



Hope in a crisis

Help refugees fleeing their homes

The images of refugees travelling across Europe, filling up our news steams and all over social media, can seem overwhelming. Why are there so many people on the move? What can we do to help? This resource tells the story of one family fleeing persecution in Iraq and looks at stories of refugees in the Bible, to show that there is always hope, even in the most desperate situations. If you want to support Tearfund's work with refugees you can donate £5 now through your mobile phone by texting 'Tearfund Respond' to 70444.

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Total resource time: ⌚ 1hr, 25mins

Why are there so many refugees?

P Paragraph ⌚ 5mins

Text:

You don't need to look far in the news at the moment to see images of refugees camping outside train stations, trying to cross country borders or crammed onto wooden boats out at sea. But why are there so many people leaving their home countries at this particular point? There are now more refugees in the world than there were at the end of the Second World War. A brutal and ongoing civil war in Syria has left four million people displaced. Many of them are now living in refugee camps in the bordering countries of Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan but the camps are over-crowded and under-resourced. This has forced hundreds of thousands to make the long and dangerous journey to Europe. Many of the refugees have also come from Eritrea where the government's human rights records are dire and many people, including Christians face terrible persecution. The refugees also come from Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan and many other countries. Conflict, changes in climate, persecution and poverty are the key drivers in forcing people out of their home countries which are now causing them to seek refuge in Europe.

What would you take?

 Game  10mins

Introduction:

Later on we will read the story of Hanan who had to flee Iraq because of persecution. She had to run away from her house so quickly that she left food cooking on the stove. If you had to leave your house quickly to get to safety, what would you take with you?

Object of the game:

To put the young people in the position of someone who is having to leave their home very quickly and help them understand why the refugees in camps or coming into Europe have hardly anything with them.

You will need:

- A selection of things you might take from your home if you were escaping and only had five minutes to pack. This could include passport, birth certificate, phone, jumpers, medicine, family photographs, laptop, TV, something precious like a present someone gave you, good walking boots etc.


Steps / rules:

1. Lay all the items out on the floor.
2. Give people two minutes to think which three items they would take with them.
3. Discuss together as a group what you would take and why.
4. Spend time talking about the issues which might come up if you didn't take a certain thing; i.e. if you didn't take a jumper you might get cold, if you didn't take any medicine what would you do if you got ill.

Conclusion:

Ask the young people if this activity has made them feel any differently about the people they have seen on the news who are running away from their countries and have little or no possessions.

Where is the hope?

 Bible study  20mins

Introduction:

The Bible is full of stories about refugees. Men, women and children making long journeys to safer places or living away from their homeland for a whole range of reasons; persecution, conflict, famine etc. In this study we will look at two key characters from the Bible and explore how although they were born into persecution and forced into precarious situations, it did not stop them from going onto achieve incredible things. We will learn that there is hope in every circumstance.

Passages:

- Exodus 1:8-14, 22 [↗ Bible Gateway](#)
- Exodus 2:1-10 [↗ Bible Gateway](#)
- Matthew 2:13-16 [↗ Bible Gateway](#)

Questions:

1. What is happening in the country where Moses is born?
2. What do you think of the action his mother takes to keep him safe?
3. Why do Mary and Joseph take their young child on the long journey to Egypt?
4. How do you think the parents of both Moses and Jesus must have felt?
5. How do you think Moses and Jesus, as small children were affected by these dangerous circumstances?
6. What does Moses go onto do when he grows up?
7. Can you make any connection with these stories and stories, pictures or videos you might have seen in the news recently? What are the similarities? What are the differences?
8. Who or what changes the situation for both Jesus and Moses? How do they get to safety?
9. Where do you see the hope in these Bible stories?
10. For the thousands of refugees forced out of their countries travelling across Europe, where do you think they are finding hope?
11. Ephesians 2:19 says, 'Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.' How could we see ourselves as strangers and refugees? How have we found a home? How does that feel?

Conclusion:

Both Moses and Jesus were born at a time when their very lives were under threat. Pharaoh orders the death of all baby boys and Herod of all males under the age of two. It is a miracle they survived beyond their first few years of life. The parents of both children must have been terrified but it is their very courage and swift actions which save their lives. Moses and

Jesus go onto achieve unimaginable things, changing the whole course of human history. When we look at images of people fleeing violence, persecution and war, we can think think there is no hope for them. Yet we are called to believe and pray courageously that things can be different for these refugees, and not reduce them to just being victims. We need to believe the unimaginable is possible even in the very worst of circumstances.

A baby called Hope

 Link  5mins

Hanan (not her real name) is a Yazidi woman from Sinjar City in Northern Iraq. When Islamic State came to her village she fled for her life whilst heavily pregnant. She ran for the mountains with 20,000 others. Finally Hanan ended up giving birth under a tree on a mountain top - in the middle of a gun battle.

She and her baby survived. This is her remarkable story.

http://www.tearfund.org/en/latest/2015/05/iraq_-_a_baby_called_hope/

Warning

Some younger members of the group may find this story disturbing. You might want to let people know this before reading it out or you could make some edits to it. The young people should also feel free to leave the room if they don't want to listen to it.

A baby called Hope discussion

 Discussion  10mins

Introduction:

Get one or two people to read out the story of baby Hope.

Questions:

1. What did the story of baby Hope make you feel?
2. What do you think are the similarities and differences between Hope's story and that of Jesus and Moses?
3. Where do you see the hope for Hanan and her family?

Warning

Some younger members of your group may find this story disturbing. You might want to make some edits to it before the session or just let people know that they can leave the room if they need to at any point.

The Tearfund Emergency Refugee Fund

P Paragraph ⌚ 5mins

Text:

Following the tragic scenes of hundreds of thousands of refugees attempting to flee to Europe from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea and many other countries, the Tearfund Emergency Refugee Fund was launched.


As you read in the story of Hanan and baby Hope, Tearfund partners have already been helping families in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq with essential supplies which they need to survive. They are also working on the ground in many of the affected nations where the refugees are coming from providing essential supplies like food, shelter, clothes and medical assistance.

The fund will bring desperately needed help and support to these refugees. This fund needs your support to help the millions of people like Hanan, baby Hope and her family, living without a permanent home, far away from home.

Spend some time thinking together as a group what you could do to raise money for the Refugee Fund.

Donations can be made here <http://www.tearfund.org/en/refugeecrisis/> or you can give £5 by texting: 'Tearfund Respond' to 70444. Alternatively, you can post a cheque (made payable to Tearfund) to Tearfund Youth Team, 100 Church Road, London, TW11 8QE

Entertaining angels

 Prayer activity  15mins

Introduction:

Hebrews 13:1-2 says, 'Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.' We might feel scared or worried by the images that we see of refugees on the TV and internet; we might even feel concerned that some of them will be coming to live in the UK. As we have seen in the story of baby Hope, many of these people have been through terrible suffering and need others to come alongside them both in refugee camps in other countries and in the places where some of them will come to in this country. They need friendship, support and love as well as many practical things like housing, education and access to medical care. The Bible makes it very clear that we are to care for strangers and those in need - this passage says that by doing so we may even be entertaining angels without even knowing it. Imagine that!

You will need:

- Images of refugees from newspapers or websites etc.
- Template of an angel
- Different pieces of coloured card
- Scissors
- Glue
- String or ribbon
- Felt tip pens
- Hole punch
- Wooden pole/stick or a coat hanger

Steps:


1. Cut out different pictures of refugees from the newspapers and print outs.
2. On the pieces of card, draw the image of an angel twice. It needs to be quite large so that it can be cut out and written on. Prepare an angel template beforehand for anyone who needs it.
3. On one of the angels, stick the picture of the refugees.
4. On the other angel, thinking about that Bible verse in Hebrews and the stories you have heard, write a prayer for the refugees. Think of what will bring hope to their situation.
5. You can decorate the other side of the angel prayer if you would like to.
6. Hole punch the angels. Hang it up with all the other angels using the string. You could hang them in a window with a coat hanger, or off some string, ribbon or a stick.
7. Keep the angels up for a few weeks and remember to pray for the refugees.

Write to your local MP to tell him how you feel about the refugee crisis

 Activity  15mins

Object of the activity:

To get the young people involved in contacting their MP and appealing for a greater response to the refugee crisis than we have seen so far. To help them to think creatively about how to do this.

 You will need:

- The MP letter attached to this resource.
- Pens
- Additional sheets of paper
- The name and contact details of your MP. You can look them up at <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/>

Steps / rules:

1. Ask the group how the story they read about baby Hope made them feel.
2. Write a to your local MP using the letter attached to this resource as a guide.
3. In the letter have a section where everyone contributes, stating how they felt about the story they read. It could be something like this: 'We have recently read a story about a baby born to a mother on the run in Iraq. This story made us feel....' The young people can then write in the words they felt like 'sad', 'angry', 'hopeless', 'disappointed', 'upset'. They can also illustrate it if they want to. This could work better if it is handwritten rather than typed as it is more likely to catch the MP's attention.
4. Be sure to include the specific asks stated in the original letter.
5. Get each member of the group to sign their names at the end of the letter.
6. Make sure you put a return address on the letter and tell the group to expect a response from the MP.

 Leaders' notes

You may need to start writing the letter in advance but leave space for the group to add their contributions.

Example letter to send to your MP

[Link](#)

You can use this letter to form your own one to send to your local MP.

<http://www.tearfund.org/~media/Files/Main%20Site/News/LettertoMP110915-MSWord.docx>



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