

# Refugee Awareness Sabbath

## *Program Ideas*

Possibilities are endless. Tailor your Refugee Awareness Sabbath program to your church. Pray for divine wisdom, and the sky is the limit. Here are a few ideas:

### **If the program is already full, or time is limited:**

- Put up a poster (Refugee Awareness Sabbath posters are available for download at [www.refugeeministries.org](http://www.refugeeministries.org) and beautiful refugee posters are also available from UNHCR for the asking. They will be mailed to you free of charge. (See Links below.)
- Put an insert about refugees in the bulletin
- Mention World Refugee Day and a few statistics about refugees (See *Refugees in North America* below.) and have a moment of silent prayer for refugees
- Plan ahead for next year's Refugee Awareness Sabbath

### **Sabbath School and/or Worship Service**

- Invite a missionary or ADRA worker who has worked with refugees to share a mission story or speak for the worship service.
- Invite a refugee to share his/her story.
- Invite a representative from a local refugee assistance organization to share needs of refugees in your community and/or introduce some refugees and interview them briefly.
- Show a YouTube video about refugees. (See YouTube Video Links below.)
- Invite Sabbath School classes to discuss ways they could reach out to refugees.
- Involve children and youth in these discussions. (See *Ideas for Involving Youth* below.)
- Encourage children to draw pictures of refugees during the sermon. (Provide materials.)
- Post the pictures on a bulletin board or on your church website. (Send some to ARIM.)
- Divide into small groups and pray for refugees around the world.
- Pray, as a church, that God will open opportunities for the church and each member, personally, to reach out to refugees.
- Weave the theme of refugees throughout the service.
- Include refugees in the prayer and/or hold a moment of silent prayer.
- Select hymns for the occasion. *So Send I You* is excellent, especially for closing. (More below.)
- Utilize *Scripture References and Sermon Outline* below.

Plan a Vespers Program on Refugees. (See play below.) Host a Fundraiser. For more ideas, see [http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfIQKSOWFqG/b.5106437/k.D118/World\\_Refugee\\_Day\\_2010\\_Organize\\_an\\_Event\\_in\\_Your\\_Area.htm](http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfIQKSOWFqG/b.5106437/k.D118/World_Refugee_Day_2010_Organize_an_Event_in_Your_Area.htm) or [www.refugeeministries.org](http://www.refugeeministries.org).

# Refugees

## North American Division

*Please prayerfully consider the following facts and inspired counsel.*

- ◆ Displaced people groups are the most fruitful target population for evangelism.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ There are 43.3 million displaced people worldwide,<sup>2</sup> 14,047,300 of which are refugees.<sup>3</sup>
  - More than 3 million refugees have come to North America.
    - United States: More than 2.6 million since 1975<sup>4</sup>
    - Canada: more than 409,526 between 1979 and 2001<sup>5</sup>
    - Nearly 98,000 arrived in North America last year alone.<sup>6</sup>
      - There are 2.8 refugees for every Adventist in North America.<sup>7</sup>
- ◆ The North American Division is in a strategic position to evangelize refugees and train workers from nearly every country of the world, including many countries currently closed to the gospel.

*Great benefits would come to the cause of God in the regions beyond if faithful effort were put forth in behalf of the foreigners in the cities of our homeland. Among these men and women are some who, upon accepting the truth, could soon be fitted to labor for their own people in this country and in other countries. Many might return to the places from which they came, in the hope of winning their friends to the truth. They could search out their kinsfolk and neighbors, and communicate to them a knowledge of the third angel's message. Ev. 570*

- ◆ This strategic position is a providential opening with specific inspired counsel.

*God would be pleased to see far more accomplished by His people in the presentation of the truth for this time to the foreigners in America than has been done in the past. . . . As I have testified for years, if we were quick in discerning the opening providences of God, we should be able to see in the multiplying opportunities to reach many foreigners in America a divinely appointed means of rapidly extending the third angel's message into all the nations of earth. God in His providence has brought men to our very doors and thrust them, as it were, into our arms, that they might learn the truth, and be qualified to do a work we could not do in getting the light before men of other tongues. Ev. 570*

- ◆ God is pleased with those in leadership who make wise plans to evangelize refugees and other immigrants.

*It is well that those in responsibility are now planning wisely to proclaim the third angel's message to the hundreds of thousands of foreigners in America. God desires His servants to do their full duty toward the unwarned millions of the cities, and especially toward those who have come to these cities in our land from the nations of earth. Many of these foreigners are here in the providence of God, that they may have opportunity to hear the truth for this time. Ev. 569*

- ◆ Personal acquaintance is a key factor to successful evangelistic efforts among refugees scattered across North America.

*It is acquaintance that awakens sympathy, and sympathy is the spring of effective ministry. To awake . . . sympathy and the spirit of sacrifice for the suffering millions in the "regions beyond," let them become acquainted with these lands and their peoples. Ed. 269*

*World Refugee Day\** is June 20 of every year. Why not devote a Sabbath to *Refugee Awareness*?

For more information about refugee populations in your area or how to start a refugee ministry, visit <http://refugeeministries.org> or contact Terri Saelee, NAD Refugee Coordinator (608) 443-6575 [terri.saelee@nad.adventist.org](mailto:terri.saelee@nad.adventist.org)

\* World Refugee Day was adopted by the United Nations in the year 2000. For information on the history of World Refugee Day, see <http://burmadigest.info/2006/06/25/history-of-world-refugee-day/> For a press statement by Sean McCormack, spokesman for the U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC June 19, 2008, see <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2008/jun/106090.htm>. For general information and the specific focus for World Refugee Day each year, see the UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) website at <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/events?id=3e7f46e04>

<sup>1</sup> *Exodus*, a Christian refugee assistance organization, reports that, according to research, evangelism among displaced people produces higher results than evangelism among any other target group.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees), the UN Refugee Agency, reports that, according to the most recently released statistics, the number of displaced persons worldwide has risen to 43.3 million, the highest level since the mid 1990s. <http://www.unhcr.org/4c176c969.html>

<sup>3</sup> World Refugee Survey 2008 (released July 2008) by The United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants Website: <http://www.refugees.org/newsroom.aspx?id=2114>

<sup>4</sup> Opening Doors, Restoring Hope: The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, Fact Sheet, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Washington, DC, March 6, 2007 <http://www.state.gov/g/prm/rls/fs/82822.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Refugees in Canada: Fact & Fiction, CBC.CA [http://www.cbc.ca/humancargo/realstories/fact\\_and\\_fiction.html](http://www.cbc.ca/humancargo/realstories/fact_and_fiction.html)

<sup>6</sup> Refugees Resettled in North America in 2010: Canada: 24,693 <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/data-release/2010-Q4/index.asp>; United States: 73,298

[http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois\\_rfa\\_fr\\_2010.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois_rfa_fr_2010.pdf); Total for North America: 97,986

<sup>7</sup> Calculations based on above references and statistics found on the following webpage of the Adventist Yearbook Website:

<http://www.adventistyearbook.org/ViewAdmField.aspx?AdmFieldID=NAD>  
(NAD Churches, 5,172; membership, 1,050,210; population, 335,215,000)

## ***Refugee Awareness Program Ideas***

### ***Suggested Scripture Readings, Hymns, and Sermon Outline***

#### ***Scripture Readings:***

- Genesis 21: 8-21                      The three visitors
- Genesis 28:10-17                      Jacob's dream at Bethel
- Exodus 23: 1-9                        Laws of justice and mercy
- Ruth 1: 16-22                         Ruth and Naomi leave Moab and travel to Bethlehem
- Psalm 137                                Lament of the exiles who were taken to Babylon
- Lamentations 5: 1-15, 19-22        For a fresh start
- Micah 4: 1-7                            The mountain of the Lord
- Matthew 2: 13-15                      Jesus as refugee
- Matthew 25: 31-46                    The parable of the sheep and the goats
- Luke 10: 25-37                        The parable of the Good Samaritan

#### ***Hymns from the Seventh-day Adventist Church Hymnal***

- 369    Bringing in the Sheaves
- 370    Christ for the World
- 357    Come, Labor On
- 358    Far and Near the Fields are Teeming
- 359    Hark! The Voice of Jesus Calling
- 360    From the Eastern Mountains
- 361    Hark! 'Tis the Shepherd's Voice I Hear
- 363    Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service
- 365    O Zion, Haste
- 366    Where Are the Reapers?
- 367    Rescue the Perishing
- 368    Watchman, Blow the Gospel Trumpet
- 369    Bringing in the Sheaves
- 373    Seeking the Lost
- 375    Work, for the Night Is Coming
- 377    Go Forth, Go Forth With Christ
- 378    Go, Preach My Gospel

See also other hymns and responsive readings under the topic, *Mission of the Church* in the Topical Index p. 785.

# **Seven Bible Principles for the Care and Nurture of Refugees**

*(Sermon Outline or Bible Study)*

***You won't find the word "refugee" in the Bible. But you will find refugees! Some of the most important people in scriptures were refugees.***

- Jesus and his parents slipped into Egypt to escape Herod's infanticide.
- The Israelites were delivered from Egyptian tyranny into the promised land.
- Early church believers poured out of Jerusalem to save their lives and consequently the gospel reached new corners of the world.
- The Apostle John was exiled in Patmos and wrote the book of Revelation.

All fled their homeland because they were singled out by leaders within their own country as targets for persecution. In other words, they were refugees!

***Time after time, God has taken the tragedy of forced migration and used it to work out His purposes.*** He took extraordinary interest in refugees. He still does today. He's working out plans and purposes for Cambodians, Burmese, Sri Lankans who have been fleeing their country for the last twenty years, for the Mozambicans, Sudanese running for their lives in Africa, and for the Cubans who fled Castro and made it to the shores of Florida.

***God has not left us to guess as a nation or as His people how we are to treat these people so close to His heart.*** The crowning passage that declares God's concern is in Matthew 25. When we stand before our Lord on the day of judgment, He'll ask us how we treated people who graphically fit the description of a refugee. Strangers, the hungry and thirsty, those in need of clothes, those who are in prison, and those who are sick - each characteristic strikingly parallel to a twentieth century refugee.

*Then the King will say to those on the right, "Come you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:34-36,40*

Numerous Bible passages describe how God wants us to treat refugees -the strangers, the poor, the aliens, and the sojourners in our midst. Seven key principles describe God's abiding concern for refugees.

1. God loves, protects, and provides for refugees.
  - He watches over them. Ps. 146:9.
  - He provides refuge for them, a shelter from the storm, and

- shade from the heat. Ps. 9:9, Is.25:4.
- He shows no partiality to natives of a country. Refugees and natives have equal status in His sight. Deut. 10:16-19, Num.15:16.
- He defends their cause, providing food and clothing for them. Deut. 10:16-19.
- Jesus announced that the essence of his ministry was to help and serve people in refugee-like situations. Luke 4:16-2

2. God expects his people to love refugees and to give freely of their resources to help them.

- Love refugees as you love yourselves. Lev. 19:34, Deut 10:16-19.
- Treat refugees fairly and stand up for them when others mistreat them. Ps. 82:4, Ex. 22:21, Lev. 19:33, Zech. 7:9-10, Deut. 23:15.
- Share your food, clothing, and shelter with them. Is. 58:6-11, Luke 3:10, Mt. 25:31-46.
- Invite them into your homes. Heb. 13:2. Is. 58:6-11, Luke 14:12-13.
- Set aside part of your income to help them. Lev. 19:10, 23:22, Deut. 24:19-21, 14:28-29, 26:12, Gal. 2:10, Ja. 1:27.
- Sell your possessions to help them if need be. Lk. 12:33, Mt.19:21.
- Encourage them. Is. 1:17.

3. God views our compassionate treatment of refugees as a fundamental indicator of true Christianity.

- When believers stand before Him on judgment day He will ask them how they treated refugees. Luke 14:12-13, Matthew 25:31-46.

4. God expects the nations to rescue refugees, to take them in, and to treat them just like her native born.

- Rescue refugees from persecuting nations. Is. 16:3-5.
- Give shelter to them from their destroyers. Is. 16:3-5.
- Never return refugees to their oppressors. Let them live with you. Deut. 23:15.
- Give them a choice as to where they can live among you. Deut. 23:15.
- Treat refugees just like you do your own citizens through your laws and regulations. Treat them fairly. Lev. 19:34, 24:22, Num.15:16.
- Set aside part of your income to help them. Deut. 14:28-29, 26:12.

5. God promises to bless the family and nation who take care of refugees.

- He blesses them and the work of their hands. Deut. 24:19-21.
- He answers their prayer. Is. 58:6-11.
- His glory is their rear guard. Ps. 41:1-3, Is. 58:6-11.
- He strengthens them physically. Is. 58:6-11, Ps. 41:1-3.
- He satisfies their needs. Prov. 28:27, Is. 58:6-11.
- He protects them. Ps. 41:1-3.
- He will repay them at the resurrection of the righteous. Lk.14:12-13, Mt. 25:31-46

6. God promises to curse the nation and people who mistreat refugees.
  - The judgment and curse of the Lord is on a nation that withholds justice from the refugee. Deut. 27:19, 24:17, Ez.22:9f, Mal 3:5, Ez. 16:49
  - The Lord will not answer their prayers. Pr. 21:13
  - He who closes his/hers ears to refugees will receive many curses. Pr. 28:27
  - You show contempt toward God if you oppress the poor. Pr. 10:31.
  - A nation's right to its land is predicated upon treating refugees well. Jer. 5:5-7
7. God views our care for refugees as a concrete expression of love and service to him.
  - When we take care of refugees, we take care of the Lord. Mt. 25.

*Source: Exodus World Service*

For more information, see [www.refugeeministries.org](http://www.refugeeministries.org) or contact [Terri.Saelee@nad.adventist.org](mailto:Terri.Saelee@nad.adventist.org).

# JESUS WAS ONCE A REFUGEE

## SEEKING REFUGEE STATUS

Play for Children or Youth

Voice: We are now to visit some officials in an office in first century Egypt.

(Two officials are seated at a desk covered with papers, discussing refugee cases in an office in Egypt.)

Official 1 (Yawning and stretching) How many more? I want to go home.

Official 2 Only one more and that's it for the day.

Official 1 Well come on. Make it snappy. Who is it?

Official 2 A family. Man, woman, child.

Official 1 Country of origin?

Official 2 Israel.

Official 1 What's their plea?

Official 2 Seeking refugee status here in Egypt.

Official 1 On what grounds?

Official 2 Persecution and death if they return to their own country.

Official 1 Papers?

Official 2 None.

Official 1 What sort of persecution? Religious? Political?

Official 2 Political. They claim their son's life is in danger. He will be killed if they return home.

Official 1 Only the son?

Official 2 That's what they say.

Official 1 Who are these people? What do our contacts say about them?

Official 2 No one has any knowledge or record of them.

Official 1 What's the man's occupation?

Official 2 He's a carpenter.

Official 1 And the woman?

Official 2 None. She's just a wife and mother.

Official 1 What about the boy? How old is he?

Official 2 Difficult to say.

Official 1 Give me a range. 0-2? 2-5? 5-8? 8-10?

Official 2 0-2.

Official 1 And who's going to kill him?

Official 2 The king. Herod.

Official 1 Herod? Any facts to verify this?

Official 2 Again difficult to say. The child was born in Bethlehem and our contacts have mentioned an alleged incident there where all boys under the age of two were allegedly killed. But we haven't been able to verify it with the authorities.

Official 1 So how did these people escape?

Official 2 The man, Joseph, said he had been warned to leave prior to the incident.

Official 1 Warned? They had inside information? Who from?

Official 2 He said he was told in a ...a dream.

Official 1 Dream! Rubbish! He knows more than he's telling us. He must have contacts somewhere. What about her?

Official 2 Mary? She's harmless enough.

Official 1 Harmless, my eye. What sort of parents would take a young child on such a hazardous journey across those inhospitable deserts?

Official 2 I don't know. People who are desperate?

Official 1 Their story sounds pretty thin to me. Anyone to corroborate it?

Official 2 Not really.

Official 1 Have they got any money?

Official 2 I believe they have some.

Official 1 But not much, I bet. Probably spent it all getting here. But they must have been well off to afford getting this far.

Official 2 I don't know. He says he's a carpenter. And he's willing to work.

Official 1 Carpenter? They work in wood. Great! Look around you. How much

wood do you see? Are the pyramids made of wood? Are the tombs of the Pharaohs made of wood? Stone cutters! That's what we need.

Official 2 He could possibly adapt his skills.

Official 1 And put our own people out of work? No. I guarantee he'll expect the Egyptian people to support him.

Official 2 Don't forget the woman and child.

Official 1 Ah yes, the woman and child. And we know why they came along, don't we.

Official 2 Because they're a family?

Official 1 You are so naive. They add sympathy to their plight! These people just bring the wife and kids along to add to the occasion – like you do to a dinner. Look, I don't like this. There are plenty of other countries closer than us they could have gone to. Why did they choose to come to Egypt anyway?

Official 2 I don't know. Perhaps because it's safe.

Official 1 I'll tell you why. They just want to share the economic benefits of our country. These people are here solely for a better life.

Persecution. What garbage! They should accept their lot in life and live in their own country.

Official 2 But....

Official 1 They're just queue jumpers, illegals, probably criminals. They should have waited in line like everybody else, gone through the correct channels and been processed properly.

Official 2 But the correct channels have been cut back. And they're so slow. It takes years for people to get the proper accreditation. Besides, if the king is threatening your life, you're hardly going to apply to him to leave the country, are you?

Official 1 I don't care. I have the backing of the Egyptian people on this. And if I displease them I'll lose my job. No, it's time to make a stand.

We've had too many of these people crossing our borders. By the way, what's their religion?

Official 2 They're Jews.

Official 1 I knew it! Jews are troublemakers. We don't want them here indoctrinating our people with their religion. Before we know it they'll be taking over our country.

Official 2 They seemed like nice people to me.

Official 1 Listen. Let's get this straight. These people have arrived on our doorstep –illegally. No papers, no money. No proof or record of persecution. No one to back up their story. I see no reason to grant them refugee status. We are a decent, caring people, but we've been the good guys for too long. These people are just taking advantage of us. Send them back where they came from. We have no room for any more illegals in this country. We have enough rubbish in this country already. We don't want any more.

Official 2 But what about the threats? We know what Herod's like.

Official 1 Threats! What sort of a threat would a young boy be to King Herod? We must send a strong message to these people that Egypt is not a soft touch. We'll start now and make an example of this family. Refugee status denied! (Official 1 stamps the papers defiantly) Send them back where they came from. Official 2 But what happens if any harm comes to the child? Official 1 It's my guess nothing will. What makes him so special? Besides, who cares? They're only peasants. It's hardly as if this one child will make any difference to the world, is it?

(The officials collect their papers and leave).

Voice Let us never forget that Jesus was once a refugee.

Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand available on [www.refugeehighway.net](http://www.refugeehighway.net)

*Involve the Youth.  
They will Thrive when you Turn them Loose on This!*

# ***Refugee Awareness***

## *Youth Involvement Ideas*

### Youth ***PRAY***

You can change the world on your knees. Remember to pray for the young people who are caught in the refugee struggle around the globe.

### ***Prayer Points***

1. For refugee communities who have lost everything, that they may find a welcome in a safe haven.
2. For the law-makers and administrators of the nations, that they have the courage to open the doors to those seeking refuge, and to offer generous resources for the care of refugees in other countries.
3. For the organizations and individuals who support refugees around the world, and help them to rebuild their lives.
4. Pray that in the midst of the crisis people will be open to Gospel in their lives.
5. Pray for refugees in the overflowing camps in countries such Thailand, Sudan, Pakistan, Iraq, DRC and Sri Lanka.
6. To understand cultures, and to welcome strangers in our congregations and fellowships, willingness and preparedness to serve them.

### Youth ***ENGAGE***

Organize discussion groups to discuss refugee issues. You can find more information on [www.refugeehighway.net](http://www.refugeehighway.net).

Youth Discussion Questions:

## **Joseph – the escape to Egypt**

Read Matthew 2: 13-18

Use these discussion questions, by comparing with contemporary refugee situation, and relate the issue with Joseph's story.

1. How would you feel if you had been in Joseph's shoes? What would you do if you had to flee from your own home/ town to seek refuge in another strange land?
2. If ancient Egypt during Joseph's time had modern immigration laws, what would have been the circumstances for Joseph and his family?
3. What are some truths and responses can we learn from this story?

## Youth *SUPPORT*

Think of creative ways to raise funds to support refugees – and do it!  
**Every cent you raise will make a DIFFERENCE .**

### **What makes a successful fundraising?**

- Set ambitious, yet attainable goals
- Take a planned approach – brainstorm your ideas together, then work out the steps you'll need to take to make them a reality
- Use a combined approach of individual and team fundraising
- Utilize your own networks
- Explore ways you can use your own interests to raise funds

### **Put the FUN in fundraising!**

Prepare a cultural meal, or a dish served in the refugee camp.

Adventist Refugee and Immigrant Ministries is willing to facilitate your efforts and direct your contribution to the refugee project of your choice. See [www.refugeeministries.org](http://www.refugeeministries.org) or contact [Terri.Saelee@nad.adventist.org](mailto:Terri.Saelee@nad.adventist.org)

## Links to Resources

### Posters

- Refugee Awareness Sabbath Poster <http://www.refugeeministries.org> to download and print
- Refugee posters produced by the UNHCR and available, free of charge, for the asking: [http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfIQKSOwFqG/b.5106429/k.FD84/World\\_Refugee\\_Day\\_Materials\\_2010.htm](http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfIQKSOwFqG/b.5106429/k.FD84/World_Refugee_Day_Materials_2010.htm) (These are beautiful posters, appropriate to post in our churches. These pictures are truly worth a thousand words! They sent me three kinds. Specify how many you can use.)

### YouTube Videos about Refugees

- Excellent short invitation to imagine what it must be like for refugees (downloadable): <http://www.refugeehighway.net/resources/presentation-list/orphan-widow-alien>
- YouTube Videos produced by the UNHCR (The United Nations Refugee Agency): <http://www.youtube.com/user/USAforUNHCR>
- ADRA Video - not only about refugees, but has pictures that are, no doubt, of refugees—very touching. Could be used as a follow-up to another refugee video. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4ldOEwuFZw>