

## A Place to Call Home

These notes are intended as a guide to help Sunday school teachers prepare a lesson introducing our diocesan project entitled "A Place to Call Home". Please feel free to change the content to suit to your particular Sunday school's needs. The programme is split into 3 age-appropriate sections; under 7s, 7-11 and teens (many of the activities/stories overlap so age groups can be easily combined if numbers are low). **Activities always work best if all leaders and adults present take part too!**

### Learning objectives for the children

- To be grateful for what we have; warm homes, full bellies, love & support from our communities etc.
- To learn what a refugee is, with examples from the bible and today, and to be aware of their suffering.
- To answer the call to help; to be Jesus' hands and feet to bring about change and a better life for those in need.

## Week 1

### Opening (all ages, 10 to 15 minutes)

#### **Icebreaker name game:**

1. Gather around in a circle. Let a leader introduce the game by using an adjective starting with the same letter as their first name, followed by their name. For example; sweet Sarah, handsome Harry, clever Conor, silly Susan, mad Mary, tall Tara, friendly Frank etc.
2. The next person repeats the adjective and name of the first and then adds their own adjective and name.
3. Continue around the circle with the last person having to repeat all the adjectives and names in order, then add their own.

Encourage the children to think about things that happened during the week and what they're grateful for. Go around the circle again and ask each person to name something they're grateful for (it can be anything that happened during the week; not getting homework, eating your favourite food, going to a party). Encourage shy kids but let them skip if they can't think of anything. Finish circle time by reminding everyone of all the mundane but wonderful things we should be grateful for.

Split up into age-groups for the following sessions. Each session is designed similarly; first with an opening game to introduce the topic, followed by bible-based learning and finishing with discussion or crafts.

#### **Teens:**

- **Game; what do these famous people/things have in common? (10 minutes)**
  1. Daniel Radcliffe, Daisy Ridley, Daniel Day Lewis (*born in London*)
  2. James Joyce, Amy Huberman, Ryan Tubridy (*went to UCD*)
  3. Roy Keane, Denis Irwin, Frank Stapleton (*Irish played for Man Utd*)
  4. Selena Gomez, Neymar, Jack Conan (*born 1992*)
  5. Barack Obama, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa (*Nobel Peace prize*)
  6. Ophelia, Eleanor, Emma (*hurricanes/storms*)
  7. Belle, Jasmine, Merida (*Disney princesses*)

8. Cyan (Blue), Yellow, Magenta (Red) (*Primary colours*)
9. Bill Clinton, Brian O'Driscoll, John Giles (*Freedom of Dublin*)
10. Rent, Hairspray, Chicago (*Musicals*)
11. Ronnie Delaney, Michael Carruth, Katie Taylor (*Olympic Gold*)
12. Linda Martin, Niamh Kavanagh, Eimear Quinn (*Eurovision winners*)
13. C3PO, R2D2, BB8 (*Star wars robots*)
14. Peter, James, John (*Disciples*)
15. Abraham, Moses, Jesus (*all refugees*)

## Bible bit, discussion and action (20 mins)

Explain that we're going to talk about refugees. Ask:

1. What is a refugee?
  - A person who leaves their country because it is too dangerous to stay. (*Simple answer*)
  - A person who leaves their country because they are being, or fear they will be, persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality or political views.
2. About how many refugees are there in the world today? (a) 20 million (b) 10 million (c) 2 million. Answer A
3. How many of those refugees are children? (a) 20 million (b) 10 million (c) 2 million. Answer B
4. How many young people in Syria are not able to attend school because of the civil war? (a) 20 million (b) 10 million (c) 2 million. Answer C

*Something to think about: write out 2 million (2,000,000) on a board or piece of paper everyone can see. Add one zero at a time so the young people grasp the concept how the vast number of people that it (twenty, two-hundred, two-thousand, two-hundred-thousand, two million). Think about how lucky we all are. Although school can be a real chore, we are so fortunate that we are entitled to a free education and can freely go to school to learn and give ourselves a chance of a good future.*

5. What causes people to have to leave their homes and become refugees?

**(climate change or natural disaster/human trafficking/ famine/war/persecution)**

Ask one of the young people to write these headings on a board or as a large heading on separate sheets of paper.

Briefly discuss the bible characters below and how they were displaced/refugees. Write each character's name under the appropriate heading. Encourage the young people to look up the verses if they get stuck or don't know one of the characters/stories.

**Noah** Genesis 7:7 (natural disaster)

**Abraham & Sarah** Genesis 12:10 (famine)

**Joseph** Genesis 37:28 (human trafficking)

**Jacob** Genesis 47:4 (famine)

**Moses and all the people of Israel** Exodus (persecution)

**Naomi** Ruth 1:1 (famine)

**David** 1 Samuel 27:1 (persecution)

**Daniel** Daniel 1:1 (In exile because of war)

**Jesus** Mathew 2:13-14 (persecution)

## Discussion

6. Are you surprised to discover how many people in the bible were refugees?
7. Ask someone to read Leviticus 19:33-34 (see below)
8. Ask someone else to read Hebrews 13:1-2 (see below)
9. According to these verses, how does God want us to treat strangers to our country, some of whom will be refugees? Leviticus refers to a time when the people of Israel lived in Egypt because there was a famine. Can you think of any times in history when Irish people became refugees?

Leviticus 19:33-34 *The Message*

33-34 "When a foreigner lives with you in your land, don't take advantage of him. Treat the foreigner the same as a native. Love him like one of your own. Remember that you were once foreigners in Egypt. I am God, your God.

Hebrews 13:1-2 *New Living Translation*

Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. <sup>2</sup> Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!

## Action

**How can we respond to the 20 million refugees we have in the world today?** (*be kind and welcoming to new people in Ireland, pray for them, fundraise, sign petitions etc.... make a list of all their ideas*)

Explain that your church and all the churches in your dioceses are working together on a project called "A place to call home" to give refugees that come to Ireland a safe place to live and make a new home. Over the next few weeks you're going to learn more about this project and help to raise money for it.

## 7-11s

- **The Hand Game (5 mins);** gather around in a circle and sit on your knees. Place your two hands on the ground in front of you. Then everyone crosses their left hand over the hand of the person next to them so your hands are separated by someone else's hand. Pick someone to start. If they slap their hand once off the ground, the slap continues around the circle clockwise. If somebody slaps twice, the direction changes. If somebody hesitates or uses the wrong hand, they have to put one hand behind their back and continue playing with only the other hand. Keep playing until there's only one person's hand left in the game. They win! See video for demonstration <https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&v=DHMxfA2OivI&NR=1>
- **Heads in bible time (10-15 mins).** *From your position playing the game, get the children to relax in the circle for bible time. This works best is everyone in lying on their front resting on their elbows with their heads towards the centre of the circle.*  
**Explain** that we are going to talk about refugees today. Ask the children what a refugee is and give them this definition;  
*A person who leaves their home because it is too dangerous to stay*

Explain that today there are lots and lots of people who have to leave their homes, neighbours, schools and communities and run away to a place where they will be safe. Lots of these people are children too.

Give each child a page and pen/pencil and ask them to draw a picture of the one thing they would take with them if they had to leave their home.

Tell the children that lots of famous people in the Bible were refugees at one time in their lives. Ask a few confident children to read these verses from the bible (get leaders to help them)

**Noah** Genesis 7:7 (natural disaster)

**Abraham & Sarah** Genesis 12:10 (famine)

**Jacob** Genesis 47:4 (famine)

**Jesus** Mathew 2:13-14 (persecution)

Explain that today there are still lots and lots of people who have to leave their homes, neighbourhoods, communities and run away to a safer place. God tells us, His people, that we should be welcoming to everyone who needs help.

Ask someone to read Leviticus 19:33-34  
Ask someone else to read Hebrews 13:1-2

Leviticus 19:33-34 *The Message*

<sup>33-34</sup> “When a foreigner lives with you in your land, don’t take advantage of him. Treat the foreigner the same as a native. Love him like one of your own. Remember that you were once foreigners in Egypt. I am God, your God.

Hebrews 13:1-2 *New Living Translation*

Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. <sup>2</sup> Don’t forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!

- **Craft and action planning (10-15 mins; same craft as under 7s)**

Cut out the template of the house and get the children to colour it in, assemble it and hang it somewhere at home to remind them of how blessed they are to have a safe home and to pray for all those that have to run away.

Explain that your church and all the churches in your dioceses are working together on a project called “A place to call home” to give refugees that come to Ireland a safe place to live and make a new home. Over the next few weeks you’re going to learn more about this project and help to raise money for it.

*Ask the children for some of their suggestions on how they can help.*

### **Under 7s**

- **Relay game:** divide the children into 2 teams. Put a dot of petroleum jelly (Vaseline) on each child’s nose. Have a plate of cotton wool balls on a table and an empty plate on the floor for each team. On “go”, let the first child from each team run up to their table and try to stick a cotton ball to their nose (no hands) and then transfer it to the empty plate on the floor. Once the first child is done, they run back to their team and tag the next child to go.

- **Bible story**

**Explain** that we are going to talk about refugees today. Ask the children what a refugee is and give them this definition;

*A person who leaves their home because it is too dangerous to stay*

Draw a picture of your home and describe how you feel about the place and the people in it.

Tell the children you are going to read a story from the bible about a time when Jesus and his parents had to leave their home and run away to another place to stay safe. Read Mathew 2:13-14 from a children’s bible or show this video or similar if you have internet access/laptop:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ncToFabSwE>

Recap on the story and reiterate that when Jesus was very small, he and his parents, Mary and Joseph, had to run away from King Herod. They left home and went to Egypt until it was safe for them to return.

*Ask the children:*

How do you think Mary and Joseph felt having to leave their home, family and friends?

How do you think Jesus felt as a very little boy having to leave home and live in Egypt?

How would you feel if you and your parents had to leave home and run away to safety?

- **Craft and action planning (same craft as 7-11)**

Cut out the template of the house and get the children to colour it in, assemble it and hang it somewhere at home to remind them of how blessed they are to have a safe home and to pray for all those that have to run away.

Explain that your church and all the churches in your dioceses are working together on a project called “A place to call home” to give refugees that come to Ireland a safe place to live and make a new home. Over the next few weeks you’re going to learn more about this project and help to raise money for it.

## Week 2

### Opening (all ages, 10 to 15 minutes)

#### *Icebreaker game:*

1. Gather around in a circle. *Quickly recap on the main messages from last week to refresh memories and let children who were missing catch up.*
2. Get the children to select one sweet each out of a bag of chocolate M&Ms or smarties. Have a list written up on a big page corresponding to each colour (see example below) and go around the circle asking the children to tell you the thing related to the colour sweet they have. For example;  
Red: something you learnt last week  
Blue: something you did yesterday  
Yellow: something you are grateful for  
Orange: something you can't live without  
Brown: something you love  
Green: something you don't like
3. After the children have said their bit they can eat the chocolate!
4. Split up into age groups then everyone come back to the circle at the end for prayer time.

#### Teens:

- **Game: Empire 10-15 mins** (explanatory video for leader if needed [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r28qXiN\\_SaE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r28qXiN_SaE))  
Give everyone a piece of paper and pen. Get them to write down one famous name or character. Fold it over and put them in a box/jar.  
Mix them up and get a leader to read them out twice. The young people have to memorise these names as they are read out.  
Sit around in a circle and select a person to start. They should point at someone else and guess who they are (i.e. what famous person they wrote on the paper). If they guess correctly, the person joins their empire and can help them to make further guesses. They guess until they get it wrong. The person who was incorrectly guessed goes next and can aim to steal an empire (by guessing the empire owners name) or create their own empire by guessing someone else.
- **Bible (10-15 mins)**  
Ask your young people how many times they've been "starving"? Discuss the difference between the way we use the word "starving" to describe being really hungry and what it actually means.  
Ask the young people to think about a situation in which they become refugees. Get them to make a list of all the things they need that they probably wouldn't be able to carry enough of. Where would you go? What would you do? How would you make money for food?  
Show this video or similar if you have internet access/laptop;  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQpdsNqn\\_jI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQpdsNqn_jI)  
Think about the problems that come with living in a refugee camp like that. No running water, cleanliness/disease spread, access to medicine, education, crime etc.
  - Jesus said "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Mathew 25:34-40

- **Discussion and Action**

Think holistically about the needs of refugees who arrive in Ireland. What are some of the major things they need to for life in Ireland? *English, right to work to earn money, education, medical care, counselling services to help them deal with trauma etc.*

Watch the Church of Ireland video that documents the work of the Irish Refugee Council:  
<https://dublin.anglican.org/about-us/diocesan-refugee-housing-appeal>

### **Under 7s and 7-11s**

- **Interactive bible reading (10 mins)** Explain to the children that you are going to read them a story that Jesus told his followers. They have to listen out for certain word (listed below) and do the actions (you can make up your own, suggestions below). Go over the actions to the words a few times before starting the story.
  - Jesus (make a cross with your 2 index fingers)
  - God (put arms out showing muscles; God's strength)
  - King (mime putting crown on your head)
  - Inheritance (rub your fingers against your thumbs; money)
  - Heaven (hands above your head towards the sky)
  - Hungry (rub belly)
  - Thirsty (rub throat)
  - Invite (mime writing on your hand)
  - Clothes (pull at your shirt)
  - Sick (cough)
  - Prison (make fist and cross your wrists)
  - Brothers and sisters (pat person beside you on the back)
  - Eternal Life (2 thumbs up)

**JESUS** was talking to a big crowd one day about being saved and going to **HEAVEN**. He said that when it came time, we would all be separated into two groups. One group would get to go to **HEAVEN**, and the other group wouldn't.

**GOD** would say to the first group, "Come join me in **HEAVEN** and enjoy your **INHERITANCE**! When I was **HUNGRY**, you fed me. When I was **THIRSTY** you gave me something to drink. When I was alone and a stranger, you **INVITED** me in. When I was naked you gave me **CLOTHES** to wear. When I was **SICK** you took care of me. And when I was in **PRISON** you visited me."

The people in this group were super excited. They were going to get to go to **HEAVEN**! But they were also really confused. They didn't remember doing any of those things. You would think you would remember if you happened to meet **GOD** one day, and you definitely remember if He was **NAKED**!

But that wasn't what **GOD** was talking about. He said, "What ever you did for the least of your **BROTHERS** and **SISTERS**, you did for me. So accept your **INHERITANCE** of **ETERNAL LIFE** and join me in **HEAVEN**."

**GOD** doesn't need us to feed Him dinner, or wipe His runny nose, but there are people who do. And when we help them, it's like a gift to **GOD**. He loves it when we love each other. But don't forget that there were two groups.

**GOD** would say to the second group, "Go away from me, you have **NO INHERITANCE**! When I was **HUNGRY**, you wouldn't feed me. When I was **THIRSTY** you never gave me a drink. When I was alone and a stranger, you didn't **INVITE** me in. When I was naked you wouldn't give me **CLOTHES** to wear. When I was **SICK** you wouldn't care for me. And when I was in **PRISON** you ignored me."

The people in this group were upset. And they were also really confused! They never would have ignored **GOD** like that! They would have loved to cook **GOD** dinner, or buy Him a new pair of shoes. But they never had that chance. They never met God in person form, so how could they!?!

But that wasn't what **GOD** was talking about. He said, "What ever you didn't do for the least of your **BROTHERS** and **SISTERS**, you didn't do for me. So you have no **INHERITANCE**."

**GOD** doesn't need us to do any of those things Him, but there are plenty of people who do. Each and every one of us need help sometimes, *and* each and every one of us can be that help. **JESUS** tells us

many times that we should love our neighbor just like we love ourselves, which includes making sure that others have food and clothes and love. And when we do those things for others, it's just like doing them for **GOD**.

- **Game; learning memory verse (10-15 mins)**

- Jesus said "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Mathew 25:34-40

Write out each phase of the memory verse on separate pieces of paper.

- E.g.
1. Jesus said
  2. I was hungry and you gave me something to eat
  3. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink
- etc.....

Hang a rope across the room like a washing line and using pegs, attach each piece of paper in order across the line (you may need to zig-zag to fit them all on).

Get the children to read out the entire verse together off the washing line.

Take away 2 pieces of paper and get them to repeat it.

Ask for a volunteer to take down another sheet and try repeating the whole thing by themselves. Keep going individually or saying it all together until there are no pages left on the line and everyone is saying the verse off by heart.

Watch the Church of Ireland video that documents the work of the Irish Refugee Council.

**Prayer time (all ages 10 mins)**

1. Sit around in a circle. Pass a toilet roll around and ask the children to take some. (Don't tell them what it's for or how much to take, if someone asks what it's for just tell them to take as much as they think they'll need!)
2. When everyone has some toilet roll, explain that we are going to use the number of sheets as a prayer tool. So if you took 2 sheets, for example, you pray for 2 things. Have a list up to help inspire children about what they can pray for/about. A good memory tool for kids' prayers is the teaspoon prayer (Tsp: Thanks, Sorry, Please). Pray for refugees and all displaced people.
3. Start with a leader/adult and keep it really short, simple and conversational so that the children are not intimidated.
4. End by saying the Lord's prayer together.

**Family service:**

Discuss as a church community some things you can do to help!

Watch the Church of Ireland video that documents the work of the Irish Refugee Council.

