Using Children’s Books to Talk about Refugee Justice

The following is a collection of books that can be used to talk to children and youth about issues related to refugee justice. This list is not exhaustive but a great resource! Use them in the classroom, Sunday school classroom, church service, community centre and home. Most of these books are children’s picture books, and some are non-fiction/fiction books for youth. The goal is to offer books about refugees, but you will also find books on peace and war. All are meant to offer windows into the refugee experience: being uprooted, the terror of war, being forced to find a new home, the struggle to fit in, loss, grief, and … hope.

Tips for using these books:

- Use the images (only) to stimulate dialogue
  i.e. “Out of Iraq: Refugee’s Stories in Words, Paintings, and Music”
- Use a book as an example to make another book to highlight a real story in the your city, then exhibit them in a library
  i.e. “Gervelie’s Journey: A Refugee Diary”
- Read a book or portion of a book during a church service
  i.e. “When the Horses Ride By: Children in the Times of War”
- Use a prayer or poem from one of the books
  i.e. “Let There Be Peace: Prayers from around the World”
- Show just the images or a single image of a book to start an event
  i.e. “Why”
- Work with a group to change the ending of a book
  i.e. “The Butter Battle Book”
- Use a book in an art class to analyse what and how the illustrator is communicating
  i.e. “Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust”
- Copy the style of a book to create another book
  i.e. “Azzi in Between”
## Refugees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Key ideas</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Long Walk to Water</td>
<td>Linda Sue Park</td>
<td>(Boston: Sandpiper, 2010)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sudan, refugee, civil war, history, boy, non-fiction novel</td>
<td>10-up</td>
<td>119p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan</td>
<td>Mary Williams &amp; R. Gregory Christie, illustrated by Gregory Christie</td>
<td>(Lee &amp; Low Books, 2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sudan, refugee camp, orphan boys, picture book</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>40p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees</td>
<td>Deborah Ellis</td>
<td>(Groundwood Books, 2009)</td>
<td></td>
<td>children of war, Iraq, refugees, non-fiction book</td>
<td>12-up</td>
<td>128p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Christopher’s Story
by Nicki Cornwell, illustrated by Karin Littlewood
(Great Britain: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2011)

**Key ideas:** refugees, Rwanda, England, picture book
**Age:** 6-12; 96p

Dia's Story Cloth: The Hmong People's Journey of Freedom
by Dia Cha and Cha Chue
(Lee & Low Books, 1996)

**Key ideas:** war, refugees, refugee camp, Laos, Thailand, picture book
**Age:** 6-12; 28p

Four Feet, Two Sandals
by Karen Lynn Williams & Khadra Mohammed, illustrated by Doug Chayka
(Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2007)

**Key ideas:** refugee camp, Pakistan, surprising friendship, shoes, picture book
**Age:** 6-12; 32p

Give Me Shelter: Stories About Children Who Seek Asylum
edited by Tony Bradman
(Great Britain: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2007)

**Key ideas:** asylum seekers, Kosovo, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Eritrea, Zaire, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Zimbabwe, Kurdistan, non-fiction
**Age:** 12-up; 127p
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Illustrator(s)</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hamzat’s Journey: A Refugee Diary</td>
<td>Anthony Robinson</td>
<td>June Allan</td>
<td>London: Frances Lincoln, 2009</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>32p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Lived on Butterfly Hill</td>
<td>Marjorie Agaosin</td>
<td>Lee White</td>
<td>Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2014</td>
<td>10-up</td>
<td>455p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key ideas:**
- Republic of Congo, England, girl, refugee, non-fiction picture book
- Chechnya, England, refugee, boy, non-fiction picture book
- Chile, military dictatorship, refugees, Maine USA, historical fiction novel
- Refugees, real stories, non-fiction
Meltem’s Journey: A Refugee Diary
by Anthony Robinson, illustrated by June Allan
(London: Frances Lincoln, 2010)

**Key ideas:** Turkey, Kurdish, England, refugee, girl, non-fiction picture book
**Age:** 6-12; 32p

One Day We Had to Run: Refugee Children Tell Stories In Words and Paintings
by Sybella Wilkes
(Lerner Publishing Group, 1995)

**Key ideas:** refugees, real stories, art, picture book, non-fiction
**Age:** 10-up; 64p

Out of Iraq: Refugee’s Stories in Words, Paintings, and Music
by Sybella Wilkes
(London: Evans Brothers Ltd, 2011)

**Key ideas:** Iraq, war, refugees, Civil Ward, poverty, UNHCR, art, personal stories, non-fiction juvenile literature
**Age:** 10-up; 77p

Petar’s Song
by Pratima Mitchell, illustrated by Caroline Binch

**Key ideas:** refugee, music, boy, picture book
**Age:** 6-10; 28p
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Key ideas</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai Escape</td>
<td>Kathy Kacer</td>
<td>Toronto: Second Story Press, 2013</td>
<td>holocaust, Shanghai China, Vienna, Jewish, refugee, non-fiction juvenile literature</td>
<td>8-up</td>
<td>248p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bite of the Mango</td>
<td>Mariatu Kamara &amp; Susan McClelland</td>
<td>Toronto: Annick Press, 2008</td>
<td>war, civil war, history, refugee camp, Sierra Leona, 12-year-old girl, UNICEF, Toronto Canada, non-fiction</td>
<td>12-up</td>
<td>216p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lotus Seed</td>
<td>Sherry Garland, illustrated by Tatsuro Kiuchi</td>
<td>HMH Books for Young Readers, 1997</td>
<td>Vietnam, USA, picture book</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>32p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Whispering Cloth: A Refugee’s Story
by Pegi Deitz Shea, illustrated by Anita Riggio & You Yang
(Honesdale, Pennsylvania: Boyds Mills Press, 1995)

Key ideas: refugees, refugee camp, Thailand, fabric, picture book
Age: 6-10; 32p

Walk In My Shoes
by Alwyn Evans

Key ideas: refugee, Afghanistan, Australia, non-fiction
Age: 12-up; 360p

When I Get Older: The Story Behind “Wavin’ Flag”
by K’naan, illustration Rudy Gutierrez
(Toronto: Tundra Books, 2012)

Key ideas: Somalia, soccer, song, music, Toronto Canada, boy, non-fiction picture book
Age: 6-up; 32p

Peace and War

A Little Peace
by Barbara Kerley
(Washington: National Geographic, 2007)

Key ideas: peace, multi-cultural, picture book
Age: all ages, 32p
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Dreamt... : A Book about Hope</td>
<td>Gabriela Olmos</td>
<td>Groundwood Books, 2012</td>
<td>hope, violence, whimsical, picture book</td>
<td>8-up</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let There Be Peace: Prayers from Around the World</td>
<td>Jeremy Brooks, illustrated by Jude Daly</td>
<td>Frances Lincoln, 2009</td>
<td>peace, prayers, picture book</td>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Peace: True Stories of Young Activists</td>
<td>Janet Wilson</td>
<td>Orca Book Publishers, 2008</td>
<td>peace, pacifism, activists, non-fiction picture book</td>
<td>8-up</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>Wendy Anderson Halperin</td>
<td>Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2013</td>
<td>peace, quotations, multi-cultural, picture book</td>
<td>ageless</td>
<td>40</td>
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*From Journey with Me toolkit – Books for Children*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Key Ideas</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peace Begins with You</td>
<td>Katherine Scholes, illustrated by Robert Ingpen</td>
<td>(San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1989)</td>
<td></td>
<td>peace, picture book</td>
<td>6-up; 40p</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Key Ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Butter Battle Book</td>
<td>Dr. Seuss</td>
<td>New York: Random House</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>war, senselessness of war, poetry, picture book</td>
<td>all ages</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of 2012 Moonbeam Awards for Peacemaking; **original language is Spanish</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Wishes Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak</td>
<td>Debrorah Ellis</td>
<td>Toronto: Groundwood Books</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Palestine, Israel, children of war, non-fiction novel</td>
<td>12-up; 111p</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Varmints
by Helen Ward, illustrated by Mare Craste
(Cambridge, Massachusetts: Candlewick Press, 2007)

Key ideas: war, peace, picture book
Age: 8-up

When the Horses Ride By: Children in the Times of War
by Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist

Key ideas: war, peace, multi-cultural, poetry, picture book
Age: 6-12

Why?
by Nikolai Popov
(New York: North-South Books, 1996)

Key ideas: war, senselessness of war, wordless picture book
Age: 6-up

Why War Is Never a Good Idea
by Alice Walker, illustrated by Stefano Vitale

Key ideas: war, peace, hope, multi-cultural, children’s poetry, picture book
Age: all ages