



# Together we heal, learn and shine

Resources for Refugee Sunday, 20 June and 4 July 2021

## “Let us go across to the other side”

Jesus, Mark 4:35 b

Every day thousands of desperate people take to the road or the sea, seeking safety from harm. Some stay within their home country as displaced people while others often make the dangerous journey to other mostly poorer countries. Turkey, Colombia, Pakistan and Uganda host over 9 million refugees between them.

On [World Refugee Day](#) (June 20 each year), we celebrate the contribution refugees make to our world and our responsibility to always welcome the stranger. This year Methodist and Presbyterian churches mark Refugee Sunday on World Refugee Day and the Anglican churches on July 4— these resources have been written for both.

CWS encourages your participation in [Operation Refugee](#) which will be launched on June 20 and run until October 24. We are asking you to raise funds so more refugees in Jordan and Lebanon can have access to medical care, education and emergency supplies.

*Assef (pictured left) was born and raised in Al Husn Refugee Camp in Jordan. His parents fled their home in Beersheba, Palestine at the end of the Arab-Israeli war in 1967. Read his story p. 11.*

If you would like larger-sized files of these images, please contact Gillian: [gillian.southey@cws.org.nz](mailto:gillian.southey@cws.org.nz)

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CWS is a member of [ACT Alliance](#)  
 (Action by Churches Together)

*CWS thanks Rev Sharon Ross Ensor for preparing these resources, Assef for sharing his story, DSPR (Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees) for stories and images, and ACT Alliance/P.Jeffrey/ H. Bjelland/R. Chowdry for photos.*



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## RESOURCES

*My understanding is that as long as YouTube clips are not downloaded onto a computer, they can be used in worship ie by accessing them online.*  
Sharon

### NZ TV stories:

- *March 2017, TV One News.* A young Syrian former refugee and a young kiwi woman 'ignoring cultural barriers for flourishing friendship.' 'I want to love and be loved.'  
<https://www.facebook.com/1595515799/posts/10208339419915195/?d=n> 2.56 mins
- *March 2021 TV One News.* Two young Syrian former refugees have gone into business in Newtown, Wellington. The news item gives a brief overview of the situation in Syria, followed by the stories of the two young men. <https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/syrian-refugees-reflect-new-life-in-nz-but-memories-decade-long-war-remain> 3.05mins

### From UNHCR, 2016:

*What They Took with Them.* A rhythmic poem performed by Cate Blanchett, Keira Knightley, Stanley Tucci, Neil Gaiman and other actors. The poem, written by Jenifer Toksvig 'was inspired by stories and first hand testimonies from refugees forced to flee their homes and items they took with them.' <https://fb.watch/5j0FiiYw9U/> 5.25mins

### From Radio New Zealand:

They used to call Bhutan the "Happiest Country in the World," says Shreejana, a 23-year-old living in Christchurch. One of a series of inspiring interviews with former refugees now settled in Aotearoa New Zealand. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/voices/audio/2018785097/getting-here> 12.51mins



*Syrian refugees attend extra classes run by DSPR Lebanon to catch up on the schooling they have missed.*

A **Poem** - Read it 'both ways':

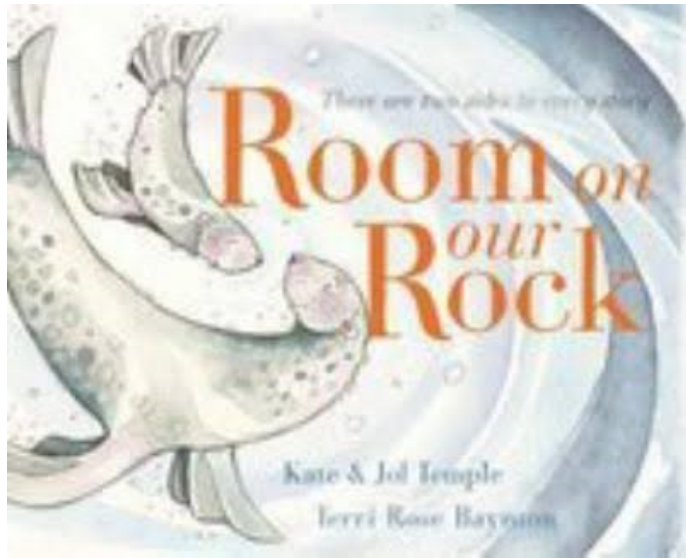
REFUGEES by Brian Bilston.

They have no need of our help  
So do not tell me  
These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
Should life have dealt a different hand  
We need to see them for who they really are  
Chancers and scroungers  
Layabouts and loungers  
With bombs up their sleeves  
Cut-throats and thieves  
They are not  
Welcome here  
We should make them  
Go back to where they came from  
They cannot  
Share our food  
Share our homes  
Share our countries  
Instead let us  
Build a wall to keep them out  
It is not okay to say  
These are people just like us  
A place should only belong to those who are  
born there  
Do not be so stupid to think that  
The world can be looked at another way  
(now read from bottom to top)

## *Home* by Warsan Shire

A powerful poem giving voice to the refugee experience.

Note that this is a challenging poem and discretion is advised for your context. <https://www.facinghistory.org/standing-up-hatred-intolerance/warsan-shire-home>



### **A Picture book:**

*Room on our Rock* by Kate and Jol Temple. 2018. Scholastic, available in some libraries.

From Goodreads.com “Two seals are perched on a rock. When others need shelter, do they share it? *Room on Our Rock* celebrates the truth that there are two sides to every story. This clever picture book has one story that can be read two different ways.

When read from front to back, the seals believe there is definitely no room on their rock for

others. But when the book is read from back to front, the seals welcome others to shelter on their rock. A heartwarming story about sharing and compassion.”

-Scholastic Australia have produced this video of it being read: <https://youtu.be/CXHymkbaTlc>

-There is another version of it being read (slowly) here: <https://youtu.be/-wnkcLdNLP8>

### **Conversations about the experience of becoming a refugee:**

Ask your congregation to talk in groups of 4-6 people. Each group is given a piece of A3 paper and felt tip pens. Their task is to write down everything that they value about life in Aotearoa NZ. It could range from details of our lifestyle, climate, freedoms, food, environment, human rights, job opportunities.

After 5 minutes ask for examples from the groups of things they have written down so that everyone gets some sense of what we value about our life in NZ.

Then ask the group to take turns at ripping their piece of paper up into as many pieces as they can. Pass the paper around the group so everyone has a chance to rip it up.

This is the experience of refugees whose life is disrupted and upended when they have to flee from their country. Everything that is familiar and loved is ripped away from them.

*Photo: Refugees play football in Northern Iraq.*







Photo: A Syrian refugee takes blankets and water to her family in Zaatari Refugee Camp where ACT Alliance members work.

A variation is to ask people to imagine they are refugees. They have had to flee for their lives from NZ because of an oppressive and/or violent regime. Imagine that after some time they have resettled in a new country as refugees. The country is a completely different culture to the one they have come from, one where everything is strange for them eg Syria, Ethiopia, Myanmar. As a group make a list of the things which are strange and disorientating eg food, language, dress code, gender roles and expectations, lifestyle, climate etc.

Another idea is, in small groups, to imagine that you have to flee your home as a refugee. You are only allowed to take one 15kg bag per person, everything else must be left behind. You have thirty minutes to pack. You do not know where you will end up, you do not know if food or water will be available. You just know

that you have to leave your home urgently and that you may not be able to return for some time, if ever. What do you pack in your bag? Come up with a list as a group to share with the congregation. You could follow this by showing *What They Took With Them* (see above.)

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## LECTIONARY READINGS — JUNE 20

### 1 Samuel 17:32-49

David goes out to fight against Goliath. The armour Saul gives him to take on Goliath does not work for David. He has to abandon it and find his own way to take on the giant.

Consider the giant i.e. the thing which seems overwhelming, frightening in its violence and threat to overpower us. For refugees 'the giant' leads them to flee for their lives, leaving everything behind. For us 'the giant' might be

the oppressive and violent authoritarian leaders on the world stage who deny human rights and squash any challenge to their hold on power disrupting the lives of millions in the process or the seeming immovability of governments to lift the refugee quota.

Using his own skill, tenacity, resources and the sense of God being with him equipping him for the task, David takes the giant on and defeats him. The image of David's 'five smooth stones' which he uses to defeat the giant is a compelling one.

**As Christians what might our 'five smooth stones', equipping us to address, challenge and 'take on' the giants in our world be?**

### Psalm 9:9-20

A call to God to recognise people's suffering and to bring life and hope.  
(See Call to Worship below)

### 2 Corinthians 6:1-13

The suffering experienced in being true to Christ.  
'There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours...open wide your hearts also.' (v.12-13)

The compassion which grows from suffering brings to mind the idea of the 'wounded healer'. Our wounds and bruises in life can deepen our compassion, empathy and heartfelt response to others in their suffering.

### Mark 4:35-41

*Jesus calms the storm.* The passage begins with Jesus saying 'let us go across to the other side'. Ched Myers (and others) in *Say to this mountain: Mark's story of discipleship*, (1996, Orbis Books) notes that Jesus and his disciples do this 'crossing over' in Mark's gospel several times. "From Mark's point of view, this is Gentile territory, symbolising everything alien and threatening to the Jewish population west of the Sea. The function of this crossing pattern is to



*DSPR Jordan delivers food rations to some of the many refugees in need of food. \$87 pays for one box.*

dramatise the fact that, despite their cultural and political 'otherness', Mark's Jesus is determined to bring liberation to those on the other side." (p. 56)

Note too that the sea in biblical times represented chaos, disruption, unpredictable and uncontrollable forces which threatened to overwhelm. Jesus wants to cross to the other side. The very forces of nature conspire to impede him and his followers going to the social space of 'the others', bringing the liberation which lies at the heart of Jesus' ministry.

This seems like a pertinent Bible passage given that many refugees are forced to try to escape for their survival across dangerous waters. We hear the stories of the terror it represents for those escaping in overcrowded, unsafe boats. Consider what the sea represents for refugees trying to escape chaos, disruption and fear. As dangerous as the sea is, its perils are a better alternative than the chaos they face in their own country.

What are the 'forces of the storm' which conspire to both create a situation where people need to flee and claim refugee status in the first place, but which keep refugees in a place of



terror and chaos? Eg unscrupulous profiteers, inhospitable or overwhelmed countries, hunger, cold, sickness, lack of shelter, violence, the COVID pandemic....

**What does it mean to us as Jesus' followers to go with him 'to the other side' in order to bring liberation?**

What 'forces of the storm' might we have to contend with in order to be faithful to Jesus' call to us to be bearers of peace and liberation for those who are refugees and particularly for those refugees who are resettled in NZ?

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## LECTIONARY READINGS — July 4

### 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10

David is anointed King of Israel where he reigned for 40 years. He is generally regarded as Israel's greatest king.

The notion of the 'good King' in Israel's story is strongly tied to the covenant that was made with God. In response to God's love and care for them and their promised future, the people of Israel were to live lives reflecting their commitment to God which was most clearly seen in: not worshipping other gods, being a 'light to the nations' and living with justice and compassion towards the vulnerable... characterised as the widow, the orphan and the 'alien outsider'. The integrity and wellbeing of Israel's life as a nation was reflected in the way those who were most vulnerable were cared for and included.

**What does the notion of the 'good king' look like in our world, in Aotearoa New Zealand, in our life as a congregation, particularly as it relates to our care and welcome of refugees within our communities, and the help we extend to those overseas?**

### Psalm 48

(See Call to Worship below)





## 2 Corinthians 12:2-10

While we have significant issues around equity and equality, the life we live in Aotearoa New Zealand can seem very easy compared to the life of many around the world, particularly when we think of the experiences refugees have to endure.

Recognising the difficulty which many New Zealanders have in accessing the resources they need in order to thrive, being honest about the underlying issues of racial inequality, poverty and violence in our society, can help to create a humility within us. Our 'thorn in the flesh' can be a catalyst for standing in solidarity with others in their need.

## Mark 6:1-13

American theologian Walter Brueggemann talks about the two-fold task of the prophet of truth-telling and hope-bringing. The truth-telling word is not always appreciated and resistance or even rejection can sometimes be the reaction when the word spoken comes too close to home.

Jesus shows his disciples how to do it and then sends them out to preach the gospel to whoever is open to hearing it.

Jesus calls his followers to emphasise simplicity and humility along with an openness to those who welcome and offer hospitality to them. Not lingering or expending energy trying to convince those who are not receptive to the liberating message of God in Christ.

### **What might our truth-telling gospel task be when it comes to the issue of refugees?**

What resistance might we encounter? What might equip us for the task and what might we be best to discard so that we don't get weighed down or distracted from the task at hand?

'They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them' (v. 1)



*Eman teaches cooking skills to women attending one of DSPR's popular workshops.*

Mark shows the fruits of the gospel-bringing task. What might the fruits be from our courageous standing alongside those in our society who are vulnerable, including refugees?

## MUSIC FOR WORSHIP

- *Singing from the Lectionary* is a lectionary - based song/hymn resource by Australian Natalie Sims, Brunswick Uniting Church in Melbourne. She suggests songs/hymns for each week of the year and also has this page of suggestions for Refugee Sunday; <http://lectionarysong.blogspot.com/2009/08/refugee-and-migrant-sunday-august-30.html>
- Beauty for Brokenness - Graham Kendrick <https://youtu.be/MO1G-o7Yj-c>
- Let us build a house/All are welcome. Marty Haugen. <https://youtu.be/gKJgcv8SdnQ> (Church Hymnary 4th edition, number 198)

- Christ be our Light - Bernadette Farrell.  
<https://youtu.be/B63zLFQmp3U> (Church Hymnary, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, number 543)
- Welcome Home – Dave Dobbyn <https://youtu.be/WIz2uEuxyyk>
- Room at the Table – Carrie Newcomer  
[https://youtu.be/FkY\\_qBFs\\_3g](https://youtu.be/FkY_qBFs_3g)
- There Is A Time for Silence – by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette <https://vimeo.com/428897516> This song was written in response to the Black Lives Matter movement...but it can fit well with a theme of hospitality and solidarity with those who find themselves made refugees and needing to find welcome in a new country.
- Make me a channel of your peace (Prayer of St Francis, various hymnbooks)
- Malcolm Gordon's album *Songs for the Saints* has songs which are appropriate for the theme: eg Beneath the Southern Cross <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R86-04Z3uXg> . Also Korowai Tapu, Christ Before Me. You can purchase a digital version of the album, the songbook (digital or hard copy) and/or the CD at: <https://www.onevoice.org.nz/shop/page/2/>

## CALLS TO WORSHIP, AFFIRMATIONS, PRAYERS

### Based on Psalm 9 (lectionary June 20)

Let us give thanks to the LORD with our whole heart  
And tell of God's wonderful deeds.

**The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed  
A stronghold in times of trouble**

Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion  
**For God does not forget the cry of the afflicted.**

**We come to worship God.**

### Based on Psalm 48 (lectionary July 3)

Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in all the earth.

**We come to remember God's steadfast love and justice**

**To join in the praise of God which reaches to the ends of the earth.**

**Living Water, a liturgy from Iona Abbey.  
Holy Ground 2005. Wild Goose Worship.**



*DSPR Jordan trains trainers who teach young women about health and nutrition. It is an opportunity for the women to raise questions and share with one another.*

*Opening responses:*

Creator Spirit, wellspring of our lives,  
As the refreshing rain falls on the just and unjust alike

**Refresh us with your mercy**

**Who knows our own injustice.**

As the stream flows steadily on,  
Defying all the odds of stone and water

**Flow over every boundary and border**



**That separates us from each other.**

As the waters of our baptism washed us and welcomed us  
**Renew us now in newness of life and unity of love.**

As we were once held in the waters of our mother's womb  
**Hold us in the power and peace of your abiding presence.**

*Closing responses:*

A blessing on you who are poor,

**Yours is the kingdom of God**

A blessing on you who mourn

**You shall be comforted**

A blessing on you who hunger and thirst for justice

**You shall be satisfied.**

A blessing on you who make peace,

**You shall be called the children of God.**

**Amen**

**From In An Unjust World. Holy Ground 2005.  
Wild Goose Worship Group**

*Closing responses:*

Christ has no hands but our hands;

**No hands but our hands to do God's work in the world.**

Christ has no lips but our lips

**No lips but our lips to proclaim the good news.**

Christ has no love but our love;

**No love but our love to share with the imprisoned, the silenced, the persecuted, the marginalised. Amen.**



*Rohingya refugees face floods, food shortages, disease and now Covid –19.*

**From In Our Own Backyard. Holy Ground  
2005. Wild Goose Worship Group**

*Affirmation*

(said together)

We believe that God is present  
In the darkness before dawn;  
In the waiting and uncertainty  
Where fear and courage join hands,  
Conflict and caring link arms,  
And the sun rises over barbed wire.  
We believe in a with-us God  
Who sits down in our midst  
To share our humanity.  
We affirm a faith  
That takes us beyond the safe place:  
Into action, into vulnerability  
And into the streets.  
We commit ourselves to work for change  
And put ourselves on the line;  
To bear responsibility, take risks,  
Live powerfully and face humiliation;  
To stand with those on the edge;  
To choose life  
And be used by the Spirit  
For God's new community of hope.  
Amen

## From In Our Own Backyard, *Holy Ground* 2005. Wild Goose Worship Group

Opening responses: (slightly adapted)

Creator God, in Jesus we see you:  
born with no place to call home,  
making friends amongst the poor and rejected,  
living your life with no place to lay your head,  
challenging unjust ways and teaching us to  
share.

**Creator God, be among us as we offer you  
our worship.**

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### DEFINITIONS AND STATISTICS

A **refugee** is a person who, 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his [or her] nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.'

UN Convention on Refugees, 1951

Photo: Young refugees love to attend the Children's Forums run by DSPR Jordan. They play games, make crafts, sing and learn traditional dances. It is a welcome opportunity to make friends and escape the drudgery of every day life.



**"Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)** are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border." UNHCR

### Refugees By Numbers (2019)

Note: [UNHCR](#) will announce 2020 figures on World Refugee Day, June 20.

- 79.5 million displaced people.
- 45.7 million people are internally displaced.
- 26 million are refugees of whom 6.6 million are Syrian and 5.6 million Palestinian.
- 1% of the world's population is displaced.
- 107,800 people were resettled.
- 80% of displaced people live in countries or territories affected by acute food insecurity and malnutrition.
- 40% of the displaced people are children.
- 5.6 million people returned home.



## A STORY

### Refugees Face Challenges Together

*In Jordan, former refugees are helping newer refugees settle and create new lives. Young refugees like Assef are leading the way.*

*Like refugees everywhere, he wants to make his own way in a world where everyone is accepted and has a place.*

Assef has spent his whole life in the Al Husn Refugee Camp, set up by the United Nations north of Amman in 1968. His parents fled their home in Beersheba, Palestine during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. They cannot return without a robust peace agreement with Israel.

Ten years ago, the first refugees from Syria began to arrive at Al Husn, a cramped cluster of small homes often built on top of each other and home to around 35,000 refugees. Unemployment is the highest across the UN's 13 camps in Jordan. The hot, dusty streets are busy even with Covid.

The Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees Jordan runs the Husn Centre which is open to all refugees in the camp. Staff like Assef's mother warmly welcome the new arrivals and find ways to get them the support they need. Thankfully they have successfully integrated around 2,000 Syrian refugees into camp life.

Assef first became involved with the Centre when he was eight years old. He says he grew up at the Children's Forums, a regular opportunity to learn crafts, play sports and have

fun. Assef says he became more confident and learned how to talk to others at the Forums. Skills that have made the seventeen year old the young leader he is today.

Now he can be found concentrating in front of a computer or playing with a small machine, surrounded by a group of young people. He loves to make robots and writing the codes that make small trucks turn or flip by themselves.

"After nine years participating in DSPR activities and exhibitions, I have become more knowledgeable about the robot industry. I have participated in robot contests on a regional level and am looking forward to continuing my university studies in the field that I adore.

"In the meantime, I am still loyal and committed to the place that gave me all the success: DSPR. I help the team there with all activities related to children and through youth forums that are conducted there to give training courses on smart phone programming, how to best utilise mobile applications, robots manufacturing, and on IT."

"I hope one day to work at NASA," says Assef.

*Over the last year, Covid-19 has made life harder for many refugees. Rations have been cut, schools closed and services reduced. At home, tensions are increasing the risk of gender-based violence and forced marriages among young woman. DSPR is a safe place for mothers and young women to explore these issues.*

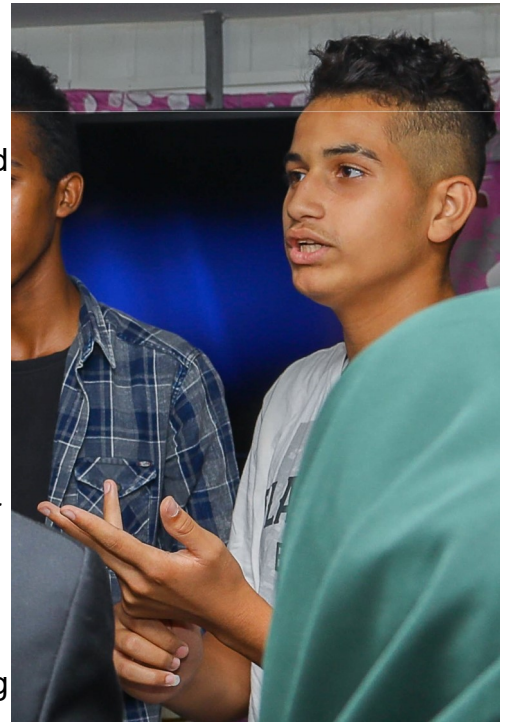


Photo: Assef has the confidence to share his views with visitors to Al Husn.





*Photo: Yazidi boys returning from school in northern Iraq. ACT Alliance members have supported Yazidi and other displaced people for many years.*

## OPERATION REFUGEE

CWS invites you to join this year's [Operation Refugee](#) which runs from June 20 to October 24. It is an opportunity to show your concern for refugees and support the work of the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon.

Funds raised will enable the DSPR to provide more medical care, run education programmes for all ages and distribute emergency supplies for refugees from Iraq, Palestine and Syria in Jordan and Lebanon. DSPR welcomes everyone and makes sure the refugees themselves have networks of support and opportunities to learn new skills for their new situation.

**Organiser Eric Park is keen to talk to anyone who is interested. Please contact him on phone: 022 377 6606 or [eric.park@cws.org.nz](mailto:eric.park@cws.org.nz).**

### There are two streams:

**[Food for Life](#)** involves organising a banquet or feast in homes or at church. This new initiative proved popular last year after the isolation of lockdown. Individuals may like to try living on the Food Box (equivalent to an emergency food package distributed in Jordan) or \$32 for five days or two days for students.

**[Walk the Talk](#)**, emphasises the journey people who leave their homes make. Participants can set their own walking goal or organise a sponsored walk or similar event.



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<https://cwsoperationrefugee.nz/>