



Refugee Sunday Service Suggestions: Our Home

Refugee Sunday 2024

This year, Refugee Sunday celebrates refugees in the UK through the theme of 'Our Home'.

Outlined below are some ideas and resources that you may choose to use as you plan your church's content for Refugee Sunday. As you meet as a church, we encourage you to think of ways to:

Celebrate refugees in your community, and across the UK including:

- People who have faced persecution
- People who have fled for other reasons
- People in the church who have served refugees faithfully over the years
- Ways the church is welcoming people and making people feel at home

Learn from refugees' experiences and perspectives, thinking how:

- We are God's people together - refugees and not
- Our home is a heavenly one, not on earth.
- Many people coming to the UK are followers of Jesus - they need to find a place to belong in God's church here.
- Refugees connect us to God's global church, including the persecuted church, in a very special, personal way

Understand the important call for Christians to welcome refugees in our communities

- God's Church should feel like home to everyone, no matter where they are from
- Some have fled because they have faced persecution for following Jesus, or are looking to find out more about the Christian faith
- Others have a freedom to find out about Jesus in the UK that they haven't had in their home countries that they may want to make the most of
- Every church has the opportunity to join in with welcoming people seeking refuge in the UK today

Suggested Bible passages

Hebrews 11: 13-16 - God's people are people on the move

1 Peter 2: 9-16 - As God's people, we are all living as strangers on earth and have a lot to learn from refugees in our communities

The Bible is rich with examples of why people seeking refuge matter to God! There are lots more examples than these you might like to choose too!

Sharing stories

You may like to invite someone from a refugee background to share their testimony as part of the service. This can be very inspiring for the church, and some people really value the opportunity to be able to share what God has done in their lives. Here are some things to consider when doing this:

- It is important that the person feels free and comfortable to say no, and doesn't feel obliged to do it - which can be difficult across cultures!
- People should feel free to not include every part of their story, particularly parts that they find traumatic or too difficult to share.
- Think about the allowances that you might need to make, in order for the person sharing to feel comfortable. Many people from a refugee background may not want their faces, names or personal information to be shared online. Therefore, make sure to ask your congregation not to share this information publicly. If your church has a live-feed, you may need to turn it off for this part of the service.

Suggested interview questions you might like to use:

1. What does the word 'Home' mean to you?
2. When did you first come to the UK and where did you live before coming to our town / city?
3. How did you come to follow Jesus?
4. How have you seen God at work in your life?
5. What role has your faith played in helping you through the challenges you have faced?
6. What do you enjoy about this church?
7. How can we pray for you?
8. How can we pray for your country?

Recommended songs:

Jeremy Riddle, Home: <https://youtu.be/HKX7qB6f92Y>

Resound Worship, Our God was a refugee: https://youtu.be/nqymqJ_pypQ

Emma Billington (Welcome Churches), Mercy Song: <https://youtu.be/d4oaqmaCSb4>

Songs to Serve songs in different languages.

Especially: Azim ast name to Isa (in Farsi): <https://songs2serve.eu/songs/azim-ast-name-to-isa>

Written prayers

All age responsive prayer:

We thank You, Lord, that You made us in Your image

We thank You that You gave us eyes to see
Help us to see when things are not fair

We thank You that You gave us mouths to speak
Help us to speak out against injustice

We thank You that You gave us hands to care
Help us to be gentle and kind in all our actions

We thank You that you have blessed us with homes, families and friends
Help us to be generous and share all that we have

We thank You that You are the perfect refuge
Help us to be like You as we welcome refugees

We thank You that You gave us hearts to love
Help us to show Your love in all we do

Amen

Prayer of confession:

○ Lord, the God of heaven, the great and mighty God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keeps his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear our prayer. (Neh 1:5-6)

We come before you today knowing that we have not always shown your great love in our thoughts, words and actions. We see how you have blessed us with a safe place to live and grow. We know that we are free to follow you without fear of oppression. And we have heard many times of the ways that Jesus welcomed people and showed his disciples how to live.

But there are times when we haven't been generous with our homes. There are times when we haven't welcomed and included people. There are times when we have held back from telling people about you. There are times when life has just felt too busy, and we have used that as an excuse to close our eyes to loneliness, isolation, fear and desperation.

By your Spirit, Lord, strengthen us this day. Renew our hearts. Give us fresh courage. Shape us into the people you want us to be. Help us this day to do one thing differently.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer of intercession:

God of the nations, we pray for all those seeking asylum and refuge in the UK, and across the world today.

We especially pray today for the countries where many people seeking asylum and refuge in the UK come from. We pray especially for the people of: Afghanistan, Iran, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Kurdistan, Eritrea, Bangladesh, Albania, Syria, Sudan, Ukraine and Hong Kong - the top countries where people come to the UK from.

We pray for your church in these countries, that you will strengthen them, and that they will know you as their refuge and strength in all the difficulties they face.

We pray for all those seeking asylum in the UK who are fearful today of what the future holds. We pray for those waiting for decisions on their asylum cases, in the long waits and uncertainty. We pray especially for those in the UK who are at risk of deportation to Rwanda.

We pray for those who have never heard of Rwanda, and don't know how they will adjust to life there.

For those who have heard of Rwanda, and are fearful of what life may hold for them in that country.

For those who are at risk of being trafficked and exploited by others.

For those who are separated from their families and loved ones.

For those still recovering from trauma in their lives, who are at risk of being retraumatized by these plans.

We pray for your peace in their lives, that they will find places where they can settle and rebuild their lives again, without fear of violence, persecution and danger.

We remember too, those in the UK who are trying to rebuild their lives, having received their refugee status here. We pray for your provision in housing, employment and language learning especially. May there be more resources available to give these people the things they need to live happy, peace-filled lives.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy on all those seeking safety and sanctuary across the world today.

Lord, have mercy on those special people known to us personally who want to rebuild their lives in peace.

Lord, have mercy on our government.

Lord, have mercy on us, your Church. Help us to follow you today.