

Refugee Resource

This resource is meant to be used at a Women's event (Women's Ministries at the corps, Women's Retreat or any gathering), but feel free to use it however it might be helpful for you. This can be done in person or virtually— depending on your situation!

Opening Ice Breaker Discussion Questions:

Where in the world would you want to visit if finances, health, and safety weren't a concern? Or weren't prohibitive? Why?

Where in the world do you think there is the most injustice? Why? (There is not a right answer to this question. This is not meant to be a discussion about prioritizing injustices. The point of asking this question is to illustrate how hard it is to pick just one place.) We are all called to advocate for different issues, so it is cool to hear about everyone's personal experience and how that has led them to care about that issue.

Transition into discussion about refugees... When we were talking about where we would like to visit, it's important to understand that some people are forcibly displaced, meaning that they move to a different country without a choice. We are going to learn more about refugees and what the Bible says, and what The Salvation Army is doing.

Fast Facts (These come from the UNHCR Website, it's easy to look up more of these facts)

Currently the world is at the highest levels of displacement on record

By the end of 2019, there were 79.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide.

1% of people in the world are either an asylum seeker, internally displaced, or a refugee. (definitions can be found below)

Rohingya refugee emergency – The Rohingya people are a Muslim minority that are not recognized as citizens in Myanmar. Having basic rights taken away from them, they have been fleeing to Thailand and Bangladesh. There are around 900,000 Rohingya people in Bangladesh.

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>

Definitions (From the UN Refugee Agency – UNHCR)

Refugee: A refugee is a person who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or political opinion.

Asylum Seeker: When people flee their own country and seek sanctuary in another country, they apply for asylum – the right to be recognized as a refugee and receive legal protection and material assistance. An asylum seeker must demonstrate that his or her fear of persecution in his or her home country is well-founded.

Internally Displaced Person: An internally displaced person, or IDP, is someone who has been forced to flee their home but never cross an international border. These individuals seek safety anywhere they

can find it—in nearby towns, schools, settlements, internal camps, even forests and fields. IDPs include people displaced by internal strife and natural disasters.

Resettlement: Resettlement involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status. Resettlement also carries with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen of the resettlement country.

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/who-we-help.html>

TSA Response – World Services Offerings make programs like these possible!

Bangladesh: In Bangladesh, there is a camp where many of the Rohingya refugees have fled to. Along with many other NGOs and Faith-based organizations, The Salvation Army is present in this camp. One of the ways The Salvation Army was able to help is that they provided solar kits in 2,800 households benefitting an estimated 11,200 vulnerable people. Each household received two LED lights, one battery and one high-output solar panel with accessories. The system will also allow people to charge their mobile phones. This has made the camps a lot safer. Lt. Richard Bradbury writes, “[The Salvation Army] members were not just physically bringing lights to people but working alongside them. It was clear to me that their very presence was bringing light to a very dark situation.” All the World Article April-June 2019 issue (Lt. Richard Bradbury) Read more: <https://issuu.com/salvationarmyihq/docs/atw-april-2019-web/1?e=3192995/75692232>

Venezuela/Brazil Border - “Working in partnership with the local UNHCR, CHAME (the anti-human trafficking agency in northern Brazil), the shelter for vulnerable women and children run by the Methodist Church and other churches in Roraima state, The Salvation Army has begun a program of small group lectures and interactive learning. Venezuelan women refugees are being taught appropriate areas of Brazilian law and civil rights, while children and young people are being empowered with teaching about how to respond to difficult situations such as violence and sexual abuse, with the clear message that ‘no means no’. The Salvation Army has also equipped the shelter with an additional 40 mattresses, bedding and other necessary resources, in order to ensure that it remains a safe and comfortable place to be as the refugees adapt to life in a culture and legislative framework other than their own.” <https://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/news/inr240818>

Nigeria - There has been conflict in the north-eastern part of Nigeria with non-state armed militant groups. People are leaving this part of the country due to violence and becoming an internally displaced person. As a compassionate response, The Salvation Army provided food for some of these Internally Displaced People in Nigeria. - <https://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/news/inr230719>

Italy – There is a new residential facility in Rome, Italy that can provide accommodation for up to 14 people who are refugees. The facility is a more permanent option than a shelter. Residents come from Egypt, Cote D’Ivoire, The Gambia, and Niger. While living there, they have a dedicated social worker helping them achieve their goals and help them in vocational training. It will be exciting to see how this new facility makes a difference in this community! <https://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/news/inr110820>

Devotion and Reflection

Biblical reference: Read Hebrews 13:2 “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”

Themes: Hospitality, Compassion, Loving your Neighbor

Reflect: How do you show hospitality? Can anyone share an experience of a blessing coming from showing hospitality?

Going deeper: The word “angel” is originally in Greek written as “aggelos”. This word in Greek literally means “messenger”. By keeping this in mind, we should think about how “strangers” - refugees or anyone who is different from us - sometimes arrive with something to give, not only receive. When we are thinking about how to love refugees and people who are different from us, it is important to see them as God sees them; as active participants of accomplishing God’s will on earth. Just like God has a plan for your life, he has a plan for these messengers as well. By showing hospitality to strangers, the door of possibility is open for receiving and learning from others.

Pray: Ask God to show you how you can show hospitality to strangers. Ask God to help increase your Compassion for others.

Get Involved – Things you can do that will make a difference.

- Pray weekly for one of the locations you learned about today
- Give to World Services to support Salvation Army work around the world
- Share some statistics you learned today with a friend
- Continue learning and educating others about the refugee emergencies and crises happening around the world.