



Refugee Week

This resource is a starting point for Worship Leaders and Children's Ministry Leaders to use during intergenerational worship or children's ministry activities. It can also be provided to parents to continue the conversation about Refugee Week at home.

Devotional

Page 1 of 2

Psalm 46:1 (NIV)

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

I wonder what you think of when you hear the word, 'refuge'? 'Refuge' means a place that provides shelter. Have you ever built a cubby house using lots of blankets over a table or chairs? It feels safe and warm inside and can be a special place where we feel like we belong. A refuge is something like that cubby house.

It makes sense then, that in the bible, God is described as "our refuge". If we talk (pray) to God when we feel scared or in danger, He will hear us and help us to not feel as scared. If people are being hurtful to us, we can tell God how we feel and he will comfort us. God helps us to feel safe.

To help us get a better understanding about what it might be like to find safety after being in a scary place, let's imagine you've recently met two children.

Amena and Akram (popular Syrian names) are a brother and sister who come to your Salvos Kids Church or after school program (Kids in the Kitchen, SAGALA, KidZone Club, etc). They might look a bit different to your other friends, and don't talk so much.

After a couple of weeks of smiling at them and saying, "Hi", you start to ask them about their family and where they live. It's a little bit tricky to talk to them at first, because Amena and Akram are still learning how to speak English. They spoke a different language in their home country and they are finding it a bit hard to remember all the new words. Drawing pictures and saying the Australian word for what you've drawn, helps the children to understand you.

Eventually, Amena is able to tell you that they only came to Australia a little while ago, before that they lived in a camp. They shared a tent with their mum, and their dad died. Akram said there were other kids who lived at the camp, and he missed playing games with them. The children have not seen their Aunts and Uncles, cousins or Grandparents since they left their home. They feel sad when they think about how far they are from family.





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Page 2 of 2

As you get to know Amena and Akram better, you learn that they have started going to a school nearby and they want to make friends, but sometimes it's hard. The other kids don't always understand what Amena and Akram are trying to say, they eat different types of food that look and smell strange to them, and the games they play are sometimes different to the ones that Amena and Akram are used to. There is lots to learn and sometimes that can feel scary for them. They are glad that they can be friends with you when they come to the Salvos with their mum.

Because we are people who love God and want to follow his example of caring for others, there are many things we can do to welcome our new friends who have moved into our community, started coming to our school, or are new to our church. Jesus said "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger you welcomed me" (Matt 25:35). As followers of Jesus, we want to be welcoming and show the example of Jesus to everyone in our communities. It doesn't matter where they come from, what they look like or how they speak. Jesus taught us to welcome everyone, and there are many ways you can help welcome new people who may have travelled long distances to find refuge in our safe places.

