something. Your teacher may be upset with you if you didn't return your homework, or maybe you had to go back home to get what you forgot and that made you really late. This can be frustrating, but even though it may have ruined our days most of us were able to find a solution, and had a home to go back to with all of our stuff still there.

Has anyone ever heard the word refugee? Does anyone know what that means?

(Leave time for answers)

Yes, a refugee is someone who has been forced to leave their home because it is no longer safe for them to stay there. This can be because of a war, persecution, or other types of danger. This means that most families have to leave almost everything behind and leave their homes very quickly. They most often have to walk kilometer after kilometer, so they cannot bring suitcases or all the things they want or need. They leave their homes not knowing where they will go, but they know they can't stay where they are.

Did you know that there are 65 million people who have been forced to leave their homes in the world today? And, that over half of those people are children like you?

What do you think you would feel if you too had to leave your home because of danger, and didn't know what was going to happen to you or your family and friends?

(i.e. *helpless, hopeless, sad, angry, etc.*)

Yes, those are great answers. There are lot of things their hearts may be feeling at the moment they leave, and even more as they continue on their journey towards safety.

Now, most of us in this room have probably never had to experience this, but did you know that Jesus was also a refugee?

YES! Does anyone remember who wanted to kill Jesus after he was born? Yes, the king named Herod was jealous of Jesus, and feared that He would be more powerful than he was, and so he wanted to kill him. That is why an angel came and told Jesus's earthly dad, Joseph, in a dream to run away. Can someone read Matthew 2:13-15 for me?

"Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in the dream and said, "Rise take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod."
Matthew 2: 13-15 (ESV)

How incredible is it that we have a saviour like Jesus who knows what it is like to be a refugee! We truly have a God who knows what we feel and go through every day.

How do you think God feels about the millions of people who have been forced to leave their homes in the world today?

Yes, He loves them, He wants them to find rescue, and He sees them!

What do you think God wants us, His people, His hands and feet to do?

Brainstorm ideas with the kids, and allow them to share things they can do as kids and things they want the church to do.

Those are all really great ideas, kids! Let's finish with another story. Does anyone remember the story of the Good Samaritan? (Retell the story using Luke 10...if the children are being bored, and you have time feel free to have them act out the parable.)

Yes, refugees are our neighbours and we are called to be merciful towards them and love them. That is why our key verse for today is:

“Which of these three, do you think proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?!” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.” -Luke 10: 36-37

Prayer

Jesus, thank you that you know what it is like to be refugee. Thank you that you see each person who is afraid, sad, or desperate for safety right now. We ask that you would comfort them with only the comfort that you can bring. Wrap your strong arms around them, and show them your love and mercy right now. Holy Spirit, we ask that you would help us love our refugee neighbours. Remind us to pray, and use us as your hands and feet in this world. We pray for peace, and for wars to cease and your kingdom to come on earth as it is in Heaven. We love you, Jesus! Amen

Activities

- **Building a Temporary Shelter**

Divide the group into either pairs, or groups of three. Give each group some cardboard boxes, pegs, sellotape, masking tape and scissors. Each group has approximately 10 minutes to make their own temporary shelter. Once the groups have finished the task ask them to come and sit together as a group. Ask the group to imagine that they were a refugee who had had to leave their home, school and friends because of violence and build a temporary shelter elsewhere. Ask them how would they feel? What emotions do you think you would feel? Ask them to think of ways that they could help refugees and displaced people. Some possible suggestions can include pray, fundraise for a local ministry or a ministry in another country.

- **Making a Candle Holder**

Decorate a glass jar with the key verse, or “Pray for Refugees” and put a candle in it. The candle holder can then be taken home and used as a reminder to pray for refugees and displaced people.

- **Children’s Prayer for Refugee Sunday**

Heavenly Father please protect every refugee around the world.

We pray that they may know that You love them and care for them, Jesus.

We pray that You will help them to have enough food to eat and that you would give them somewhere safe to live.

We pray for all refugee children and ask that they may be given the opportunity to go to school where they are now living.

We pray the blood of Jesus over all refugees.

Thank you God for answering our prayers.

We pray in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

11-18 Year Olds

In this section, there is a selection of activities that could be used during the service, or when the youth group meet during the week.

Talk - What Does Love Look Like?

It is vital that as Christians we respond with compassion to refugees and displaced people who are greatly suffering and in need. A constant theme throughout the Bible from the Old Testament through to the New Testament is that we are to welcome strangers. In Hebrews 13:2 we are reminded to welcome the stranger because we may entertain angels unaware. The Gospel of Matthew says that as we welcome the alien, we welcome Jesus:

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 a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 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'* (Matthew 25:37-40).

From Leviticus through to James there is a clear command to welcome the stranger. In fact, James boldly suggests that: *Religion that our God the Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world* (James 1:27).

The Bible often mentions the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. God truly cares for vulnerable people. God requires us to care for them in tangible ways including providing food and clothing, ensuring justice, giving hospitality and provision of shelter.

God expects His people to treat foreigners with justice. Examples include Exodus 23:9; Leviticus 19:33-34 and Deuteronomy 1:16. Please can I have three volunteers to look up and read these particular verses. Thank you. In Luke 10:27 Jesus clearly commands us to love our neighbour. An expert in the law once asked Jesus to define, "who is my neighbour?" His intent was less to know who he was commanded to love, but rather to know who he was not required to love. Jesus responded with the well-known parable about the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). It is the story of a man who was walking through dangerous territory. The man was vulnerable. He was beaten, stripped and left almost dead. When a priest and a Levite saw the man, they did not stop to help him. When a foreign Samaritan saw the man, he stopped to give him medical care and took him to a safe place where he could care for him. The traveller also promised to cover any additional costs to pay for the care of the man.

This story has as much relevance today as we perceive the similarities between the victim in the story with refugees. Like the victim in the story, they too are vulnerable as they have travelled along a dangerous road having experienced robbery, abuse, physical suffering, trauma, exploitation and near death.

Throughout the Bible there are stories of displaced and persecuted people and how God goes with them. Firstly, there is the divine banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden

of Eden (Genesis 3: 23-24) to the final book of the Bible written by John while in exile on the island of Patmos. The stories of forced displacement run throughout Scripture. There are some people who were forcibly displaced as a result of their own choices and actions such as Adam and Eve, Cain, Moses, while Noah and Lot were driven from their homes in response to climate change/natural disaster, Hagar and Joseph were driven from their homes due to conflict. Jacob, Abraham and Naomi left because of famine. The nation of Israel, Esther, Nehemiah, Daniel left their homes due to war/exile and David, Jesus, Philip, Aquila and Priscilla, Peter, the early church left due to persecution.

The pervasive refugee narrative flows through the Bible and it is apparent that God is powerfully at work in the lives of people who have been forcibly displaced. In the light of having looked at what the Bible has to say about refugees and displaced people it would be good to think about what God is asking each of us to do to help. Allow the group to discuss possibilities of how they too can be involved in helping support refugees and displaced people in their local communities, nation and globally. Some possible suggestions can include pray, fundraise for a local ministry or a ministry in another country, get involved in advocacy (see our section on advocacy), get involved with a local project that works with refugees and asylum seekers.

Activities

- **Sleep Out for Refugees**

Sleep Out for Refugees is a simulation experience designed to enable young people to connect with the lives of refugees from across the world. Sleep Out for Refugees challenges young people to spend 24 hours living in a temporary shelter such as a tent and to eat only one hot meal. During the 24 hours, there will also be several opportunities to pray for refugees in different parts of the world. We hope that as young people join in prayer and experience what life is like for refugees their hearts and minds will engage at a deeper level with a desire to see transformation in the lives of refugees and displaced people.

- **Making a Candle Holder**

Decorate a glass jar and put a nightlight in it. The candle holder can then be taken home and used as a reminder to pray for refugees and displaced people.

- **Prayer Ideas**

Hand out newspapers and ask people to cut out a story about refugees or people fleeing violence in the Middle East or another region of the world. Ask people to read the newspaper clipping. After people have read you could have a time to pray about the situations that have just been read from newspapers.

Set out 65 coloured nightlights on a heatproof tray or tray of sand. Once the nightlights are lit ask the group to pray for over 65 million men, women, children and babies who are refugees and displaced around the world.

- **Worship**

You could have a time of worship which is led by the young people. There are a selection of songs and hymns that could be sung. See the “Order of Service” document in the pack.

Refugee Quiz

Question 1: What is the legal definition of a refugee?

- a) A person who has come to another country to claim asylum
- b) A person who has been persecuted in their own country
- c) A person who has a well-founded fear of persecution in their own country

1c) You do not need to have actually been persecuted to be a refugee. If you have a well-founded fear of persecution then you could be a refugee.

Question 2: Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum

True or false

True - Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum.

Question 3: What is the definition of an asylum seeker?

- a) Someone who has made an application to be considered a refugee
- b) Someone who is not a real refugee
- c) Someone who goes to another country so they can have a better standard of living

3a) An asylum seeker is someone who has applied to a government or UNHCR to be considered as a refugee.

Question 4: The International Convention which protects refugees from being forcibly returned to countries where they would face persecution, was drafted by governments in the wake of:

- a) The Babylonian Exile
- b) The Napoleonic Wars
- c) The First World War and the Russian Revolution
- d) The Second World War and the Holocaust

4d) During the Second World War there was no right to seek and be granted asylum. Victims of Nazi persecution were trapped. Even if they managed to flee, the countries to which they fled could send them back. International law protects refugees from being returned to danger.

Question 5: How many people were forced to flee their homes each minute in 2015?

- a) 1 person
- b) 10 people
- c) 24 people
- d) 18 people

5c) On average 24 people worldwide were displaced from their homes every minute during 2015 - some 34,000 people per day.

Question 6: What is the country that hosts the largest number of refugees per habitant?

- a) Germany
- b) Lebanon
- c) Turkey
- d) Greece

6b) According to UNHCR *Global Trends 2014*, 232 out of every 1000 inhabitants in Lebanon are refugees (which represents 23,2% of the population).

Question 7: What percentage of the world's refugee population is under the age of 18?

- a) 12%
- b) 29%
- c) 51%
- d) 80%

7c) According to UNHCR *Global Trends 2015*, children below the age of 18 constituted 51% of the refugee population in 2014, up from 41% in 2009 and the highest figure in more than a decade.

Question 8: In which group of countries do most of the world's refugees and asylum seekers currently live?

- a) Developed countries such as Canada, the USA and Australia
- b) Developing countries
- c) European countries

8b) According to UNHCR *Global Trends 2015*, the majority (86%) of the world's asylum seekers and refugees are hosted by developing countries.

Question 9: How many people in the world today have fled their homes due to violence, conflict and persecution?

- a) 1 million
- b) 7 million
- c) 10 million
- d) Over 65 million

9d) According to UNHCR (2016) over 65.3 million people have fled their homes due to violence, conflict and persecution.

Question 10: UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency protects and assists:

- a) People displaced by war and persecution
- b) People who lost their homes in natural disasters
- c) People who want to work and study overseas

10a) People displaced by war and persecution.