Module 8. Welcome Refugees!

**Reach Out! Connect! Share!**
***Kentucky Council of Churches
Campus Ministry Modules*!**

**Welcome Refugees!**

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**Introduction**

The Bible challenges churches worldwide to rediscover their identity, their integrity and their vocation as the church of the stranger. For we are the Church of Jesus Christ, the child refugee (cf. Mathew 2:13).

“I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.”Matthew 25:35. (Taken from the WCC Statement on Refugees. https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/statements/statement-on-refugees-in-europe/)

**Guiding Question**

How should we, as Christians, take care of the refugees in our community?

**Guiding Bible Passage**

Isaiah 16:1-4

1. Send lambs

 to the ruler of the land,

from Sela, by way of the desert,

 to the mount of daughter Zion.

2. Like fluttering birds,

 like scattered nestlings,

so are the daughters of Moab

 at the fords of the Arnon

3. “Give counsel,

 grant justice;

make your shade like night

 at the height of noon;

hide the outcasts,

 do not betray the fugitive;

4. let the outcasts of Moab

 settle among you;

be a refuge to them

 from the destroyer.”

**Bible Passages**

Isaiah 16: 1-4

Genesis 1:27

Psalm 8:5

Exodus 2:1-12, 15;

Ruth 1:1-2;

1 Samuel 22:1–2;

1 Kings 17:2;

Acts 8:1.

Deuteronomy 10:17-19;

Psalm 146:5-9;

Deuteronomy 1:16-17

Deuteronomy 16:11;

Deuteronomy 24:14-15, 17-19;

Deuteronomy 26:12;

Leviticus 19:33-34;

Leviticus 25:35;

Numbers 35:15;

Jeremiah 22:1-5;

Deuteronomy 27:9;

Deuteronomy 28:1-2;

Luke 10: 25-37;

Revelations 21:1-4;

Matthew 25.

**Worship Center/Supplies**

For the Worship Center you will need a Bible, a candle, blanket, backpack and photos of refugees and the war ravaged cities that they have left for the worship center.

Provide Bibles for every participant.

Tape up large colorful pieces of poster board around the room or to the floor.

You will need scissors adhesive tape, white paper, colored paper, colored markers, crayons, pencils, and/or pens for the Bible Studies.

**Bible Study**

**1. Created in God’s Image**

**Opening Prayer**

Gather at the Worship Center. Pray for the refugees in our communities. Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst! Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

Lord Jesus, today you call us to welcome the members of God's family who come to our land to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war. Like your disciples, we too are filled with fear and doubt and even suspicion. We build barriers in our hearts and in our minds.

Lord Jesus, help us by your grace,

* To banish fear from our hearts, that we may embrace each of your children as our own brother and sister;
* To welcome migrants and refugees with joy and generosity, while responding to their many needs;
* To realize that you call all people to your holy mountain to learn the ways of peace and justice;
* To share of our abundance as you spread a banquet before us;
* To give witness to your love for all people, as we celebrate the many gifts they bring.

We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

(From the USCCB. http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/prayer-for-migrants-and-refugees.cfm)

**Bible Study**

Read: Genesis 1:27 and Psalm 8:5.

Ask: If all of us are created in God’s image and if we are valued only a little lower that God how must we treat each other? If we treat each other with disdain, how are we treating God? How are we made in God’s image? What part of God has God transferred to us.

Activity: Give each participant a sheet of bond paper. Ask them to draw how God transferred God’s image to each of us.

**Closing Prayer**

As the group gathers around the Worship Center ask them to remember how much God loves them since God created them just a little lower than the angels. Pray, We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**2. A Refuge**

**Opening Prayer**

Gather at the Worship Center. Pray for the refugees in our communities. Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst! Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

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**Bible Study**

The Bible has 107 passages that talk about refuge. See <https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=refuge&qs_version=NRSV&limit=250>. Numbers, Deuteronomy and Chronicles detail the laws concerning the cities of refuge that God instituted for the protection of those accused of crimes. Most of the passages that refer to refuge, speak of God as a “refuge” for God’s people.

The word refuge means safe place. A refugee is someone, who is looking for a safe place to live. Refugees leave everything they love, everyone they love to look for a place where they can live happily and peacefully.

Ask: What is a safe place? What is home? What do you need to feel safe? If you had to leave your home what would be the first thing you would do when you arrived somewhere new?

Play the “10 things I can’t live without …” Game.

Give every participant 10 small scraps of paper. Have them write down one thing on each sheet of paper that they can’t live without. Put a bowl in the middle of the table. Tell the participants that they are now refugees and have to “sacrifice” one of the things “that they cannot live without.” Ask them to put that sheet of paper in the bowl. Ask them how it felt to “sacrifice” one of the things that they thought they could not “live without.” Next, ask them to “sacrifice” another thing that they “could not live without.” Ask them to put that sheet of paper in the bowl. Continue the game until only one piece of paper is left. Ask the participants how it felt to “sacrifice” everything except the one thing.

**Closing Prayer**

As the group gathers at the Worship Center ask them to remember how fortunate they are not to have to give up their beloved things. Pray, We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**3. God’s People Take Refuge**

**Opening Prayer**

Gather at the Worship Center. Pray for the refugees in our communities. Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst! Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

Lord Jesus, today you call us to welcome the members of God's family who come to our land to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war. Like your disciples, we too are filled with fear and doubt and even suspicion. We build barriers in our hearts and in our minds.

Lord Jesus, help us by your grace,

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* To realize that you call all people to your holy mountain to learn the ways of peace and justice;
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* To give witness to your love for all people, as we celebrate the many gifts they bring.

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Read Exodus 2:1-12, 15; Ruth 1:1-2; 1 Samuel 22:1–2; 1 Kings 17:2; and Acts 8:1.

In each of these Bible passages we find that God’s people are leaving their homes to look for refuge somewhere else.

Read the Bible passages in small groups. On a large piece of poster board write the answer to the questions, “Why are God’s people leaving the land they love to move somewhere else? Do refugees today leave the land they love for the same reasons?

View TED talk by Antonio Guterres: Refugees Have the Right to be Protected. [Refugees have the right to be protected](https://www.ted.com/talks/antonio_guterres_refugees_have_the_right_to_be_protected)

[https://www.ted.com/talks](https://www.ted.com/talks/antonio_guterres_refugees_have_the_right_to_be_protected).

<https://www.ted.com/playlists/294/refugees_welcome>

Activity: Ask the participants to blindfold each other and then do a trust walk. One seeing person will lead all other blindfolded participants outside and around the campus. When the group returns ask them what it felt like to be so vulnerable. Was there a time when they felt like they wanted to pull off the blindfold? Did they want to take refuge in the security of sight?

**Closing Prayer**

As the participants gather at the Worship Center ask them to hold on to the feeling of vulnerability and the need for a safe place. Pray, We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**4. God’s People Are a Refuge**

**Opening Prayer**

Gather at the Worship Center. Pray for the refugees in our communities. Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst! Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

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**Bible Study**

Read Isaiah 16: 1-4.

Isaiah 14-16 are passages full of anguish and retribution in which Isaiah confronts the brutality and hatred that fuel and sustain wars. In Isaiah 16: 1-4 God turns to Israel and asks them to be compassionate and shelter those who were their enemies because they too have been oppressed.

Refugees flee because of war, bombs, enslavement, and hatred. War, oppression and fear drive the refugee crisis today.

[Alexander Betts](https://www.ted.com/speakers/alexander_betts): [Our refugee system is failing. Here's how we can fix it](https://www.ted.com/talks/alexander_betts_our_refugee_system_is_failing_here_s_how_we_can_fix_it)

<https://www.ted.com/talks/alexander_betts_our_refugee_system_is_failing_here_s_how_we_can_fix_it>

Show pictures of bombed out cities. You can easily create a PowerPoint presentation with images found on Google Image Search is a good resource. An example of some images can be seen on:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2740643/Inside-bombed-Gaza-One-week-end-50-day-war-true-scale-devastation-revealed.html>

Activity: Give each participant a black sheet of paper and a pair of scissors. Have them create bombed out buildings. This can be done by cutting rectangles out of the sheets of paper or tearing bits and pieces out of the paper. Tape the edges of the pieces of paper together so that the “buildings” stand. Place the “buildings” on the worship table.

**Closing Prayer**

As the group gathers at the Worship Center, ask them to keep the starkness of the bombed out buildings in mind. Ask them to remember that these buildings once sheltered families with grandparents, parents and children. Now the buildings are destroyed and the people are homeless. Pray, We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**5. God Cares for the Foreigners, Widows and Orphans.**

Gather at the Worship Center. Pray for the refugees in our communities. Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst! Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

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**Bible Study**

What do Foreigners (Strangers), Widows and Orphans have in common?

How does God care for strangers according to Deuteronomy 10:17-19 and Psalm 146:7-9?

Look at the following texts to discover the rights and duties that foreigners were given in the Old Testament: Deuteronomy 1:16-17; Deuteronomy 16:11; Deuteronomy 24:14-15, 17-19; Deuteronomy 26:12; Leviticus 19:33-34; Leviticus 25:35; Numbers 35:15; Jeremiah 22:1-5.

Write down reactions on large pieces of Poster Board.

View TED Talk [Chris Abani](https://www.ted.com/speakers/chris_abani) [On humanity](https://www.ted.com/talks/chris_abani_muses_on_humanity)

<https://www.ted.com/talks/chris_abani_muses_on_humanity>

Read Deuteronomy 27:9 and 28:1-2.

Ask: How do these texts show that God takes His commandments regarding care for strangers seriously?

Activity: Ask the participants to get into groups and create a “play” about what it means to be a stranger and to be welcomed far away from home.

**Closing Prayer**

As the group gathers at the Worship Center ask the participants to remember what it feels like to have lost everything: one’s home, one’s family and one’s dignity. ather at the Worship Center. Pray, We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**6. Strangers become Neighbors**

**Opening Prayer**

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**Bible Study**

Who is your neighbor? Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament Law so the laws regarding foreigners were already in place. Jesus insists that we go further than a strict application of the law. The people who we avoid, must become our neighbors. He illustrates this with the parable of the “Good Samaritan”

Read Luke 10: 25-37. How did the Priest and the Levite act according to the “law”? How did the Samaritan traveler act according to God’s love?

What do we do, reluctantly, because we are forced? How is this different from what we do because we love to do something?

Activity: Make a list of “things” in your house that are extra that you could “share” with a refugee. I.e. Extra blankets, dishes, pots and pans, furniture … Be specific! Tear a piece of colored paper into strips. Write one item on each piece of paper. Glue these colored pieces of paper onto a white piece of paper. Put the title “I can give”. Tape these “lists” around the edge of the worship table.

**Closing Prayer**

As the group gathers at the Worship Center ask them to remember what it feels like to be welcomed and given hope. ather at the Worship Center. Pray, We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**7. Restoration**

**Opening Prayer**

Gather at the Worship Center. Pray for the refugees in our communities. Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst! Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

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**Bible Study**

God wants us to stand up for justice and to practice compassion. Revelations 21:1-4: and Matthew 25.

Ask: How has God already started God’s restoration work through Israel and Jesus Christ.

View: [Melissa Fleming](https://www.ted.com/speakers/melissa_fleming): [Let's help refugees thrive, not just survive](https://www.ted.com/talks/melissa_fleming_let_s_help_refugees_thrive_not_just_survive)

<https://www.ted.com/talks/melissa_fleming_let_s_help_refugees_thrive_not_just_survive>.

Activity: Invite the participants to create a collage out of torn paper to illustrate how God can bring about restoration out of the most harrowing despair. Invite them to share their art work and its interpretation with other members of the group.

**Closing Prayer**

As the group gathers at the Worship Center invite them to lay their artwork around the Bible. ather at the Worship Center. Pray, We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Mission with Community and Global Partners**

Invite someone from a Faith Based Congregation who has sheltered refugees to come and speak about their experiences.

Invite someone from Kentucky Refugee Ministries to come to speak about the work they do. Kentucky Refugee Ministries invites everyone to get involved in welcoming refugees to Kentucky. Visit their web page for opportunities and events.

<https://kyrm.org/>

Invite someone from a refugee community to come and speak about their experiences – why they left their country, what it was like to come to Kentucky, what they wished they had known before they came, what help Kentuckians could have given them when they arrived, and what kind of help they still need.

**Resources**

Bible Studies:

Marike Blok: “Refugees.” <https://www.gave.nl/gave/download/materialen/bible-studies-refugees.pdfLesson>

Websites:

World Council of Churches

[https://www.oikoumene.org/en/@@search?Subject%3Alist=Refugees](https://www.oikoumene.org/en/%40%40search?Subject:list=Refugees)

TED talks

<https://www.ted.com/playlists/294/refugees_welcome>