



Migrants and Refugees

'Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.'

- Article 13 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

★ Who is a migrant or a refugee?

A migrant is any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born. They chose to move. They may migrate to be with family, to seek work and to send money back to their families.

Migrants have time to prepare, learn the language of their host country and say farewell to family members.

A refugee is a person who has fled their home in fear of persecution seeking a safe place to live.

Some refugees return home when it is safe to do so. Some may never be able to return home.



★ Did you know?

Australia is one of only 10 main countries in the world which gives a safe place for refugees to start a new life.

Department of Immigration and Citizenship
http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/pdf/A_New_Life_3.pdf

Of the 35 million people who have had to flee their homes because of dangerous harassment and armed conflict around them, more than 17 million are children.

Refugee Children: Victims of War and Want- National Geographic
http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/06/0619_030618_refugeechildren.html

Activity

You are told you have 5 minutes to "pack your bags" to leave, possibly permanently. You have no car and will have to carry the items yourself in 5 minutes. **Make a list of everything that you would bring with you.**

As a group share the items you have listed and write them on a whiteboard. Discuss why certain items were chosen and why some were not.

Imagine sleeping on a boat with lots of other people to travel to a safer place carrying these items.

Finish the activity with a prayer saying thanks for your family, your home and praying that all children across the world have safe journeys that lead them to safe destinations.



Case study: Sofia



Ten year-old Sofia has been living in a refugee camp for four years. She doesn't know what became of her parents; all she really remembers about her homeland is leaving.

Sofia recalls her experience:

"We came to Tanzania by boat. We were very many people running and

pushing because of the fighters, because they were coming."

Sofia goes to school each morning at the camp where she lives, but only if her grandmother doesn't need her for chores and her clothes are clean and in good enough shape not to embarrass her.

Some children in refugee camps have to take care of younger siblings, or spend their time gathering wood, collecting water, or doing the cooking.

Camps can also be dangerous places for children. Some food and shelter is provided from aid organisations.



★ For a chance at survival...

War and persecution often force people to flee their homes for a chance at survival in another country. These people become known as 'refugees'.

Some migrants and refugees experience confusion and might be nervous about the new languages, food, rules and environment they are in when they move to a new

country. Often they become sick because they do not know how to find medical help, communicate how they are sick or how to use public transport to get to the doctors. Migrants and refugees usually experience homesickness at some point. They miss their families, the familiar surroundings and can find it challenging to adjust to their new ways of life.



★ What can I do to help?

If your school isn't already involved in something similar start up your school's multicultural activities like those described at right.

Become aware of how Australia came to have so many wonderful and rich cultures and celebrate these.

If you know of a person or family who is new to Australia make

them feel welcome and help them with all the things you already know. Examples include introducing them to popular Aussie sports, talking to them about your town and answering any questions they may have.

Take the time to learn about their culture and be patient if you may have trouble talking with them because of their knowledge of English.



Case Study

A school in the Maitland/ Newcastle diocese that has a large number of migrant/refugee students from many different nationalities and cultures has raised awareness and celebrated these differences.

For a week a few times each term students will be given one nationality to discuss, make craft activities and listen to guest speakers and dancers.

The canteen makes a yummy lunch for everyone with food typical of that culture such as rice noodles and poppadums that the children may never have tried before.

These activities highlight the richness within their many cultures and enables the children to understand each other better and to be more tolerant of each other's differences.

By learning about cultures other than our own we are better able to understand why some people choose to dress in traditional clothing, may talk another language or are confused about how your school works.

And it's also a lot of fun tasting, smelling, touching and seeing many different ways of life!

For more information go to:

Your local Migrant Resource Centre - They will be able to give you information on the number of Migrant/Refugees in your local area and where they are from.

abc.net.au - http://www.abc.net.au/longjourney/index_flash.html - An interactive documentary where you can listen to other students your age who talk about what its like to be a refugee or how they would imagine it would feel. There is a map and pictures allowing you to choose different people and their stories

Kids Around The World - <http://www.katw.org/index.cfm> - Learn about all the fun cultures, foods, games and lives of kids all around the world on this website. Learn about the various cultures of students in your school and languages children around the world speak.

