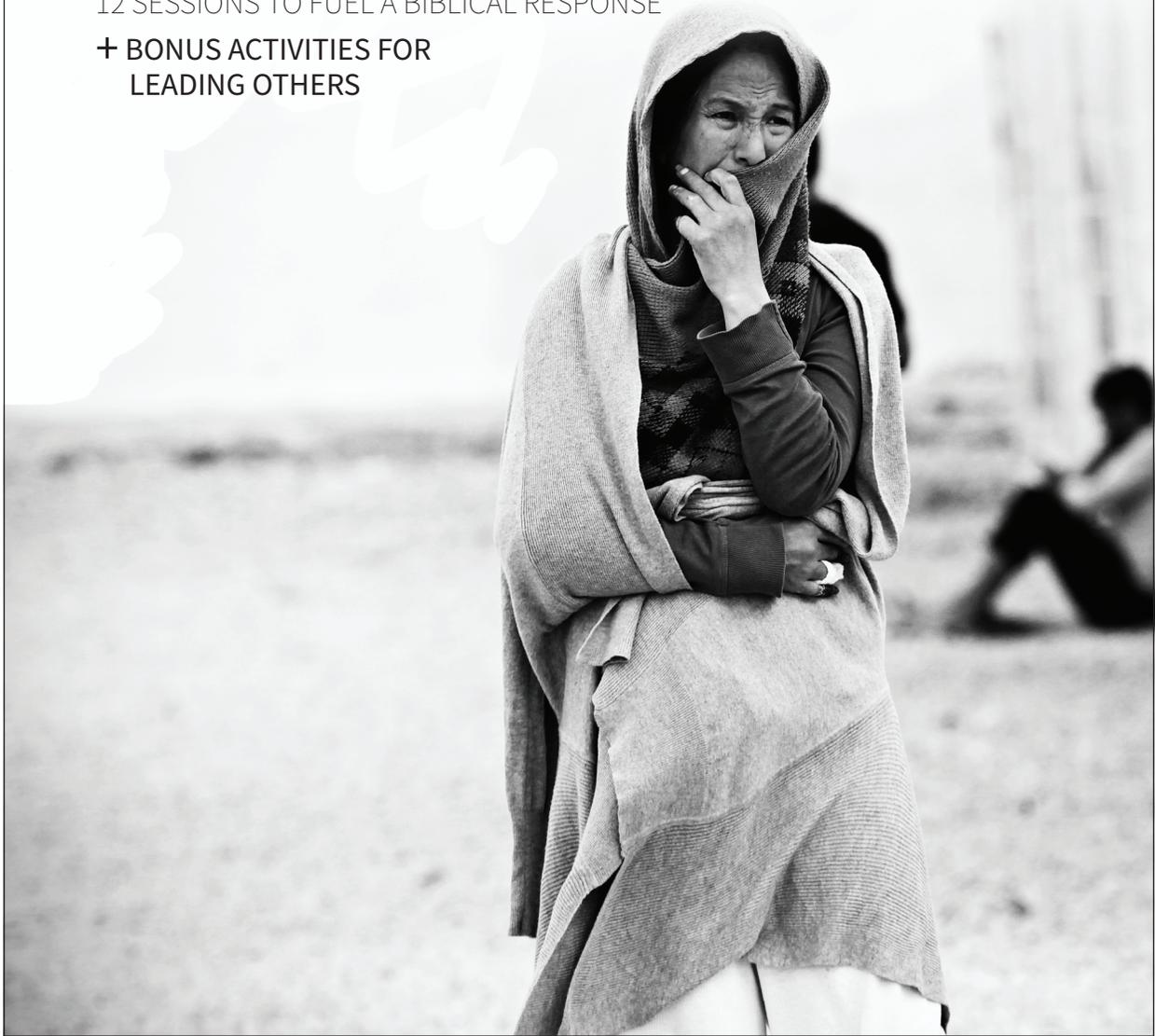


REFUGEES

FORCED TO FLEE

12 SESSIONS TO FUEL A BIBLICAL RESPONSE

+ BONUS ACTIVITIES FOR
LEADING OTHERS



We hope you enjoy this sample from our e-book *Refugees: Forced to Flee Bible Study and Teaching Guide*. This collection of 12 stories of refugees from both the Old and New Testaments will help you delve into the biblical meaning of caring for those fleeing for their lives. Included with the Bible study is a teaching guide you can use for leading small groups to understand and respond to the refugee crisis.

Visit wmustore.com to download *Refugees: Forced to Flee Bible Study and Teaching Guide* for \$24.99

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REFUGEES: FORCED TO FLEE

12 sessions to fuel a biblical response
+ BONUS ACTIVITIES FOR LEADING OTHERS

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Danette High shared her first meal with a refugee when she was a journeyman in the Philippines. And now, after many years serving in South America and South Asia, telling the stories of God and His people, Danette again finds herself among refugees—this time in the United States. Her favorite part of this project was talking to friends who invest their days working with refugees across the world. When Danette is not coaching, teaching, and writing, she can be found hiking with her husband in southwest Virginia.

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DAVID

Displaced by Political Rivalry

We don't often think of David as a displaced person. We see him as a giant-fighter and a powerful king. However, he spent many years as a political refugee.

A STORY FROM 1 SAMUEL 16 - 25

David was a boy when he was anointed as Israel's new king. God knew David would not be king immediately, but He knew David's heart. Saul, the king of Israel at the time, was jealous and kept David from the throne. The people, even the kings of neighboring countries, knew David would be the next king. But many years passed from David's anointing to when he finally became king as God had promised. During those years, while on the run from Saul, he found a place where his parents could be safe. His brothers traveled with him, along with others who supported him.

One time, when David was traveling through the desert, he and his men camped near the property of a wealthy man, Nabal. This man was known to be mean and unfair in all his dealings. His wife, Abigail, was a sensible and beautiful woman. David sent a message to Nabal asking for any extra food and provisions he might have to share with David and his men.

"Who is this fellow, David?" Nabal sneered. "Should I take my bread and my water and my meat . . . and give it to a band of outlaws who come from who knows where?"

David and his men made plans to attack Nabal, but one of the servants alerted Abigail and told her about her husband's response to David's request. The servant told

her, "David's men have been very good to us, and we never suffered any harm from them. Nothing was stolen from us the whole time they were with us. You need to know this and figure out what to do, for there is going to be trouble for our master and his whole family. He's so ill-tempered that no one can even talk to him!"

Abigail wasted no time. Without telling Nabal, she quickly gathered food for David's men and sent the servants ahead with it, following along behind them. Abigail acknowledged David as king and begged forgiveness on behalf of Nabal.

David praised God for her actions and said, "Thank God for your good sense! Bless you for keeping me from murder and from carrying out vengeance with my own hands." Then David accepted her gift and told her, "Return home in peace. I have heard what you said. We will not kill your husband."

When Abigail arrived home, Nabal was at a big party and was very drunk, so she did not tell him all that had happened. The next morning, when he heard the story, he fell over with a stroke and died within days.

When David heard that Nabal was dead, he remembered Abigail's kindness. He sent for her to become one of his wives.

*"Hear me as I pray, O Lord.
Be merciful and answer me!" (Psalm 27:7).*

➤ RETELLING AND REFLECTING

Some years later, when Saul died, David finally became king of Israel. We know that Jesus comes from the family of David. God was making a way for redemption.

Once you've pondered the story through retelling it in your own words, take some time to reflect on the story.

ELIJAH

Displaced by Threat of Death

Running for one's life is a common cause for displacement, but usually groups of people in an area are fleeing together. That was not the case for Elijah. He had a specific target on his head. Listen to his story.

A STORY FROM 1 KINGS 19:1-18

Elijah saw God's power when God sent fire on Mount Carmel. What an experience for Elijah and the people of God! They saw God triumph over the false gods worshipped by King Ahab.

When King Ahab got home, he told his wife, Jezebel, about everything Elijah had done, including the deaths of the prophets of Baal. Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah! Elijah, afraid for his life, fled to the wilderness. He stopped under a tree and prayed to die. "I've had enough, Lord. Just take my life."

Then he lay down and went to sleep. As he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat!" He looked around, and there beside him was some hot bread and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again.

Again, an angel touched him and encouraged him to eat for the difficult journey ahead. So Elijah ate and drank, then traveled for 40 days and nights to Mount Sinai, where he spent the night in a cave.

In the morning, the Lord asked Elijah, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Elijah said, "I've served you

faithfully, but your people have disobeyed your commands, torn down your altars, and killed all your prophets. I'm the only one left, and now they want to kill me, too."

So God told Elijah to stand there on the mountain and that He would pass by. There on the mountain, a violent windstorm came, but God was not in it. Then an earthquake shook the mountain, but God was not in it. A fire roared, but God was also not in the fire. Finally, Elijah heard a gentle whisper.

God asked Elijah, "What are you doing here?" And Elijah told God, "I've served you faithfully, but your people have disobeyed your commands, torn down your altars, and killed all your prophets. I'm the only one left, and now they want to kill me, too."

Then God assured Elijah that he was not alone. Seven thousand other people also still served the true God. God gave Elijah a task to do and gave him a helper to go with him. And Elijah served God for many more years.

"Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it" (Heb. 13:2)!

➤ RETELLING AND REFLECTING

To remember this story, draw a picture of Elijah's journey to Mount Sinai. Drawing the scenes will help you remember and meditate on

the story. You don't have to be an artist to draw a stick figure! From your drawing, tell the story of God's comfort for Elijah. Then ponder the questions on page 16.

SIMPLE SIMULATIONS

Weave these simulations into the beginning, the end, or the middle of a Bible storytelling session.

Put Yourself in Their Shoes

(Pair Share)

1. Ask, *How would it feel to be a refugee?*
2. Encourage participants to reflect on how it might feel and raise their hand when they are ready to share. Instruct them to find another raised hand and pair up with that person and each share his or her thoughts.
3. Ask, *What one thing would be the hardest for you to leave behind? Why?*
4. Repeat this with the hand/pair/share method.
5. Inquire, *Who would be the hardest person for you to say goodbye to? Why?*
6. Repeat this with the hand/pair/share method.
7. Ask, *What would you miss most about your country? Why?*
8. Repeat this with the hand/pair/share method.
9. Say, *Many refugees do lose everything: country, home, job, family members, friends, routine. Let that sink in.* Encourage participants to add to the list of losses.

Time Matters

1. Say, *Move to a place where you won't be disturbed. Tightly close your eyes and do not talk. Sit for what you estimate is three minutes. Don't use any personal technique to determine when the time has passed. When you think your selected time has passed, open your eyes and check to see how correct your estimation was. Remain silent. I will call time at three minutes.*
2. After three minutes have passed, say, *Open your eyes and check your watch or smartphone.*
3. Encourage participants to ponder how it felt to sit quietly in the dark for three minutes. Allow time for sharing feelings with the group.
4. Sum up the experience by pointing out, *Refugees may have to hide and stay quiet for many hours in the darkness, afraid of being discovered, tortured, or killed. Unlike you, who chose to enter this simulation, refugees are forced into the situation.*

Emotion Wall

1. Write *Refugee* in the center of a large piece of paper. Hang it on the wall.
2. Invite participants to come to the wall and respond by drawing images or writing words or phrases they know are connected to refugees.
3. Identify the different stages of becoming a refugee (i.e., a suitcase for leaving, a map for traveling, or a house for arriving). Then instruct participants to draw or write different feelings for the various stages of becoming a refugee.
4. Give participants 30 seconds to reach into their purses, wallets, or backpacks and pull out their most prized possession.
5. Ask, *Why did you choose your item? Allow time for everyone to share his or her choice. Ask, Did any items others chose surprise you? Did listening to others' choices cause you to want to change your mind? Did the time constraint factor into your decision?*
6. Say, *Refugees often leave on the run. Bombs are dropping. Houses are burning. Floodwaters are rising by the minute. Rebels with guns are going door-to-door. Do you think people outside the United States are as tied to their "things" as we are? Would their choice of things even matter when lives are at stake? Why or why not? Would things take precedence over lives for you?*

SIMPLE SIMULATIONS

(continued)

What Would You Do?

1. Divide into two to four small groups, depending on the number of participants.
2. Duplicate the scenario on page 43 to give to each group.
3. Give groups ten minutes to discuss these questions:
 - What would you do?
 - What factors would play into your decision?
 - What resources do you need?
 - What additional questions do you need answered?
 - What are the pros and cons?
 - How would you take care of the family members who depend on you?Be sure to include examples of what to do if you go or if you stay.
4. Call on groups to present their findings and lay out their plans.

Your Choice

1. Give each person five 3-by-5 cards and a pen. Designate a basket or small container to hold the discarded 3-by-5 cards.
2. Say, *Write one of your most cherished values (e.g., freedom, family, Christianity, honesty, fairness) on each card.*
3. Call for volunteers to read and discuss their list.
4. Give the following instructions to participants:
 - *You have paid your money to leave your war-torn country, but the boat is too full and you will have to wait. You must give up one of your values. Place the card in the designated container.*
 - *You barely survived the boat trip and traffickers are demanding money and threatening to harm your family if you don't pay. Place another value in the container.*
 - *You struggle to run through the jungle and lose your phone. Trade in one of your values to stay alive.*
 - *You have reached the refugee camp. People are speaking a language you do not know. Food is rationed and you barely have a place to lie down. The guard expects a bribe. Give up one more of your values.*
5. Continue until everyone has only one value remaining. Ask, *Why did you hold on to this final value? How did it feel to give up the values that mean so much to you? On the back of your last card, list all the things a person loses when he or she flees and becomes a refugee.*
6. Debrief by asking, *How has this activity helped you empathize with refugees? How will it shape your prayers for refugees and how you receive them?*

A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words

1. Show the provided photos on page 44 of refugees and a refugee camp.
2. Ask these questions:
 - *What does the photo depict?*
 - *How does the picture make you feel?*
 - *What questions does the photo cause you to ask?*
 - *If you could meet the people in the photo, what would you ask them about life in a refugee camp?*
3. Bring it closer to home by asking these questions:
 - *Have you or has anyone you know been a refugee or displaced person?*
 - *How do you think you would feel if you were the one fleeing your home?*
 - *What would you miss most about your home?*
 - *How do you think you would fare in a refugee camp? What would be the hardest thing you would encounter?*
 - *What do you think you would have in common with these refugees?*
 - *How would you want to be welcomed by your new country?*
 - *What is our role as Christians with regard to the refugee situation, given what we have learned from our refugee Bible study?*
4. Challenge participants to scan the Internet, television, and newspaper for current news about refugees and ways to support them.