

# A JOURNEY TO HOPE

In the past few years we've seen thousands of refugees journeying across Europe in search of safety. This session is designed to be run as a series of stations, set up around the space you meet in, to help create a journey that reflects the situations facing refugees.

## BEFORE THE SESSION

Each station provides a refugee's story, an activity, discussion points and a prayer.

In the following pages you'll find instructions for what you need to prepare for each station.

You will need to print out the station instructions and accompanying stories in advance.

You will also need enough red wool or ribbon to provide each person with roughly 12cm.

## RUNNING THE SESSION

If you don't have the space to set up multiple stations you can run the session in one place.

Depending on the size of your group, you might want to divide the young people into pairs or small groups, and encourage them to visit the stations in turn, taking part in the activities and discussions as directed.

The stations are designed to be visited in order, but if you have a large group you can visit stations 1 – 7 in any order, so long as station 8 is the final one.

## AFTER THE SESSION

Please post your knotted wool and petition sheet to:

**Christian Aid Youth Groups, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT**

Make sure to include the name of your church and youth group.

## Note to leaders:

Please adapt the activity to the needs of your group. Special sensitivity might be required for young people affected by some of the issues raised. If you have members who are refugees or asylum seekers, or who are homeless, you might want to have a conversation with them first to ensure they are comfortable with taking part. If your group is a bit younger, you might prefer to use our Children in Church resource: [caweek.org/resources](http://caweek.org/resources)

The red wool will be used to pray for the people whose stories are at each station. At the end, all the wool will be joined together and sent in to Christian Aid to create one giant ball of wool that will be presented to the Prime Minister, representing our connectedness as humans and solidarity for refugees.

If your group is interested in the issues raised through this session we also have some fundraising activities that can be found at: [christianaidcollective.org/caw](http://christianaidcollective.org/caw)

All the money raised will go towards the work Christian Aid does to support the poorest and most vulnerable people around the world.

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE REFUGEE SITUATION IN EUROPE

**Christian Aid was set up 70 years ago, to support refugees in Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War. Today we're facing different wars, but the same fallout.**

Today, there are 65 million people around the world who have been forced to leave their homes due to conflict and disaster. Most of these seek refuge in neighbouring countries, but last year, more than a million people came to Europe in search of sanctuary.

## WHAT IS A REFUGEE?

A refugee is anyone who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution or disaster. They are defined and protected in international law and must not be returned to situations where their life is at risk. They have a legal right to seek sanctuary and find safety.

## WHERE ARE REFUGEES FLEEING FROM?

The majority of refugees coming into Europe are fleeing from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Yemen.

## WHERE ARE REFUGEES NOW?

In 2015, Europe closed its borders. Now, thousands of people are stranded in refugee camps in Greece, Serbia and Macedonia – countries that have been entry points to the rest of Europe. European countries are deadlocked over who should take responsibility and Greek authorities have yet to receive the bulk of resources promised to enable them to respond adequately. There are currently an estimated 57,000 refugees stranded in Greece.

## WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO CLAIM ASYLUM AND EU RELOCATION?

Currently the only people eligible for EU relocation from Greece to other European countries are nationals from Syria, Iraq and Eritrea, and the process is extremely slow. Of 66,000 pledged places across Europe for relocation, fewer than 3,000 refugees have been relocated. Refugees from other countries must either apply for asylum in Greece or return home.

## WHAT ABOUT UNACCOMPANIED MINORS?

Of the 57,000 refugees in Greece, the UN estimates that more than 30% are unaccompanied minors. Due to inadequate provision, some children are being placed in protective custody in police stations or reception facilities on the Greek islands.

When we hear of unaccompanied minors we often think of small children. In reality, most of these are young teenage boys, often sent ahead by their families, having witnessed and suffered trauma at home and along the way.

## HOW IS CHRISTIAN AID SUPPORTING REFUGEES IN CAMPS?

Christian Aid is working through local organisations in Greece and Serbia to provide refugees with resources such as food and community kitchens, education for children, basic healthcare, and social and legal counselling. We are also funding shelter for unaccompanied minors in Greece.

# STATION INSTRUCTIONS

## STATION 1 : LIVING IN AN UNSAFE PLACE

The first station is designed to encourage people to understand the unsafe situations in which many people fleeing conflict are living, and to think about what it means to feel safe.

### You will need:

- a print-out of Nejebar's story
- a large piece of paper and coloured pencils
- a Bible opened to Exodus 1:1-22
- print-outs of the station 1 sheets.

## STATION 2 : LEAVING HOME

At this station we will think about why people leave home, what situations make refugees flee and what we might do if it was happening to us.

### You will need:

- a print-out of Faraidoon's story
- sticky notes and pens
- a Bible open at Exodus 3:7-10
- print-outs of the station 2 sheets.

## STATION 3 : DANGEROUS JOURNEYS

Station 3 explores the reality of dangerous journeys undertaken by many refugees.

### You will need:

- a print-out of Samira's story
- laptop and speakers OR printed images
- a Bible open at Exodus 14:10-22
- print-outs of the sheets for station 3
- a life jacket, as a visual prompt for the prayer (although this is not essential).

The activity for this station ideally requires a laptop so that you can show a short film documenting the experience of refugees journey to Greece.

We have a number of recommendations and suggest you choose the film that is most appropriate for your group, depending on their age.

**The Crossing: A 360° look into the journey of refugees to Greece** <https://youtu.be/BxxYXx7iMJ4>

**People of nowhere** <https://youtu.be/sWUx-5sLNxU>

**Unfair Tales: Malak and the boat** <https://youtu.be/2UMjSZaMY2Y>

If you are are not able to show films, then find and print some images of refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

## STATION 4 : UNWELCOME

This station is designed to look at the negative reaction that much of the media across Europe has had towards refugees.

### You will need:

- a print-out of Mustafa's story
- a print-out of the image of negative news headlines at [christianaidcollective.org/change-the-story](http://christianaidcollective.org/change-the-story). You might want to find your own newspaper articles from papers that are particularly negative, such as the *Daily Mail* or *The Sun*
- temporary tattoos (Order these for your group via [collective@christian-aid.org](mailto:collective@christian-aid.org))
- a Bible with bookmarks in Isaiah 53:3 and John 1:10
- print-outs of the station 4 sheets.

## STATION 5 : AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Station 5 thinks about the uncertainty faced by refugees who have fled their homes. Many are stuck in refugee camps, unable to resettle in other countries because of border closures, and unable to return home because their lives are at risk. Note: this station does not contain an activity.

# STATION INSTRUCTIONS

## STATION 5 : AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE (CONTINUED)

### You will need:

- a print-out of Mohammed's story
- a Bible opened to Jeremiah 29:11
- print-outs of the sheets for station 5.

## STATION 6 : LOSS

This station explores the loss that many refugees face; the death of family and friends, and the loss of their homes and lives. If any of your group has suffered a bereavement recently, you might want to consider omitting this station or talking to them beforehand. Note: this station does not include an activity.

### You will need:

- print-out of Ruhia's story
- a Bible opened to Lamentations 1. Highlight the lines that are particularly relatable, for example: 'My eyes will overflow with tears'; 'my groans are many and my heart is faint'; 'she is in bitter anguish'; 'bitterly she weeps at night, tears are on her cheek'.
- print-outs of the sheets for station 6.

## STATION 7 : WELLBEING

This station talks about mental health, one of the biggest issues facing refugees who have reached camps in Greece.

### You will need:

- a print-out of Firas' story
- a large piece of paper and pens. Put a title at the top saying 'Rules for living well'. You might want to start the list with a few suggestions.
- a Bible opened to Matthew 11:28-30
- print-outs of the sheets for station 7.

## STATION 8 : ARRIVING AT HOPE

The last station tells the story of a young man who is working to support refugees in Greece. Here, we will think about the things we can all do to help bring hope for refugees.

### You will need:

- a print-out of Arash's story
- a print-out of the petition sheet
- a Bible opened to Psalm 46:1-3
- print-outs of the sheets for station 8.

## TO FINISH

**When all members of your group have reached the final station and everyone's wool has been joined together, bring your session to a close with this statement:**

'As we've prayed today for refugees around the world, we have joined thousands of others all over the country. Thousands who are not prepared to ignore the thirsty, the hungry and the sick. Thousands who, together, are part of a different story where no one is left out. The knots in our wool symbolise all our prayers and the stories that connect us as human beings. This wool will be sent to our Prime Minister to show that we want to be part of a new story; a story where the hungry are fed and the stranger is invited in.'

### Pray together:

Living Lord Jesus,

As we thread and tie knots in our red wool

Tie our lives more closely together with all who seek refuge

And may our hearts be entwined with all those in need of a safe place to call home.

May we never be tongue tied when we raise our voices to call for justice,

For the widow, the orphan and the stranger.

Amen.