

**TO ACCOMPANY,  
SERVE AND  
DEFEND**

**FORCED DISPLACEMENT  
IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

**JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE/USA  
CURRICULUM FOR  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

## Introduction

One of the greatest tragedies of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is the explosive increase in the number of our world's refugees, internally displaced people, and vulnerable migrants. Since 1980 Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) has committed itself to accompanying, serving and defending the rights of these forcibly displaced people. While this curricular module focuses largely on areas of the world where JRS serves vulnerable and forgotten people, it also tries to address global issues of refugee protection and assistance.

The following curricular module is based on an innovative approach to learning that is built on five important steps in the student's learning cycle: Context, Experience, Reflection, Action and Evaluation.

## Some Thoughts As You Begin

*"The spiritual as well as material need of nearly 16 million refugees throughout the world today could scarcely be greater. God is calling us through these helpless people."* Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., Founder of Jesuit Refugee Service, 1980.

"When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." Leviticus 19:33-34

"...I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." Matthew 25:31-46

*"In our world there are millions of people who have been forcibly uprooted from their homes or native lands and cannot return due to persecution, war, or generalized disorder. . . . The situation of all such people is, in the words of John Paul II, "a shameful wound of our time."* Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants, 2000.

*"Those who have worked with refugees are in the best position to know that when people have been stripped of all their material supports only their cultural values and spiritual inheritance remain to sustain them."* Nobel Peace Prize Recipient Aung San Suu Kyi, *Towards a True Refuge*, 1993.

*"Indeed the foreigner, isolated from his fellow countrymen and his family, should be the subject of greater love on the part of men and of the gods. So all precautions must be taken in order that no wrong be committed against foreigners."* Plato, *The Laws*.

## **UNIT I. Why Are People Forcibly Displaced From Their Homes?**

### **Objectives: Students will be able to:**

- 1. Explain the causes for forced displacement of people.**
- 2. Describe five difficulties encountered by refugees.**
- 3. Compare the difficulties faced by women and children as refugees in relation to those difficulties faced by men.**
- 4. Explain why there are a disproportionate number of refugees who are women and children.**

### **Context**

What causes people to become refugees?

- War and civil conflict.
- Famine and other natural disasters.
- Persecution.
- Economic necessity.
- They may be found in countries on every continent, including Sudan, Uganda, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Colombia.

What difficulties are faced by refugees?

- loss of legal status and protection.
- loss of community and family members.
- loss of property and possessions.
- loss of livelihood, resulting in impoverishment.
- loss of freedom of movement.
- exploitation.

Specific examples of refugees – See Appendices for more information

- Valentino Achak – South Sudanese
- Daniel Mabut Garang – South Sudanese boy (*Appendix I*)
- Sri – thirteen-year old Achenese girl (*Appendix II*)
- John Dau – featured in 2006 film, *God Grew Tired of Us*
- Burmese widow (*Appendix III*)
- Rodi Alvarado (*Appendix IV*)
- Abdul Sheikh (*Appendix VII*)

Groups that help refugees and IDPs:

- **UNHCR** – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:  
<http://www.unhcr.org>
- **JRS** – Jesuit Refugee Service: <http://www.jrsusa.org>
- **PRM** – U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration:  
<http://www.state.gov/g/prm/c25756.htm>
- **CRS** – Catholic Relief Services: <http://www.crs.org>
- **Women’s Refugee Commission**: <http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/>
- **World Food Program**
- **U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops**
- **Caritas**
- **UNICEF**

## **Experience**

Guest Speakers

- Invite a refugee to tell his or her story

Media

- Film: *God Grew Tired of Us* – award-winning 2006 documentary film on the “Lost Boys of Sudan.” The title of the documentary is a quote from Dau discussing the despair he and other Sudanese felt during the civil war.
- Film: *Black Diamond* (note: this film requires evaluation for its suitability for high school audience. It does a fine job of portraying the child soldier issue.)
- David Eggers, *What is the What?* Vintage: New York, 2007. A novelized account of Lost Boy, Valentino Achak Deng and other young victims of the Sudanese civil war, which lasted from 1983 to 2005 and displaced tens of thousand of children.
- Video about Afghanistan & Pakistan:  
<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=JjHALy8wX10&feature=user>

- Video about Darfur:  
[http://www.metacafe.com/watch/477538/sudans\\_refugees\\_from\\_crisis\\_to\\_incarceration/](http://www.metacafe.com/watch/477538/sudans_refugees_from_crisis_to_incarceration/)
- Cusimano – Love, Dr. Maryann, *Beyond Sovereignty*, Thomson-Wadsworth, 2007, Chapter 8.
- *War Has Changed Our Life, Not Our Spirit – Experiences of Forcibly Displaced Women*, JRS publication, 1999: <http://www.with.jrs.net/files/wb.pdf>
- “No Refuge: Haitian Women in the Dominican Republic,” *The Refugee Voice*, volume 2, issue 1, February 2008, JRS/USA publication:  
[http://www.jrsusa.org/voice/2\\_1/JRSUSA\\_RefVoice\\_Feb08.pdf](http://www.jrsusa.org/voice/2_1/JRSUSA_RefVoice_Feb08.pdf)
- Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers: <http://www.child-soldiers.org>
- Iraqi Refugee Stories:  
[http://www.alternet.org/blogs/waroniraq/99512/introducing\\_iraqi\\_refugee\\_stories:\\_voices\\_missing\\_from\\_media\\_describe\\_life\\_in\\_exile/](http://www.alternet.org/blogs/waroniraq/99512/introducing_iraqi_refugee_stories:_voices_missing_from_media_describe_life_in_exile/)

## Reflection

Why do we care about refugees?

- Compassion for those that suffer even if they’re not one of ‘us.’
- Understanding of common human rights and dignity of the person.
- Common religious tradition.
- Christian biblical tradition: e.g., story of the Good Samaritan.
- Catholic Social Teaching on Solidarity: *Gaudium et Spes*, their hopes are our hopes, etc.

Consider what would it be like to be a refugee?

- Picture yourself as a refugee. What would be your biggest concerns? Who would you turn to for help in meeting your needs?
- What does it mean to be a child soldier?

## **Action**

- Bookmark JRS/USA website – <http://www.jrusa.org>
  - Select one area to follow.
  - Visit once per week for new material.
- Bookmark Child soldiers website: [www.child-soldiers.org/home](http://www.child-soldiers.org/home) and visit monthly
- Bookmark Women’s Commission website: <http://www.womenscommission.org/> and visit monthly.
- Contact local interest group on refugees in community
- Learn local congressional representative’s or senator’s position on refugees
- Write articles for either school or local newspapers
- What have you learned? What do you think should be done?
- Volunteer work
- Seek to help migrant families through local parish

## **Evaluation**

Student evaluation of the lesson – small group work and relate to class.

Small group interaction – students discuss the steps to take to provide adequate protection and care for these two vulnerable groups in their homelands.

In a five paragraph essay, based on the case studies and readings, discuss the U.S. State Department's regulations on admittance of refugees to the U.S. Does it respond to the needs of the refugees you studied? Why or why not? Does anything need to be added or amended? Give specific examples and citations in your answer.

## UNIT II. Who Is a Refugee/History of Refugees

### Objectives: Students will be able to:

1. Express the United Nation's definition of a refugee as delineated in the 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol in their own words.
2. Express the Catholic Church's definition of a refugee.
3. Distinguish among refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and asylum seekers.
4. Compare refugee movements in biblical times with movements in the 20th and 21st centuries.
5. Identify four major movements of refugees into the United States.
6. Explain the role of the Holocaust in creating post-WW II policy for the treatment of refugees.
7. Describe the impact of 20th and 21<sup>st</sup> Century wars on creation of refugees and IDP populations, particularly as a result of WWII, Vietnam War, and wars of ethnic cleansing in Europe (Bosnia), Africa and Asia.

### Context

What distinguishes refugees from internally displaced people (IDPs)?

- UNHCR's role in determination of status
- The Catholic Church's definition of a refugee and the *special significance this distinct definition has for JRS' work across the globe*. (See Appendix V.)
- Undocumented aliens in the US – refugees, asylum seekers or economic migrants?
- Student interaction with refugees in school or neighborhoods

Examples of asylum seekers and IDPs

Groups that help asylum seekers in US:

- CLINIC – Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.: [www.cliniclegal.org](http://www.cliniclegal.org)
- JRS: [www.jrsusa.org](http://www.jrsusa.org)

What impact has persecution had on forcing people to seek refuge in new lands?

- In biblical times Hebrews sought a Promised Land.
- Religious dissenters fled from England and France to the New World.
- Political dissenters left Europe in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 20<sup>th</sup> Century warfare displaced millions from Europe, Asia and Africa.
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century refugees – Is there a difference?
- Students reflect on family history to ascertain what brought their ancestors to U.S.

Specific examples of impact of persecution:

- French Huguenots – Protestants driven out
- Irish Famine Refugees – 1840s victim of the blight which destroyed potato crop
- Holocaust Survivors – WWII victims, primarily refers to European Jews
- Cubans – 1960s – fleeing from Fidel Castro’s Communist regime.
- Chin Christians from Burma/Myanmar

Groups that help refugees:

- Highlight creation of UNHCR after WWII

## **Experience**

Guest Speaker

- JRS staff member: JRS’ mission and work, stories and important points **or**
- CLINIC staff member – stories about defending migrants.
- Holocaust survivor or relative to tell story **or**
- Cuban-American driven out by Castro

Media

- Cusimano – Love, Dr. Maryann, *Beyond Sovereignty*, Thomson-Wadsworth, 2007, Chapter 8.
- UNHCR 1951 Refugee Convention text: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/protect?id=3c0762ea4>
- UNHCR’s “Internally Displaced People: Questions & Answers”: <http://www.unhcr.org/basics/BASICS/405ef8c64.pdf>
- CLINIC website answers the question, “What is an asylum seeker?” [http://www.cliniclegal.org/Publications/Freepublications/CLINIC\\_Asylee.pdf](http://www.cliniclegal.org/Publications/Freepublications/CLINIC_Asylee.pdf),
- Charter of the Jesuit Refugee Service: [http://www.jrsusa.org/publications/publications\\_documents\\_jrs\\_charter.php](http://www.jrsusa.org/publications/publications_documents_jrs_charter.php)
- UNHCR Pictorial History: <http://www.unhcr.org/pictorial/index.html>
- Vatican document from the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants on refugees: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/migrants/documents/rc\\_pc\\_migrants\\_doc\\_20040514\\_erga-migrantes-caritas-christi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/migrants/documents/rc_pc_migrants_doc_20040514_erga-migrantes-caritas-christi_en.html)

## **Reflection**

Should we care about IDPs and asylum seekers in the same way that we care for refugees?

- Is our compassion limited to those people who are farther removed from us geographically?
- Asylum seekers fear that their lives are at risk in their native lands.

What has been the impact of 2000 years of refugees on our current thinking?

- The United States – a land of refugees and immigrants
  - Why the U.S. offers resettlement in the US to refugees from other lands.
  - U.S. treatment of undocumented aliens who may or may not be asylum seekers.
- The Holocaust of WWII creates policy for the treatment of refugees.
- 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century warfare creates millions of refugees and IDP populations.

## **Action**

- Bookmark CLINIC website – [www.cliniclegal.org](http://www.cliniclegal.org)
- Compare the UN and Catholic positions on refugees. Under which definition would a person find it easier to gain acceptance in a new country? Explain why.
- Write articles for either school or local newspapers.
- Bookmark UNHCR website to raise awareness about refugees: [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)
- Contact local interest group on refugees in community
- What have you learned? What do you think should be done?

## **Evaluation**

Small group interaction – students identify individuals as refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and IDPs.

Student evaluation of the lesson – small group work and relate to class.

## **UNIT III. Modern Response to Refugees/Migrants**

(With focus on the United States)

### **Objectives: Students will be able to:**

- 1. Identify biases of writers and commentators in their treatment of refugees.**
- 2. Understand the basis for their personal views on refugees and other migrants.**
- 3. Express their views on migration to the US.**
- 4. Understand that refugees may enter the United States legally through the US refugee admissions program.**
- 5. Understand that undocumented persons may enter the United States legally in order to seek asylum.**
- 6. Understand US policies pertaining to undocumented persons not seeking or not eligible for asylum**

### **Context**

Biases exist in media coverage of the immigration issue.

- Buzz words and terms which indicate biases. (See questions in *Appendix VI*)
- Threats from undocumented aliens: real or imagined?

Examples of refugees

- Burmese widow (See Appendix III)

### **Experience**

Media

- *System of Neglect* – coverage in *Washington Post*, May 2008
- Weisberger, Bernard, “A Nation of Immigrants,” *American Heritage* – February/March 1994.  
[http://www.americanheritage.com/immigration/articles/magazine/ah/1994/1/1994\\_1\\_75.shtml](http://www.americanheritage.com/immigration/articles/magazine/ah/1994/1/1994_1_75.shtml)
- UNHCR, “Refugees: Victims of Intolerance,” <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/publ/openssl.pdf?tbl=PUBL&id=44508b222>

- Jesuit Refugee Service, *God in Exile*, Rome, 2005
- Martin, S.J., James, *This Our Exile, A Spiritual Journey with the Refugees of East Africa*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1999.
- Smith, S.J., Gary, *They Come Back Singing*, Loyola Press, Chicago, 2008.

### **Reflection**

Media influence on our views of migrants either documented or undocumented.

### **Action**

- Bookmark website: *Refugee stories*: <http://www.refugeestories.org/>
- Bookmark website: *Teen refugees*:  
[www.tolerance.org/teens/stories/article.jsp?p=0&ar=67](http://www.tolerance.org/teens/stories/article.jsp?p=0&ar=67)
- What you learned, what you think should be done...

### **Evaluation**

Small group interaction – students discuss the biases that exist in US media coverage of refugees and undocumented immigrants.

Student evaluation of the lesson – small group work, then relate to class

## **UNIT IV. Meeting Refugee Needs – the International Response**

**Objectives: Students will be able to:**

- 1. Explain the roles of UNHCR and the U.S. State Department in meeting needs of refugees and forcibly displaced people.**
- 2. Explain the need of durable solutions for refugee populations.**
- 3. Identify five U.S. humanitarian organizations that work with refugees.**
- 4. Re-state the mission of Jesuit Refugee Service in their own words.**
- 5. Distinguish between the work of JRS and the work of relief agencies.**

### **Context**

Study the mission of Jesuit Refugee Service, comparing it to the other humanitarian organizations identified. (*Appendix VIII*)

- Explain JRS involvement in seeking durable solutions, such as voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement
- Identify regions in which JRS works.

### **Experience**

- Source for immigration information : <http://www.immigrationlinks.com/>
- JRS Annual Report: <http://www.jrs.net/pubs/ar/index.php?lang=en>
- Doctors Without Borders:  
<http://www.msf.ca/refugeecamp/curriculum/index.htm> Life in a refugee camp.
- JRS/USA 2007 Annual Report, JRS/USA, 1016 16<sup>th</sup> St., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

### **Reflection**

- Accompaniment – how JRS serves refugees.
- Advocacy – how JRS works to obtain durable solutions for forced migrants in the US.

## **Action**

- Review criteria for refugee resettlement at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/>
- Contact a local chapter of one of the identified refugee organizations.
- Find out the requirements needed to work for a humanitarian organization.

## **Evaluation**

Small group interaction – students discuss and evaluate the seven major functions of JRS in refugee camps. *See Appendix VIII*

Evaluate the report on Sri Lanka (*See Appendix IX.*) What is the message contained therein? Is it as a message of despair or of hope?

Small group interaction – student assessment of resettlement programs in the US.

## **Concluding Thought**

The international response to refugees is evolving to attempt to improve protection and assistance to broader categories of people in need. We have new approaches to IDPs, the concept of the "duty to protect" broader categories of what constitutes a "social group" (persecuted women), discussion of environmental "refugees", protection for victims of trafficking etc. Despite setbacks caused by post 9/11 security concerns, the church's definition of refugees as encompassing all forced migrants is gaining ground. (*Please refer to the Appendix for a full discussion of this evolution.*)