



“Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, **“THE ONE WHO HAD MERCY ON HIM.”** Jesus told him, **“GO AND DO LIKEWISE.”**

–LUKE 10:36, 37

Children, youth groups, Sabbath School and families can explore issues related to the experience of refugees during worship times. Here are some ideas.

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WORLD REFUGEE SABBATH [ADRA.org/WorldRefugeeSabbath](https://ADRA.org/WorldRefugeeSabbath)



## Worship Ideas & Activities

### Biblical Refugees

Many people in the Bible were refugees in different ways. Noah's family; Jacob running away from his angry brother; Joseph when he was sold into slavery; Joseph's family when they moved to Egypt because of the famine; the Israelites when they fled Egypt; Naomi and her family who moved to Moab because of the famine in Bethlehem; Ruth, who left Moab to move back to Bethlehem with Naomi; and Mary, Joseph and Jesus. Which other Bible characters had to travel to a different country, or run away to a safer place because they were in danger?

Choose one of these stories, read it together, act it out, or create a scene from the story with things you have in your home. Then choose some of the following questions to discuss:

- ▶ What were the dangers for the person in the place that they left?
- ▶ What were some of the dangers they encountered, or could have encountered on their journeys?
- ▶ What were some of the potential dangers they might face in the place to which they travelled?
- ▶ What might have helped them to settle when they arrived at their destinations?
- ▶ Were there any people who were kind to them and helped them to settle in their new country?
- ▶ If you were one of the refugees in this Bible story, what would you have liked someone to do for you?
- ▶ Create a piece of artwork, poetry, or drama that expresses the dilemmas faced by refugees when they must balance the dangers of where they are living, with the dangers of a difficult journey and the potential dangers in the place to which they are going.
- ▶ Close with a prayer for refugees.



## Adventist Youth Society Program (AYS)— Refugee Psalm

Read Psalm 71. This has been described as The Refugee's Psalm. Read it in a Bible translation suitable for the ages of your children or teenagers.

- ▶ What does this psalm help you to understand about the experiences, thoughts and feelings of refugees? If you were to write a refugee's psalm today, what would you include, and why?
- ▶ Try writing a short psalm for refugees together, perhaps writing a verse or two each, and then putting them together. Emphasise the loving care that God has for refugees.
- ▶ Or create some pictures to illustrate Psalm 71.
- ▶ Or make a PowerPoint presentation using the words of Psalm 71 and photographs that are copyright free from [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com). You could show this at church on World Refugee Sabbath.
- ▶ Or create a mime/drama to illustrate Psalm 71 with your friends and make a video of it.
- ▶ Plan something practical you can do together to care for the refugees in your area. What would you like someone to do for you if you were a refugee? Maybe there are children who would love to have some of your nice old toys, or some good clothes you have outgrown. Maybe there is a young person in your school who is a refugee and who needs a good friend. Find out if there is an organization caring for refugees near you and ask what they need.



## Family Worship—Jesus was a Refugee

When Jesus was just a baby—his family became refugees. Mary, Joseph and Jesus had to escape to Egypt very quickly because Jesus' life was in danger. Read the story in Matthew 2:13–23.

- ▶ Imagine that you are Joseph and Mary, and you have a small baby. You only have a few minutes to pack what you need for your journey and to make your home in a foreign country. What would you choose to take with you?
- ▶ Set a timer for ten minutes. Run around your home and look for some of the things that Mary, Joseph and Jesus might have needed. Bring them back to your family. Look



## Family Worship—Jesus was a Refugee, continued

at what you have all chosen. Can you carry everything? Is anything missing? What else might you need? What could you leave behind? What are some of the things that you can't take with you, and that will be very sad for you to leave behind?

- ▶ Fortunately for Mary and Joseph, the wise men had just given them very expensive gifts. Perhaps they sold these and used the money to help them travel and settle in Egypt for a few years?
- ▶ What do you think it would be like to move to a foreign country for a few years, for your own safety? Imagine you are Mary and Joseph arriving in Egypt. Your clothes are different, you don't speak the language, you don't have many things, and you have a young child. You don't know who to trust, and you don't understand the culture. How would you learn all the things you need to learn? What would help you to settle quickly and adapt? How would you learn the language? What would be some of the kindest things the local people could do for you? How would you let them know that you are trustworthy too?
- ▶ What have you learned about Jesus' family, and about refugees, by exploring his story?
- ▶ What do you like best about the story? What is the most important message of this story for you? What does this story tell you about God's love?
- ▶ Draw your own picture of Mary, Joseph and Jesus travelling to Egypt. Or write a journal entry from Mary or Joseph that they might have made during the journey
- ▶ Many great artists painted pictures of Mary, Joseph and Jesus escaping from Bethlehem to Egypt. Search online for some famous paintings of "The Flight into Egypt". Look at some of these pictures. How realistic do you think they are? What are they taking with them? What can you learn from each of the pictures?
- ▶ Search for some photos on the internet of refugees travelling today. How are these different from the old paintings? Look at one of the photos of the refugees and imagine the stories that the people could tell you. Write their story or write a poem that describes their feelings and their hopes. Or use one of the photos you have found to inspire a piece of artwork.
- ▶ Close with a prayer for refugees.





## Sabbath School—The Sheep & the Goats

Read the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31–46. Think about this parable in relation to the story of the refugees.

- ▶ Find out about refugees in your country and read about their story and their needs. Or look for an interview with a refugee in your country on the internet that you can watch or listen to.
- ▶ How can you be “sheep” and help to provide safety, food, clothing, and friendship to the refugees in your area? Know that whenever you do something to help and support a refugee, you are doing it for Jesus. Choose at least one of your ideas and put it into practice.
- ▶ Make a poster of different ways that you can support a young refugee person or a family. Share it with your church community and look for a good project that you can do together. Some churches have offered free language classes for refugees, a social gathering time where they can come together for food and fun, or they have sponsored a refugee family by helping them find good accommodation, work and things that they need.
- ▶ Create a drama or mime with your youth group, using the parable of the sheep and the goats, to highlight the need for caring for refugees.
- ▶ Use the parable of the sheep and the goats to inspire your prayer together. Each person can take one of the ways in which the “sheep” helped others and use it to inspire a brief sentence prayer for refugees.
- ▶ Close with a prayer for refugees.



## Sabbath School—Jacob’s Mixed Emotions

Many refugees have to flee from their homes and countries because it is not safe for them to stay. In the Bible Jacob had to run away from home because he had lied to his father and tricked his brother. Esau was so angry that he wanted to kill Jacob, so his mother sent Jacob on the long and lonely journey to her brother. Read the story in Genesis 27 and 28.

- ▶ Imagine how Jacob felt when he knew his brother wanted to kill him. Draw or create something to express his fear.



## Sabbath School—Jacob's Mixed Emotions, continued

- ▶ Imagine how he felt as he said goodbye to his family, never knowing if or when he would see them again. Draw or create something to express his sadness, and uncertainty.
- ▶ Imagine how he felt when he woke from his amazing dream! Draw or create something to express his hopefulness and joy.
- ▶ Read a story of a refugee and think about their emotions when they are living in danger; when they have to leave everything behind, even the people they love; and when they experience the kindness of God and others on their long, risky and challenging journeys to safety.
- ▶ Create something that expresses the different emotional experiences of a refugee. Divide a sheet of paper into sections that express the different emotions. Create a sculpture that expresses different emotions. Or write poetry.
- ▶ Close with a prayer for refugees.



## Vespers—Hopes & Dreams

Every refugee has hopes and dreams. They have made a difficult choice to leave a place that is very unsafe for them, make a dangerous and risky journey, and start to make a new life in a different environment and culture. It is often their hopes and dreams of a better, happier and safer life that helps them to make these difficult decisions and gives them the determination to persevere through all their challenges.

Think about these Bible characters, and what their hopes and dreams might have been. (Noah's family; Jacob running away from his angry brother; Joseph when he was sold into slavery; Joseph's family when they moved to Egypt because of the famine; the Israelites when they fled Egypt; Naomi and her family who moved to Moab because of the famine in Bethlehem; Ruth, who left Moab to move back to Bethlehem with Naomi; and Mary, Joseph and Jesus.)

- ▶ Invite each person in your family or group to choose one of these characters, or another Bible character who was a refugee.
- ▶ Spend time thinking about the different hopes that these people might have had, and how these hopes helped them when they faced challenges, dangers and discouragements along the way.



## Vespers—Hopes & Dreams, continued

- ▶ Stars are like hopes that guide us on our journey, just as they guided the wise men to Jesus. Cut out some large paper or card stars. On your star, write some of the hopes of the Bible character you have been thinking about.
- ▶ What hopes do you have? How do they guide you, and how do they help you when you face challenges and setbacks? How are your hopes similar to, or different from, the hopes of the Biblical refugees, and refugees today? Write your hopes on the other side of the star.
- ▶ Share your stars with each other. Talking about the hopes of Bible refugees and refugees today, and how they might be similar, and different. Talk about your own hopes too, and how they help to give purpose and direction to your life.
- ▶ Make a collage of stars, dream-clouds, colourful kites, etc. that express some of the hopes of refugees.
- ▶ What practical things could you do as a family or group to help some of the refugees hopes become realities?
- ▶ Close with one of the suggested prayer activities.

*Ideas prepared by Karen Holford—Family Ministries Director of the Trans-European Division*

