

## Prayer stations

### Walking with refugees

Use these kinaesthetic prayer stations to help people engage with praying for refugees by symbolically walking with them and connecting with their experiences more.

Each station details what if any equipment you need to get together in advance, instructions for setting up, and the text for the instruction signs you will need to display – (simply copy and paste these into a word document, enlarging the font so that the instructions are clear enough to read).

When we first developed this resource (in World Refugee Week 2013) we used stories from the crisis in Syria at a number of the stations, and these are linked to throughout the resource to provide context. However, you will probably need to look up current refugee stories for a number of the stations. Good websites to visit to source these include [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk), [www.unicef.org.uk](http://www.unicef.org.uk) and [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

Used together, the stations should take 30-40 minutes to work round, but if you have less time you can obviously leave out some of the middle or end stations (but however many you use, we suggest that you get people to do them in order to give people the journeying experience). You can use these stations within an intercessions slot, have them set up as an installation for a special service or day of prayer where people can come and go independently and/or use them individually as prayer or intercession responses.

If you are setting up the stations as an installation for people to come and use, you might also consider laying out tape, markings or footprints on the ground, to further help the idea of journeying from one station to another.



You might also like to use mp3 worship tracks of songs celebrating God's love for people, and his safety as a refuge for all who run to him, to create a playlist or CD to play in the background as people are moving round the stations. (If you're stuck for ideas, check out some of our songs, or use our 'Outward focussed song index' at [www.thesanctuarycentre.org/whereworldandworshipmeetl-songs](http://www.thesanctuarycentre.org/whereworldandworshipmeetl-songs) )

#### 1. Refuge

**Equipment needed:** Enough A4 print-outs of an enlarged picture of a house (such as the one below) for each person to have one; pens or pencils; either printed out copies of the following Bible verses, or a few Bibles with the relevant verses bookmarked – 2 Samuel 22:2-4 (in The Message), Psalm 91:1-2, Ruth 2:11-12, Isaiah 25:4 and Proverbs 14:26; and a print out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below.



**Instructions for setting up:**

1. In advance: Enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display' section. Find an outline image of a house like the one above, and copy and paste it into the middle of a blank A4 sheet – then print enough copies of the sheet for one per person. Decide whether you are going to print out the Bible verses or bookmark them in Bibles, and then get these ready.
2. On the day: Lay out all the equipment needed, and display the sign you have made using the text below.

**For display:****Refuge**

- Food, water, shelter, good health, sleep, financial provision, love from family and friends... these are all basic human needs.
- Reflect on the things you have in your life that help you feel secure, especially in your home.
- Take a "house of refuge" sheet – write down all the things you give thanks for in your current situation onto the sheet.
- Look through the scriptures that talk about God as our refuge. Thank God that he promises to always be our security no matter what our circumstances.
- Take your sheet with you to the next station.

**2. Torn to shreds**

**Equipment needed:** A shredder; pens or pencils; post-it notes; a few empty bags, suitcases or rucksacks; print outs of refugee stories (or showing on a laptop); and a print-out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below.

**Instructions for setting up:**

1. In advance: Gather together the equipment you need, and source and print-out (or have on a laptop) one or two stories about families or individuals who have had to flee conflict and whose homes have been destroyed – for example, we used this story from Christian Aid about a family who had fled to Iraq from Syria in May 2013: <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/emergencies/current/syria-crisis-appeal/Eyewitness/terrified-family-escape-bombs-in-Syria.aspx> Then enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display' section (having filled in the information about the stories you have found).
2. On the day: Lay out all the equipment needed, and display the sign you have made using the text below.

**For display:****Torn to shreds**

- For people fleeing conflict, there is often little time to gather their possessions. Their homes have either been destroyed, or they have literally had to grab what they can and run.
- Read the story about [...]
- Look again at your "house of refuge" sheet... this will be painful but think about how terrifying it would be to have your home destroyed and minutes to escape with what you can. Put your sheet into the shredder and watch all your security disappear.
- What would you take with you? If you only had a few panicked minutes to pack a few essential possessions, and you had to flee on foot so you could only take what you could carry?

- Note these down on a post-it note and place it in one of the empty bags. Carry this bag with you to the next station.

### 3. Everything gone

**Equipment needed:** A print out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below, and one or two stories about refugees who have lost family members in the midst of conflict or persecution.

**Instructions for setting up:**

1. In advance: Source and print-out (or have on a laptop) one or two stories about refugees who are having to cope with the grief of losing family members as well as their homes and possessions. For example, we used this story from Christian Aid about a Syrian father who had fled to Lebanon in March 2013 after his pregnant wife was killed in a bombing: <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/emergencies/current/syria-crisis-appeal/Eyewitness/emergency-relief-widower-Lebanon.aspx> Then enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display' section (having filled in the information about the story or stories you have found).
2. On the day: Display the sign you have made using the text below.

**For display:**

**Everything gone**

- For many families, the trauma of fleeing their homes is accompanied by the grief and tragedy of having lost loved ones.
- Read the story about [...]
- Spend a few moments praying for men, women and children who have experienced this depth of trauma.
- And as an act of solidarity with the millions of refugees in our world today who have lost so much, place your bag down and leave it behind as you move on to the next station.

### 4. Foot worn

**Equipment needed:** Some old shoes; and a print out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below.

**Instructions for setting up:**

1. In advance: Enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display' section. Gather together one or more pairs of old shoes.
2. On the day: Display the sign you have made using the text below.

**For display:**

**Foot worn**

- Many refugees have to flee either barefoot or find their shoes break, or are lost or stolen on their journey to safety.
- In March 2013, UNICEF reported that many Syrian children in the refugee camps were running around barefoot, even in freezing temperatures and despite sharp rocks, broken glass, dirt and a constant risk of infection with waste water flowing freely from inadequate toilet facilities\*

- Pause to pray for these children who have lost so much, and now have so little, and as you do so, take off your shoes and leave them at this station.

\*[http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/lebanon\\_68391.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/lebanon_68391.html)

## 5. Youthful hope

**Equipment needed:** A print out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below, and one or two stories about organisations working with child refugees to help them cope with the trauma they have experienced.

### Instructions for setting up:

1. In advance: Source and print-out (or have on a laptop) one or two stories about organisations bringing hope and trauma counselling to child refugees. For example, you might find organisations like Save the Children helpful ([www.savethechildren.org](http://www.savethechildren.org)) or we used this story from UNICEF about their work in a youth activity centre in a Syrian refugee camp in Jordan: <http://unicefmena.tumblr.com/post/49250258536/stories-of-loss-hardship-and-hope-of-syrian-refugees> Then enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display' section (having filled in the information about the story or stories you have found).
2. On the day: Display the sign you have made using the text below.

### For display:

#### Youthful hope

- Many organisations have reported the deep trauma experienced by refugees who have been forced to flee their homes – many of whom have witnessed the death of loved ones first-hand. And sadly, a great many of those most affected are children.
- But there are stories of hope and recovery too. Stories about children receiving the care and counselling they need to be able to express and process what they've experienced, and learning how to be children once again.
- Read the story of [...]
- Give thanks for the work of organisations like Save the Children and UNICEF who focus on helping children and young people cope with the trauma of conflict, death and being far from home.
- Pray for every child who has experienced the horrors of war, and had the innocence of childhood robbed from them – and in doing so, remember back to the scriptures about God as our refuge, praying these verses over each child who needs the caring restoration of their Father God.

## 6. A canvas home

**Equipment needed:** A small tent or makeshift canvas shelter; a laptop or iPad for playing an online film; and a print out of the sign you create using the 'For display' text below.

### Instructions for setting up:

1. In advance: Enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display' section. Source a tent or put together a homemade canvas shelter. Have a look online for an up to date film about what it's like living in a refugee camp – e.g. we used this short film about conditions in Syrian refugee camps: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-22820972>
2. On the day: Display the sign you have made using the text below.

**For display:****A canvas home**

- Sit inside the makeshift tent – try to imagine what this would be like as your only home.
- Watch the film about living in a refugee camp.
- Pray for the 10.5 million refugees around the world who are living in camps today.

**7. Strength in the midst of despair**

**Equipment needed:** A print out of the sign you create using the ‘For display’ text below, and one or two hopeful stories about the resilience and resourcefulness of refugees and refugee communities.

**Instructions for setting up:**

1. In advance: Source and print-out (or have on a laptop) one or two stories about how refugees have coped with their situations, perhaps helping each other out within their newly formed refugee communities, or have reached out beyond themselves to help others despite their own needs. For example, we used this story from World Vision about how refugees cared for an aid worker who was grieving for the loss of her father: <http://www.worldvisionmagazine.org/story/aid-workers-diary-syrian-refugees-strength-and-despair> Then enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the ‘For display’ section (having filled in the information about the story or stories you have found).
2. On the day: Display the sign you have made using the text below.

**For display:****Strength in the midst of despair**

“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.” (Habakkuk 3:17-19)

- Take a few moments to consider the scripture, and how God can give us the strength to hold on to joy and hope – for ourselves and for others – even in the midst of despair.
- Read the story about [...]
- Give thanks for the God-given ability to look beyond one’s own tragedy to care for others.
- Pray that within refugee camps, new communities and connections would form as men, women and children look beyond themselves to reach out and share love – and that we, in our current comfort and security, would be challenged and humbled to do the same to our neighbours.

**8. The refugee crisis today**

**Equipment needed:** A print out of the text titled ‘Numbers and definitions’ and the sign you create using the ‘For display’ text below.

**Instructions for setting up:**

1. In advance: Enlarge and print out a sign using the text in the 'For display' section, and print out the text titled 'Numbers and definition' (adding to or updating this if you need to).
2. On the day: Display the sign you have made using the text below.

**For display:****The refugee crisis today**

- Read the definitions and statistics provided at this station. How do they make you feel?
- God commands us to care for the foreigner, just as he cares for us – Deuteronomy 10:18-19 says “He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.”
- How does this command line up with the facts above? Ask God to move the heart of every nation to welcome the fleeing refugee.

**Text to display:****Numbers and definitions**

- In 2013, there were 42 million displaced people in the world – of which one third are refugees and two-thirds are internally displaced\*
- Refugees and displaced people are fleeing war, persecution and political upheaval. Many have had little warning of needing to flee, and many endure great suffering on their journey to safety.
- A person is classed as a refugee when they cross an international border and seek safety in another country.
- A person is classed as internally displaced when they are forced to flee their homes, but remain within the borders of their native country
- Most refugees and displaced persons are able to return to their home communities when peace and stability is restored, although for some this will be after many years. For many of those that are unable to return – perhaps because of an ongoing conflict or if there's danger of persecution – staying in a refugee camp is the only option as most host countries are unable to accept refugees permanently.
- Resettlement in a third country – i.e. not the country originally fled to – is the last option, and is available to only a tiny fraction of the world's refugees.
- There are just under 200,000 refugees currently living in the UK\*\*

\*<http://www.rescue.org/refugees>

\*\* <http://www.unhcr.org.uk/about-us/the-uk-and-asylum.html>

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*If you are doing these prayer stations as a group or within a special service, you might like to finish your time by praying this prayer together:*

[http://www.thesanctuarycentre.org/resources/written\\_prayer\\_for\\_refugees\\_based\\_on\\_psalms\\_126.pdf](http://www.thesanctuarycentre.org/resources/written_prayer_for_refugees_based_on_psalms_126.pdf)

*Alternatively, you might like to make it available as a further prompt to prayer at your final prayer station.*