



REAL PEOPLE

REAL NEEDS

Sunday

June 21 | 2009

WORLD REFUGEE SUNDAY



**“I was a stranger and you welcomed me! ...Truly I tell you, just as you did it to the least of my brethren you did it to me” ~Matthew 25:35-40**

*Refugee Highway Partnership*

Refugee Sunday 2009  
Resource Pack



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## *1. Invitation for Refugee Sunday*

Dear Friends,

### **Real People Real Need**

On behalf of the refugees and displaced communities, thank you for your participation in this year's Refugee Sunday O9!

Refugees are the people forced to flee their country because they have been persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group. Refugees do not choose to leave their country and they can never go back to their country.

Today every second there are people fleeing from their homes and cities seeking safe havens. Around the world, more than 33 million people have no place to call home. Persecution and terror have forced these refugees and internally displaced persons to flee, leaving everything behind. They have lost family members, friends, possessions and the familiar places of their homeland.

World Refugee Sunday is an opportunity for you to join other churches around the world in praying for refugees and internally displaced people.

The event, held on two consecutive Sundays (June 21 or 28) is celebrated by the Refugee Highway Partnership in cooperation with the World Evangelical Alliance to raise awareness and to pray for the situation of refugees and internally displaced communities around the world.

**We invite you and your church to participate** to remember those who are persecuted and oppressed around the world. Additional information about refugees and displaced persons can be found at the Refugee Highway website: [www.refugeehighway.net](http://www.refugeehighway.net) or write to [info@refugeehighway.net](mailto:info@refugeehighway.net)

**We encourage you to continue praying** for refugees and internally displaced communities. They still need our intercession, and praying is still the most effective thing we can do for them.

Sincerely

*Refugee Highway Partnership*

## *2. Background Information*

### **What is the "Refugee Sunday" ?**

Due to fear of oppression and persecution, millions of victims worldwide seek asylum and protection. They flee from their homeland, facing the pain of separation from loved ones. These displaced people show incredible strength and perseverance to find hope and security in their lives.

The UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 55/76 on 4 December 2000. In this resolution, the General Assembly noted that 2001 marked the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. In solidarity with the African Nations, the United Nations adopted the African Refugee Day to be the Universal Refugee Day. The Assembly therefore decided that from 2001, 20 June would be celebrated as World Refugee Day.

The Refugee Sunday falls on the following Sunday to the World Refugee Day

- The Refugee Sunday is a period of common prayer day in which the Churches are encouraged to focus on refugees and refugee related issues.
- It is a time when the Church across the Globe come together, in their own locality, to pray and support the refugees.
- It is a time for the young people and children to be encouraged to pray, worship, reflect, organize workshops, Bible studies and other such activities to bring awareness about Refugees and Internally displaced communities.

### **Why the Refugee Sunday?**

- To help the church to globally focus on a common issue, which affects the church either directly or indirectly.
- To create awareness and solidarity among the Christian community in relation to the struggles and suffering of Refugees and Internally displaced people.
- To bridge gaps across cultures, languages, between communities and church to promote community integration and understanding.

## How do we organize “Refugee Sunday” in our Church?

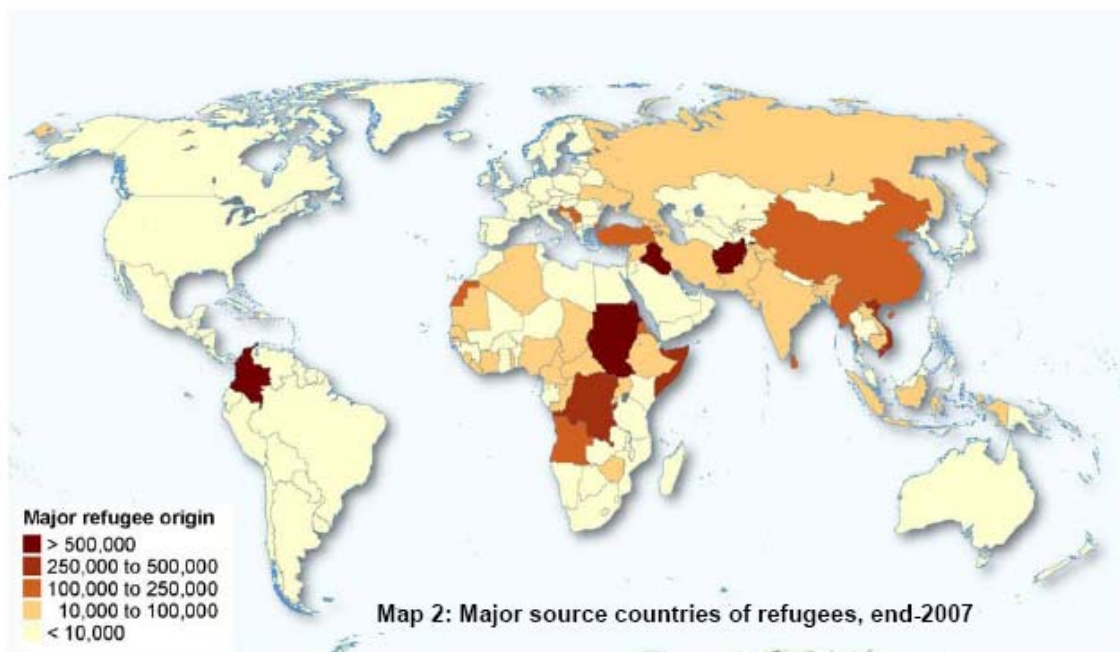
The refugee Highway Partnership will share the experiences and tools for you to organize the Sunday, by integrating the theme in your Sunday worship service, youth groups and Sunday Schools.

You will be able to download, posters, bible studies, sermon notes, presentations, Children’s and youth activities to help you to prepare this Sunday. The churches are encouraged to translate the materials in the local language.

<http://www.refugeehighway.net/>

### As the Clock Ticks

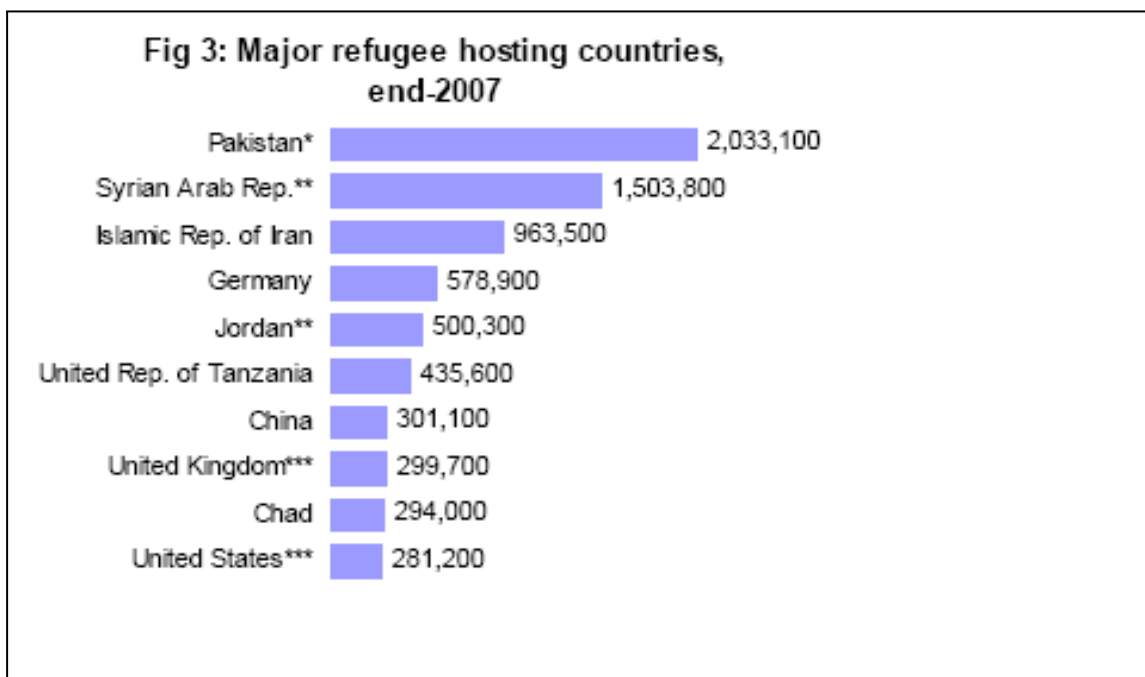
Every second refugees somewhere in the world are fleeing from their homes and cities seeking safety. What is our responsibility and response towards these women, men, and children? Their plight is hard for many of us to imagine: forced to leave their homeland with little more than their clothing and a small supply of food, these people are leaving everything behind.



### 3. *Who is a Refugee? Internally Displaced Persons?*

#### **Who is a Refugee?**

According to Article One of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is a 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... is unwilling to avail himself [herself] of the protection of that country”.



UNHCR Statistics 2007

For further information and details could be found in UNHCR website, 2007  
Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons

<http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/STATISTICS/4852366f2.pdf>



## 4. Seven Bible Principles

### For The Care And Nurture Of Refugees

***You won't find the word "refugee" in the Bible. But you will find refugees!***

***Some of the most important people in scriptures were refugees.***

Jesus and his parents slipped into Egypt to escape Herod's infanticide. Moses and the Israelites were delivered from Egyptian tyranny into the promised land. Early church believers poured out of Jerusalem to save their lives and consequently the gospel reached new corners of the world. The Apostle John was exiled in Patmos and wrote the book of Revelation. All fled their homeland because they were singled out by leaders within their own country as targets for persecution. In other words, they were refugees!

***Time after time, God has taken the tragedy of forced migration and used it to work out His purposes.*** He took extraordinary interest in refugees. He still does today. He's working out plans and purposes for Cambodians, Burmese, Sri Lankans who have been fleeing their country for the last twenty years, for the Mozambicans, Sudanese running for their lives in Africa, and for the Cubans who fled Castro and made it to the shores of Florida.

***God has not left us to guess as a nation or as His people how we are to treat these people so close to His heart.*** The crowning passage that declares God's concern is in Matthew 25. When we stand before our Lord on the day of judgment, He'll ask us how we treated people who graphically fit the description of a refugee. Strangers, the hungry and thirsty, those in need of clothes, those who are in prison, and those who are sick - each characteristic strikingly parallel to a twentieth century refugee.

Then the King will say to those on the right, "Come you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For 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. Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25;34-36,40

Numerous Bible passages describe how God wants us to treat refugees -the strangers, the poor, the aliens, and the sojourners in our midst. Seven key principles describe God's abiding concern for refugees.

1. God loves, protects, and provides for refugees.

- He watches over them. Ps. 146:9.
- He provides refuge for them, a shelter from the storm, and shade from the heat. Ps. 9:9, Is.25:4.
- He shows no partiality to natives of a country. Refugees and natives have equal status in His sight. Deut. 10:16-19, Num.15:16.
- He defends their cause, providing food and clothing for them. Deut. 10:16-19.
- Jesus announced that the essence of his ministry was to help and serve people in refugee-like situations. Luke 4:16-2

2. God expects his people to love refugees and to give freely of their resources to help them.

- Love refugees as you love yourselves. Lev. 19:34, Deut 10:16-19.
- Treat refugees fairly and stand up for them when others mistreat them. Ps. 82:4, Ex. 22:21, Lev. 19:33, Zech. 7:9-10, Deut. 23:15.
- Share your food, clothing, and shelter with them. Is. 58:6-11, Lk. 3:10, Mt. 25:31-46.
- Invite them into your homes. Heb. 13:2. Is. 58:6-11, Luke 14:12-13.
- Set aside part of your income to help them. Lev. 19:10, 23:22, Deut. 24:19-21, 14:28-29, 26:12, Gal. 2:10, Ja. 1:27.
- Sell your possessions to help them if need be. Lk. 12:33, Mt.19:21.
- Encourage them. Is. 1:17.

3. God views our compassionate treatment of refugees as a fundamental indicator of true Christianity.

- When believers stand before Him on judgment day He will ask them how they treated refugees. Luke 14:12-13, Matthew 25:31-46.

4. God expects the nations to rescue refugees, to take them in, and to treat them just like her native born.

- Rescue refugees from persecuting nations. Is. 16:3-5.
- Give shelter to them from their destroyers. Is. 16:3-5.
- Never return refugees to their oppressors. Let them live with you. Deut. 23:15.
- Give them a choice as to where they can live among you. Deut. 23:15.

- Treat refugees just like you do your own citizens through your laws and regulations. Treat them fairly. Lev. 19:34, 24:22, Num. 15:16.
- Set aside part of your income to help them. Deut. 14:28-29, 26:12

5. God promises to bless the family and nation who take care of refugees.

- He blesses them and the work of their hands. Deut. 24:19-21.
- He answers their prayer. Is. 58:6-11.
- His glory is their rear guard. Ps. 41:1-3, Is. 58:6-11.
- He strengthens them physically. Is. 58:6-11, Ps. 41:1-3.
- He satisfies their needs. Prov. 28:27, Is. 58:6-11.
- He protects them. Ps. 41:1-3.
- He will repay them at the resurrection of the righteous. Lk. 14:12-13, Mt. 25:31-46

6. God promises to curse the nation and people who mistreat refugees.

- The judgment and curse of the Lord is on a nation that withholds justice from the refugee. Deut. 27:19, 24:17, Ez.22:9f, Mal 3:5, Ez. 16:49f
- The Lord will not answer their prayers. Pr. 21:13
- He who closes his/hers ears to refugees will receive many curses. Pr. 28:27
- You show contempt toward God if you oppress the poor. Pr. 10:31.
- A nation's right to its land is predicated upon treating refugees well. Jer. 5:5-7

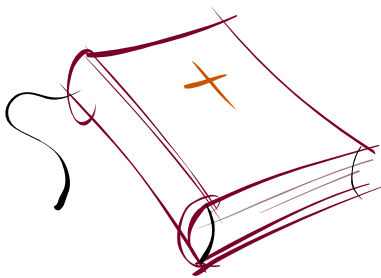
7. God views our care for refugees as a concrete expression of love and service to him.

- When we take care of refugees, we take care of the Lord. Mt. 25.

*Source: Exodus World Service*

## *5. Suggested Scripture Readings*

- Genesis 21: 8-21  
The three visitors
- Genesis 28:10-17  
Jacob's dream at Bethel
- Exodus 23: 1-9  
Laws of justice and mercy
- Ruth 1: 16-22  
Ruth and Naomi leave Moab and travel to Bethlehem
- Psalm 137: -  
Lament of the exiles who were taken to Babylon
- Lamentations 5: 1-15, 19-22  
For a fresh start
- Micah 4: 1-7  
The mountain of the Lord
- Matthew 2: 13-15  
Jesus as refugee
- Matthew 25: 31-46  
The parable of the sheep and the goats
- Luke 10: 25-37  
The parable of the Good Samaritan



## 6. *Young People to Get Involved*

Youth



*PRAY*

You can change the world on your knees. Remember to pray for the young people who are caught in the refugee struggle around the globe.

### *Prayer Points*

1. For refugee communities who have lost everything, that they may find a welcome in a safe haven.
2. For the law-makers and administrators of the nations, that they have the courage to open the doors to those seeking refuge, and to offer generous resources for the care of refugees in other countries.
3. For the organizations and individuals who support refugees around the world, and help them to rebuild their lives.
4. Pray that in the midst of the crisis people will be open to Gospel in their lives.
5. Pray for refugees in the overflowing camps in countries such as Sudan, Pakistan, Iraq, DRC and Sri Lanka.
6. To understand cultures, and to welcome strangers in our congregations and fellowships, willingness and preparedness to serve them.

Youth



## *ENGAGE*

Organize discussion groups to discuss refugee issues, you can find more information on [www.refugeehighway.net](http://www.refugeehighway.net).

### Youth Discussion Questions

#### **Joseph – the escape to Egypt**

Read Matthew 2: 13-18

Use these discussion questions, by comparing with contemporary refugee situation, and relate the issue with Joseph's story.

1. How would you feel if you had been in Joseph's shoes? What would you do if you had to flee from your own home/ town to seek refuge in another strange land?
2. If ancient Egypt during Joseph's time had modern immigration laws, what would have been the circumstances for Joseph and his family?
3. What are some lessons, truths and responses can we learn from this story?

Youth



## *SUPPORT*

Think of creative ways to raise funds to support refugees – and do it!

**Every cent you raise will make a DIFFERENCE .**

### **What makes a successful fundraising?**

- Set ambitious, yet attainable goals
- Take a planned approach – brainstorm your ideas together, then work out the steps you'll need to take to make them a reality
- Use a combined approach of individual and team fundraising
- Utilize your own networks
- Explore ways you can use your own interests to raise funds

### **Put the FUN in fundraising!**

You can download the information on PAAN PARTY, or prepare a cultural meal, or a dish served in the refugee camp.

Refugee Highway Partnership is willing to facilitate your efforts in directing your contribution to any refugee project you would like to be involved. Contact [info@refugeehighway.net](mailto:info@refugeehighway.net)

*7. Jesus was once a refugee (Children)*

## **PLAYS FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL**

# **JESUS WAS ONCE A REFUGEE**

### **SEEKING REFUGEE STATUS**

Voice We are now to visit some officials in an office in first century Egypt.

(Two officials are seated at a desk covered with papers, discussing refugee cases in an office in Egypt.)

Official 1 (Yawning and stretching) How many more? I want to go home.

Official 2 Only one more and that's it for the day.

Official 1 Well come on. Make it snappy. Who is it?

Official 2 A family. Man, woman, child.

Official 1 Country of origin?

Official 2 Israel.

Official 1 What's their plea?

Official 2 Seeking refugee status here in Egypt.

Official 1 On what grounds?

Official 2 Persecution and death if they return to their own country.

Official 1 Papers?

Official 2 None.

Official 1 What sort of persecution? Religious? Political?

Official 2 Political. They claim their son's life is in danger. He will be killed if they return home.

Official 1 Only the son?

Official 2 That's what they say.

Official 1 Who are these people? What do our contacts say about them?

Official 2 No one has any knowledge or record of them.

Official 1 What's the man's occupation?

Official 2 He's a carpenter.

Official 1 And the woman?

Official 2 None. She's just a wife and mother.

Official 1 What about the boy? How old is he?

Official 2 Difficult to say.

Official 1 Give me a range. 0-2? 2-5? 5-8? 8-10?

Official 2 0-2.

Official 1 And who's going to kill him?

Official 2 The king. Herod.

Official 1 Herod? Any facts to verify this?

Official 2 Again difficult to say. The child was born in Bethlehem and our contacts have mentioned an alleged incident there where all boys under the age of two were allegedly killed. But we haven't been able to verify it with the authorities.

Official 1 So how did these people escape?

Official 2 The man, Joseph, said he had been warned to leave prior to the incident.

Official 1 Warned? They had inside information? Who from?

Official 2 He said he was told in a ...a dream.

Official 1 Dream! Rubbish! He knows more than he's telling us. He must have contacts somewhere. What about her?

Official 2 Mary? She's harmless enough.

Official 1 Harmless, my eye. What sort of parents would take a young child on such a hazardous journey across those inhospitable deserts?

Official 2 I don't know. People who are desperate?

Official 1 Their story sounds pretty thin to me. Anyone to corroborate it?

Official 2 Not really.

Official 1 Have they got any money?

Official 2 I believe they have some.

Official 1 But not much, I bet. Probably spent it all getting here. But they must have been well off to afford getting this far.

Official 2 I don't know. He says he's a carpenter. And he's willing to work.

Official 1 Carpenter? They work in wood. Great! Look around you. How much wood do you see? Are the pyramids made of wood? Are the tombs of the Pharaohs made of wood? Stone cutters! That's what we need.

Official 2 He could possibly adapt his skills.

Official 1 And put our own people out of work? No. I guarantee he'll expect the Egyptian people to support him.

Official 2 Don't forget the woman and child.

Official 1 Ah yes, the woman and child. And we know why they came along, don't we.

Official 2 Because they're a family?

Official 1 You are so naive. They add sympathy to their plight! These people just bring the wife and kids along to add to the occasion – like you do to a dinner. Look, I don't like this. There are plenty of other countries closer than us they could have gone to. Why did they choose to come to Egypt anyway?

Official 2 I don't know. Perhaps because it's safe.

Official 1 I'll tell you why. They just want to share the economic benefits of our country. These people are here solely for a better life. Persecution. What garbage! They should accept their lot in life and live in their own country.

Official 2 But....

Official 1 They're just queue jumpers, illegals, probably criminals. They should have waited in line like everybody else, gone through the correct channels and been processed properly.

Official 2 But the correct channels have been cut back. And they're so slow. It takes years for people to get the proper accreditation. Besides, if the king is threatening your life, you're hardly going to apply to him to leave the country, are you?

Official 1 I don't care. I have the backing of the Egyptian people on this. And if I displease them I'll lose my job. No, it's time to make a stand.

We've had too many of these people crossing our borders. By the way, what's their religion?

Official 2 They're Jews.

Official 1 I knew it! Jews are troublemakers. We don't want them here indoctrinating our people with their religion. Before we know it they'll be taking over our country.

Official 2 They seemed like nice people to me.

Official 1 Listen. Let's get this straight. These people have arrived on our doorstep –illegally. No papers, no money. No proof or record of persecution. No one to back up their story. I see no reason to grant them refugee status. We are a decent, caring people, but we've been the good guys for too long. These people are just taking advantage of us. Send them back where they came from. We have no room for any more illegals in this country. We have enough rubbish in this country already. We don't want any more.

Official 2 But what about the threats? We know what Herod's like.

Official 1 Threats! What sort of a threat would a young boy be to King Herod? We must send a strong message to these people that Egypt is not a soft touch. We'll start now and make an example of this family. Refugee status denied! (Official 1 stamps the papers defiantly) Send them back where they came from. Official 2 But what happens if any harm comes to the child? Official 1 It's my guess nothing will. What makes him so special? Besides, who cares? They're only peasants. It's hardly as if this one child will make any difference to the world, is it?

(The officials collect their papers and leave).

Voice Let us never forget that Jesus was once a refugee.

## *8. Downloadable Resources*

Additional Resources on Refugee Sunday and displaced persons can be found at the Refugee Highway website: [www.refugeehighway.net](http://www.refugeehighway.net) or write to [info@refugeehighway.net](mailto:info@refugeehighway.net)

Refugee regional presentations PPT

Europe

Global Presentation

Middle East

Africa

Asia and Pacific

North America

Posters in different languages

Children's Activity Book

Feedback and Evaluation Form

Fund raising links

# *Refugee Highway Partnership*



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