

Journey with Me:

Refugee Stories that Change Lives

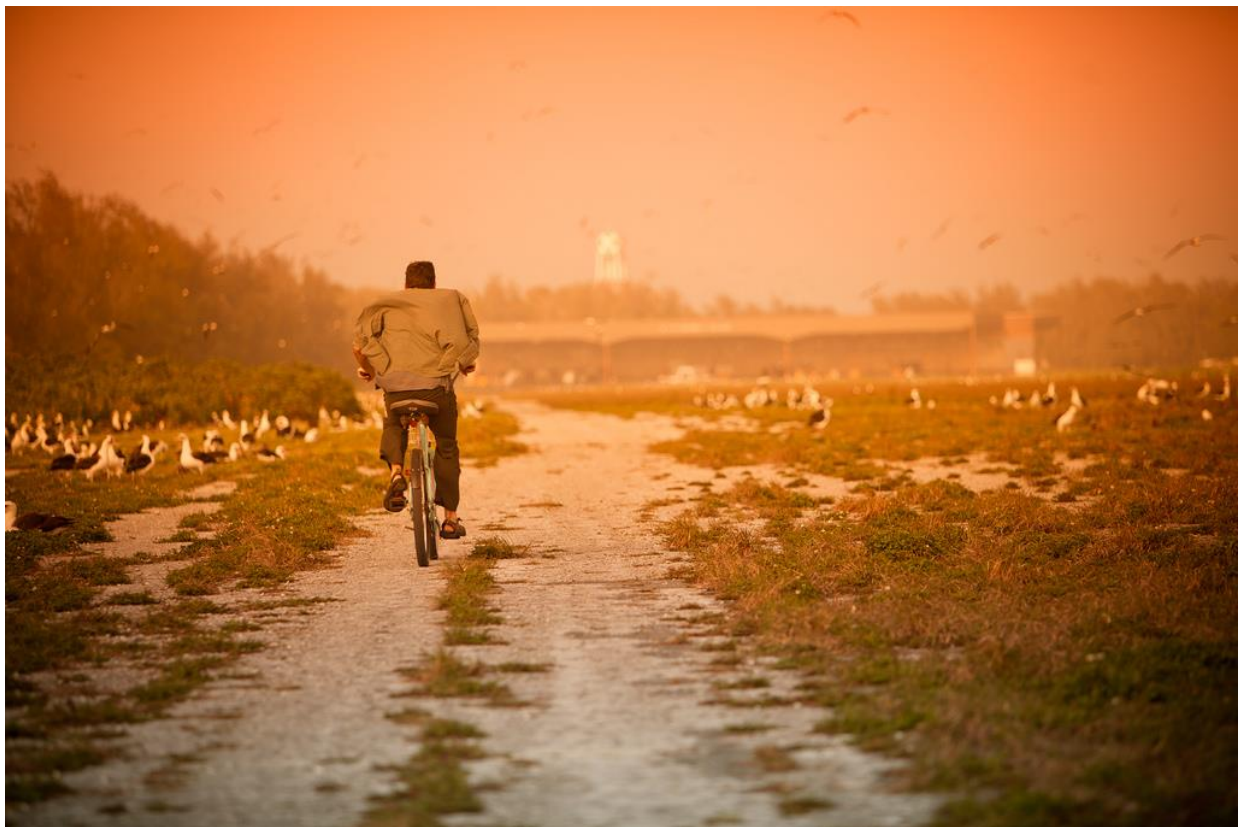


Figure 1 Flickr user Kris Krug

-A Facilitator Guide-

Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue
www.crcna.ca/PublicDialogue

Acknowledgements

The Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue is thankful for the partnerships and conversations that have made this resource possible. Our profound thanks to:

The Refugee Justice Task Force: Humberto Lopes (CRC Race Relations), Samia Saad and Rob Datema (The Lighthouse), Jenn McIntyre (Romero House), Katie Karsten (Diaconal Ministries), Angela Tuininga, Rebecca Walker (World Renew), and Danielle Steenwyk-Rowaan (CRC Canada Justice and Reconciliation Team). Your passion and vision inspired and nurtured this work! Your organizations have also made generous commitments to this work – thank you!

A special thanks to Global Learning Partners and the intrepid Jeanette Romkema, our project designer and passionate co-journeyer with refugees, for their vision and creativity in this work.

Our US colleagues in CRC justice and reconciliation ministries (Office of Race Relations, Office of Social Justice) have blazed a trail in passionate and principled action with vulnerable migrants. Their *Church Between Borders* project, inspired by Synod 2010's reflections on migrant justice, was a creative catalyst for our work.

The CRCNA Canada Foundation for their generous support of this project.

Our two wonderful interns, Lydia McGeorge and Carissa Groot-Nibbelink, who worked hard to update and finesse this workshop in 2018.

This workshop was built on a learning-centred approach as designed by Global Learning Partners. To be effective, facilitators will honour the following principles of adult learning: safety, respect, inclusion, engagement, relevance, authenticity, transparency, and autonomy.

For more about this approach, visit:
www.globallearningpartners.com

Endorsement

Our community of churches in Canada has an honourable history of welcoming and helping refugee families settle here. Today, with the displacements caused by war, poverty, and environmental damage, refugee populations are higher than any time since World War II. The Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue and the Office of Race Relations believe that we have an opportunity and a responsibility as Christian citizens to live into the call to biblical hospitality today. Indeed, in a time when the refugee crisis is deepening and policy changes are creating new hardships for refugees and refugee claimants in Canada, our neighbours need us to hear that biblical call now. As citizens acting together with our refugee neighbours, we can seek justice, speak hope, and make our communities places of welcome. This is important because our refugee neighbours are so much more than refugees.

We are excited, prayerful and hopeful that this tool – *Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives* – will help build communities of faithful and faith-filled citizens to act for justice *for and with* refugees.

-Darren Roorda

Canadian Ministries Director, Christian Reformed Church in North America

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Endorsement	3
Table of contents	4
An overview	
Who is this for?	5
Why are we doing this workshop?	7
What results are we hoping for?	11
When should we do this workshop?	12
Where should it be?	13
What content will be learned?	14
Key terms	15
To help you plan	
Planning checklist	17
Steps of planning worksheet	18
Materials needed	20
Bulletin announcement	20
Photo release form	21
Reporting to Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue	22
Some tips	
Tips for effective facilitation	24
Core principles for effective facilitation	25
Types of probing questions	26
10 ways to minimize resistance	27
How to facilitate role play	28
For worship	
Scripture passages	29
Prayers and liturgy	32
Resources	40
Case studies for role plays	43

Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives

A refugee justice workshop

Welcome to this refugee workshop. Congratulations! By engaging in this learning event, you have just taken a positive step towards addressing refugee justice in Canada and the world.

WHO is this for?

Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives has been created for **Christians** who care about refugees and the injustices they face in Canada while fleeing conflict-ridden, oppressive, and desperate circumstances in other parts of the world. Some of the participants of this workshop may already know quite a bit and others may know very little. Some are passionate about taking action about the topic and others may be hesitant to commit to anything at all. Some always read or listen to news items about refugees and others rarely choose to do so. All are participating in this workshop because they feel called or curious to know more.

This workshop can be used with **a group of 5-500**. It is designed in such a way that it is flexible and versatile, and can include all interested participants. However, the ideal size to maximize learning is **15-20**. This will allow everyone to fully participate in the workshop throughout.

This workshop has been designed for youth and adults – not children. Although it can be adapted for a younger audience, the target audience is 14 and older.

Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives is great for a variety of groups. Some possibilities include:

A group within the church:

- Bible study group
- Part of a seasonal workshop
- Young adults class or event
- Teen event
- Catechism class or other church classes
- Chapel
- Retreat or day camps.

Part of a denominational event:

- Day of Encouragement, for deacons and other church leaders
- Classis meeting

- Synod learning opportunity.

Part of a Christian organization's event:

- Board meeting
- Special event or workshop
- Staff meeting
- Staff professional development day
- Festivals.

The facilitator of this workshop should be passionate about refugee justice but does not need to be an expert on the topic. Of course it is helpful that the facilitator is somewhat informed, however, the idea of this workshop is that everyone is learning and journeying together. Ideally, the person leading the workshop is a trained facilitator (inquire with the Centre for Public Dialogue about how to become trained), but this too is not essential.

Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue (crcna.ca/PublicDialogue) provides “....a place of conversation, learning and action on God's call to justice and peace”. The centre's goal is to present a positive voice of faith in Canadian public life, and to live out the links of justice, hope and reconciliation in advocacy and citizenship (adapted from the website). This workshop is an important learning tool in the resources it offers members of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) and the Reformed Church of America (RCA), and is one of many other resources on its webpage: crcna.org/JourneyWithMe.

The Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue and the Office of Race Relations collaborated in the formation and facilitation of a **Refugee Justice Task Force**. This group was mandated to produce learning resources on refugee justice that will influence people to walk alongside their refugee neighbours, invest and engage in the lives of newcomers, extend hospitality, and assist in the mobilization of citizens to speak for policy change. Given the profound success of the *Blanket Exercise*¹ as a learning and mobilization tool in our communities, the Centre for Public Dialogue believes that a similar interactive and experiential tool can be a valuable contribution to our Refugee Justice Task Force objectives. This workshop is a critical learning tool for the CRC and RCA, and long overdue.

¹ The *KAIROS Blanket Exercise* is an interactive telling of the shared history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. It was developed by KAIROS and is widely used in the Christian Reformed churches and organizations across Canada. Some adaptations have been made for CRC use.

WHY are we doing this workshop?

Well, the short answer is: refugees are our neighbours. When we think of refugees, we often hear the biblical call to “welcome the stranger.” Welcoming the stranger is a good first step. But in this increasingly interconnected world, these strangers have become our neighbours and we need each other. When one part of a community struggles, the entire community hurts. Our hope is that this workshop will help Christian citizens to work with their refugee neighbours for justice.

To begin, let’s explore who refugees are and how they come to Canada.

Who is a refugee?

A refugee is a person who meets the 1951 United Nations Convention definition of a refugee. A refugee is:

...a person who, because of well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable or afraid to ask for protection in that country, or not having a country of nationality, is outside the country where he/she usually lived, and is unable or afraid to return to that country.

A person isn’t a refugee by choice. A person is a refugee because the discriminating choices of others.

How Do Refugees Come to Canada?

Refugees come to Canada in two ways: Resettlement and the Refugee Claim process. It is important to understand the differences between these processes to avoid misunderstandings about who refugees are and how they come to Canada.

Resettlement – Many refugees flee their home and go to a neighbouring country where they live either in refugee camps or in urban centres. Some of these refugees will be resettled to Canada, though the vast majority are hosted in countries in the Global South like Lebanon, Turkey, and Pakistan.

Refugees resettled to Canada are selected abroad, are recognized as refugees by the Canadian government before they arrive, and become permanent residents as soon as they arrive in Canada.

Refugees can be resettled to Canada as either Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) or as Government Assisted Refugees (GARs). PSRs and GARs arrive to Canada as permanent residents.

Privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) are refugees who are identified for resettlement by private sponsors. They are screened for health and security, interviewed, and approved for resettlement by an overseas Canadian visa officer. Once these steps are finalized the refugees travel to Canada. Private sponsors are organizations or groups of Canadians. Many sponsors represent faith-based communities. Others include ethno-cultural groups and settlement organizations. Private sponsors provide financial support and settlement assistance for the refugees they sponsor, usually for one year after arrival. World Renew is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) organization with an agreement with the government to assist churches and groups in resettling refugees to Canada through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP).

Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) are refugees referred by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to the Canadian government for resettlement. As with the PSRs, GARs are screened for health and security, interviewed, and approved for resettlement by an overseas Canadian visa officer. Once these steps are finalized the refugees travel to Canada. The government provides financial support and settlement assistance typically for one year after arrival.

Refugee Claimants – Refugee Claimants are people who have fled their home country and who have come to Canada. They make a refugee claim once they are at the border or in the country. Canada has a legal obligation towards refugee claimants in Canada: the most important is the obligation not to send them back to face persecution. Refugee claimants have the right, under Canadian and international law, to remain in the country until the claim has been reviewed by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada and either accepted or rejected. Refugee claimants are interviewed, screened for health and security and approved as refugees by the International Refugee Board (IRB) in Canada. Once approved as refugees, they apply for Permanent Residence. Sometimes the term “asylum seeker” is also used to refer to refugee claimants.

It is important to note that both resettled refugees and refugee claimants are screened and approved by the Canadian government, albeit through very different government processes and government institutions. It is also important to remember that refugees are not immigrants. A refugee is forced to flee. An immigrant chooses to move to another country.

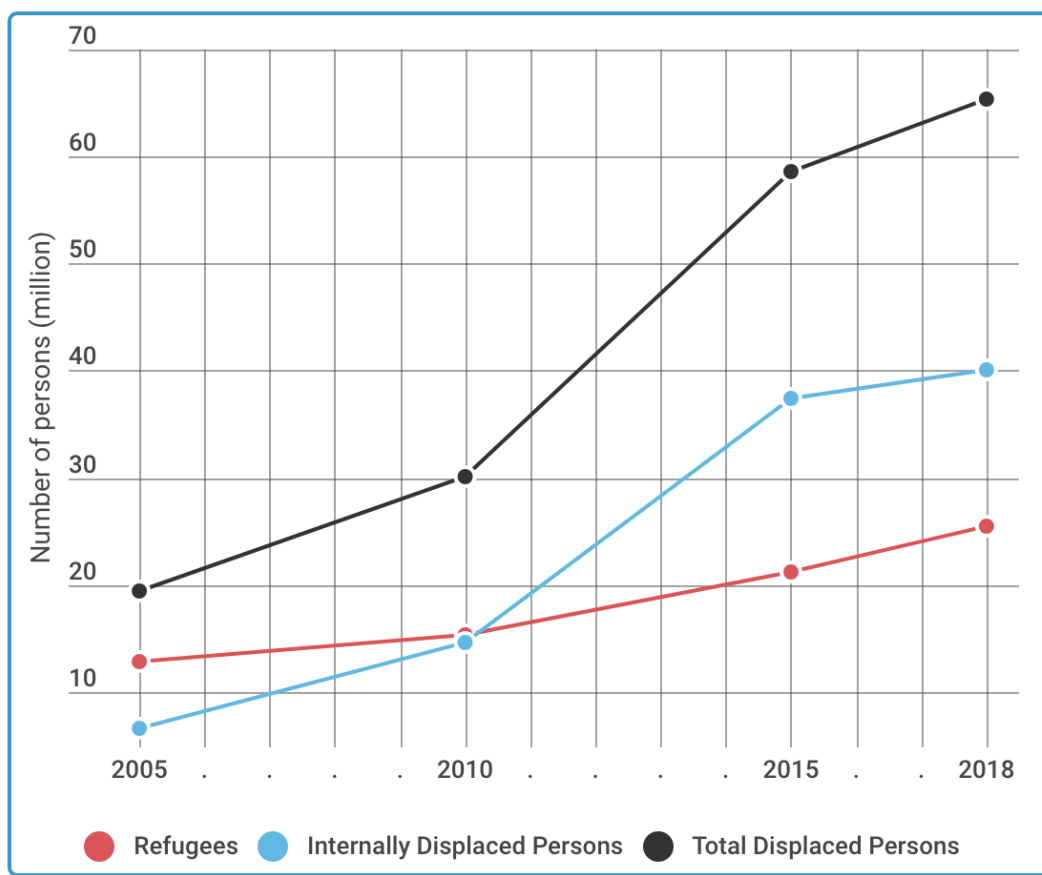
Resettled refugees are determined to be refugees by the Canadian government before they arrive in Canada. Refugee claimants receive a decision on whether they are refugees after they arrive in Canada.

Find a more complete list of key terms related to refugees on page 15.

Global Refugee Crisis

Figures from the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) show that the number of refugees in the world today has been steadily increasing. Looking at figures for 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2018 we can see a marked increase in the number of displaced persons and refugees.

YEAR	Refugees (million)	Internally Displaced Persons (million)	Total Displaced Persons (million)
2018	25.4	40	65.4
2015	21.2	37.4	58.6
2010	15.4	14.7	30.1
2005	12.9	6.6	19.5



(data from UNHCR and UNRWA)

We are witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record. As of 2018, an unprecedented **68.5 million** people around the world have been forced from home. Among them are nearly **25.4 million refugees**, over half of whom are **under the age of 18**.

The refugee crisis is a human crisis. Refugees are people who have had to flee their homes, leaving almost everything behind. They have suffered unimaginable loss. Yet they are people filled with unique life experiences, skills, capacities, and dreams for the future. They are people who seek peace and protection from whatever forced them to flee. Parents desire work, good health, and opportunities for their children. Children and youth long for opportunities to learn and grow.

Yet despite the unprecedented numbers of displaced people and refugees in the world, governments continue to find ways to restrict and limit refugees from accessing protection. Policies to restrict resettlement and to restrict the claimant process persist in Canada and in other countries around the world.

More important policy information

For more information regarding Canadian policies relevant to resettled refugees and refugee claimants please visit www.crcna.org/CanadaRefugeeFacts. This page will be kept up to date to ensure you have the most current policy information. We recommend that you click the link and read the policy documents before leading a workshop. We also suggest that you print off a copy for easy reference and bring it to the workshop. You might even consider bringing copies for all the workshop participants, or sending them the link. You can also find great, current policy information on the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR)'s [website \(ccrweb.ca\)](http://ccrweb.ca).

It is critical that Canadian citizens continue to remind the government of their willingness to play a meaningful role in the welcome and integration of refugees to Canada. Doing so will ensure that the political commitment to refugee resettlement in Canada remains strong.

For more information, visit crcna.org/CanadaRefugeeFacts

Canada's Faith Communities

It is vital for Canadian churches to realize the current realities of refugees and immigrants to Canada so that we can more intentionally and effectively support refugees in their resettlement or refugee claim process. The biblical stories of seeking refuge (eg. the Israelites to and from Egypt, Jesus' family in exile) are compelling examples. These stories have illustrated welcoming

the stranger as well as extending generosity and justice to people in every circumstance. For Christians, these are core Gospel values.

Christian churches and other faith communities have traditionally provided the main support for refugees making a new home in Canada. People of faith have reached out in support of refugee claimants and in support of resettled refugees through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program and support for Government Assisted Refugees. Many churches have compelling stories to tell about their own members' immigrant experiences. Many Christian churches whose members come from immigrant communities are now aging. Yet, these churches are still seeing present and future growth in welcoming and joining with members from more recently arrived immigrant communities.

This workshop is designed to provide time for you to reflect on what the Bible says about refugee justice, learn through experiential activities, dialogue what it feels like to be a refugee in Canada today, and consider ways to get personally involved, together with your church community.

What RESULTS are we hoping for?

By engaging in this workshop with heart, mind, *and* body, we are hoping for some or all of the following changes/impact:

- Individuals will listen more and assume less, when in conversation with a refugee
- Individuals will have more empathy, love and kindness for their refugee neighbours
- Individuals will be confident to take up conversation about issue of refugee justice i.e. 1-1, groups, at church, etc.
- Canadians will respond to campaign requests i.e. through social media, petitions signing, letter writing, marches, etc.
- Canadians will feel empowered to discuss refugee issues with their elected representatives.
- Individuals and churches will seek out other resources to help them engage further with refugee justice issues i.e. another workshop, a guest speaker, etc.
- Churches will be more fully inclusive and accepting of refugees
- Churches will join existing campaigns dealing with refugee justice i.e. through the Centre for Public Dialogue
- Churches will visit, promote, and more vigorously support the work of organizations working with refugees.
- Churches will sponsor a refugee individual or family to come to Canada and assist with their resettlement to Canada (eg. through World Renew).

WHEN should we do this workshop?

Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives can be used at any time of the year and at any event. However, here are some dates to keep in mind:

March 8 – International Women’s Day

April 4 – Refugee Rights Day in Canada²

Mid-April – **Refugee Sunday in the CRC** (This date changes annually and is typically on the Sunday following Refugee Rights Day in Canada.)

June 16 – Day of the African Child

June 20 – World Refugee Day

October 17 – International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

December 10 – International Human Rights Day

This is a 90-minute workshop. We hope that this workshop will fit easily into an already existing gathering or event. It is also hoped that this time frame minimizes barriers preventing individuals to participate and maximizes the places and times it can be used.

Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives is not meant to teach all there is to learn about refugee justice. However it is an introduction and we encourage additional workshops and learning after some time has passed. This is a step in the direction of empowering empathy.

No breaks are necessary and the workshop should run continuously from start to finish. Here is the suggested timing:

Welcome and intro (5 min)

Task 1 – An Overview of Our Time Together (5 min)

Task 2 – Why Does This Matter (10 min)

Task 3 – What the Bible Says About Refugees (10 min)

Task 4 – Walking in Some Else’s Shoes Role Play (35 min)

Task 5 – The Christian Reformed Church (10 min)

Task 6 – What Are You Going to Do (10 min)

Closing and prayer (5 min)

² April 4, 1985 was a milestone for refugee rights in Canada. On that day, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the right of refugee claimants in Canada to life, liberty and security of the person, and that claimants are therefore entitled to an oral hearing, in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice and international law. This ruling has become known as the ‘[Singh decision](#)’ in recognition of Harnhajan Singh, Sadhu Singh Thandi, Paramjit Singh Mann, Kewal Singh, Charanjit Singh Gill, Indrani and Satnam Singh who brought their cases to the Court.

The timing of the workshop will depend on the following:

- size of the group
- the people in the group
- the amount of time you have
- which section receives the most emphasis
- whether the workshop is done in its entirety or in part.

NOTE: *All tasks are optional and can be used in their entirety or in part. However, the action plan at the end of the workshop is crucial, and is where evidence of learning and change will be found. We recommend you have a plan for follow-up on this section and reporting to the church and/or Centre for Public Dialogue.*

WHERE should it be?

The ideal location for *Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives* is an open space with movable furniture. Since you will need to set up multiple areas of engagement, using a church sanctuary is discouraged. Find a space that has usable walls, is comfortable and welcoming, and in which your group can easily fit and move around.

When selecting the building, consider the group that has been invited. If they are a Bible study group or catechism group, you may want to use a room in the church. If they are at a conference or Board meeting, the room may be given to you. No matter the group, remember to intentionally match the size and type of group, with the venue and space.

Food can help people relax and offers an easy way for people to interact and talk. For this reason, we encourage offering food and/or drinks before and after the workshop.

What CONTENT will be learned?

The Content	The Achievement-based Objectives <i>By the end of the course, you will have...</i>
Refugees in the Bible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examined a list of Bible verses and discussed what you believe God is telling us about refugees and how we are called to respond
Refugee terminology and facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed, discussed and role played various facts about refugees in Canada
Empathy for refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared our connections with refugees and refugee issues “Walked” in a refugee’s shoes and shared feeling about this experience Unpacked the potential ripple effect (both positive & negative) of our treatment of refugees in Canada
The work of the church and other like-minded organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and discussed two CRC statements about refugees Reviewed and celebrated the work of the church and other like-minded organizations
Resources available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed resources available and written a personal or group action plan using select resources to further the work and/or learning in this area.

Key Terms

A refugee is a person forced outside of his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. (*United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*)

A refugee claimant is a person outside of his or her country of nationality who has made a claim to be a refugee, and is waiting for the claim to be investigated. Refugee claimants have the right, under Canadian and international law, to remain in the country until the claim has been reviewed by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada and either accepted or rejected. Sometimes the term “asylum seeker” is also used.

A privately sponsored refugee is a refugee who has been resettled to Canada under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP). Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) organizations provide support to Canadian citizens, who provide the financial and settlement assistance typically for one year after arrival for refugees they sponsor.

A Government Assisted Refugee is a refugee who the Government of Canada supports in their initial resettlement in Canada.

An “Irregular” Refugee is a refugee who crosses a border by foot, smuggling, or other means in order to make claims for refugee status at inland offices. Whether a person arrives at an official Port of Entry or comes across at an irregular location, they have the right to identify as a refugee and receive all corresponding protections while their claim is evaluated. While Canada does not authorize people to cross the border at irregular locations, when a person does so as a refugee claimant, it is not a crime, there are no charges laid against them, and their claim is not any less valid. (You can find further information about irregular arrivals at crcna.org/CanadaRefugeeFacts.)

An immigrant is a person who chooses to leave one country to settle in another. To immigrate to Canada, people must apply and be selected while living outside of Canada.

An internally displaced person (IDP) is a person who has fled war, famine, or persecution, but has not left his or her country of origin. Many IDPs have fled for similar reasons as refugees, but they remain inside the boundary of their country and are under the care of their government. Most IDPs hope they can return home soon. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has a limited mandate to care for IDPs.

A migrant is a person who moves to another country without being granted the rights of permanent residence. Migrants often leave their homes due to extreme poverty, environmental catastrophes, and forced displacement due to projects such as dams, mines or the introduction of foreign markets. In Canada, most migrants come under temporary worker programs such as seasonal agricultural or live-in caregiver programs, which afford few rights or protection from abuse. Undocumented migrants are another growing reality in Canada. They are economic “refugees/migrants” who tend to live under the radar.

A migrant worker is a person who has left his or her homeland and has moved, sometimes seasonally, in order to find work.

A permanent³ resident is a person who has been granted permanent resident status after having come to Canada as an immigrant or as a refugee. This term has replaced the term “landed immigrant”.

An application for permanent residence on Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds (H&C) is an application that may be available to someone who is seeking permanent residence on the following grounds: the best interest of the child, establishment in Canada or hardship (different than risk) in their country of origin. In the past “H&C” has been a viable option for refugee claimants who have received negative decisions; however it is becoming less accessible due to significant restrictions that were put in place in 2012.

³ Although based on changing legislation, “permanent” may not be so permanent any more.

Planning Check List

Date:

Facilitators:

Location:

What (action item)	When (date)	Who (person)
Send flyer/ invitation to church(es), group(s), individuals	1-2 months before	
Decide on facilitator(s) best suited for the event	1 month before	
Decide and arrange venue	1 month before	
Meet with co-facilitator (face-to-face, Skype or phone)	2 weeks before	
Conduct needs assessment	2 weeks before	
Visit event site, if possible	2 weeks before	
Adapt workshop, as needed	1 week before	
Confirm date, time, place and number of participant with organizer	1 week before	
Check all supplies, including photo release forms, handouts, and enough scenarios for all participants	2 days before	
Set up the room	At least 1 hour before	
THE WORKSHOP		
Check in with a few participants	Immediately after session	
Check in with co-facilitator, if applicable	Immediately after session	
Check in with event organizer(s) and those involved	Immediately after session	
Address any remaining logistics issues i.e. costs, follow up work	Within the week after	
Send (by email or mail) the signed Photo Release Forms and reporting form to the Centre for Public Dialogue	Within the week after	

Steps of Planning Worksheet

This worksheet is intended to assist you as you plan of this workshop. This document will help you check your assumptions, maximize the learning opportunities available through the workshop, and increase the possibility of real change moving forward.

	What we know	What we need to do/ change for their workshop
The People: How might the identified participants impact the delivery of this workshop?		
The Situation: Why is this event taking place with these people at this time?		
The Impact: What realistic impact could this workshop have on the participants?		
The Time and Timing: How may the time available impact the workshop?		

<p>The Place and Space:</p> <p>How may the place or space impact the workshop; what may need to change?</p>		
<p>The Content:</p> <p>What skills, knowledge, attitudes are especially needed here; what do you want to emphasize?</p>		
<p>The Objectives:</p> <p>Which objectives may not work with this group; what may need to change?</p>		
<p>The Plan:</p> <p>Given your responses to the previous seven questions, what will need to change in the workshop in order to accommodate your specific situation?</p>		

Materials Needed

The following materials are needed for this workshop:

- ☐ Workshop design, 1/participant
- ☐ Flip chart stand
- ☐ Flip chart paper, for stand and 1 sheet per table
- ☐ Dark markers, for table and facilitator
- ☐ Refugee profiles, 1/participant (with extras)
- ☐ Pens, for each table
- ☐ Photo release forms, 1/participant (see below)

Optional

- ☐ Camera, it's always great to share the event with others (NOTE: need to make sure you have everyone sign a photo release form)
- ☐ Music, can play as people are arriving
- ☐ Resource table, with books, article, brochures, etc.

Bulletin Announcement

Here is a bulletin announcement you may wish to use:

Refugee Workshop—"The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow." (Ps 146:9) Join us on **(date)** to learn about the situations that our refugee neighbours face in Canada today and how we can journey with them. We'll be using an interactive 90-minute workshop developed by several Christian Reformed ministries. Sign up with **(name of contact person)** by **(deadline to sign up)**.

Photo Release

☐ I hereby consent to be included in any **photographs** taken by/for Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue during the *Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives* workshop, and further, authorize the use and reproduction of any of these photos for use in the Centre for Public Dialogue educational activities or promotional materials.

☐ I hereby do NOT consent to be included in any *photographs* taken by or for the Centre for Public Dialogue during the *Journey with Me: Refugee Stories that Change Lives* workshop.

Date: _____

Please print your name: _____

Signature: _____

Reporting to the Centre for Public Dialogue

Please consider completing the template below and sending it to publicdialogue@crcna.org. This feedback will be helpful to the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue in our recording, future planning, and appropriate follow-up and support. Thank you for taking the time to do this!

1. WHO did you teach, and how many were in the group?
2. WHY was this event organized?
3. WHERE exactly was this event held?
4. WHEN was this event held, and how much time did you have?
5. Some important areas of learning are:

For the learners

For the facilitators

6. Some important areas of concern or challenge are:

For the learners

For the facilitators

7. What does the Centre for Public Dialogue need to do/clarify re: process and support for facilitators?

8. What does the Centre for Public Dialogue need to do re: support for the church or participants?

9. What action plan did the participants create? Who will hold them accountable to their action plan (or check on their commitments)?

WHAT needs to be done	WHEN will it happen	WHO will do it

10. What is the next learning opportunity for this church or community?

11. Please share any additional comments or questions you may have in the space provided below.

Tips for Effective Facilitation

Effective facilitation makes all the difference. If done well, facilitation can lead participants to feel safe during a learning event. This is both a skill *and* an art. Here are some tips to help:

1. **Affirm all answers, questions and comments.** Participants need to know that every answer, regardless of its content, will be heard and respected. When learners know that all answers are valid, they will be more open to speaking their minds.
2. **Encourage cross-talk.** People are accustomed to the “teacher” as the focus of a session and all discussion. Facilitators need to encourage the group to respond to each other rather than relying constantly on the active participation of the facilitation.
3. **Ask open questions.** Open questions encourage dialogue as well as invite ideas, opinions and discussion. Since open questions do not require ‘yes/no’ answers, learners are given the opportunity and flexibility to engage with the content and each other i.e. “What in this experience about refugee justice was important to you to hear or experience?”
4. **Weave.** By weaving past and future information or stories into what you are doing, you will help learners see important connections i.e. “Remember when ... said...?” “By the end of this session we will all have a personal action plan...”
5. **Talk less, listen more.** The more learners can discuss, debate, and assess new content, the more they learn. This means: less of you, more of them.
6. **Use invitational language.** Invitational language is respectful and inviting. Try phrases like: “Who doesn’t mind sharing their idea with the group?” or “Who can read that for us?”
7. **Use your co-facilitator.** Discuss how you can best support each other and work as a team i.e. one can script on the flip chart while the other facilitates the dialogue.
8. **Echo and summarize what is shared.** This technique helps participants feel affirmed and respected.
9. **Wait at least 5 seconds for an answer after asking a question.** Although silence may initially be intimidating for the facilitator, people need time to think about what they want to say or how they would like to contribute. In order to give others the time they need to respond, it may be helpful to count silently to yourself.

10 Core Principles

The following core principles will help maximize the learning that takes place. Here are some practical ways to practice these principles:

1. **Respect.** Learners want their ideas, experiences, knowledge, and culture—everything about them—to be respected. Affirm everyone.
2. **Safety.** Learners need to feel emotionally, physically, and psychologically safe in order to share personal stories, ask difficult questions, and offer challenging ideas.
3. **Authenticity.** The facilitator must be fully present with the learners. Through this engagement, you will ensure that your responses and questions are meaningful.
4. **Humility.** Since we all are learners in this journey together, it is important to demonstrate humility throughout the workshop. By doing so, the facilitator acknowledges what he/she knows and does not know.
5. **Deep listening.** Sometimes what *is not* said is just as important as what *is* said. The facilitator can help participants feel safe by listening deeply to both moments of discussion as well as moments of silence. i.e. listen with your whole body.
6. **Relevance.** Throughout the material, learners must be able to recognize that each session is relevant to them and their lives. If someone cannot see the relevance, they will become disengaged. i.e. invite participants to personalize the content as much as possible.
7. **Engagement.** In order for deep learning to take place, learners must remain fully engaged with the material and activities of this workshop. i.e. encourage everyone to fully participate.
8. **Inclusion.** Since learners want to feel included and valued, the facilitator must take the time to thank people for all input, even if that input pushes back or challenges what has just been said.
9. **Transparency.** Because learners tend to feel increasingly safe once they know what to expect, the facilitator must be transparent throughout the workshop. i.e. In the middle of this workshop we are going to spend some time seeing how it feels to be a refugee in Canada.
10. **Learning styles.** All participants will have different learning preferences: auditory, visual, or kinesthetic. For this reason, this workshop offers a variety of ways to engage with the material. i.e. ask questions specific to the learning style: what did you *do*, what did you *see*, and what did you *hear*.

Types of Probing Questions

The following questions can help you encourage the participants to share more deeply, especially during a debriefing session:

1. Tell me more about...
2. Why do you say that?
3. It must have been very difficult for you to... Tell me more about how you...
4. What else can you tell me about...
5. What else...
6. Help me understand...
7. Can you give me another example of...
8. Tell me why...
9. So why do you think that ...
10. I'm not sure I understand... Can you tell me more about that?
11. I'm not certain what you mean by... Can you give me some examples?
12. What stands out in your mind about that?
13. So what I hear you say is... What am I missing?
14. What makes you feel that way?
15. You just told me about... I'd also like to know about...
16. What would ... say about what you just said?
17. How do *you* feel about that?
18. What exactly did you mean by ... ?
19. And, what happened after that?
20. Why do you think that is/happened?
21. For you, what prevented... from happening?
22. What would it take for us/ you to do that?
23. And, what might a refugee think about that?

10 Ways to Minimize Resistance

Resistance is normal. It is common for learners to either resist the content or the way in which the content is being taught. Though resistance may be a normal response to this kind of learning experience, it is important to minimize this resistance so that it does not interfere with the meaningful learning that can take place. Here are 10 ways to minimize resistance:

1. **Early invitation and plan.** Tell learners in advance what they will be learning and doing.
2. **Safety.** Create an emotionally and physically safe environment as a way to ensure the full participation of all learners.
3. **Respect.** Since some individual may react if they feel left out or unvalued, show respect to all learners present in the workshop.
4. **Affirmation.** Affirm each individual and voice present in the room. By doing so, participants will come to realize the significance of their presence within this learning experience.
5. **Relevance.** Help all learners know *why* this content is important in their lives and why it matters. As a way to further emphasize the relevancy of this topic, seek out additional information that speaks to your local context and corresponding refugee issues.
6. **Choice.** Give learners the choice to learn and participate in a way that is comfortable for them. They will appreciate having input in their learning experience.
7. **Transparency.** Be up front with learners throughout the workshop. Explain to the learners the specific goals behind various components of the workshop. Once the participants hear these goals, they will become receptive to the particularly difficult learning sections.
8. **Welcome it.** Welcome and celebrate resistance because, often times, this resistance signals the first step in deep and meaningful learning. If avoided, this resistance will likely come back to you—only this time, *stronger* than before.
9. **Check in.** Check in with learners privately before the session or during a break. Alternatively, touch base with the participants altogether at the end of a session. By doing so, participants will begin to see that the facilitator values their input.
10. **Stick to the program.** Try to follow the agenda as planned. If you have a good reason to sway from the original agenda, take the time to explain this change to the group. This workshop has been carefully designed to maximize learning and, therefore, you need to trust its design.

How to Facilitate Role Play

The role play activity is a key element of this workshop—it will help deepen the discussions as well as the overall learning experience. These role plays will also have a profound impact on all participants, even those who have worked with refugees for many years. One such individual noted: “It’s strange but even after all these years of working in this field I have never really stopped to think how it must *feel* to be a refugee.”

Here are some tips to maximize the potential of the role play:

1. **Take time to set the stage.** Explain that for the next 15 minutes the participants will not be themselves; instead, they will “be” refugees. Tell the participants that you will give them a few minutes to read their character description. Note that, after that time, they should do their best to become this person. Encourage each participant to try and feel how this person feels, speak how he/she might speak, and share in any additional characteristics that may apply to the character. Take time to highlight the importance of understanding the character, his/her emotions, and his/her situation. Explain that, after the role play, there will be time to debrief as a group.
2. **Tell them these are real people.** Note that, though the names of the individuals have been changed, the stories that they have read are true. Explain that the Christian Reformed Church has in some way, helped each person (or “character”).
3. **Do not hover.** Let the groups enter into deep dialogue together. This way, the participants can freely express their emotions and the impact of the role play had on them. Only re-enter the group when it is time to debrief within the larger group.
4. **Call the group back gently.** Since many individuals will be deep in discussion, use a soft voice to call them back to the larger group.
5. **Help everyone out of their role.** If the role play is successful, each participant will have assumed the full experience of the assigned character. Since it may be difficult for participants to move out of their characters, encourage them to stand up, turn around, and shake out of their assigned character.
6. **Acknowledge the intensity of these role play experiences.** Validate the intensity of these experiences by saying statements such as, “You may be feeling a little shook up by what you just experienced...” or “You may not be feeling that great right now... but we are going to move into sharing some of what you just experience”.

Scripture Passages

Below you will find a long list of scripture passages relevant to refugee work. Although this list is not exhaustive, it is intended to function as a starting point for you. When used in a bulletin announcement, poster, Bible study, or personal devotions, these passages will prepare you for your role as a facilitator. The Bible clearly states God's call for his people and the relationships we must have with our refugee brothers and sisters.

Psalm of Refuge

Psalm 9 "The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble..."

Psalm 16 "Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge..."

Psalm 17 "Hear me, Lord; my plea is just. Listen to my cry..."

Psalm 18 "I love you, Lord, my strength..."

Psalm 31 "In you, Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame..."

Psalm 34 "I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips..."

Psalm 36 "I have a message from God in my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked:
there is no fear of God before their eyes..."

Psalm 46 "God is our refuge and strength; an ever-present help in trouble..."

Psalm 61 "Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer..."

Psalm 71 "In you, Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame..."

Psalm 91 "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty..."

Psalm 118 "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever..."

Psalm 142 "I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy..."

Other Scripture Related to Immigration and Refugees

Genesis 1:26-27 "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image...'"

Genesis 12:1 "The Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people, and your father's household to the land I will show you...'"

Exodus 2:15-22 "... Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian..."

Exodus 22:21 “Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt...”

Exodus 23:9 “Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels...”

Leviticus 19:9-18 “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field... leave them for the poor and the foreigner...”

Leviticus 19:33-34 “The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born...”

Numbers 15:15 “...You and the foreigner shall be the same before the Lord...”

Deuteronomy 10:18-19 “[God] defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you...”

Deuteronomy 24:17-22 “Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice...”

Deuteronomy 27:19 “Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner...”

Ruth 2 “[Ruth] asked him, ‘Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me – a foreigner?’”

1 Chronicles 29:14-16 “We are foreigners and strangers in [God’s] sight...”

Psalms 146 “The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked...”

Psalms 147:1-6 “... [the Lord] heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds...”

Proverbs 14:31 “Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker...”

Proverbs 22:8-9, 16 “Whoever sows injustice reaps calamity...”

Proverbs 31:8-9 “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves...”

Isaiah 1:17 “Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed...”

Isaiah 3:14-15 “... ‘What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?’ declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty...”

Isaiah 10:1-4 “Woe to those who make unjust laws...”

Jeremiah 7:5-7 “...Change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly...”

Jeremiah 22:3, 13-17 “This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right... do no wrong or violence to the foreigner...”

Malachi 3:5 "... 'I will be quick to testify against... those who deprive foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,' says the Lord Almighty."

Matthew 2:13-15 "... So he got up, took the child [Jesus] and his mother during the night, and left for Egypt..."

Matthew 25:31-46 "... The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me...'"

Luke 4:14-21 "... 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor...'"

Luke 10:25-37 "Who is my neighbour?"

Romans 12:13 "Share with the Lord's people who are in need..."

Romans 13:1-7 "... The authorities that exist have been established by God..."

Ephesians 2:11-22 "... For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility..."

Hebrews 13:1-2 "Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters..."

James 2:5-9, 14-17 "... God [has] chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith..."

1 John 3:14-18 "... And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters..."

1 John 4:7-21 "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God..."

Prayer #1

All-embracing God, no one is a stranger to you and no one is ever far from your loving care. In your kindness, watch over refugees and exiles.

For those separated from their loved ones when they fled war and conflict, re-unite them and give them protection.

Inspire us to make our churches places of refuge for those in search of safety and peace. Help us to show by our words and our actions the welcome you gave to the strangers you met.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

Prayer #2

God, our creator and sustainer,
you loved us long before we knew ourselves to be lovable
and love us still.

Give us, we pray, a greater awareness of your love for all people,
and a confidence in the action of your grace in us
and in your church.

Grow in us a greater awareness of the oppression
and acts of greed that create refugees.

Give us the courage to welcome the stranger among us
and the wisdom to speak up on their behalf.

We praise you for your mysterious ways among us:
for your presence in the midst of human affairs
even in ways we do not understand.

By the power of your Spirit, may we grow in the truth that compels us to act justly;
giving expression to the compassion of your son Jesus.

We pray in Christ's name, Amen.

Adapted from *More than Words: Prayer and Ritual for Inclusive Communities* by Janet Schaffran and Pat Kozk. Oak Park, IL: Meyer-Stone Books, 1988, p110.

Prayer #3

Lord Jesus, you swept away centuries of prejudice and legalism when you reached out and accepted people as they were.

Help us understand that there is not one of us who deserves your grace, yet you grant to us all, whether Muslims, Jews, Christians or non-Christians; whether believers or non-believers; rich or poor; black or white; status or non-status⁴; the love of God.

Strengthen us Lord, where we are weak, and give us courage to withstand the seduction of a society obsessed with wealth and power. Help us build bridges instead of erecting barriers. Help us live in peace and harmony with your creation where no one is a stranger anymore.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

Call to Worship

Leader: Lord, we are your gathered people, come together to be one with refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people whose lives have been dislocated by war, famine and injustice. By our presence here we express our solidarity with them in their search for a new life, a new home, a new promise.

All: Lord, clear our eyes that we may see the suffering of the refugee.
Open our ears that we may hear the cries of those deep in despair.
Release our feet that we may walk on paths where some comfort we may spread.

⁴ "Non-status Indians" commonly refers to people who identify themselves as Indigenous people but who are not entitled to registration on the Indian Register pursuant to the *Indian Act*. Some of them may be members of a First Nation. (www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca)

Unloosen our tongues that we might speak your words of hope and love.
Open our hearts that we may be truly hospitable to the stranger in our midst.

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Prayer #4

Holy God, you are a God on the move.
You move in the world and in our lives.
You shape and direct your creation and us.
Your people have always been on the move.
Moses led your people out of slavery in Egypt.
Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt with Jesus to escape the murderous King Herod.
Today people continue to move.
War, poverty, oppression and injustice drive people from their homes and countries.
We pray that you will move with today's refugees and migrants.
Comfort and sustain them.
For all who serve those forced to move in our world, and for all who are on the move.

We pray this,
In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

Affirmation of Faith

Leader: It is the will of God that no one should go away thirsty.

All: *It is the will of God that all who ask will be received.*

Leader: It is the will of God that none should be driven out of their homes and communities.

All: *It is the will of God that Christ's love be available to all the world.*

Leader: It is the will of God that we should be light to a waiting and broken world.

All: *It is the will of God that we love the world as Christ has loved us.*

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Prayer #5

God of mercy and grace, we see genuine mercy that renews our spirits to right the wrongs in our world, to love the unloved to free the oppressed. Deliver us from cheap grace; grace without repentance, grace without the cross, grace without transformation.

By global comparisons, we are people of power and privilege. Too often we have left politics to politicians, preaching to preachers, and the affairs of other nations to fate. We commit ourselves this day to engage in your world, to hear the cries of your people, certain of the presence of your Holy Spirit leading us.

Loving God, help us understand that you are present with us in every encounter with others whose lives have been touched by death. Help us to listen for your voice God, beneath the human word spoken to us. May we be bearers of life and may we know your life-giving love in our lives.

We pray this,

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From the Presbyterian Church of Canada workshop
Making Connections: Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World.

Prayers of Intercession

Leader or reader:

Let us pray for refugees and displaced people throughout the world. Let us pray for those who have fled (from...) and who are (in...) or other parts of the world.

We especially pray for those known personally to us whom we now name before you (name aloud the people or community group).

We pray for them in their need for the basic necessities of life – shelter and food. Grant that they may have the skills and equipment to build shelters and to grow food.

We pray for ourselves that we can also be like Zacchaeus and welcome people into our homes.

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Prayer #6

Almighty and merciful God,
whose Son became a refugee
and had no place to call his own;
look with mercy on those who today
are fleeing from danger,
homeless and hungry.

Bless those who work to bring them relief;
inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts;
and guide the nations of the world toward that day
when all will rejoice in your Kingdom of justice
and of peace.

We pray this,
In the name of our God who shares divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.

From *A Prayer for Refugees*. The first two stanzas of the prayer are from www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/prayers/

Prayer for Women Refugees

by Jane Deren

On the road, seeking safe shelter;
In makeshift tents, feeding children;
In resettlement centers, rebuilding community;
In strange neighborhoods, looking for a compassionate face:
Long lines of women refugees,
Thousands, millions, all searching for that grace called home.

Grant them healing and wholeness, God of the vulnerable.
As you cherished Mary, cherish these women.

Grant us eyes to see them and the will to reach out,
So they may know they are not forgotten
But are welcomed in the global community,
Sisters to us all.

From <http://www.sjpcommunications.org/images/uploads/documents/efj061614.pdf>

For the Courage to Do Justice

O Lord,
open our eyes that we may see the needs of refugees;
open our ears that we may hear people's cries for justice;
open our hearts that we may assist sojourners near and far.

Show us
where love, hope and faith are needed.

Use us as ministers of your healing.

Let us not be afraid
to protect the weak because of the anger of the strong,
or to defend the poor because of the power of the rich.

Sustain us so that in these coming days
we may be able to do some work of peace for you. Sustain us so that in these coming days
We may be able to do some work of peace for you.
We ask these things in your blessed name. You taught us to pray....

From <https://foodgrainsbank.ca/product/prayer-for-refugees-the-courage-to-do-justice/>

Prayer for Refugees and Victims of War

Lord God,
no one is a stranger to you
and no one is ever far from your loving care.
In your kindness, watch over refugees and victims of war,
those separated from their loved ones,
young people who are lost,
and those who have left home or who have run away from
home.
Bring them back safely to the place where they long to be
and help us always to show your kindness
to strangers and to all in need
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

From <http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=1460>

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Knowing that our God walks with us in our confusion, our doubts, our failings, our struggles, we now come humbly before God to ask for mercy.

Leader: For the times we fail to offer hospitality to those in our world who suffer injustice, oppression, and poverty, we pray:

Response: *God, have mercy on us and your people*

Leader: For the times we lack courage to address the causes of injustice, oppression and poverty, we pray to our God:

Response: *God, have mercy on us and on your people.*

Leader: For the times we give in to despair and resignation when confronted with the injustice of our world, we pray to our God:

Response: *God, have mercy on us and on your people.*

Leader: For the times we allow our fears to triumph over the call to solidarity, we pray to our God:

Response: *God, have mercy on us and on your people.*

All: Merciful God, receive our petitions. Heal the brokenness in our hearts and in our world caused by injustice, indifference, selfishness and fear. Open our hearts to hear the cries of your suffering people. Support us as we seek to respond in solidarity and with hospitality. Amen.

From liturgy: *Offering Hospitality to Refugees* www.crcna.org

Don't Call Me a Stranger (poem)

Don't call me a stranger;
I need to feel at home;
Especially when loneliness cools my heart.

Don't call me a stranger;
The soil we stand on is the same;
But mine is not "the promised land."

Don't call me a stranger;
The colour of my passport is different;
But the colour of our blood is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
The language I speak sounds different;
But the feelings it expresses are the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
I toil and struggle in your land;
And the sweat of our brows is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
Borders, we created them;
And the separations that results is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
I am just your friend;
But you do not know me yet.

Don't call me a stranger;
We cry for justice and peace in different ways;
But our God is the same.

From *Study: Making Room Good Samaritan*.
Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, Philippines, 1995 (abridged version).

Resources

Statistics

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/infographics>

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/2017-immigration-levels-comments>

Myths

<http://ccrweb.ca/sites/ccrweb.ca/files/static-files/documents/FFacts.htm>

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/myths-facts>

How Generous is Canada

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/how-generous-is-Canada>

World Refugee Day resource toolkit

www.crcna.org/WorldRefugeeDay

Current refugee policy information

www.crcna.org/CanadaRefugeeFacts

Facts about the global refugee crisis

bit.ly/2NZIHS0

Syrian Crisis

<http://lifelinesyria.ca/>

Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program

<https://worldrenew.net/what-we-do/programs/refugee-sponsorship-canada>

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/sponsor.asp>

<http://www.rstp.ca/en/>

CRC Resources

The resources below are available at: crcna.org/JourneyWithMe

Articles

Bible verses

Children's books

Children's story during church service

Prayers

Recommended reading

Myth-busting information

Sermons

Skits

Sunday school activities

Videos

Facts about the global refugee crisis

Other Workshops

Welcome the Stranger: Post 9-11

http://indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com/web/Welcoming_Uprooted.pdf

A KAIROS workshop on refugees and migration.

Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World

<http://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/?wpdmdl=112>

A workshop for adults by the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

Welcoming Refugee Friends to Canada

http://presbyterian.ca/wp-content/uploads/cm_partners_welcoming_refugee_friends_to_canada_2009.pdf

A workshop for children and youth by the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

Websites on Refugees and Migration

Canadian Council for Refugees

ccrweb.ca

Centre for Public Dialogue

crcna.org/PublicDialogue

World Renew

worldrenew.net/refugeesponsorship

Amnesty International Canada

<https://www.amnesty.ca/our-work/issues/refugees-and-migrants>

Citizens for Public Justice

cpj.ca/private-sponsorship-and-public-policy

Refugees Deeply

newsdeeply.com/refugees/

Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees.html>

Human Rights Watch

hrw.org/

KAIROS-Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives

kairoscanada.org

Office of Social Justice for the Christian Reformed Church

justice.crcna.org/refugees

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

unhcr.ch

The following are 12 case studies (6 of Refugee Claimants and 6 of Privately Sponsored Refugees)

1. SHAMISO – female (Refugee Claimant)

I am a 47-year-old woman from Zimbabwe. My family cares about democracy and could not support the authoritarian regime that has taken over our beautiful country. I was a teacher and taught my students about human rights and the political history of our country so they could grow up knowing how to speak out against injustice. For this, I was attacked by supporters of the government.

We needed to leave the country for the safety of myself, my husband, and my four children. We knew that our names were on a list of dissenters ineligible for passports so we had to pay a neighbour to find us fake ones.

We crossed the border into South Africa and then flew to Canada. When we arrived in the Toronto airport and asked the border agent for refugee protection, an officer took my whole family to a room that seemed very much like a prison. He told us that our documents are false and that they need time to confirm our identities.

We are waiting here in detention, unsure of whether or not we can enter Canada or if we will be deported back to danger because of our documents. I am staying in one room with my children and am unable to see my husband. My children are very frightened—this does not seem like a place that children should be. I just want to have peace.

2. EMMANUEL – male (Refugee Claimant)

I might be deported back to the Central African Republic (CAR) because my request for refugee status in Canada was denied. My fear of political instability and religious intolerance was not enough to justify refuge in this country. My negative decision included the reason that I was not personally targeted, but face “generalized risk.” Don’t they understand, it’s a place where people stop you in the street to check if you are Christian or Muslim? If you give the wrong answer, the outcome may be death, torture, or the loss of limbs!

I have always been a hard worker and worked hard to become a teacher. When my society fell apart and children stopped attending school, I sold some possessions and collected enough money to buy a couple of vehicles and start a taxi service. It soon became too dangerous to stay in the country, and I found my way to Canada.

One year later, I had received a negative refugee decision and a deportation order arrived at my home. The violence in the CAR was in all major Canadian newspapers and hardly any flights were going there because it is so dangerous. With an outcry from my church community and with the assistance of wise legal counsel, my deportation was postponed. I am hopeful that my community will help me find a way to stay, but I know that my safe future in Canada is not guaranteed. I have heard things about the CAR being added to a list of countries that Canada won’t deport people to. If they won’t deport people there then they know it is dangerous! Why won’t Canada give me refugee status so I can start a life of peace?

3. ANJELICA – female (Refugee Claimant)

I am 29-years-old and a single mother of five. I was born in Guatemala and was raised there until the age of 15. My family and I left to the United States because of the political unrest and terrible crime that took away the life of my father and brother and many others in my village. In the United States we lived undocumented because it is widely known that US immigration would not grant Guatemalans refugee protection.

I met a man in the U.S. and married him. We had four children and we adopted my brother's child when he and his wife died in a car accident.

The stress of living undocumented lives was too hard on my husband and he began to drink and use violence against me. I became terrified of him! I could not go back to Guatemala so I came to Canada two years ago with my five children and made a refugee claim.

I was devastated to learn that my refugee claim was denied. The official who made the decision said that my testimony was not credible because there were obvious holes in my story. I realized that she had expected me to tell her about the things that are too hard to talk about because of my own fear and shame. Now it is too late to add anything and expect them to believe me.

I work full time, which means I have to leave my children alone a lot. One of them has terrible nightmares that I will be taken away some day. I feel like a terrible mother for all I have put them through. As a last resort, I applied for something called a "humanitarian and compassionate application." It was also denied. I don't know what to do!

4. MIRIAM – female (Refugee Claimant)

I am from Iran. As a woman my husband and his family didn't allowed me to work. I was the best wife I could be but whenever I did not act the way my husband wanted me to - he beat me. The last few times I was with him he threatened to kill me. I was so afraid that I left.

Sadly, I could not take my children because only my husband can authorize them to cross borders. I made a refugee claim in Canada and was given a hearing date 60 days later. In that time, I was expected to find a place to live, apply for social assistance, apply for legal aid, find a lawyer, collect and submit evidence and prepare for the verbal testimony of my hearing. I was all alone, I didn't speak English and I had no one to explain all of the above expectations to me. The people at the women's shelter tried to help me, but they didn't know very much about the refugee system. When my hearing finally came, I had to tell my story to a male officer, which made me very uncomfortable. Afterwards, he told me that I was *not a refugee* because I could not prove the danger I was in. I was just told I should have no problems going back.

But I know that if I do, I will die.

I was asked to present myself to something called the "Canadian Border Services Agency" and there they apprehended me because I did not want to sign a form saying I was willing to be deported and that it was safe to go back. Why would I sign something that was not true?

They are now holding me in a detention centre until I sign. I have been there for months now. I cry every day because I miss my children so much. But I can't go back if I want to live...

5. ZOLTAN – male (Refugee Claimant)

I am a 41-year-old Roma man from Hungary who worked fighting for the rights of Roma people in Europe. I came to Canada with my wife and daughter after our family was physically attacked by a group of Neo-Nazi thugs and our lives were threatened.

While living in a refugee shelter in Toronto, a Hungarian speaking man told us that he worked for a great refugee lawyer and I became a client of his. My refugee claim was denied after my lawyer did not appear at the hearing and failed to submit evidence of my human rights work. I learned that he had also failed to properly represent hundreds of other Roma refugees.

We tried to make a complaint against our lawyer, but we were given a deportation order before our complaint was even considered. A church community that we know offered us “Sanctuary” while the complaints process played out. We waited in sanctuary, never leaving the church, before we were able to testify against the lawyer. We ended up being the only witnesses—imagine that all the other Roma refugees who were poorly represented were deported!

After living for three years without freedom, we couldn’t take it anymore. We decided to return to Europe and live in hiding there. However, a miracle has happened! Our friends in Canada continued to advocate for us and the Minister of Immigration granted us permanent residence! We are waiting for our visas to be issued so that we can return and live our lives in safety and peace. We have such gratitude for the Canadian people who did not stop fighting for what is right.

6. ANGELA – female (Refugee Claimant)

A genocide was happening in a neighbouring country! People were streaming into the country for safety but unfortunately the differences were also emerging on our side of the border. Then the day of peril struck...an errand took me away from my home, and my entire extended family was slaughtered.

What I saw when I returned home left me extremely traumatized! I fled to Canada as soon as I could.

My first months in Canada were spent navigating an unfamiliar medical system with medication that left debilitating side effects. My doctor told me that I was really suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

In contrast, the refugee claim hearing was positive and I was soon reunited with my two sons! My husband however, couldn't handle all the stress. We decided to end our relationship. He is still in Canada, but it is better that we aren't together.

My health challenges continue and I find it difficult to get what I need, see who I need to see, and figure out what I need to learn. As my English gets better, I am starting to understand the health system better in Canada. I worry about the effect my mental health on my children, so I am working hard to get help. For the first time in a long time I feel like I will be okay.

7. ABRAHIEM – male (Privately Sponsored Refugee)

My family and I came from Sudan. We were refugees and sponsored by a rural church that treated us like family.

It wasn't long after we arrived here that tension developed between me and my wife and soon I was no longer able to stay in our home. One of the refugee committee members said I could make my home with them.

Besides learning the usual things to adjust to a new culture I had to learn about divorce and child support – it was all very confusing. When I separated from my wife I was taught how to do things I used to consider “women's work,” such as cooking, baking and cleaning house.

After a number of months I moved out on my own and found a good job so now I can support myself, my new wife and son and my other obligations. Though our life was not as it should have been, we were not judged. Instead we felt supported and loved by the church community. I have been deeply moved by what we experienced.

8. ELAINA – female (Privately Sponsored Refugee)

My name is Elaina. I came from Colombia with my six children as refugees eight years ago. We came under the Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program*⁵ because of the significant assistance my family needed to resettle well in Canada. A church sponsored us at that time and is still helping us to this day. They are like our family now.

One of the hardest things in this new country is finding care for our special needs son. We all need to work so we can pay the bills, but our son needs someone with him at all times. Back home there were so many family members around to help out.

Today I am in the hospital because my son needed surgery. After this week he will need to stay in the hospital for several months of tests. I just don't know how to do all I have to do. I am the only person who knows how to communicate with my son so I need to be with him.

For now, our older daughter will move back home from Alberta to help out. The church is also trying to help. It means so much to me even when someone comes to sit with me at the hospital. Many church members have been bringing us meals. In this difficult time I can still say God is good to us.

⁵ * A Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) case is the sponsorship of a refugee who requires special assistance to settle in Canada. The government provides financial support and the sponsor provides community, emotional support, and orientation and ensures access to appropriate services. JAS sponsorship support lasts 2-3 years (in contrast to the year-long commitment of other sponsorships). These refugees may need special assistance due to factors such as large/unusual family configuration, trauma due to violence or torture, medical disability, and/or effects of systemic discrimination.

9. AHMED – male (Privately Sponsored Refugee)

My name is Ahmed. I am from Syria. I fled my home four years ago with my wife and four children after our hometown of Homs was bombed. Everything was destroyed. We lived for three years in Jordan where I was not able to work and my children were not able to go to school. Thankfully we had a strong community with my extended family—we supported each in that difficult time in Amman.

After three years of waiting for a word from the UNHCR, the Canadian government called us and asked if we would like to come to Canada. We were given tickets and arrived in Toronto. There was a group of Canadians with a welcome sign at the airport who seemed very excited to meet our family. They put us in a van and drove us to an apartment where we were told we would live. We didn't know these people or why they were helping us. Eventually they brought a translator and explained that they had sponsored our family. We still aren't sure we understand why they are helping us, but we are grateful. I feel a little bit uncomfortable that I have to ask one of the people every time I need help with something—as I am used to providing for my family. Sometimes they are a little bit late with our monthly cheque and money seems pretty tight. But it is okay, I know they are all busy people and they have done so much for us, I don't want to complain.

The most important thing to my family is that we are living in safety in Canada. It has been new and difficult—the winter was very cold, learning English is exhausting and our kids are having a hard time adjusting to going to school every day. But we are okay. We have been told by our sponsors that they won't be able to support us financially starting in a month from now. They will help us apply for assistance

from the government until my English is good enough to work. I do really hope I am able to find work soon, because we might have to move because the assistance from the government is less than our sponsors and rent is high. We will miss our neighbourhood, but I have faith in Allah that it will be okay.

10. WAFA – female (Privately Sponsored Refugee)

I am 62 years old, a widow, and I am the legal guardian for two of my grandchildren.

My husband died in Syria, where our family had been living. He suffered a heart attack and died when militia entered our home and began attacking my husband and two sons. My grandson witnessed the attack. My sons fled following the attack and I have not seen them since. My daughter-in-law died from kidney failure several years before the attack, so I had been helping me son take care of his two children.

I took the children to Turkey and obtained legal documents giving me full guardianship of the children. My daughter and her 3 children joined us in Turkey. Her husband too has been missing for several years.

In December 2016, all seven of us came to Canada. We were privately sponsored by a church. They were able to find us a house where all seven of us could live together.

We are grateful to be safe now, and the children have adjusted very well to life in Canada. Four are in elementary school, the youngest will start school next year.

Unfortunately, we are experiencing some difficulties living all together. My daughter and I do not always agree on how to raise the children. She says it is difficult when I make decisions for my two grandchildren, the ones I am responsible for, that she does not want for her 3 children. They are all my grandchildren, but my relationship with the two is different. I am also of a different generation and have different ideas

about raising children. Sometimes I resent having to do so much of the work around the house, and I know my daughter sometimes resents having to play such a big role in raising her brother's children.

I am lonely when the children and my daughter go to school. I have tried going to ESL classes, but it is difficult at my age to learn a new language.

With the end of the refugee sponsorship approaching we have been talking about splitting into two households. Our church sponsors have told us repeatedly that it would be much more cost effective if we stay living together. It might make sense financially, but living together is taking a significant toll on the relationship between me and my daughter, and among the children.

11. YOUHANNA — male (Privately Sponsored Refugee)

My name is Youhanna and I am married to Yosra. In 2014, we fled from Qaraqosh, Iraq with our three sons Aiden, Allen, and Martin and our daughter Abeer. Before we fled, our life was perfect. We had all we needed or could ever want. We rarely left our predominantly Catholic town, partly because of safety concerns but mostly because of how much we loved our community.

We owned our own home, multiple cars, and two businesses. My son Allen and I owned and operated a butcher shop. We were happy.

But on August 6, 2014, the Islamic State bombed our town. I remember it killed a young bride and her nephew on the morning of her wedding day. The Islamic State said we had to convert to Islam, pay a tax, or be killed. I knew I had to get my family out of Qaraqosh—my once perfect community was no longer safe. There was no military to protect us and we were not willing to convert to Islam, so we left.

When we left, we brought nothing with us because we thought we would be back, but we haven't been. Travel was slow and hot. When we got to Ankawa, we were hungry, thirsty, and exhausted but had no place to stay. Some people took advantage of us along the way, but there were some kind locals who gave us food and water.

We realized that we wouldn't be going home and heard news that our homes and churches had been bombed. We knew we had to find a new home. I knew that we wouldn't be resettled if we were still living in our homeland, so we boarded a plane and flew to Lebanon and applied to the UNHCR for refugee status.

My wife's sister Hannah lived in Canada and shared our story with her church, and they began the process of privately sponsoring our family. It took three years to get our first family member into Canada. My youngest son Martin arrived in September 2017. He lived with a family I didn't know while he was in Canada by himself. Thank goodness it worked out well. The family helped him so much and loved him while I wasn't there. He started ESL, got all his Canadian papers, found an Arabic-speaking doctor, went to sports events and even attended his hosts' churches regularly. We arrived five months later. When I saw him, I was so proud of him. His English was very good and he helped us with the settlement experience and was our translator.

My family and I are struggling with learning English. This has been the hardest part. We are all at different levels, and it is discouraging. I want to work, but I know that I have to learn English first. So for now, I am trying to find a part-time job so I can continue with ESL. Though we are struggling and have travel loans to pay back, I am so glad that my family no longer has to worry about being persecuted because we are Christian. Though the churches are very different than the ones back home, they are the same faith—the same Nicene Creed. I hope that our children can have everything that we had in Iraq—a house, business, and family. Our children are hard workers and good students.

We are now Canadian.

15. KIDANE - male (Privately Sponsored Refugee)

My name is Kidane and I was born in Eritrea.

Back when I turned 18 I was taken by force by the government for mandatory indefinite military training and service. I was forced to work day and night in the nationalized mining industry. The conditions were awful and I was not given enough food to eat or water to drink. I suffered from malaria on many occasions. I was forced to the point of near death to further the goals of a corrupt dictatorship that censors and imprisons its people and forces them into poverty in order to control dissent.

I was given a very brief time away from my military service to get married to my wife Genet. With her I have two beautiful sons, Hermon and Yafet. However, during my time of military service I was rarely allowed to see all of them. On many occasions when I asked my military commander for more time off to visit my wife and sons I would be beaten, sent to solitary confinement for many days, or made to work additional labour.

After ten years of forced military service I realized I could no longer live this life. I fled from the army base on foot for a month before arriving at a refugee camp in Sudan. I considered trying to cross the Mediterranean in a boat but I know that many other African refugees died this way and so I hired smugglers to take me by land to Israel. For three months the smugglers walked us through Egypt into the Sinai desert. After several failed attempts I managed to cross the border into Israel.

After arriving in Israel I was detained for three months.

My wife and two sons remain in Eritrea.

Recently I arrived in Canada after being sponsored by a church with connections to the Eritrean community in their area. While I am relieved to have arrived in a country in which I can now live with dignity and freedom, my heart breaks with the knowledge that I will likely never see my wife and two sons again.