

Refugee Week



Discussion guide

from the Intercultural and Disability Inclusion Team

What and when to use

This is a guideline to facilitate a light educational discussion around refugees and people seeking asylum. It is ideal for use in faith communities and workplaces.

Welcome and thanks

Welcome the group and thank them for coming.

Icebreaker

If time allows, lead an icebreaker activity. For example, ask your group to get into pairs, then get them to introduce each other to the wider group and share an interesting fact about themselves.

Starter

- Ask for a show of hands of people who have heard of Refugee Week.
- Ask them 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 (provide prompts if they are unsure).

Key conversation points

1. The Salvation Army International Positional Statement on Refugees and Asylum Seekers

- Ask the group whether they are aware that The Salvation Army has a positional statement on refugees and asylum seekers.
- Provide the group with a copy of the [positional statement](#), allow time for it to be read, and then ask a couple of people to summarise what they believe it is saying.
- If people are struggling to respond, provide them with your own summary and Bible verses that are the foundation for the position.

2. Correct understanding of refugees and people seeking asylum

- Ask the group, “Who is a refugee or person seeking asylum?” Then explain how they differ from each other and someone who is a migrant.
- Briefly explain to the group the reasons why people flee their country – to seek protection/a safe place/a refuge. Help them to understand that in most instances they have been forced to leave and had no other option. Use the [UNHCR definition of a refugee](#).
- You can refer to the [Refugee Council of Australia Fact Check](#) page to help you explain the above and to point out some common incorrect views about refugees.

3. Reflect on the experience of seeking refuge

- Imagine that you were forced to leave Australia because you feared for your safety and/or your family’s safety. What would you do? Where would you go? Who and what would you take? What would you expect when you arrived in the new country?
- How would you live now if you knew you could be forced to flee your country at any minute?
- How would you feel being ‘detained’ despite having committed no crime?

4. Reflect on issues faced by people from refugee backgrounds

- 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 in another country like Australia?

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

- Ask the group what they believe are positive contributions made by refugees to Australian society. Prompt them to think about the wide array of food that has been introduced to Australia, or professionals and artists, etc., that have enriched Australia as a nation. For example, Hieu Van Le (current Governor of South Australia) and Anh Do (well-known TV personality) – both refugees from Vietnam, Ayor Makur Chuot (the first woman State MP of African and South Sudanese ancestry in Western Australia) – a refugee from South Sudan, and Dr Karl Kruszelnicki (scientist, doctor, and TV and radio host) – a child refugee whose parents were Holocaust survivors.

Conclusion

- Remind the group of the theme for Refugee Week and ask them how they could contribute at a personal, community or professional level. For example, the theme for 2021 is ‘Unity – The way forward’. How do you think you could contribute to this?
- Provide people with information on ways to participate.