

AN EVENING IN SOLIDARITY

WITH MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES



Purpose:

This is a multicultural and adaptable guide with models specific to adolescents, college-age young people, and young adults. We encourage ministry leaders to use this as a model, and to adapt it as necessary to your local needs and circumstances. Event durations range from 50 minutes to 1.5 hours, and include detailed instructions on materials needed, questions for reflection, and key information to educate young people on the migration and refugee crisis in the context of their Catholic faith.

Target Audience:

Youth and Young Adult Catholics

ADOLESCENTS AGES 13-18

Event Specific to Teens Ages 13-15

Duration: 55-60 minutes

Goal of Event: This event should educate teenagers on why people move, and the serious dangers involved in migration for many families.

Activity Environment: This is a simulation activity that could take place on a Sunday night after Mass in a classroom space.

Step-by-Step How to Guide: [Jesuit Refugee Services](#) has created a refugee simulation activity – [Walk a Mile in My Shoes](#) – for young people to simulate what it is like to be forced from your home and live as a refugee. It includes objectives, preparations needed, and questions for participants to discuss. The activity has been briefly outlined and summarized below.

- I. **Opening Introduction and Prayer (5 minutes):** We suggest briefly introducing the activity to your group and opening with prayer. We would urge you to use the prayer developed for the 2019 World Day for Migrants and Refugees, but you can use another prayer if you have a preferred option.
- II. **Group Discussion (10 minutes):** Preceding the activity, engage participants in a discussion about why people move (perhaps drawing on the lived experiences of participants whose families have moved) and the difference between the terms “migrant” and “refugee.” See the guide for a full list of possible discussion questions. Please also take the opportunity to reflect on the [root causes of migration](#), which will help to put the reasons people migrate into context.
- III. **Activity (25-30 minutes):** We suggest following the complete guide from Jesuit Refugee Services, which includes instructions, materials, script, and Q&A.
Note: It is highly recommended that instructors and ministry leaders educate themselves on why people move prior to the session. This includes understanding the difference between choosing to move and being forced to move. To facilitate educational preparation, please go to [UNHCR](#), or [USCCB's Justice for Immigrants](#), or [CRS Six Facts About Refugees & Migrants](#) online.
- IV. **Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes):** Engage the participants in a discussion of the activity using the reflection questions found in the guide.
- V. **Closing Prayer (5 minutes):** We recommend group prayer, where participants gather in a circle and hold hands to pray. Each should have the opportunity to offer up his or her own intentions, but encourage the group to pray for

those who seek a safe home and those who are suffering as a consequence of not having a safe home, or to pray for all that they have keeping them safe in their own lives.

Note: This activity would also be appropriate for older teens and young adults. We recommend adapting it to fit the age of your group, possibly by cutting down the time allotted in the activity, changing the items on the lists, or incorporating additional educational and spiritual components as time permits.

Event Specific to High Schoolers Ages 15-18:

Duration: 55 minutes

Goal of Event: This event should educate high schoolers on why people move—with attention to refugees—and it includes more opportunities for guided discussion following several informative videos.

Activity Environment: This is an activity that could take place on a Sunday night after Mass in a classroom space with internet access and audio-visual capability.

Step-by-Step How to Guide: Catholic Relief Services has several digital resources that will guide discussion for this event. It includes a 10-minute digital retreat drawing comparison between the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt and the dangerous flight of many refugee families. This will be followed by two short videos—one is the personal story of a refugee, and the other is a video discussing Catholic teaching on welcoming refugees.

- I. **Opening Prayer and Introduction (5 minutes):** We suggest briefly introducing the activity to your group and opening with prayer. We would urge you to use the prayer developed for the 2019 World Day for Migrants and Refugees, but you can use another prayer if you have a preferred option.
- II. **Group Discussion (10 minutes):** We suggest starting with questions and discussion.
 - a. First ask, what is the difference between a “migrant” and a “refugee?” If they do not know, remind them that this is okay, because they will learn tonight!
 - b. Second, we recommend discussing factors that help people choose to migrate, as well as the [root causes of migration](#) that force people to flee their home country.
 - c. For this information, we recommend: [USCCB's Justice for Immigrants](#), or [CRS Six Facts About Refugees & Migrants](#) online

Cover Source: Stock

Special thanks are given to the Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth Office at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, which assisted in the development of this resource, and to Catholic Relief Services and Jesuit Refugee Services for their outstanding resources on this topic.



Credit: Vatican/Migrant and Refugee Section

- III. **Digital retreat (10 minutes):** Produced by Catholic Relief Services, called "[Holy Family, Refugee Family: Digital Advent Retreat](#)."
- IV. **Video 1 (3 minutes) and Silent Reflection (5 minutes):** "[The Refugee Journey: A Story of Bravery and Resilience](#)."
- V. **Video 2 (2 minutes):** "[Catholic Teaching on Welcoming Refugees](#)."

- VI. **Small-Group Discussion (15 minutes):** What kinds of ideas and concerns did these videos inspire in you? How can I welcome new people in my community?
- VII. **Closing Prayer (5 minutes):** We recommend group prayer, where participants gather in a circle and hold hands to pray. Each should have the opportunity to offer up his or her own intentions, but encourage the group to pray for those who seek a safe home and those who are suffering as a consequence of not having a safe home, or to pray for all that they have keeping them safe in their own lives.

COLLEGE-AGE YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 18-24

Duration: 1.5 hours

Goal of Event: This event is to help young people reflect on the experiences of migrants and refugees in ways that help them discern their connection to this global crisis.

Event Environment: The ideal space for this event is a chapel that seats 20-50, but any prayerful space can work. This is a Candle-lit Vigil designed to evoke calmness and seriousness. There will be a corresponding PowerPoint presentation prepared by Catholic Relief Services to guide the Vigil; audio-visual capability is needed.

Step-by-Step How to Guide: Catholic Relief Services has created a solidarity vigil for refugees titled, "[Remember, You Too Were Once Strangers](#)" that includes materials needed, preparation, script, and letter templates for young people to write to Congress (letter-writing specific to U.S. participants). The full guide has been briefly summarized below. As an alternative, please use the prayer vigil developed specifically for the World Day for Migrants and Refugees.

- I. **Set-up and Preparation:** Select cantor(s) and readers, make copies, and set up the vigil space according to the instructions.

II. **Letter writing campaign (Optional):**

- a. **For U.S. Participants:** Letter Writing to Congressional Representatives will proceed the Vigil (letter writing template and instructions included in packet linked above).
- b. **For non-U.S. Participants:** If appropriate within the local context, develop a sample letter for participants to send to their government representatives about the importance of supporting immigrants and refugees.

III. **Solidarity Vigil (1.5 hours):** Following the instructions, lead the attendees in the prayer vigil as laid out. Feel free to adapt, revise, or shorten it to fit another event timeframe.

IV. **Follow-Up:** Many young adults are not aware of simple ways they can speak up for the voiceless or act to empower the vulnerable. Be sure this lecture includes this information. Research local opportunities for your community to get involved.

Some helpful resources include: [USCCB's Justice for Immigrants](#), or [CRS Six Facts About Refugees & Migrants](#) online

Credit: Vatican/Migrant and Refugee Section



Credit: Vatican/Migrant and Refugee Section

YOUNG ADULTS AGES 24-39

Duration: 1 hour-1.5 hours

Goal of Event: This event is to help young adults learn about actions they can take to empower vulnerable communities and populations—in particular, migrants and refugees—in the format of a Theology on Tap.

Event Environment: The ideal space for this event is a bar, brewery, or restaurant that can host about 30-50 people. Though presenters do not need audio-visual capability to give their talk, it is a nice addition when possible. The most important task for this event will be finding the professional to give this lecture on issues of the migration and refugee crisis. If possible or appropriate, include stories and testimonies from individuals who have migrated or resettled, either secondhand or by inviting them to speak.

Step-by-Step How to Guide: Theology on Tap has become a popular gathering idea for many Catholic young adults in the United States. Something similar can be developed in your own country or local community. The idea is that a notable ministry leader, or an academic in the field of theology, ministry, or religious education with professional experience on a specific topic—in this instance, pastoral care of migrants and refugees—gives a practical and engaging lecture of about 30-40 minutes at a bar or brewery/restaurant for young adults to enjoy faith-sharing in a relaxed and community-building setting.

- I. Introduction and Opening Prayer (5 minutes):** We suggest a brief introduction from the organizers, who should also introduce the guest speaker with his or her bio. Following this, we recommend opening with prayer. We would urge you to use the prayer developed for the 2019 World Day for Migrants and Refugees, but you can use another prayer if you have a preferred option.
- II. Guidelines for the Lecture:**
 - a. The presentation or talk should last about 30-40 minutes;
 - b. We recommend encouraging your speaker to incorporate some key facts or resources from the suggested links below.
 - c. Many young adults are not aware of simple ways they can speak up for the voiceless or act to empower the vulnerable. Be sure this lecture includes this information. Research local opportunities for your community to get involved. Some helpful resources include: [USCCB's Justice for Immigrants](#), or [CRS Six Facts About Refugees & Migrants](#) online
- III. Discussion:** We recommend leaving 25-30 minutes for question and answer with the guest speaker.
- IV. Follow-up:** This does not have to be the only Theology on Tap you organize. For the sake of young adult community building, we suggest creating a follow-up evaluation of the event that will help you gauge interest and desires for the next event/lecture.

ADDITIONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

for All Leaders and Young People:

Pope Francis contemplates the migration and refugee crisis affecting young people in his recent exhortation, [Christus Vivit-Christ is Alive!](#) We recommend using this resource—with special reference to chapters 3-5—for reflection and discussion.

1. How can we apply this in our local community?

2. How are we called to take the lead on this issue?
3. How can we respond to migrants and refugees in our community?
4. How can we be more culturally, globally, and socially conscious?



*Credit: Vatican/
Migrant and Refugee Section*