



Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

**THEME: Does our behaviour
matter? Refugees**

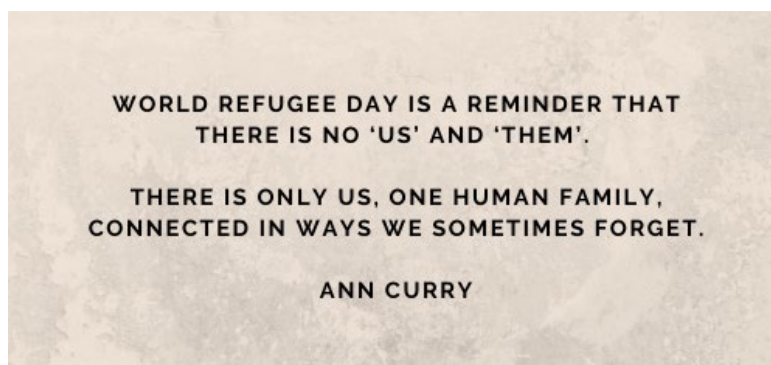


KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

A refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their home and country because of war, persecution, or natural disaster. Such an experience can be profoundly traumatic, as people travel to find a place of safety. Presently, there are about 26 million refugees around the world, approximately half of whom are under 18.

The story in the New Testament of the 'Escape to Egypt' describes Mary and Joseph fleeing from Bethlehem with the baby Jesus in order to escape from Herod. Jesus himself was a refugee. Even when they tried to return, they realised that Bethlehem remained unsafe, so settled in Nazareth.

With the very present reality of people seeking safety and security as refugees, does our behaviour matter? How can we love all and enable all to flourish?



World Refugee Day is celebrated on June 20th each year. As with all challenging material, children will respond in different ways to this theme, which may generate the need for some follow-up in the classroom.

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

The Escape to Egypt (Matthew 2: 13-23)



Gathering



Refugees: *La Sagrada Familia* by Kelly Latimer.

https://kellylatimoreicons.com/gallery/img_2361/#main

Find a place where you can be still, without interruptions. You might like to light a candle as you begin.

Look closely at the image:

- I wonder what you notice?
- Who do you think these three are?
- What do you think they are doing?
- How do you think they are feeling?

Engagement

At Christmas, Christians around the world remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus. Many sing carols such as 'Away in a Manger', with lovely words such as 'Away in a manger/no crib for a bed/the little Lord Jesus/laid down his sweet head'.

Less remembered is what the bible describes happens next to Mary, Joseph and Jesus. After the wise men – who had given gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh – had left, an angel visited Joseph in a dream. The angel told Joseph to 'Get up, 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'. It was no longer safe in Bethlehem, so Mary, Joseph and Jesus quickly packed their bags and left for Egypt.



It is this journey which you can see painted, in a modern way, by Kelly Latimore.

I wonder what their journey was like?

I wonder how they felt having to leave their home and possessions behind?

I wonder how they felt leaving friends and family?

I wonder if they felt welcomed and loved in Egypt?

Mary, Joseph and Jesus had become refugees. A refugee is someone who has been forced to leave their country because of war, persecution, or natural disaster. Refugees look for a place of *refuge*, which means a place of safety or shelter.

Refugees are present all across the world today. In 2021, there are 26 million refugees worldwide; about half of these are under 18. Life isn't easy for refugees; it can be scary leaving the home you know. Sometimes, the journey to safety can be dangerous, taking days and weeks, travelling from country to country to find a new home.

Many people are inspired by their beliefs to help refugees. Some people choose to donate to charities which provide clothing, clean water and food to refugees travelling to a safer place. Some campaign to ensure that refugees are welcomed within new places. I wonder if you can think of other ways in which people try to support refugees?



When Jesus grew older, he told a parable to his disciples. In this parable, Jesus praised those who acted compassionately to those in need: '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' (Matthew 25: 35-36).

I wonder whether Jesus was thinking back to his own family's experience as refugees when he said this?

Response

'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'. (Matthew 25: 35-36)

'Everyone can make a difference. Every action counts' – The UN Refugee Agency



I wonder what the quotes above make you think about? Do you think they link?

I wonder how we might make a difference in helping refugees today? Does our behaviour matter?

If you'd like to, you might like to offer up your own prayer to God here. Below is an example if you'd like to use it:

Dear God,

We pray for all refugees today.

We pray that, like Mary, Joseph and Jesus, they will find somewhere safe and receive a welcome.

Help us, in our own lives, to think about how we can make a difference.

Amen

Sending

As you finish the act of collective worship, I wonder what thoughts you will take into the rest of the week?

'Collective worship today has made me think about...'

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

Refugee Rucksacks

You might like to try the prayer activity 'Refugee Rucksacks' from Prayer Spaces in Schools. Choose 15 everyday objects and place them on a table. Which six objects would you take if you had to flee your home and why? What if you could only take three? Full information about the activity can be found here: <https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/resources/78>.

Listen: 'Away from the Manger: The Refugee King'

Listen to Liz Vice's 'Away from the Manger: The Refugee King' (<https://tinyurl.com/jm4v7mgg>). As you listen, reflect on the lyrics below:

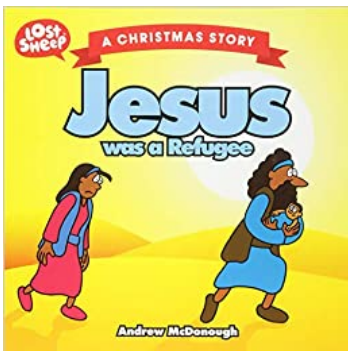
*Away from the manger they ran for their lives
The tiny boy Jesus, a son they must hide
A dream came to Joseph, they fled in the night
And they ran and they ran and they ran
Ooh*

*No stars in the sky but the Spirit of God
Led down into Egypt from Herod to hide
No place for his parents no country or tribe
And they ran and they ran and they ran
Ooh*

*Stay near me LORD Jesus when danger is nigh
And keep us from Herods and all of their lies
I love Thee LORD Jesus, the Refugee King
And we sing and we sing and we sing x2
Alleluia*

I wonder what this song makes you think about? How does it make you feel?

Read



Jesus was a Refugee by Andrew McDonagh.

What does the story make you think about?

Why do you think Andrew has decided to tell the story in this way?

Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Story by Margaret Ruurs illustrated by Nasir Ali Barr. There is a video of Margaret Ruurs reading it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIZAM-obsmE>.

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Examen

Use the EXAMEN prayer to reflect on welcoming. It has five steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

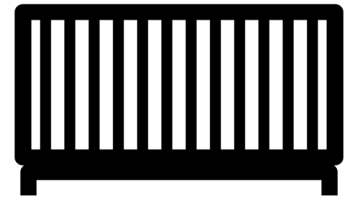
1. GIVE THANKS for those who have made you feel loved and welcomed
2. ASK FOR HELP to help others feel loved and welcomed
3. REFLECT on your day and think about times you acted in a loving and welcoming way to others 😊 and those times you didn't 😞
4. SAY SORRY for the times you weren't as loving or as welcoming as you could have been
5. DECIDE how you will help someone feel loved and welcomed tomorrow

To discover more about using the Ignatian Examen with children, listen to this [podcast](#).

'A warm welcome'

A popular phrase in the English language is to offer someone a 'warm welcome'.

This week, every time you notice the radiator on, you might like to lean against it to feel the heat (be careful not to touch it with bare hands, though!). Each time you do, you might like to:



- think about all those who have offered you a 'warm welcome'
- think how you might offer others 'a warm welcome'
- pray that refugees might find a place of safety, warmth and shelter. Pray that they will find a 'warm welcome' wherever they travel.

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES



Refugees: La Sagrada Familia by Kelly Latimer



From Egypt I called my Son by Salvador Dali

Look closely at the two different artistic interpretations of Mary, Joseph and Jesus' flight to Egypt.

- What do you notice? What is the same between them? What is different?
- What do you think both pictures try and show about the experience of refugees?
- Why do you think Kelly Latimer decided to paint this biblical story in the modern day?
- How important is it to you that the bible describes Jesus as a refugee? How important do you think this is to others?

'Refugees' by Brian Bilson

Brian Bilson's Poem 'Refugees' looks at refugees from two points of view. Read it from top to bottom, then read it bottom to top to get the opposite perspective.

<https://nationalpoetryday.co.uk/poem/refugees/>

INVITATIONAL

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

INCLUSIVE

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...'

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

INSPIRING

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?