

PRAYING FOR REFUGEES PRAYING FOR REFUGEES PRAYING FOR REFUGEES

And we're invited to join in.

THANK YOU PRAYING FOR REFUGEES

THANK YOU: prayer ideas to reflect on our own safety, and to thank God for the presence, gifts and contributions of refugees

Supplementary PowerPoint template available, with Bible verses, call and response, and additional material.

Background

Across the UK and Ireland, members, volunteers, officers and employees of The Salvation Army are responding to the needs of newcomers. Many of these people are seeking sanctuary here in the UK. Whether they are Ukrainian, Afghan, from Hong Kong, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea or any number of other countries, they all have some things in common. They have left their home country, will have had a traumatic experience before leaving and/or on their journey to the UK or Ireland, and they are strangers in a strange land.

The prayers below, shaped around The Salvation Army's five mission priorities, could guide a congregation in giving thanks for all the beautiful things that God has brought out of these dark situations through his redeeming love.

To Share the Good News

'He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."' (Mark 16:15)

We thank you for the good news! We thank you for your message of love and forgiveness. We thank you that Jesus is the Prince of Peace. We thank you for Christians across the UK and the world who boldly live out this good news, both within refugee communities and in service to them.

Leader: Lord, thank you for desiring fullness of life.

Response: Lord, thank you.

To Serve Others Without Discrimination

'He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.' (Deuteronomy 10:18-19)

We thank you for Salvation Army corps and centres across the UK and Ireland who have chosen to welcome the stranger. We thank you for the welcome hubs, the resettlement teams, the hosts, the conversation cafés, the English classes, the



Response: Lord, thank you.

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We thank you for your heart for justice and reconciliation. Thank you for sending Jesus to show us your commitment to restore humanity's relationship with you. Thank you for all those who reflect your heart in their work for justice and reconciliation in our world: for those who advocate for newcomers to the UK who are trapped in systems they don't understand; for those who engage tirelessly with

You might like to show the photo at the end of the PowerPoint template. These paintings were produced by young men seeking asylum who were attending a Salvation Army migrant hub and were used as part of the corps Christmas celebrations. Invite the congregation to consider the people, situations and countries that this represents. Give thanks for missional activities like this, and the hope and transformation that they bring.

SORRY: prayer ideas to say sorry to God for the times when we have not welcomed the stranger

Supplementary PowerPoint template available, with Bible verses, call and response, and additional material.

Background

While there is much to be thankful for in the response of churches to the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum, there are still many things that we as fallible humans do that place barriers in the way of fullness of life for these newcomers and ourselves. Whether this is unjust or flawed policies, sharing misinformation or harmful narratives on social media, or failing to make programmes accessible, we so often act (or fail to act) in ways that are harmful to newcomers and ourselves.

The prayers below, shaped around The Salvation Army's five mission priorities, could guide a congregation in repenting for ways in which our actions may have not built up God's Kingdom and hindered mission with newcomers.

To Share the Good News

'How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?' (Romans 10:14)

We are sorry for the times when we have put limits on God's good news, preventing newcomers to the UK from experiencing it because of our prejudice or lack of compassion. We lament over all those people who have not had the opportunity to hear the good news.

Leader: Lord, we are sorry for when we fail to offer fullness of life.

Response: Lord, we are sorry.

To Serve Others Without Discrimination

'My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favouritism.' (James 2:1)

We are sorry for the times when we have discriminated against people because we have failed to see them as an image-bearer of Christ; when we have allowed our language, race or cultural differences to be a barrier to serve newcomers to the UK and Ireland. We are sorry for our role in perpetuating false narratives, and for times when we have failed to challenge the discriminatory behaviour of others. We lament over those newcomers who have felt excluded from a caring community.



Response: Lord, we are sorry.

We are sorry for those times when we have neglected the privilege of serving refugees and asylum seekers. We are sorry for when we have failed to make Jesus accessible to newcomers to the UK by excluding them from opportunities to learn more - whether through our failure to invite them to participate or through a failure to make our discipleship activities accessible to them. We lament over those Christian newcomers to the UK and Ireland who have not been welcomed by a local church.

Response: Lord, we are sorry.

We are sorry for the times when we have allowed convenience to drive our choices. We repent for taking actions which exacerbate climate change and, in so doing, drive the displacement of others. We lament over the families driven from their homes by drought, famine, flood and storm, forced to flee to find safety.

Response: Lord, we are sorry.

We are sorry for times when we put up barriers between people; for times when by our action or inaction we have allowed relationships between newcomers and the wider community to break down or become hostile. We lament over violence of word and action that has been perpetrated against refugees and asylum seekers.

Response: Lord, we are sorry.

Next Step

Below are some reflection questions inviting the congregation to think about when they haven't felt welcome themselves. You might like to invite them to spend time quietly reflecting on these questions. They could be shown on a screen, read out, or prepared as 'stations' around the church.

- Can you recall a specific instance when you felt unwelcome or excluded? What were the circumstances?
- How did you feel in that moment? What emotions were most prominent?
- What do you think contributed to those feelings of exclusion? Was it something someone said or did, or was it more about the environment or situation?
- How did you respond to feeling unwelcome or excluded? Did you withdraw, confront the situation, or something else?
- How did this experience affect your self-esteem?
- What, if anything, could have been done differently by you or others to prevent the exclusion?
- Have you ever unintentionally made someone else feel unwelcome or excluded? How did you handle that situation?
- What steps can you take in the future to ensure that you and newcomers to the country feel included in similar situations?

Many newcomers to the UK experience exclusion and a lack of welcome. Reflecting on their personal experiences may have given the congregation a small insight into this exclusion. At the end of the reflection questions, you might like to create space for people to repent of times they have made newcomers feel unwelcome. They might like to ask God for the grace to make the most of future opportunities to make everyone feel welcome and valued.

PLEASE: prayer ideas to intercede for refugees and ask God for inner transformation

Supplementary PowerPoint template available, with Bible verses, call and response, and additional material.

Background

Acknowledging the blessings we have received, as well as the ways we may have acted against God's will for our lives and communities, we recognise that we can only hope to address the challenges which arise by calling out to God and asking for his strength and wisdom.

The prayers below, shaped around The Salvation Army's five mission priorities, could guide a congregation in asking God to intercede, both in our lives and the lives of newcomers to the UK and Ireland, as we seek to engage more fully in God's mission where we are.

To Share the Good News

'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' (Acts 1:8)

We ask for your protection for our Christian brothers and sisters who are persecuted for sharing the good news and are forced to leave their homes and communities to find a place of safety. We pray that they will find compassionate communities to settle in. We pray that your Spirit will empower and inspire your Church in our work with refugees and asylum seekers, that we will be empowered to live out the good news in people's darkest situations.

Leader: Lord, please would there be fullness of life for all with Jesus.

Response: Lord, please.

To Serve Others Without Discrimination

'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.' (1 Corinthians 13:13)

We ask that you fill us with love for the newcomers in our communities. We ask that you reveal to us their needs, and give us ears to hear, so that we may serve them in the best way. And we ask that you remove the scales from our eyes and reveal to us the prejudices we may hold, so we can humbly work to remove these.

Leader: Lord, please would there be fullness of life for all with Jesus.

Response: Lord, please.

To Nurture Disciples of Jesus

'Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.' (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

We ask that you reveal opportunities to spend time being with refugees and asylum seekers in our community. We pray that through these experiences, as we begin to understand the sacred being before us, we are both transformed, knowing more deeply your heart of love and compassion. Please also open up opportunities for newcomers to serve in your Church, recognising that we all have a role to play in the body of Christ.

Leader: Lord, please would there be fullness of life for all with Jesus.

Response: Lord, please.

To Care for Creation

'Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.' (1 Peter 4:10)

We ask you to soften the hearts of those who have the power to significantly impact climate change and, in so doing, allow people to have sustainable livelihoods and avoid natural disasters in their home countries. Inspire us to do our part and recognise our role as stewards of the resources you have given us, using them responsibly and acknowledging the impact we may be having.

Leader: Lord, please would there be fullness of life for all with Jesus.

Response: Lord, please.

To Seek Justice and Reconciliation

'Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.' (Hebrews 12:14)

We ask for peace. We recognise that violence of language and of action drives conflict. We see the millions of people displaced because of war and persecution. We ask that you help us to grow into people of peace in our communities. We ask that you empower us to be beacons of your light and love in dark places, and give us the boldness to challenge injustice and the will to seek justice.

Leader: Lord, please would there be fullness of life for all with Jesus.

Response: Lord, please.

Invite the congregation to respond in prayer, asking God to intercede in situations like these in the UK, Ireland and overseas. Pray for the boldness and compassion to come alongside newcomers in your country as they journey to a place of safety and strength.