

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON: *Refugees in the Bible*

Objective: To explore biblical refugee characters and how to love/welcome refugees in your own country.

Setting

This lesson can be taught in any size classroom.

Supplies

- Chalk/white board and chalk/dry-erase markers
- Printed cards with biblical refugee character names on them
- A basket/container
- White or coloured sheets of 8.5 x 11" paper for cards
- Markers / pencil crayons / scissors / glue / stickers
- Individual or one large envelope to mail the Welcome Cards to students' own local Member of Parliament

Preparation

1. Cut out the names of biblical refugee characters and corresponding bible references printed below.
2. Create the chart and headings below on your classroom's black/whiteboard.
3. Assemble the paper and art supplies for students to create their own Welcome Cards at the end of the lesson.
4. Optional: if time will be short, you may choose to address some envelopes in advance (no postage required).

House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Lesson Plan Overview

This lesson plan has been created for **ages 7-12** but could be easily adapted to suit other ages.

Introduction

Begin with the question: what does the word 'refugee' mean?

Primary-age answer—A person who leaves their country because it is too dangerous to stay.

Junior-age answer—A person who leaves their country because they are being, or fear they will be, persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality or political views.

Here are some questions to provide context and to stimulate interest and discussion about refugees. You may choose to write all five answers in scrambled order on the chalk/white board so students can try to select the correct answer for each question.

- How many refugees are there in the world? *About 20 million*
- How many refugees in the world are children? *About 10 million*
- How many children in Syria are not able to attend school because of the civil war? *2 million*
- How long did it take Canada to bring 5000 refugees from Kosovo in 1999? *3 weeks*
- How many refugees has Canada promised to resettle by the end of this year? *25,000*

Activity 1—Matching biblical character refugees with reason for forcible displacement

On the chalk/whiteboard create a series of columns using the following headings (do not fill in the biblical characters yet):

Own choices / actions	Climate change / natural disaster	Conflict	Famine	War / exile	Persecution
Adam&Eve Cain Moses	Noah Lot	Hagar Joseph	Jacob Abraham Naomi	Esther Nehemiah Daniel	David Jesus Philip Aquila & Priscilla Peter

Next, cut out the names of biblical character refugees and references below placing all of the characters' names in a basket or other container. Have students in turn draw a card, read the relevant verse(s) aloud and identify the reason each character was displaced becoming a refugee in another land. This can also be done in small groups of 2-3 students.

Helpful resources:

<http://www.worldevangelicals.org/refugees/index.htm>

<http://iafr.org/downloads/handouts/Refugees%20in%20the%20Bible.pdf>

Adam & Eve
Genesis 3:23-24

Naomi
Ruth 1:1

Cain
Genesis 4:12-14

Esther
Esther 2:5-7

Noah
Genesis 7:7

Nehemiah
Ezra 2:1-2

Abraham & Sarah
Genesis 12:10

Daniel
Daniel 1:2-4,6

Lot
Genesis 14:11-12

David
1 Samuel 27:1

Hagar
Genesis 16:6

Jesus
Matthew 2:13-14

Joseph
Genesis 37:28

Philip
Acts 8:4-5

Jacob
Genesis 47:4

Aquila & Priscilla
Acts 18:1-2

Moses
Exodus 2:15

Peter
Acts 12:17

Discussion

Are you surprised to discover how many people in the bible were refugees at one or more times in their lives?

Ask a student to read Leviticus 19:33-34: *When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.* (ESV)

Ask another student to read Hebrews 13:1-2: *Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.* (ESV)

According to these verses, how does God want us to treat strangers to our country, some of whom will be refugees?

How can I show brotherly and sisterly love to newcomer children at my school?

Activity 2 below is one example of how we can show kindness to newcomer refugee children and youth resettling in our country.

Activity 2—Create handmade Welcome Cards for newcomer refugee children and youth coming to Canada



JOIN children & youth creating handmade **WELCOME CARDS**

to welcome thousands of expected newcomer refugee children and youth to our amazing Canada

These one-of-a-kind handmade Welcome Cards will add warmth to newcomer children's first experiences in their new home, Canada!

Here's some **ideas** kids are including in their cards:

- first name / school grade
- sports / hobbies / seasons they enjoy
- hand-drawn map of their province or Canada
- drawing of children playing
- warm wishes of welcome
- teen youth may prefer to write a Welcome Letter

Mail your Welcome Card to your local Member of Parliament (no postage required) at:

House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

millenniumkids.ca
sara@millenniumkids.ca
[Twitter @MKs4SDGs](https://twitter.com/MKs4SDGs)



Brainstorm and record on the black/whiteboard messages children could write in their cards to make refugee children and youth feel more welcome when they arrive in Canada. With 25,000 Syrians promised refuge in Canada, it is our hope that kids nationwide will send their Welcome Cards to their members of parliament in Ottawa to give to newcomers. There is no postage required to mail your cards to:

Name of MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

These Welcome Cards also provide an entry point for children and youth to discuss Canada's role in refugee resettlement and actively engage in this global crisis they hear about in media and at school. As thousands of Welcome Cards flood the House of Commons, students will learn the power they have to strengthen their country's efforts to resettle 25,000 refugees.

Conclusion

Consider the question, “how can we respond?”

- Pray for peace and safety in the home countries of refugees around the world.
- Pray that more Canadians will sponsor refugees to help them resettle in Canada.
- Mail your Welcome Cards to your local Member of Parliament to create a warm welcome for expected newcomers and to encourage Canada to reach our target of resettling 25,000 refugees by the end of 2015.
- Consider sponsoring a refugee family with your church, extended family, friends or school community.