



FORCED to FLEE

Bible Study Resource



www.foodgrainsbank.ca/education

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| Learning Objective: | To reflect and learn about how the Bible addresses refugees and human displacement. |
| Recommended Grade Level: | Grades 7-12, adults, ages 11-18+ |
| Subjects: | Religion, Bible Study |
| Recommended Time: | 30-60 minutes |
| Number of Participants: | 1-30 |
| Materials Needed: | Whiteboard/white paper, dry erase markers, basket/container, markers/pencil crayons, scissors, glue, Bible(s), world map (optional) |
| Materials Provided: | Activity cards |

LEADER'S NOTES

The Bible contains many stories about people being displaced. This resource has been created to help your group explore what the Bible has to say about refugees. The bible study is meant to be paired with “Forced to Flee”, a refugee simulation activity created by Canadian Foodgrains Bank. This supplementary activity can be used before or after the Forced to Flee activity, or it can be split: the first part taking place before and the second part taking place after the simulation activity.

Note: The Bible verses in this activity are cited from the New International Version. Feel free to choose another version of the Bible for this activity, if you wish. We also suggest that you use the verses provided on the cards as a guide and encourage you to read directly from a bible to have a more complete idea of the context from which the verses are cited.

Who are refugees in the Bible? How were God's people taught to respond?

ACTIVITY

Matching refugees from the Bible with reason for forcible displacement

Preparation:

- 1) Cut out the cards with the names and the corresponding bible verses.
- 2) Create a chart with headings on the chalkboard or whiteboard.

Activity:

- 1) On the board, create two columns using the following headings:

| Famine/Disaster | Conflict/Persecution |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| | |

- 2) Place the names of the biblical refugees and bible verses in a basket or container.
- 3) Have participants take turns drawing a card, reading the relevant verse(s) aloud, and identifying the reason each character was displaced.

Naomi
Ruth 1:1

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So, a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab.

Abraham & Sarah
Genesis 12:10

Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe.

Jacob
Genesis 47:4

They also said to him, “We have come to live here for a while, because the famine is severe in Canaan and your servants’ flocks have no pasture. So now, please let your servants settle in Goshen.”



Elijah
1 Kings 17:1-3

Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.” Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: “Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan.

David
1 Samuel 27:1

But David thought to himself, “One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand.”

Hagar
Genesis 16:6

“Your slave is in your hands,” Abram said. “Do with her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai mistreated Hagar, so she fled from her.

Aquila & Priscilla
Acts 18:1-2

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them.

Joseph
Genesis 37:28

So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

Jesus
Matthew 2:13-14

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.

DISCUSSION

- 1) Through this activity you have discovered that many people in the Bible were refugees at one or more times in their lives. Can you think of other examples not included here? What is your reaction to this discovery?
- 2) Put yourself in the shoes of the people from the Bible verses we read together. What do you think was most difficult for them? How did they manage to get through it? How do you think that you would respond in those situations?
- 3) Ask students to read the following verses on their own. Encourage them to pick out the words or ideas that stand out to them. According to these verses, how are people instructed to treat refugees?

a. **Deuteronomy 26:12**

When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied.

b. **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.

c. **Leviticus 25:35**

If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you.

d. **Hebrews 13:1-2**

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

- 4) This activity has made the connections between the Bible and refugees (strangers/foreigners). Think of these Bible passages as you embark on the Forced to Flee activity or (if you have already done the simulation) discuss how your journey could have been impacted by these teachings.

PART 2

Who are refugees today? How are we to respond?

ACTIVITY

Refugee Stories*

- 1) Print off the attached stories and have participants read the story aloud.
- 2) After reading, have each participant identify which category the story would fall under based on the chart created in part one. Write the name of the family affected (or post the story) in the appropriate column.

**If you are connected with a member of Canadian Foodgrains Bank and would like to share a story connected to your church's aid or development agency, please contact youth@foodgrainsbank.ca to request a story. We will do our best to find a relevant story that you can share.*



Jacinta

MOZAMBIQUE



Jacinta is a 40-year-old mother of five children. She lives in the city of Beira in Mozambique. In 2019, a large cyclone hit the south-east African coast and left Jacinta and her family without a home.

The winds from the storm ripped the roof off her house. As brick walls started to collapse around her, Jacinta knew that her family could no longer stay. They took refuge in Jacinta's mother's house and luckily survived the storm.

For some time, Jacinta and her family found a place to stay in a local primary school that served as a temporary shelter for some of the most vulnerable families. People slept on the floor next to each other, with little room to even move or turn around. During this time, Jacinta was concerned about not having enough food to feed her children each day. Without access to proper toilets and clean drinking water sources, Jacinta and other families were concerned about their health as many people in their area had been diagnosed with cholera, a disease spread through water.

Additional Information

World Renew, a member of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, supported local partners in preventing the continued spread of cholera. Families were given water purification packages and other hygiene essentials like soap, buckets and jerry cans to carry drinking water.

Abdel el-Razek

SYRIA



Abdel is the father of six children. The family once enjoyed a peaceful life in Syria. Abdel used to work in a car dealership. Some of his children attended school, while the others were still too young. The family owned a home.

When a peaceful protest against the Syrian government quickly turned violent, the family's life was turned upside down. Falling bombs and fighting became a part of everyday life. All Abdel wanted was for the war to stop. He was approached by one group of fighters and was told to join the fighting. He didn't want to join, but he was told that if he didn't he would become a target. Fearing for their safety, the family sold what they could and then fled to the neighbouring country of Jordan.

Additional Information

Since November 2012 Canadian Foodgrains Bank has been through five of its members[†] to bring food assistance to Syrians who have been displaced by the war, either within Syria or in neighbouring countries. Abdel's family received food assistance.

[†]Canadian Baptist Ministries, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Development & Peace – Caritas Canada, Mennonite Central Committee, World Renew

Halima Muhammed



ETHIOPIA

Halima Muhammed is a five-year-old girl from the remote northern Afar region of Ethiopia. Halima's family are animal herders. They used to depend entirely on their animals for survival, never staying in one place for long and moving with their goats, cattle and camels as they searched for good grazing land.

They traveled by foot, sometimes for many days. The men walked alongside the livestock. The women would follow, carrying everything the family owned, often with a baby on their back.

Halima's family live in a hot, remote region. But in the last 30 years or so, it's gotten worse. Increasingly frequent droughts, and the growth in population threatened traditional grazing land. To survive, families had to travel further and further with their livestock through the harsh climate. It was often difficult for them to find food for their animals or themselves.

Additional Information

With assistance from Canadian Foodgrains Bank and its member, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Halima's father, Muhammed, has switched from depending entirely on livestock for his family's livelihood to also growing cereal crops, fruits and vegetables. Engineers designed dams to divert water from nearby streams and rivers to unusable land. Because of the dams, there is vegetation on land that is normally a desert. Among the crops are maize, bananas and papayas which Halima's family now eats.

Junayet Ahammed



MYANMAR

Junayet Ahammed is a young man who is part of the Rohingya ethnic minority group. He and his family lived in Myanmar. His father was a doctor, and Junayet taught chemistry at a local high school. However, like other Rohingya people, Junayet was denied citizenship under Myanmar law and had certain restrictions placed upon him.

In August 2017, violence broke out between some members of the Rohingya group and government forces. The Myanmar government responded against the Rohingya with much violence. Junayet's village was attacked and his house burned to the ground. As a result of the violence, well over 600,000 refugees, including Junayet's family, went to the neighbouring country of Bangladesh seeking safety. Junayet fled with his parents and siblings, arriving by boat at the Bangladesh border in early September. At first, they stayed in the shelter of a relative who arrived in Bangladesh before them but then moved to a makeshift home in a refugee camp.

Additional Information

Through a project of Canadian Foodgrains Bank and its member World Renew, Junayet's family received food packages of oil, lentils, sugar and salt, which were complemented by rations of rice provided through the World Food Programme.

DISCUSSION

- 1) How does it feel to see the names of these families/individuals posted alongside those from the Bible?
- 2) Think about the biblical teachings on how to treat refugees and your own experience in the Forced to Flee simulation. What are ways that we can help and support displaced people in different parts of the world?
- 3) How can your group respond together to the needs of refugees? Brainstorm ways you can help displaced people around the world.
- 4) Read the additions to the stories above. How do the responses help the refugees and their families? How can you support these kinds of responses? Can you think of additional ways to help respond to refugees?
- 5) Going Further: Research what members of Canadian Foodgrains Bank and other Christian organizations are doing, in Canada and abroad, to live out the biblical calling to support people who are displaced from their homes. If you feel called to support refugees and others who are experiencing hunger, please consider donating to Canadian Foodgrains Bank at www.foodgrainsbank.ca.

PRAYER

[PRAYER TO COME FROM ROBERTA?]

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue, “Learning About Refugees at Sunday School”:
www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/learning_about_refugee_stories_at_sunday_school.pdf

Canadian Lutheran World Relief, “Refugee Life”:
www.clwr.org/sites/default/files/documents/Refugee%20Experience%20Youth%20Resource%20FINAL.pdf

SOURCES

Part One is a modified version of an activity by the World Evangelical Alliance:
www.worldevangelicals.org/refugeecrisis/pdf/WelcomeCardSundaySchoolLesson.pdf

Part Two - Stories:

Jacinta – Mozambique:
www.worldrenew.net/our-stories/jacinta-francisco-cyclone-idai-changed-everything

Abdel el-Razek – Syria:
www.foodgrainsbank.ca/news/food-baskets-vouchers-help-syrian-families

Halima Muhammed – Ethiopia:
www.foodgrainsbank.ca/news/livestock-herders-begin-farming-womens-lives-made-easier

Junayet Ahammed – Myanmar:
www.foodgrainsbank.ca/news/rohingya-refugee-family-grateful-for-food-assistance-and-the-kindness-of-others

