



SOCIAL JUSTICE KIT

REFUGEES

INTRODUCTION

Until 1951, there was no commonly accepted term for people fleeing persecution.

Following the mass migrations caused by the Second World War the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees defined a refugee as:

“Any person who owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country.”

An asylum seeker is a person who has sought protection as a refugee, but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been assessed. During mass influx people may be declared refugees without having an individual assessment of their claims.

DISCUSSION: Do you know someone who has been a refugee? Have you been a refugee?

REFUGEES VERSUS MIGRANTS

A migrant is a person who voluntarily leaves their country to seek a better life elsewhere. They plan their travel, take their belongings with them and say goodbye to the important people in their lives. They are free to return home at any time.

Refugees are forced to leave their country because they are at risk. They leave behind their homes, belongings, family members and friends. They cannot return unless the situation that forced them to leave improves.



“A change of attitude towards migrants and refugees is needed on the part of everyone, moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world” Pope Francis

EXERCISE: Imagine you are a refugee. Why would you leave your home?



Figure 1 People from different parts of the world share a game of chess in Hyde Park, Sydney

THE WORD OF GOD:

Select a relevant Bible passage

REFLECTION: Share your Bible passages. Note some thoughts that come to mind

GROUP EXERCISE:

Reflect on the Coptic tradition of the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt. (You may need to research)

How would I like to be treated if I needed to seek refuge?

Who is my neighbour? (ACBC Social Justice Sunday Statement 2007)

ACTION: What can we do in the coming months for refugees?
