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Growing together: Helping our children learn about refugees.

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www.ifar.ca

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Acknowledgments

This resource has been created by the International Association for Refugees Canada (IAFR Canada). IAFR works with churches and Christian organizations around the world to help people survive and recover from forced displacement. You can learn more about who we are and what we do by visiting our website www.iafr.ca. Please let us know if you use this material. We would love to hear from you! info@iafr.ca.

We are extremely thankful to all the individuals and refugee groups who were involved in the creation of this resource. We are particularly grateful for those who shared their personal refugee journeys with us. Deep appreciation goes to Cathy Fairley (primary author), Craig Fairley (graphic designer) and Carolyn Amorin (artist) who worked hard in the development of this resource.

AN INTRODUCTORY LESSON

Introduction

Talking to children about refugees is important. We know that hearing refugee stories helps children become more compassionate towards newcomers in their community. We also know that loving foreigners and practising hospitality are really important to God. The Bible is jam-packed with refugee stories!

The way we talk about refugees is important. We always want to demonstrate respect and affirm the dignity of refugees. Refugees are not simply 'poor people' who need our help. While they might have some specific needs at particular points on their journey, it is important to remember that refugees are courageous and resilient people.

Refugees are people who have been forced to flee their homes due to persecution and violence. We always want to demonstrate respect and affirm the dignity of refugees. We must never lose sight of the fact that they have not always been refugees and they did not want to leave their homes or their country. Refugees deserve both our respect and our encouragement. That is one of the underlying goals in creating this resource.

This lesson includes a refugee story to share with the children. We trust that by sharing photos and a message from a person with lived refugee experience your children will be able to feel more connected to 'real' people.

We suggest you make the learning experience as interactive and 'real' as possible by connecting with an organization in your community that supports refugees. They will be able to help you share the message and work your children create with some of the refugees they support. There is a list of organizations that you can connect with in the resource section. Don't hesitate to contact us if you need help connecting with a local organization. You can contact us at info@iafr.ca.

This lesson has been primarily designed for use in children's ministry settings and follows this format:

- Introduction (all ages together)
- Hands-on activities in smaller groups (children can be grouped by age into smaller groups or offered a choice of the activities in a 'centre' style)
- Closing time with prayer and sharing
- At-home activities

Please modify and adapt the lesson provided to suit your needs. For example, the lesson could easily be adapted to be used by a family, as part of a refugee learning workshop or at a Christian school or mid-week group.

This lesson is, in fact, the first of a four part series. It has been designed as a single, 'stand alone' learning experience that will provide your children with a general introduction to the issue of refugees. For the more in-depth study, please refer to the complete four part series that is available at iafr.ca.

The concepts of survival, welcome, and support are conveyed throughout the lesson using the analogy of a potted plant. A key bible story and bible verse has been included.

The lesson includes:

- a list of what you will need
- a script to be followed for the lesson's introduction
- photographs and a message from a refugee
- colouring pages for the bible story and key bible verse
- craft/activity resources
- a parent letter with at-home suggestions

A resource list with books and video references is also included.

It is our prayer that this resource will help your children grow in their understanding and respect for people around the world who find themselves in need of refuge.

Peace!

The IAFR Canada team

LESSON PLAN

Welcoming and Encouraging Refugees

Theme: All people can grow and be the beautiful people God designed them to be when they live in places where their basic needs can be met.

Bible Story: Jesus and his family flee to Egypt. —Matthew 2:13

Bible Verses: Treat refugees with love. Love them as you love yourself. —Leviticus 19:34
Therefore encourage one another and build each other up. —1 Thessalonians 5:11



INTRODUCTION / CHILDREN'S SERMON / FOCUS

ALL AGES TOGETHER, ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE CHURCH CONGREGATION, DEPENDING ON CHURCH'S FORMAT

- Materials needed:**
- Flowering plant
 - Easel or clip board and paper for listing children's responses
 - Photo #1A (full size copy at the end of the lesson)
 - Photo #1B (full size copy at the end of the lesson) and message
 - Globe
 - Bible marked with Leviticus and Thessalonians
 - A story bible marked to Matthew 2:13

Suggested script:

I was so excited yesterday. I opened my door and found this. [Show plant] What a great gift!

So I know I need to take good care of it so it will grow and keep flowering. What does it need? [examples: sun, water, soil, pot – These could be printed on the paper.]

We're a bit like this plant. We also need things to grow and survive—to flower, to be what God meant us to be. What do WE need? [examples: love, food, clean water, protection, home, friends, health, safety – Write these down on the easel/paper.]

Sometimes, in some places, people don't have what they need to be the best they can be.

We may not see that here in our city but in many places in the world people, including children, may not have what they need. They might not have food, they might not have schools

and teachers. They might live where the weather is dangerous. You might have talked about this at school or seen this on the news. [Show globe]

[Show Photo #1A: An unsafe situation]

Does this look like a safe place to live? If someone lived here could they be safe and grow? Why not?

Just like my plant needs a pot and clean soil people also need a safe home. If they don't have what they need to survive do you know what their family has to do? They have to flee—they leave—they find somewhere safer.

That is what a refugee is. Someone who lived where they were not safe. They had to find a safer place so they could grow up and live—and to be all God wants them to be able to be. Imagine what that would be like. To have to leave everything behind and find a new safe place.



PHOTO #1A

Do you know there are stories of people in the Bible that were refugees. They didn't have food. They were slaves. They were being hurt. They weren't safe. [Open picture bible to Matthew 2.] Even Jesus and his family were refugees. Right after he was born they had to flee to Egypt so they would be safe.

God wants us to care about refugees. It says right here in the bible in Leviticus.

*Treat refugees with love.
Love them as you love yourself*
—Leviticus 19:34



PHOTO #1B

So they don't have to feel alone. God really cares for refugees.

I wonder what we can do to let refugees know that we care too? How can we let refugees know that we are glad they are here in our city? [Take ideas and list them on paper.]

This a great list. You are so right. When refugees come here to our community we can find ways to welcome them.

We can be friendly.

We can show patience and understanding — it must be hard to have to move.

We can show them kindness.

And if they still live in another country we can encourage them.

They are not alone. We're cheering for them.

God tells us this is the right thing to do. [Open Bible to 1 Thessalonians 5:11]

It says right here:

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.

Today we're going to talk about ways that we can care about refugees. Ways we can encourage them. Ways we can build them up.

[Show Photo #1B: children in a new safe place to live.]

One of the children in this picture is a girl named Amira. She has a message for us. [Read message]:

"Back in my home it was a very nice life because I used to play with my cousins and I visited my grandparents and my uncle and aunt all the time. In Syria these days people are having a really hard life. Now in Canada it's safe for me and my family. I go to school (which I LOVE) and I learned a new language. I am happy because I am with my mom and dad and my 4 sisters and everyone is safe. I wish, in the future, to visit my country and see my cousins."

Just like my new plant—the newcomer can grow, do well and bring beauty to our world. We can help make sure refugees can grow up and be the amazing people God planned them to be. As long as they can be safe. We're going to talk about this more in our groups today.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES



CHILDREN CAN BE GROUPED BY AGE INTO SMALLER GROUPS OR OFFERED A CHOICE OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES SET UP AS CENTRES. COLOURING SHEETS FOR THE BIBLE STORY AND THE BIBLE VERSES ARE PROVIDED AS AN 'EXTRA' FOR CHILDREN WHO WISH THEM.

Activity Resources

On the following pages (after the photos for the introduction), you will find:

- Colouring pages
- Craft/Activity ideas, including:
 - » A banner that could be made as a group – one letter per pennant to spell "WELCOME"
 - » A flower in a pot additional colouring page
 - » Bouquet of flowers craft
- Blank note paper for letter writing

Discuss:

- Someone who has had to leave their home is called a refugee.
- Some stay in other countries or in refugee camps and wait.
- How can we encourage people while they wait?
- Some eventually come to Canada to make a home here.
- How can we make them feel like they belong and we're glad they are here?

Do:

 FOR YOUNG CHILDREN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• colouring sheet of a flower growing in a pot (need: crayons) or <ul style="list-style-type: none">• group flower card craft (need: construction paper, scissors, glue)
 FOR THE MIDDLE YEARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• welcome banner (need: crayons, markers or pencil crayons), scissors, string, glue or tape or <ul style="list-style-type: none">• welcome letter (need: pens or pencils)
 FOR OLDER CHILDREN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• letter of encouragement to refugees living in a refugee camp (need: pens or pencils) or <ul style="list-style-type: none">• letter to newcomers living in our community, welcoming them to Canada (need: pens or pencils)



CLOSING

In small groups or with everyone together, photograph or record their messages and forward the photos, audio messages or videos to community or national agencies who can share them with the refugees and newcomers they work with. (See Appendix)

Share:

- photograph their artwork, signs and letters
- include an audio recording to go along with their art, including the bible verse. (With parent permission, consider a video recording)

Pray:

- for people around the world living in unsafe situations
- for refugees who must flee their home communities
- for us, to show them kindness

At Home

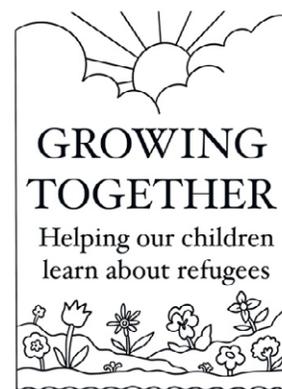
BE SURE THE CHILDREN TAKE THEIR WORK HOME TO SHARE WITH THEIR FAMILIES. INCLUDE THE PARENT LETTER, INCLUDED ON THE NEXT PAGE. (EDIT AS YOU WISH)

Dear Parents:

Today your child learned about refugees, using a flowering plant as an analogy.

These were the basic learnings:

- We all need to live in places that are safe and healthy.
- Many people around the world live in dangerous places.
- A refugee is someone who has to find a new home because it's no longer safe for them to stay in their communities.
- God instructs us to welcome and encourage others.
- When we welcome newcomers it is easier for them to grow and become the beautiful person God designed them to be.



Your child wrote a letter to a refugee child and/or drew a picture for them. These will be shared with our partner organizations who help to welcome refugees to our community and who help refugees in other places of the world.

At home, you could:

- **PRAY** — Include prayers for refugees at mealtimes
- **TALK ABOUT** — Talk about people you know who have had to leave where they live and have made a new home
- **MAKE AND DO** — Work together to create a welcome mat or sign for your doorway or window
- **READ** — There are many pictures, books and novels about refugees and their experiences. Here are a few suggestions:

FOR CHILDREN AGED 3–6:

My Two Blankets, by Irene Kobald (2015)
What is a Refugee? by Elise Gravel (2019)
The Color of Home, by Mary Hoffman (2012)
The Journey, by Francesca Sanna (2016)
Small Finds a Home, by Karin Celestine (2016)

FOR CHILDREN AGED 6-9

Four Feet, Two Sandals, by Karen Lynn Williams & Khadra Mohammed, illustrated by Doug Chayka (2007)
From Far Away, by Robert Munsch and Saoussan Askar (1995/2017)
Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush's Incredible Journey, by Doug Kuntz and Amy Shrodes (2017)
When I Get Older: The Story Behind "Wavin' Flag", by K'naan, illustrations by Rudy Gutierrez (2012)
Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey, by Margriet Ruur
Where Will I Live? by Rosemary McCarney
The Doll, by Nhung N. Tran-Davies, illustrated by Ravy Puth

FOR OLDER CHILDREN AGED 9 - 12

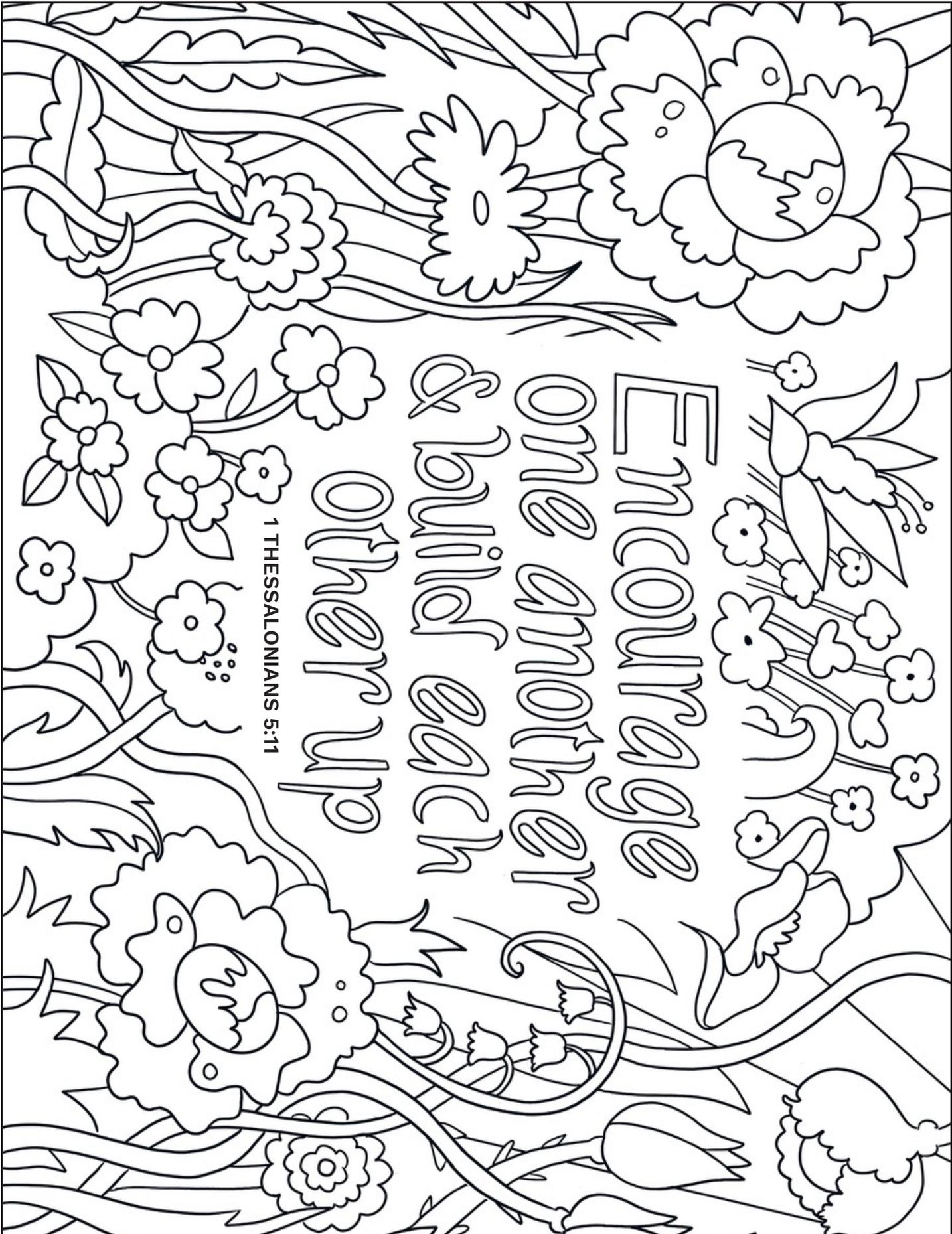
Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan, by Loretta Scott King (2005)
My Name is Sangoel, by Karen Williams (2009)
The Red Pencil, by Andrew Pinkney
Escape From Aleppo, by N. H. Senzai
Kiki and Jacques, by Susan Ross



GROWING TOGETHER: HELPING OUR CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT REFUGEES - PHOTO #1A — CREDIT: ISTOCK / MIKHAIL RUDENKO

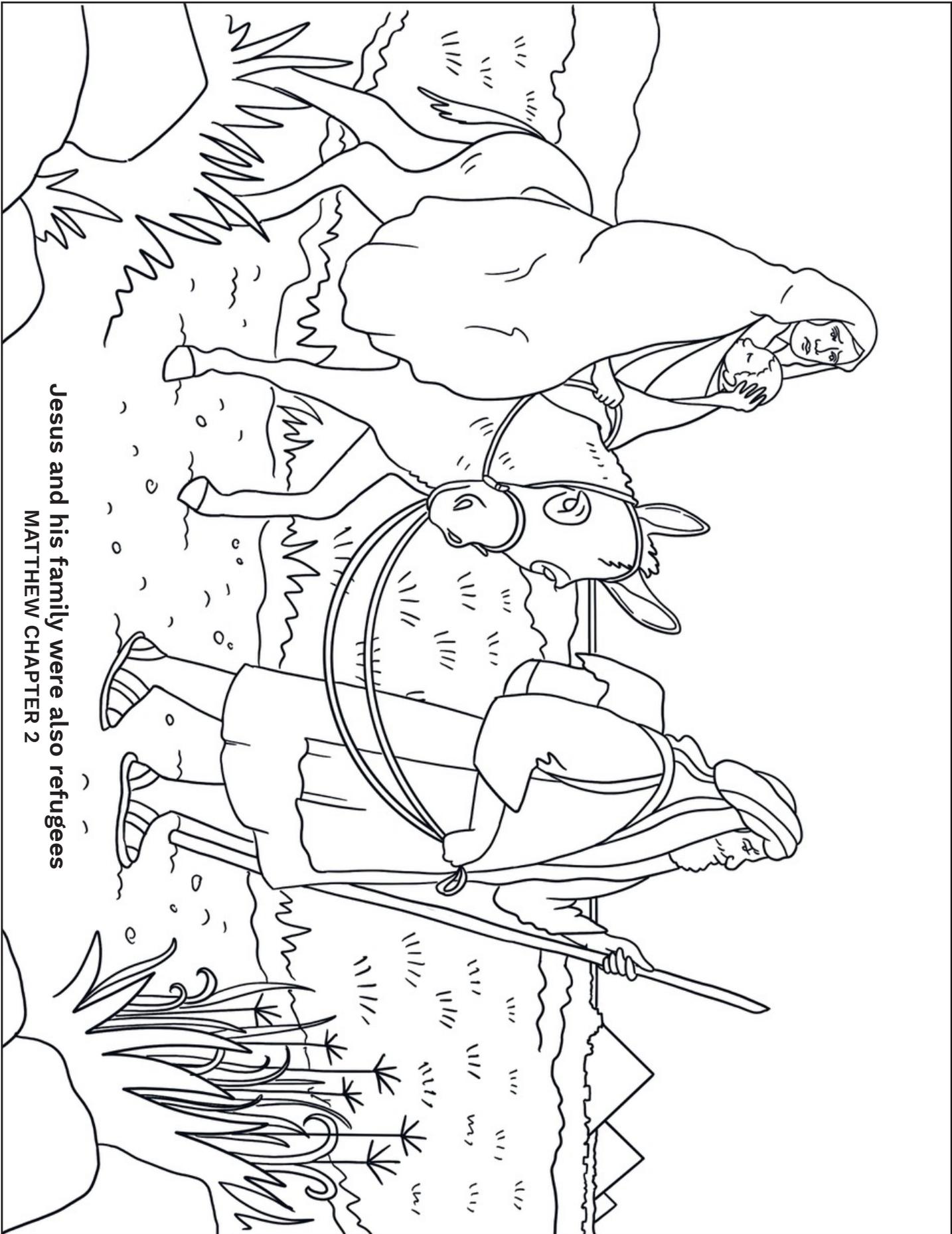


GROWING TOGETHER: HELPING OUR CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT REFUGEES - PHOTO #1B — CREDIT: IAFR CANADA/ALLISON WITT



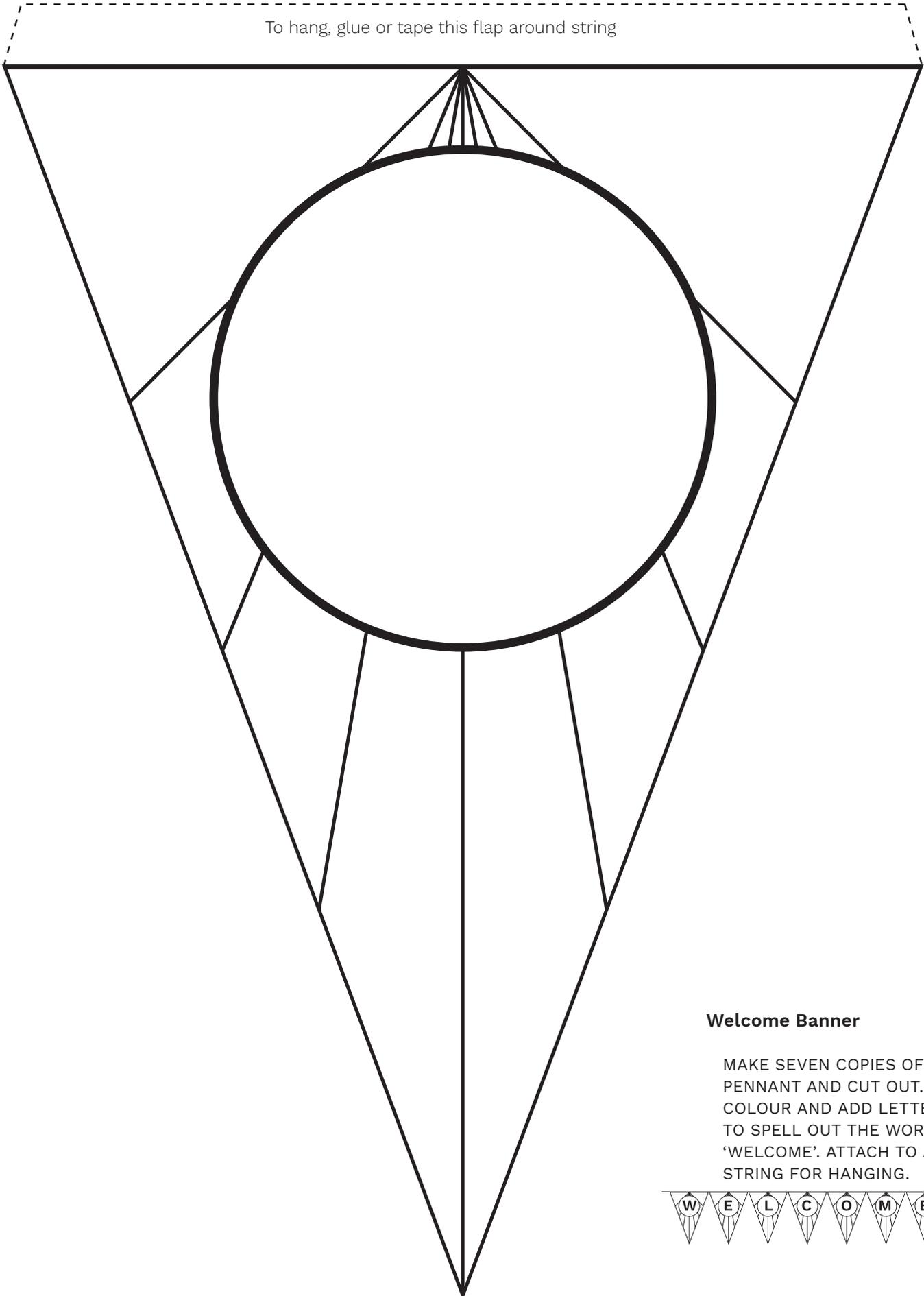
ENCOURAGE
ONE ANOTHER
& BUILD EACH
OTHER UP

1 THESSALONIANS 5:11



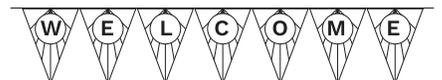
Jesus and his family were also refugees
MATTHEW CHAPTER 2

To hang, glue or tape this flap around string



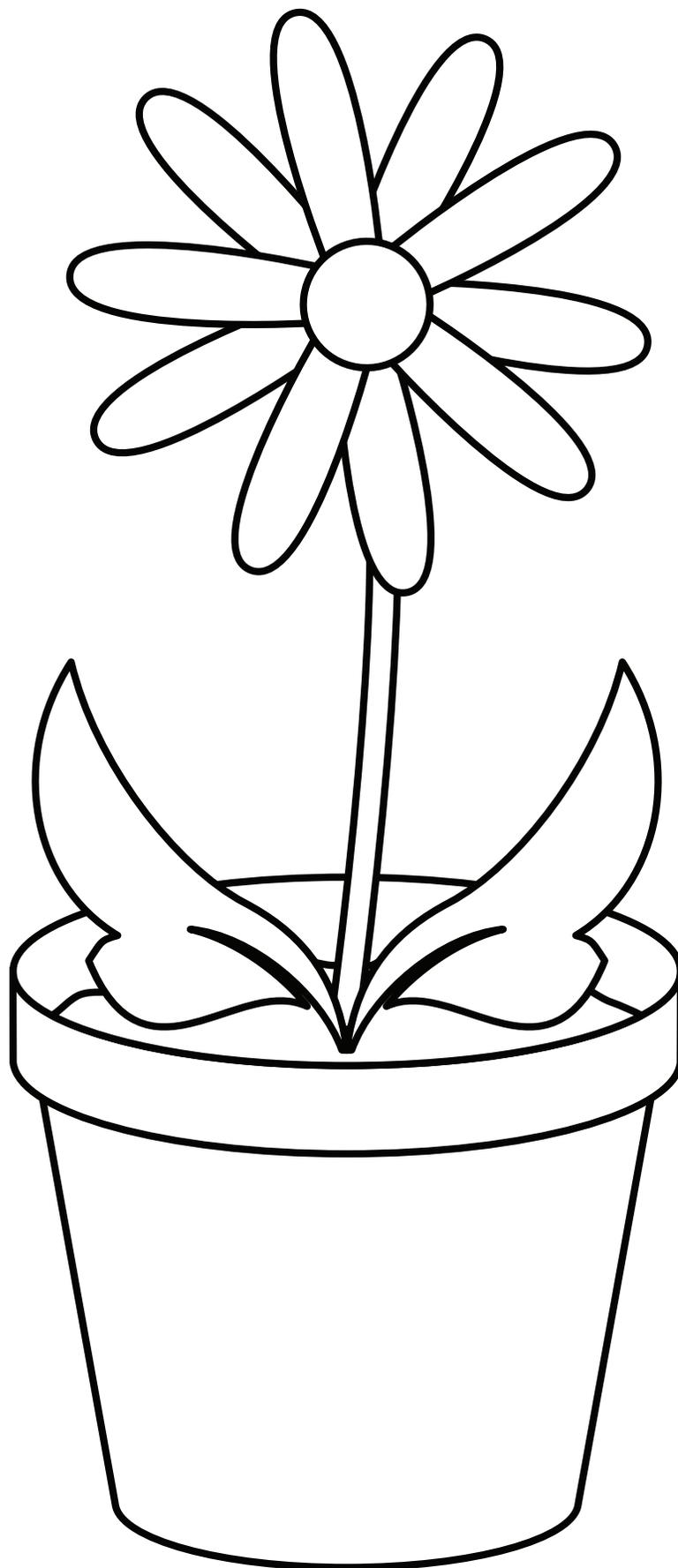
Welcome Banner

MAKE SEVEN COPIES OF PENNANT AND CUT OUT. COLOUR AND ADD LETTERS TO SPELL OUT THE WORD 'WELCOME'. ATTACH TO A STRING FOR HANGING.



A large rectangular area with a solid top border and a solid bottom border. Inside, there are 15 horizontal dotted lines, creating 16 rows of space for writing.





BOUQUET OF FLOWERS

HAVE CHILDREN TRACE THEIR HAND ON VARIOUS COLOURS OF PAPER AND CUT THEM OUT. ATTACH A GREEN STRIP OF PAPER FOR A STEM, THEN ARRANGE ON A PAGE TO FORM A BOUQUET. ADD A FINAL CUTOUT OF A HAND TO HOLD THE BOUQUET. ADD WORDS TO CREATE A MESSAGE OR CARD.



APPENDIX

Resources

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS TO CONNECT WITH

IAFR Canada local projects:

- Open Homes Hamilton: info@openhomeshamilton.ca Ph: 289-426-2612
- Refugee Support in Winnipeg: info@iafr.ca
- The Peoples House, Toronto: info@ThePeoplesChurch.ca Ph: 416.499.4209
- Refugee Children: Nomads Program, Toronto: info@iafr.ca

Micah House (Hamilton)

www.micahhouse.ca
info@micahhouse.ca Ph: 905-296-4387

Matthew House Fort Erie

matthewhouseforterie.com
matthewhfe@gmail.com Ph: 905-871-6059

Matthew House Windsor

www.matthewhousewindsor.org
info@matthewhousewindsor.org Ph: 519-945-7627

Matthew House Ottawa

www.matthewhouseottawa.org
info@matthewhouseottawa.org Ph: 613-212-1499

Matthew House Toronto

www.matthewhouse.ca
gisela@matthewhouse.ca Ph: 647-694-9293

Adam House (Toronto)

www.adamhouse.org
info@adamhouse.org Ph: 416-538-3416

Christie Refugee Welcome Centre (Toronto)

www.christiestreetrc.com Ph: 416-588-9277

Naomi House (Winnipeg):

www.naomihouse.info Ph: 204-415-1752

Kinbrace Refugee Housing and Support (Vancouver)

kinbrace.ca
info@kinbrace.ca Ph: 604.255.9691

Journey Home Community (Metro Vancouver)

www.journeyhomecommunity.ca
info@journeyhomecommunity.ca Ph: 604.568.4892

There are many other private and government funded agencies that support refugees in cities across Canada. An internet search for 'settlement agencies' or 'refugee support services' or 'refugee claimant services' should help you find them.

RESOURCES OF INTEREST TO ADULTS

Introduction to the Refugee Highway

vimeo.com/showcase/5950962/video/432912266

A 6.5 minute video giving a powerful overview of global refugee realities along with a biblical perspective. Statistics from UNHCR Global Trends 2019, published June, 2020.

Refugees in the Bible

A tool to help you ponder biblical stories that include forced displacement. www.iafr.org/toolbox

Human Flow (2017)

Trailer: www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_YbgOZYrOc

A powerful documentary filmed and produced by AI Weiwei about the current global refugee crisis. In the film

the viewer is taken to over 20 countries to understand both the scale and the personal impact of this massive human migration. Available to view/rent for viewing on YouTube, Amazon Prime Video and other online platforms.

Peace by Chocolate: The Hadhad family's remarkable journey from Syria to Canada

by Jon Tattrie (2020)

This book tells the extraordinary story of the Hadhad family and the founding of their business, Peace by Chocolate. From the devastation of the Syrian civil war, through their life as refugees in Lebanon, to their arrival in a small town in Atlantic Canada, Peace by Chocolate is the story of one family who came to Canada as sponsored

refugees. It is also the story of the people of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, who welcomed strangers and helped them face the challenges of settling in a new place.

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/

World Vision: How to talk to kids about refugees
www.worldvision.org/refugees-news-stories/how-to-talk-kids-about-refugees

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN MOST OF THESE SHOULD BE AVAILABLE IN YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY.
SUMMARIES ARE ADAPTED FROM PUBLISHER AND DISTRIBUTOR BLURBS.

For children aged 3-6

My Two Blankets

by Irene Kobald (2015)

Tells the story of a refugee from Africa and how she makes a new friend by sharing her language, one word at a time. This story about the refugee resettlement experience also has themes about friendship and dealing with change.

What is a Refugee?

by Elise Gravel (2019)

A colourful picture book that simply and graphically introduces the term “refugee” to curious young children to help them better understand the world in which they live. Answers questions such as : Who are refugees? Why are they called that word? Why do they need to leave their country? Why are they sometimes not welcome in their new country?

The Color of Home

by Mary Hoffman (2012)

This picture book follows Hassan through his first few days at school. Hassan has only recently arrived in the United States after he and his family were forced to flee Somalia. He deeply misses the colorful landscape of his former home in Africa. Hassan finds that by painting a picture of his old home and sharing his story, his homesickness and the trauma of leaving a war-torn country are lessened. And he finds that there are many things to like about his new home in America. There are additional resources available online to accompany this book. Check out: childrenslibrarylady.com/the-colour-of-home

The Journey

by Francesca Sanna (2016)

Tells the story of a family that flees after their father is killed in a war. It's an intense book with an uncertain ending, but a good one for building compassion. Use it to help children engage in conversation and generate questions.

When I Get Older: The Story Behind “Wavin’ Flag”

by K’naan, illustrations by Rudy Gutierrez (2012)

Somali-Canadian poet, rapper, singer, and songwriter K’naan tells his own story. Born in Somalia, he grew up in Mogadishu. His mother made the difficult decision to move her family so that they could grow up in safety. First in New York and then in Toronto, K’naan faced many challenges.

Like so many other immigrants, he had to make a place for himself in a world of alien customs, clothes, and language. Not only does K’naan tell a story that will inspire and encourage young readers, but he provides a brief history of the Somalian conflict. The lyrics of “Wavin’ Flag” are also included. The song was adapted again to become the FIFA World Cup theme song. There are now twenty-two versions of the song, which hit #1 in nineteen countries.

Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family’s Journey

by Margriet Ruur

Stepping Stones has illustrations inspired by the artwork of Syrian artist Nizar Ali Badr, which the author uses to tell the story of a family fleeing Syria. It's a powerful use of art to tell the story of the Syrian civil war and how it affected families. (story is written in both English and Arabic)

Where will I live?

by Rosemary McCarney

Written by Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations, this book will help children whose lives are not directly affected by the refugee crisis think about the importance of home, and what life is like for a child refugee who does not have a permanent, safe home. Full of beautiful photographs and includes images of children on the move and in refugee camps in countries such as Rwanda, Iraq, Niger, Hungary, South Sudan, & Greece.

For children aged 6-9

Four Feet, Two Sandals

by Karen Lynn Williams & Khadra Mohammed,
illustrated by Doug Chayka (2007)

This story is set in a refugee camp on the Pakistan-Afghani border. It is a poignant picture book with themes of compassion, friendship and creating a sense of belonging. There are additional resources available to accompany this book available online (do a google search) including several read aloud versions on youtube. Here is one of them. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4NLYmiriME>

From Far Away

by Robert Munsch and Saoussan Askar (1995/2017)

Saoussan tells the true story of her family's flight from war-ridden Lebanon. She wrote a letter to Robert Munsch, and together they made her letter into this book. Originally written in 1995 but new artwork was done in 2017. You can listen to the audio book here: <https://robertmunsch.com/book/from-far-away#> or see and hear it read here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVAZCb2qjI4>

Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush's Incredible Journey

by Doug Kuntz and Amy Shrodes (2017)

This book tells the true story of how one family took their cat with them when they fled Iraq. On the way to Greece, a frightened Kunkush escapes, and the family has to continue on without him. When aid workers find Kunkush, they work to reunite him with his family. This book introduces children to the basics of how and why people leave their country as well as the ways that people help along the way.

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The Doll

by Nhung N. Tran-Davies, illustrated by Ravy Puth (2021)

A young girl and her family arrive in an airport in a new country. They are refugees, migrants who have travelled across the world to find safety. Strangers greet them, and one of them gives the little girl a doll. Decades later, that little girl is grown up and she has the chance to welcome a group of refugees who are newly arrived in her adopted country. To the youngest of them, a little girl, she gives a doll, knowing it will help make her feel welcome. Inspired by real events.

For older children aged 9 - 12

Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan

by Loretta Scott King (2005)

This book tells the story of eight-year-old Garag, who escapes Sudan by walking through Ethiopia and Kenya, eventually getting to the US. This book deals with a tough subject in a delicate but honest way.

My Name is Sangoel

by Karen Williams (2009)

Sangoel is a refugee. Leaving behind his homeland of Sudan, where his father died in the war, he has little to call his own other than his name, a Dinka name handed down proudly from his father and grandfather. When Sangoel and his mother and sister arrive in the United States, everything seems very strange and unlike home. In this busy, noisy place, with its escalators and television sets and traffic and snow, Sangoel quietly endures the fact that no one can pronounce his name. Lonely and homesick, he finally comes up with an ingenious solution to this problem, and in the process he at last begins to feel at home. Here is a YouTube link to the story being read aloud www.youtube.com/watch?v=jTW4iiejDoc

The Red Pencil

by Andrew Pinkney

The Red Pencil tells the story of a Sudanese refugee who leaves her village after experiencing the horror of Janjaweed attackers. During her stay at a refugee camp, she starts to become pessimistic until a red pencil starts to open her up to possibility and hope.

Escape from Aleppo by N. H. Senzai

As civil war rages in Syria and bombs fall across Nadia's home city of Aleppo, her family decides to flee to safety. Inspired by current events, this novel sheds light on the complicated situation in Syria that has led to an international refugee crisis, and tells the story of one girl's journey to safety.

Kiki and Jacques

by Susan Ross

Twelve-year-old Jacques is already experiencing a lot of change in his life, including the death of his mother, when several Somali refugees move to his small town in Maine. Suddenly, Jacques has competition on the soccer team, and there are other growing pains — for both the locals and refugees — as their community becomes a multicultural one. When Jacques strikes up a friendship with Kiki, one of the refugees, his world begins to expand.

VIDEOS FOR CHILDREN

BE SURE TO PREVIEW FOR SUITABILITY FOR YOUR CHILDREN.

Refugee Life: Through a Child's Eyes

www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkkVnQEB1mE

What is a refugee? from Save the Children Australia

www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRk8eaW3X1Y

Who is a Refugee?

by UNHCR

www.unhcr.org/teaching-materials-ages-6-9.html