

Conversation Guide

What and When to Use

The Conversation Guide was created to help facilitate a light educational discussion around refugees and people seeking asylum. While it can be used in any suitable occasion, it is good for small group meetings in faith communities or workplaces.

Welcome and Thanks

Welcome the audience and thank them for coming.

Icebreaker

If time allows, you can do an icebreaker. Eg. Pair up, spend 5 minutes getting to know your partner and then introduce them and an interesting fact about them to the group.

Starter

From the people in the room, ask for a show of hands:

- If they have heard of Refugee Week
- If they know the dates for Refugee Week and the theme for this year
- Ask them to explain what Refugee Week is and its purpose (have an answer prepared to assist if they are unsure)

Key conversation points

1. TSA International Positional Statement on Refugees and Asylum Seekers

- Ask for a show of hands - Who knows that TSA has a positional statement on refugees and asylum seekers?
- Ask 1-2 people to summarise briefly in their own words what the TSA position says and means
- *If no one has heard about it or if people are unsure* - give them a copy and encourage them to read it later – then provide them with the summary and key Bible verses used as the foundation for the position.

2. Fully understanding refugees and people seeking asylum

- Ask the group:
 - *Who is a person seeking asylum and a refugee?*
 - *How are they different from each other?*
 - *How are they different from a migrant?*
- Briefly explain to the group the reasons people flee their country – seeking protection/a safe place/a refuge. That people are **forced to leave** and had **no option**. Use UNHCR definition of

Refugee to support your explanation.

- Briefly explain that people seeking asylum and refugees are different from migrants who generally migrate overseas by choice.
- You can refer to the **Refugee Myths and Facts** document in the Refugee Week Resource Pack to help you explain the above and to point out some common incorrect views about refugees.

3. Reflecting on the experience of seeking refuge

- Imagine you were forced to leave Australia because you fear for your/your family's safety. What would you do? Where would you go? Who and what would you take? What would you expect when you arrive in the new country?
- How would you live differently now knowing you could be forced out of your home or country at any minute?
- How would you feel being 'detained' when you had committed no crime?

4. Reflecting on issues faced by people from a refugee background

- What do you think are the challenges faced by refugees on their journey seeking asylum?
- What do you think are the challenges they face after being resettled to another country like Australia?

5. Reflecting on positive contributions that refugees have made to Australia

- Show them the 'Einstein was a refugee' poster by UNHCR published in 1981
- Ask the audience to share the positive contributions refugees bring to Australia – if people are struggling, prompt them to think about the array of food, culture and entertainment etc we have as a result of our multicultural society and how that has enriched Australia as a nation.
- Some famous Australian's who came from refugee backgrounds:
 - Hieu Van Le, AC (current Governor of Sth Aus since 2014)
 - Ahn Do – comedian/artist
 - "Dr Karl" Kruszelnicki – scientist, doctor, TV and radio host
 - Les Murray – famous TV sport presenter

Conclusion

- Reiterate to the audience what the theme for this year is and ask them how they could contribute (at personal, community or professional level)
For example, the theme for 2020 is Year of Welcome. How do you think you could contribute to this?
- Provide people with information or handouts on ways or ideas to participate.