

One People

Biblical Perspectives on Immigration
A Youth Curriculum



From one man, He made all nations...

Acts 17:26



*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there
male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Galatians 3:28



LESSONS

WEEK 1

Immigration and
Sanctuary

WEEK 3

Meet Your
Neighbors

WEEK 2

The History of
Diaspora

WEEK 4

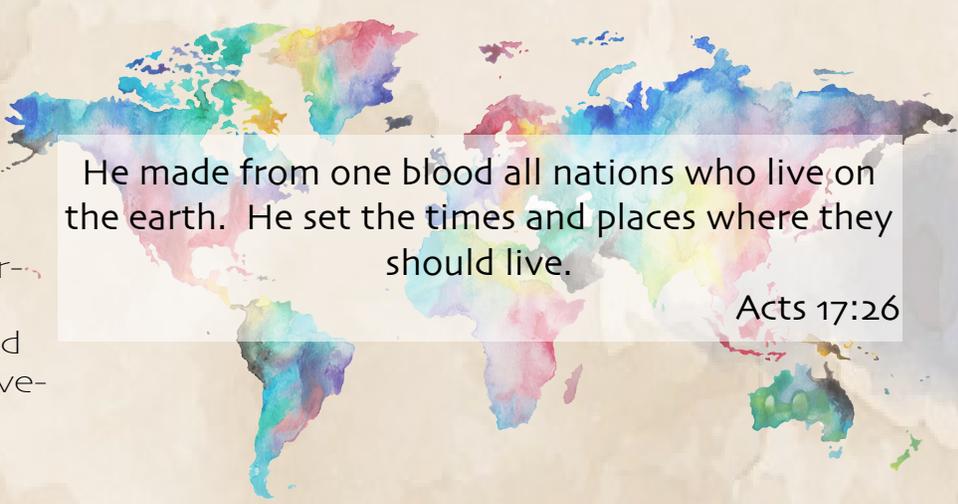
Justice Seekers

WEEK 1

We begin week 1 with a general overview and discussion of our current immigration system and the need for a re-contextualization and re-imagining of the sanctuary movement.

Recently, thousands of Central American refugees have traveled through Mexico in order to turn themselves in to U.S. Border Patrol in order to seek Asylum. What this essentially constitutes is an instance of a long standing tradition of migration between Latin America and the United States. We often forget that migration across the U.S./Mexico border is not only historic but necessary. People come to the United States primarily to work and their work is what keeps this country going.

This week, we explore not only the historical aspects of immigration, but the biblical need for creating spaces of sanctuary. We draw examples from the Bible, primarily the story of Ruth who travels to Bethlehem with her



He made from one blood all nations who live on the earth. He set the times and places where they should live.

Acts 17:26

mother-in-law in order to work and make a new life for herself. We see parallels of this story in the lives of migrant workers who come to the United States looking for labor opportunities and are often met with racism and hardship.

Additionally, we look to Mary and Joseph, who, after being warned of Herod's plan to kill the child Jesus, make the tough decision to leave their home and seek refuge in Egypt. Can we envision a scenario where our Lord and Savior is detained by Egyptian Border Agents and put in a cage?

This leads us to examine the perilousness of the migrant journey. Part of this week's purpose is to contextualize the immigration process for an audience that may not be aware of its unfair intricacies. Follow along on the next page for an exercise on how you would navigate this labyrinthian process.

Imagine if Jesus and his family had to navigate the murky waters of our immigration process. Follow along on the next page to find out how tricky that can be.



Artwork by Kimberly Duran

START HERE



Family Members in Egypt?

Is your family member a Citizen of Egypt?

Y **N**

Are you their spouse or unmarried child? Or are you the parent of an Egyptian Citizen who is older than 21?

Y **N**

You are considered the immediate relative of a U.S. Citizen and you are eligible for a green card with no wait time.

Are you their sibling, unmarried child who is at least 21 years old, or married child of any age?

Y **N**

You are eligible for a green card but will have to wait in a long line first.

Dead end: You are not eligible for a green card.

Do you have 500,00 of 1,000,000 to invest?

Y **N**

You qualify for one of 10,000 investor visas

Dead end: You are not eligible for a green card.

Have you ever received a Nobel Peace Prize?

Y **N**

You are able to self-petition for a green card.

Dead end: You are not eligible for a green card.

Are you from a country with a low rate of immigration to Egypt?

N **Y**

You are eligible for 1 of 50,000 diversity visas. Millions apply every year.



Do you have a job offer in Egypt?

Y **N**

Is your family member a permanent resident (they have a green card)?

Y **N**

Are you their spouse or unmarried child?

Y **N**

You are eligible for a green card, but you'll have to wait in a long line for a visa.

Is your employer willing to sponsor you?

N **Y**

Can they certify that hiring you won't displace an Egyptian worker?

Y **N**

Are they willing to pay potentially thousands of dollars in application and legal fees?

Y **N**

Dead end: You are not eligible for a green card.

Are they willing to wait potentially years for you to reach the front line of a visa line?

Y **N**

Dead end: You are not eligible for a green card.

You are eligible for a green card.

Week 2

The History of Diaspora

“This is what the Lord Almighty said: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another.’”

Zechariah 7:9

This week allows for the discussion that migration has been happening for hundreds of years. Mary, Joseph and Jesus were immigrants themselves, as discussed in Week 1. Using Zechariah 7:9-10, discuss how this can be interpreted. Is the immigration system just? If Jesus were to migrate now, would he be treated justly? The lesson plan for this week allows the members of the group to learn some of the factors that contributed to mass migration from Central America in the 1980s/1990s and that continue to affect the region today...“Children of the Diaspora is a documentary about the historical and ideological origins of USEU, la Unión Salvadoreña de Estudiantes Universitarios, in the United States. Set in 2009, this film begins by documenting USEU’s first delegation to El Salvador. It follows the journey of a generation of students who go against their parents wishes and travel across El Salvador during a heightened political climate on a quest to unearth a brutal history of war, repression, military dictatorships, and revolutionary activity only to discover that the war for peace and democracy is far from over. After the film there is an opportunity for discussion about the film and what they can do to help. The film allows those in the group to learn about the history of Central American migration from the perspective of young adults similar to them. The documentary allows for individuals to learn but also notes that there are other generations that have felt and lived through these experiences.

Ask the group if they feel like they want to help? Let them know that it is not difficult to get involved. So how does one help their community? The lesson provides some questions that can help narrow and focus on what one can do to help. Allow individuals in the group to reflect on what their community needs and how they might be able to help, feel free to provide suggestions for activities that they can participate in (i.e.; food drive, clothing drive, marches, etc.)



Everyone is searching for home; a place of safety and refuge. Collectively, as a people, we share this desire. And yet we look at people willing to lose their lives in a pursuit of happiness, for their children, for themselves, and call them criminals. We take so much for granted. This week's dynamic lesson will borrow from Cherrie Moraga's Theories of the Flesh. This perspective values individual experiences and the knowledge that race, gender, and community play on the development of people and places. Moraga's concept details how, while everyone's lived experiences are distinct, they are equally valid, and those experiences help one develop their identity and consciousness. And so, this week's lesson was created to allow everyone in attendance an opportunity to share a little bit about themselves. The goal is to create a safe space wherein everyone can share their testimony, their journey. The hope is to find a connection, a commonality through a sharing of experiences. As part of this weeks lesson, we have put together several questions and activities aimed at creating community, to somehow, undo the divisive nature of race, politics, and the fruitless arguing of what is legal/illegal. Instead we would not like to focus on issues of who is right, but what is right. We invite you to peruse the materials in the following pages in order to familiarize yourself with the content of our proposed discussions.



Week 3

There is an activity included in the presentation for this week which will allow everyone to share a little bit about their experiences. In exercising our ability to empathize with one another and recognize a common humanity, we may, perhaps, imagine what the personal narratives of contemporary migrants might sound like. We ought to be aware of the diversity that exists in our community and learn to appreciate difference remembering the words of Jesus that reminds us to bear with one another and persevere knowing that we have brothers and sisters in different parts of the world who are all undergoing similar struggles.



Let this lesson resonate with our shared humanity, our shared divine origins, and hopefully, we can grow together as brothers and sisters.

Note: Remind yourself and the students that whatever information is shared during this class must remain confidential so that people who are sharing can feel free to do so.

“Learn to do good. seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless and plead the widow’s case.” -Isaiah 1:17



How well does your faith community do in helping Immigrants and Refugees?

Please complete the survey below by answering yes or no for each question. A yes is worth one point. Use rubric below to review your results.

Do we promote immigration as a benefit to our community?

Y N

Do we offer ESL, language exchange or citizenship classes to our immigrant members?

Y N

Do we include immigrant integration into our mission statement?

Y N

Do we support public education events given by local immigration legal and refugee resettlement services with our resources? (Such as volunteers, available facilities, promotional networks, etc.)?

Y N

Do we offer services in languages other than English?

Y N

Do we connect our immigrant members with local social services?

Y N

Do we advocate for our immigrant community at the state and federal level?

Y N

Do we foster friendship between newcomers and the welcoming community through events and programs?

Y N

Do we ask the immigrant members how they would like us to provide them with additional assistance or support?

Y N

Do we connect our immigrant members with local immigration legal services?

Y N

Are immigrants represented among our staff and volunteers?

Y N

Do we assist our eligible immigrant members to register to vote?

Y N



0 Points
Poor

You have some work to do, but this list will help you know where you can start.

1-4 Points
Fair

You're off to a good start, but there are some good opportunities for more effort.

5-8 Points
Good

You do a great job of actively seeking to integrate new neighbors as members of the community.

9-12 Points
Fair

You work hard making new immigrants feel welcome. It would help to look for more allies.



“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.” -Micah 6:8

WEEK 4

Whether we know it or not, migrants make up a large part of our economy and our workforce as nation. Their migration is often motivated by a search for work, a demand that we place on foreign countries for their labor. Unfortunately, migrants are often one of the most vulnerable and exploited population. Whether on the field or in the maquiladoras, migrants work hard so that we can feed our families or so that we can have access to commercial products at much more affordable prices. How should we then, treat our migrant brothers and sisters when they arrive in this country? The Bible tells us to do what is good, to seek justice, and make sure that our neighbors are not being exploited or taken advantage of. This week, we will ponder how we ought to treat our migrant neighbor. We will explore some of the ways in which migrants are often taken advantage both in the country and before they even arrive here. We will explore some of the ways unscrupulous Public Notaries pose as attorneys and charge huge sums of money to misrepresent migrants on their journeys toward permanent status.



We will ask and answer, biblically, what our responsibility is as a faith community to the migrant and brainstorm ways of being more involved in helping them to achieve their goals in safety and with support. We will take up the call to be justice seekers and make sure that our faith grows beyond the walls of the church building.

This week, we will be watching a series of short videos and hearing some testimonials from migrants themselves so that we can get a better understanding of the contemporary situation our brothers and sisters who have migrated to the United States are facing along their journey and some of the ill treatment they are receiving from people once they arrive in the United States. There will also be a quiz at the end of this week's presentation to see how much you have learned about the immigration process and the ways in which the Bible intends for us to address it.



We've come so far in the last few weeks. Follow along on the next few pages to see how much you've learned!

“Love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is greater...” -Mark 12:31

Five Ways to Avoid Immigration Scams

#1

Know that immigration forms are free. You should never pay for immigration forms. You can print these out for free online, or get them from a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services field office.

#2

Only go to an attorney or a Department of Justice (DOJ) Accredited Representative to seek advice regarding your immigration case. You can find information about immigration attorneys and accredited representatives at shop.americanbar.org/ebus/ABAGroups/Division-for-BarServices/BarAssociationDirectories. Find current DOJ Accredited Representatives at justice.gov/eoir/recognition-accreditation-roster-reports.

#3

Do not sign blank forms or forms that contain false information. USCIS cannot adjudicate blank forms and filing applications with false information can lead to bad legal consequences. Always read documents before you sign and demand translation services if necessary.

#4

Avoid paying your service provider in cash. Pay with check, money order, or credit card to create a payment record.

#5

Keep copies of everything you sign, including forms wiled with USCIS.

Las Posadas (Spanish for “the inns”) is an Advent celebration revolving around the concept of hospitality. The Posadas symbolize Mary and Joseph’s long, frustrating search for a place to stay where Jesus could be born. The tradition re-enacts--with a twist, and a happy ending--the story told in Luke 2:1-7. We learn from the Posadas that by welcoming the poor and the needy, we are welcoming Jesus in our midst. (See Matthew 25:40).

We adapt this narrative and this song to fit the need for a reimagining of the Posadas within the context of migration (the key social justice topic of our time). Below, find the famous Posada Song, reimagined, placing the vulnerable within our midst at the center of the call toward empathy and righteous hospitality.

The Posada Song

Re-written by
Christian Duran

En el nombre del cielo,
Hoy pido la entrada,
Pues me es muy difícil,
Vivir en mi tierra amada.

**Aquí no es asilo,
No me hablen de abusos,
Aquí no queremos Latinos,
Solo sus recursos.**

No sean inhumanos,
No queremos caridad,
Somos trabajadoras,
Vean nuestra humanidad.

**Es mejor que se alejen,
Y dejen de luchar,
Sí exigen tantos derechos,
Los vamos a encarcelar**

Amigo veme a los ojos,
Reconoce en mí a un hermano,
Yo solo quiero vivir,
Sin miedo a violencia y engaños.

**Disculpame hermana Latina,
El miedo a nublado mi vista
Pues llevo tanto tiempo
En carreras capitalistas.**



Dios bendiga señores,
Esta su revelación,
Pues juntos podremos crear,
Una viva y justa nación.

**Dichoso el país poderoso,
Que usa todo su poder,
Ayudando a sus semejantes,
Y así al odio transcender.**

Entren, Santas Peregrinas, Peregrinos,
Reciban esta nación...
Que, aunque es triste nuestra historia,
nuestra historia, buscamos la redención.
Entren, Santas Peregrinas, Peregrinos,
Disfruten esta nación...
Que, aunque es triste nuestra historia,
nuestra historia, tenemos nueva misión.
Entren, Santas Peregrinas, Peregrinos,
Enriquezcan la nación.