



Bridges to Belonging:

**Welcoming Newcomers to the Classroom
and the Community**

Lesson Plans

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Introduction

The **Bridges to Belonging** curriculum is designed to foster understanding, empathy, and a sense of community among students as they learn about the experiences of refugees and newcomers. Through stories, discussions, and activities, this curriculum aims to create a classroom environment where students not only gain knowledge about the global refugee experience but also reflect on the importance of inclusion, kindness, and belonging.



Pre-Lesson Series Activity

Setting a Classroom Contract: A Foundation for Respectful and Mindful Conversations

Before we begin discussing the sensitive topics of refugees and resettlement, it is important to ensure that our classroom is a safe and respectful space for everyone. By creating a Classroom Contract together, we set clear expectations for how we will engage with one another throughout this lesson series. This contract serves as a collective agreement that encourages kindness, active listening, and respect for the diverse experiences and perspectives that each student brings to the classroom. Since some students may have personal connections to the topics we will explore, it is essential that we create a supportive environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts—or choosing not to share—without fear of judgment. This contract will be our guide to having thoughtful, compassionate conversations that promote understanding and learning while honoring everyone's voice and experience. If your classroom already has a classroom contract, then feel free to take this time to review it with students and update as needed.

Materials Needed:

- **Markers**
- **Posterboard**

ACTIVITY

Classroom Contract

Have students assist the teacher in creating a classroom contract. Allow students to provide examples of what the contract should consist of. This activity can be done on a poster board. Consider having all the students sign the contract after the classroom agreements have been added.

Some possible examples:

- **Listen Respectfully:** We will listen to each other without interrupting.
- **Listen to Understand:** We will listen carefully to understand what others are saying, not just think about what we want to say next.
- **Discuss Ideas, Not People:** We can talk about ideas we might not agree with, but we will never say mean things about the person sharing them.
- **Share to Learn:** We will share our thoughts to help everyone learn, not to argue or persuade.
- **Use Respectful Language:** We will avoid blaming others, guessing about their thoughts, or using hurtful words.
- **Give Everyone a Turn:** We will make sure everyone gets a chance to speak and share their thoughts.
- **Avoid Assumptions:** We will not make guesses about people or groups and will not ask anyone to speak for a whole group of people.

TEACHING TIP

For comprehensive list of considerations please reference: **Setting Classroom Guidelines for Conversations on Migration and Displacement** in the **Educator Implementation Guide**

Lesson 1

Who Are Refugees?

This lesson introduces students to refugees and the concept of resettlement. In this lesson students will be encouraged to think about the idea of “home” and the challenges people face when they are forced to leave their homes behind. We will talk about the journeys many refugees undertake, watch videos that share real stories, and have meaningful discussions to help students develop empathy and understanding for newcomers in their community.

By the end of this lesson, students will gain a clearer understanding of the terms “refugee” and “resettlement” and will be able to talk about them confidently. This is the first step toward building a compassionate classroom community where students can think deeply about welcoming newcomers and understanding the global issues that shape our world.

Materials Needed:

- **A projector screen**
- **White board**
- **Notebooks for the students, pens/pencils**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES (LESSON 1 - SLIDE 2)

- To learn the key terms “refugee” and “resettlement”
- To better understand and empathize with the journey of a refugee
- To discuss what can make refugees feel more welcome

CURRICULUM STANDARD: 4-Individual Development and Identity

OPENING ACTIVITY

Home: A Personal Reflection (LESSON 1 - SLIDE 3)

In this activity, students will reflect on their personal understanding of the word “home” by journaling or drawing what comes to mind when they hear the word. Whether it is a place, a feeling, or a collection of people and experiences, the concept of home can mean something different for everyone. This reflection encourages students to connect with their own experiences while preparing them to consider the significance of home in the context of refugees and resettlement. After a few minutes of quiet reflection, students will have the opportunity to share their artwork or one of the words that best represents home for them.

1. Ask students to use their notebooks to journal or draw what they think of when they hear the word home. Allow students 3-4 minutes to complete this task.
2. Call on a few students to share their artwork or one of the words they wrote down to represent home.

Who are Refugees? (LESSON 1 - SLIDE 4)

Refugees are people forced to flee their own country and seek safety in another country. They are unable to return to their own country because of feared persecution, war, or violence due to who they are, what they believe in or say, or because of armed conflict, violence, or serious public disorder.

There are many reasons a refugee might flee their home but here are a few:

- Physical factors natural disasters, famine, and hunger
- Social factors being differing religious or cultural belief to their country of residence
- Political factors such as war and conflict

ACTIVITY

Watch the following video — [Who Are Refugees? \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

What is Resettlement? (LESSON 1 - SLIDE 5)

As refugees move to new communities, like here in the United States, they begin a process called resettlement, which means starting a new life in a new place. Unfortunately, only 1% of refugees end up being resettled in a new country. In 2023, the U.S. welcomed just over 60,000 refugees. When refugees arrive, they often need help with things like finding a home, learning the language, and getting used to new customs. Resettlement agencies work with them to make sure they have the support they need, but it can still be hard. Everything might feel different, and it can take time for refugees to feel at home in their new community.

ACTIVITY

Watch this video: [Who are Refugees | Resettlement Process \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION (LESSON 1 – SLIDE 6)

Time: 10 minutes

Facilitate a discussion with the class around the following questions:

- What would make you feel more welcome if you had just moved to a completely new place?
- What support might you need if you moved to a new community?
- What are ways you can be a welcoming neighbor to refugees arriving to your community?
 - Some possible examples:
 - Be friendly and kind to new neighbors in your community
 - Consider donating to resettlement agencies (if you have any toys or clothes that you do not use anymore, these could be used all over again by someone else!)
 - Do not assume things about new people that you meet
 - Be open minded when meeting newcomers in your community and listen to their stories if they choose to share them with you.

ACTIVITY

Matching Activity: Understanding the Reasons People Leave Their Homes

(LESSON 1 – SLIDE 7)

Instructions: Have students work with their neighbor to discuss which factor matches each scenario. After a few minutes, come together as a class and ask students to share their thoughts and match each factor to the correct story.

Below are the correct matches between scenarios and factors:

- **Political Factor:** Anh has been forced to leave his home due to a conflict that has started in his country. This conflict started because some of the country's citizens were not happy with a recent decision made by the government.
- **Social Factor:** A Muslim family has had to leave their home in Myanmar because they were not accepted by others around them for their religious beliefs.
- **Physical Factor:** The weather where Fatima lives has become increasingly warm with very little rain, and this has caused all her family's crops to dry up leaving them without sufficient food supplies.

ACTIVITY

Students Meet Refugees (LESSON 1- SLIDE 8)

Tomorrow, we will continue this journey by reading *Brothers in Hope*, a powerful story by Mary Williams. This story follows the journey of a young boy, Garang, as he navigates displacement and resettlement. Through Garang's story, we will explore the difficult, yet hopeful, experiences of refugees and deepen our understanding of the paths they take toward building new lives in new places.

Close the lesson by showing the video: [Kids Meet A Refugee | Kids Meet | HiHo Kids \(youtube.com\)](#)

Then have students take out their journal and write down 3-5 questions they might want to ask another student who was a refugee.



Lesson 2

A Refugee's Journey

In today's lesson, we will continue building on what we learned in Lesson 1 by exploring the journeys that refugees, like the young boy Garang in *Brothers in Hope*, experience between displacement and resettlement. This lesson will help students understand the reasons people flee their homes by examining real-world conflicts in places like Sudan, Ukraine, and Afghanistan. We will start reading *Brothers in Hope*, reflect on the experiences of refugees, and engage in activities that promote empathy and creativity. By the end of the lesson, students will have a better understanding of the journey refugees take and the challenges they face.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES (LESSON 2 - SLIDE 2)

- Students will learn about some of the situations happening in different countries that make people have to leave their homes and find safety somewhere else.
- Students will get to know the characters in the story *Brothers in Hope*
- Students will learn about a young boy's journey as he looks for a new place to call home.

Materials Needed:

- **A projector screen**
- **White board**
- **Notebooks for the students, pens/ pencils**
- **Book: *Brothers in Hope* by Mary Williams**
- **Matching worksheet for Activity 1**
- **1 Comic strip template per student**

CURRICULUM STANDARD: 3-People, Places, and Environments

OPENING ACTIVITY

Review of Definitions (LESSON 2 - SLIDE 3)

To begin today's lesson, we will review what we learned yesterday by engaging in a matching activity. On the left side of the PowerPoint, you will see several key terms we discussed, and on the right side, you will find their definitions. Your task is to work with a partner to match each term to its correct definition. This activity will help reinforce your understanding of important concepts like "refugee" and "resettlement," as well as the different factors—such as social, religious, physical, and political reasons—that can force people to leave their homes. After a few minutes, we will come together as a class to discuss the answers and ensure everyone is clear on these key ideas. Below are the correct pairings for the activity.

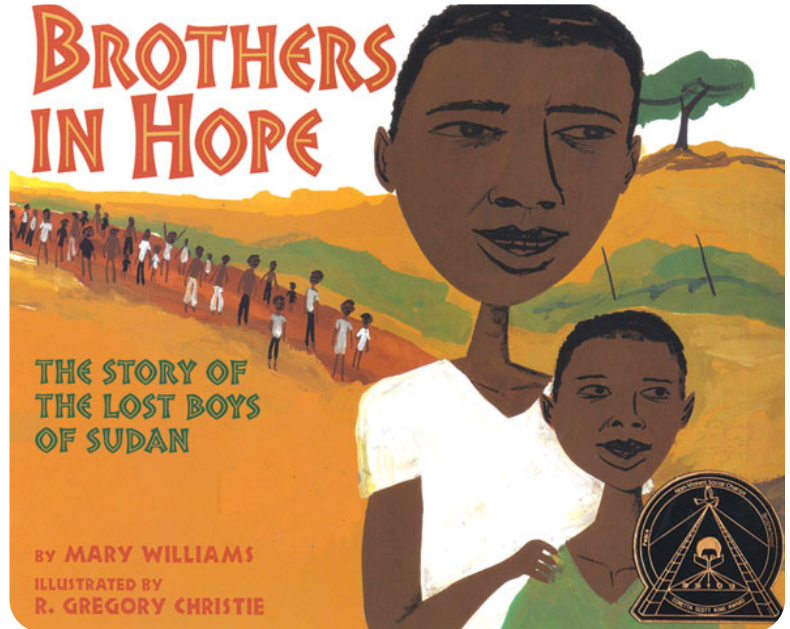
- **Refugee:** A person who is forced to flee their own country and seek safety in another country.
- **Resettlement:** A voluntary, safe, and regulated transfer of people in need of international protection from the country where they are registered to another country which has agreed to admit them as refugees.
- **Social and Religious Factors for leaving:** A family being persecuted in certain countries based on their religious beliefs.

- **Physical Factors for leaving:** A family facing extreme weather conditions like flooding and tropical storms meaning that it is no longer safe to live in their area.
- **Political Factors for leaving:** relates to the way in which a country is governed, and the decisions made that can directly affect its citizens.

Let's meet the characters of *Brothers in Hope* (LESSON 2 - SLIDE 4)

As we begin reading *Brothers in Hope* by Mary Williams, we will meet several characters who will help us understand the journey of refugees. The main character is Garang, a young boy from Sudan who is forced to leave his home because of war. Along his journey, Garang meets other boys who have also been displaced, and together they form a new kind of family. These boys, often called the "Lost Boys of Sudan," must face many challenges as they search for safety, food, and a new home. Throughout the book, you will learn about their courage, hope, and the importance of helping each other. As we read, we will explore their experiences and talk about how they find strength in difficult situations.

Before we begin reading let's get to know a few of the characters in the book:



- **Tom** - Tom is from the United States and plays a crucial role in helping Garang and the other boys find safety. He is kind, compassionate, and committed to making a difference. Tom works tirelessly to ensure the boys are cared for and helps them find new homes once they arrive in the U.S. After returning to the U.S., he continues his mission to find permanent, safe homes for the boys, ultimately succeeding in helping them resettle and start new lives.
- **Garang** (guh-RANG) - Garang is the central character in *Brothers in Hope*. He is a young boy from Sudan who is forced to flee his home due to war. Despite the tremendous challenges he faces, Garang quickly becomes a natural leader among the "Lost Boys," guiding others—including his younger friend Chuti—through the dangers of displacement. His strength, determination, and sense of responsibility make him a respected figure among the boys. Garang spends ten years in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya before resettling in the United States, where he begins a new chapter of his life.
- **Chuti** (CHOO-tee)- Chuti is the youngest of the boys and is taken under Garang's wing. Though young, Chuti is brave and resilient, showing remarkable strength in the face of danger. Garang takes on the role of an older brother to Chuti, ensuring that he is cared for and protected. Throughout their journey, Chuti remains calm and strong, inspiring others with his courage. Eventually, he, too, is resettled in the United States, where he can begin living a more stable life alongside Garang.
- **Ladies of the Village** - The village ladies represent the kindness and generosity of strangers along the boys' journey. When the Lost Boys arrive at the Ethiopian border, these women are there to welcome them. Concerned for their safety, they direct the boys to a refugee camp in Ethiopia, offering them guidance and help on their difficult journey. Their warmth and care provide much-needed comfort to the boys as they continue seeking a safe place to call home.

These characters each play a significant role in the story, helping us understand the challenges and hope that come with displacement and resettlement. As we read, we will see how these individuals work together to overcome adversity and build a new future.

The Conflict that Affected Garang and His Friends (LESSON 2 – SLIDE 5)

In 1983, a civil war began in Sudan, which created a lot of hardship for people living there. The government and different groups of people disagreed, and this led to conflict. Because of this war, many families had to leave their homes to find safety. Around 20,000 boys, including Garang and his friends, were forced to leave their villages to escape danger.

Many of these boys were incredibly young, just 6 or 7 years old, and they had to rely on each other for safety and support. They began a long journey on foot, traveling together to reach a safe place in Ethiopia. Although the journey was difficult, the boys showed great strength and courage as they helped one another along the way.

After walking over 1,000 miles, they arrived at a refugee camp in Kenya called Kakuma, where they found a safer place to live. These boys became known as the Lost Boys of Sudan, and their journey is a story of resilience, hope, and the power of community.

Garang's story of being forced to leave his home in Sudan is, sadly, not unique. Around the world, many people face the same challenges of leaving behind everything they know in search of safety. Whether due to war, persecution, or natural disasters, families and individuals often have no choice but to flee. Just like Garang, there are millions of people today who are displaced and seeking refuge in new places. In countries like Ukraine and Afghanistan, conflicts have caused countless people to leave their homes, looking for safety and hope in a new land. As we learn more about Garang's journey, we will also take a closer look at what is happening in these countries and how displacement affects people everywhere.



Similar Stories: Understanding the Crisis in Ukraine (LESSON 2 – SLIDE 6)

In February 2022 Russia targeted Ukraine and began to attack. Russian forces have targeted Ukrainians leading to more than 8 million refugees who fled the country to find safety. This has caused thousands of civilian casualties and destroyed key infrastructure such as housing, schools, and hospitals.

Families who have escaped to neighboring countries arrived with only the clothes on their backs. The Ukrainian economy has also plummeted, leaving these refugees with little or no financial security.

Following this, Ukrainian refugees were welcomed into the United States and offered protection. Resettlement agencies, like Church World Service, have responded and supported community members to welcome Ukrainians to their communities through the Uniting for Ukraine to this and are assisting to resettle the refugees into a new life in the U.S.

Welcoming Communities: How the U.S. is Supporting Ukrainian Refugees

(LESSON 2 - SLIDE 7)

Church World Service and other national resettlement agencies in the United States have taken an active role in welcoming displaced Ukrainians by supporting sponsor groups welcoming through the Uniting for Ukraine program. Through this program, CWS recruits, trains, and supports sponsor groups for the first six months of the sponsorship period, helping Ukrainian families achieve safety and stability in their new communities.

These groups of Americans assist Ukrainians with key support when they arrive in the United States, including:

- Finding and setting up homes
- Welcoming at the airport
- Enrolling children in school
- Accessing English language programs
- Finding employment
- Applying for government benefits
- Attending medical appointments
- Navigating cultural orientation
- Becoming new neighbors and friends to Ukrainians



Similar Stories: Understanding the Crisis in Afghanistan

(LESSON 2 – SLIDE 8)

Afghanistan is a country in South Central Asia that has been caught in war and fighting for decades. This is because the Taliban, a religious extremist group, took control of the Afghan government in 2022 and enforced extremely strict rules making it unsafe for Afghans.

This was after the U.S. armed forces retreated to America after hoping that the peace agreements made between the Taliban and the Afghan government would follow through. But despite their previous efforts, this was not the case, and many Afghans have been forced to leave the country.

Since then, over 75,000 Afghans started arriving in the United States to rebuild their lives. They are fleeing punishments or persecution from the Taliban and have one goal: to live in safety. Again, organizations such as CWS have made it their mission to help Afghans do this.

Introduction to the Azimi Family Story (LESSON 2- SLIDE 9)

Let's explore a real-life example of a family who had to leave their home and start over in a new place. We will watch a video that tells the story of the Azimi family, who were among the many people evacuated from Afghanistan when Kabul fell. They were welcomed to the United States, where Church World Service helped them begin a new life. This video will help us understand what it is like for families to be forced to leave their homes and the kind of support they need to rebuild their lives in a new community. As you watch, think about what the family went through and reflect on what you would need if you had to start a new life in a completely different place.

ACTIVITY

Watch the following video:

[CWS Client Profile | the Azimi Family \(youtube.com\)](#)

REFLECTION (LESSON 2- SLIDE 10)

After watching the video, have the students journal for 5 minutes on one of the following prompts:

- What did you learn from this video?
- What emotions might you have if you were told you had to leave your home immediately without warning?
- Would you need to start a new life in a new place?
- What might be some of the challenges you would have moving to a new home in a different country?
- If your family was forced to leave your home immediately and you only have time to grab three things before you leave to carry on your journey, what three things would you take?

Purpose: Encourage empathy and reflection on what students might experience being forcibly displaced from their home.

ACTIVITY

Read Aloud *Brothers in Hope* by Mary Williams (LESSON 2- SLIDE 11)

Read pages 1-12 and ask students to consider the reflection question on the side and be prepared to journal their responses after the reading.

- How do you think Garang or Chuti feel? How might you feel if you were in their situation?
- How far do you think you could walk in a day?
- If you had just walked around 20 miles, what kind of food would you want to eat?
- How would you feel physically and mentally after walking this long distance?

ACTIVITY

Comic Strip Activity (LESSON 2 – SLIDE 12)

Today, we will be putting ourselves in Garang’s shoes by creating a comic strip. You will choose one of the three scenarios where Garang faced a challenge and imagine how you would navigate it if you were in his position. You will draw your story using stick figures in a three-box comic strip, but remember, you can only write two sentences per box. Feel free to add color to bring your ideas to life!

Here are your three scenarios to choose from:

- Garang was tending to his animals when violence struck. He went and hid in the shadows of the trees. What would you have done with the animals, and where would you hide?
- Garang returned to his village and found it destroyed, then he met other boys just like him along the road. What would you say to them? Would you join them?
- Garang was chosen to be a team leader and had to look after a younger boy like Chuti. If you were a team leader, how would you organize the group, and how would you care for a 5-year-old?

Think about the challenges Garang faced and how he solved them, and come up with your own creative solutions in your comic strip.

Closing

As we wrap up Lesson 2, we have taken a closer look at Garang’s story in *Brothers in Hope* and explored the difficult choices refugees face when leaving their homes. We have also begun to understand how displacement affects people from places like Sudan, Ukraine, and Afghanistan. Tomorrow, we will continue reading *Brothers in Hope* and learn more about the experiences of refugees as they navigate life in new countries. Thank you for your engagement today, and I look forward to seeing your insights as we continue this important journey together.

Lesson 3

A Deeper Dive into A Refugee's Journey

LEARNING OBJECTIVES (LESSON 3 - SLIDE 2)

- Students will gain a deeper understanding of some of the larger refugee crises the world has faced.
- Students will be able to name at least two national resettlement agencies
- Students will continue learning about *Brothers in Hope* and further build empathy for the journey refugees take when they are forced to flee.

Materials Needed:

- **A projector screen**
- **A white board**
- **Notebooks for the students**
- **Book *Brothers in Hope* by Mary Williams**

CURRICULUM STANDARD: 5-Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

OPENING ACTIVITY

Review (LESSON 3 - SLIDE 3)

In today's lesson, we will continue our exploration of the journeys that refugees take by looking at real-world conflicts that have displaced millions of people, including those in Vietnam and Syria. We will explore how these events have led people to seek safety and start new lives in countries like the United States. Together, we will also learn about the critical role resettlement agencies, such as Church World Service, play in helping refugees rebuild their lives. As we continue reading *Brothers in Hope*, you will have the opportunity to reflect on the experiences of Garang and the Lost Boys through a creative writing activity, where you will step into their shoes and express what life might have been like for them. To start today let's spend some time reflecting on what we have learned yesterday by responding to this question:

What two conflicts did we discuss yesterday and why did people need to flee?

- **Ukraine:** Russian forces have targeted Ukrainians leading to more than 8 million refugees who fled the country to find safety.
- **Afghanistan:** In Afghanistan, the Taliban, a religious extremist group, took control of the Afghan government in 2022 and enforced extremely strict rules making it unsafe for Afghans.

Statistics of Displacement (LESSON 3 SLIDE 4)

Throughout history, conflicts, and wars have displaced millions of people, forcing them to leave their homes in search of safety. From the massive movements of people during World War II to the ongoing war in Ukraine, these numbers represent not just statistics, but millions of individual stories of survival, resilience, and hope. As we go through these numbers, consider the immense challenges that refugees have faced throughout time and continue to face today as they seek new beginnings.

- **World War II:** 60 million refugees (1939-1945)
- **Partition of India:** 10-20 million refugees (1947-1948)
- **World War I:** 7-15 million refugees (1914-1918)
- **Russia invasion of Ukraine:** 9.2 million refugees (2022-present)
- **Bangladesh Liberation War:** 9.0 million refugees (1971-71 8 months)
- **Crisis in Venezuela:** 8.9 million refugees (2014-present)
- **Syrian Civil War:** 6.7 million refugees (2011-present)
- **Soviet Afghan War:** 6.2 million refugees (1978-1989)
- **War in Afghanistan:** 2.6-2.7 million refugees (2001-2021)
- **War in Sudan:** 2.0 million refugees (2023-present)

In the next few slides, we will take a closer look at two other countries and the situations refugees faced there.

Understanding the Crisis in Vietnam (LESSON 3 – SLIDE 5)

Your overview provides a clear summary of key events related to the Vietnam War and its impact on civilians, especially in the context of refugee resettlement. To enhance it, you could consider adding a bit more context on the broader timeline of the conflict and the long-term impact on refugees. Here is a revised version with some additions:

In 1975, after years of conflict, the Vietnam War reached its peak, leading to the fall of Saigon and the takeover of South Vietnam by communist forces. As a result, many South Vietnamese citizens faced severe human rights violations, including forced relocation, imprisonment as political prisoners, and even death. The collapse of the South Vietnamese government and the new regime's oppressive policies forced many citizens to flee their homes in search of safety.

In the aftermath of the war, nearly 120,000 people were rescued and granted asylum, with many being relocated to the United States and other Western nations through organized resettlement programs. This mass exodus of Vietnamese refugees continued for years after the war, with an additional wave of refugees known as "boat people," who fled dangerous conditions in makeshift boats, risking their lives to escape.

One notable event during this period was Operation Babylift, the evacuation of thousands of infants and children from South Vietnam to the United States and other countries. This humanitarian effort rescued children who were orphaned or abandoned during the conflict.

President Gerald Ford, who was in office at the time, played a significant role in welcoming these refugees. He personally greeted many of the new arrivals in San Francisco, helping to ensure they received the support and resources needed to rebuild their lives in the United States.



Understanding the Crisis in Syria (LESSON 3 - SLIDE 6)

In 2011, the Syrian refugee crisis began, sparked by the arrest of teenagers for anti-government graffiti. This event triggered public demonstrations that quickly escalated into nationwide protests and a brutal government crackdown.

The conflict, part of the broader Arab Spring, evolved into a full-scale civil war, involving multiple factions including government forces, rebel groups, and foreign interventions. The war has displaced millions of Syrians, forcing them to flee their homes.

Thirteen years later, 16.7 million people, or 70% of the population, require humanitarian assistance. Over 6.7 million Syrians have fled the country, with millions more internally displaced, making it one of the largest refugee crises in history.

In 2023, two powerful earthquakes in Türkiye and Northern Syria added further destruction, compounding the crises for millions of displaced Syrians. Syrian refugees have sought asylum in over 130 countries, with neighboring nations like Türkiye and Lebanon hosting the majority.



Resettlement Agencies in the United States — Providing Lifesaving Support (LESSON 3 SLIDE 7)

Let's take a few moments to watch the following video to learn how resettlement agencies work with the U.S. government to welcome newcomer refugees into a new home and community.

[How Resettlement Agencies Work with the U.S. Government \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Resettlement can be a complicated process that involves government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community partners. Each service has its own role:

- **Government agencies:** Makes resources and services available to the newcomer refugees. These resources include funding for food, clothes and rent and services such as financial help and health care.
- **Non-profit Organizations:** Funded by the U.S. government and private donors to help support newcomer refugees when they enter the United States. Helps provide the refugees with English Language classes and receive work authorizations and apply for jobs.
- **Community Partners:** Local businesses and faith-based organizations can also offer support by volunteering their time, providing donations, co-sponsoring newcomer families and helping to create a welcoming environment for their new neighbors.

Who are the Resettlement Agencies in the United States?

(LESSON 3 – SLIDE 8)

- Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC)
- Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM)
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)
- Global Refugee
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
- World Relief Corporation (WR)
- Bethany Christian Services
- Church World Service (CWS)

ACTIVITY

Read *Brothers in Hope* pages 13-24

REFLECTION

(LESSON 3- SLIDE 9)

Have students choose one of the following activities to write about in their journal:

Option 1

- What friends would you trust to travel along this challenging and dangerous journey with and why? Do you have any siblings and how would you go about caring for them on a journey like this?
- Do you know of any inspiring figures such as Garang and Tom who you admire and view as a hero in society?

Option 2: Creative Journal Entry

- Place yourself in the shoes of Garang. Write a journal entry that answers the following question: How would you feel? What would you be seeing? What would you be hearing? What would you be thinking?
- You have just moved to a new town and will be starting at a new school next Monday. The place is currently unfamiliar to you, and you go out exploring. Who will you meet along the way? What will you see in your new town? What does your house look like? How do you feel about starting at a new school?

Closing

As we conclude Lesson 3, we have explored some of the largest refugee crises in history and discussed how resettlement agencies like CWS have been instrumental in helping refugees rebuild their lives. We also began diving deeper into the personal stories from *Brothers in Hope* to better understand the emotional and physical challenges refugees face. Tomorrow, we will continue reading *Brothers in Hope* and reflect on how each of us can contribute to creating a welcoming environment for those displaced by conflict. Thank you for your thoughtful participation today!

Lesson 4

Creating Welcoming Communities

LEARNING OBJECTIVES (LESSON 4 - SLIDE 2)

- Reflect on what we have learned about Garang's journey so far.
- Understand how Garang's journey mirrors the experiences of other refugees.
- Explore ways we can make our school and community more welcoming for refugees.
- Engage in creative, compassionate letter-writing to express support for refugees and advocate for welcoming communities.

Materials Needed:

- A projector screen
- Notebooks for the students
- *Brothers in Hope* by Mary Williams
- Paper, pencils, and envelopes

CURRICULUM STANDARD: 10-Civic Ideals and Practices

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

Review (LESSON 4 - SLIDE 3)

To start today's lesson, we will spend some time reflecting on what we have learned about Garang so far and his journey. Ask the students the following question:

- What have we learned about Garang and his journey so far?
- Has Garang changed at all, if so, in what way?

ACTIVITY

Read *Brothers in Hope* pages 25-42

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION (LESSON 4 - SLIDE 4)

- Do you know anyone who has resettled in the United States like Garang?
- What do you think could make Garang feel more welcomed in his new home? And why is it important to make our new neighbors feel welcome?
- Do you know any caring individuals like Tom, who never forgot about Garang and his friends and offered them a new and safe home?

ACTIVITY

What is it like to have no home? (LESSON 4 - SLIDE 5)

Have the students watch the following video: [Kids, refugees, questions: 'What is it like to have no home?'](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) ([youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com))

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION (LESSON 4 - SLIDE 4)

Have the students turn to their neighbor and discuss the following questions

- What do you think of when you heard the word Welcome?
- How did Tom welcome Garang to his new home?
- What are ways we can ensure our school is a welcoming place for students like Garang?
- What is something that someone could do if you were in Garang's shoes to make you feel welcome in a new country?

ACTIVITY

Letters of Welcome (LESSON 4 - SLIDE 7)

- Write a letter to a refugee student and welcome them to the United States. Share about your hopes and dreams for them as they adjust to their new life in America. You can include your favorite holidays, customs, foods, and activities.
 - Mail or hand deliver these letters of welcome to the nearest resettlement agency.
- Write a letter to your city mayor and/or city council about why you want your city to be a welcoming city and a safe landing place for refugees. Be sure to include why you think welcoming refugees will make your community a better place.
 - Deeper Dive: Consider mailing these letters to your city mayor
- Write a letter to the president of the United States and share why you think America should be a welcoming country. Be sure to include why you think welcoming refugees will make your community a better place.
 - Deeper Dive: Consider mailing these letters to the President of the United States

TEACHING TIP

Call ahead and schedule a tour of your closest resettlement office, or arrange a field trip to the office, to see how resettlement happens in their community. To find the resettlement affiliate in your community [click here](#).

Closing Question (LESSON 4 - SLIDE 8)

End the lesson by asking the students how they felt writing their letters of welcome. Emphasize the power using your voice to stand up for others and the power of their words in making others feel safe and included. Remind them that by writing these letters, they are actively contributing to creating a more welcoming community. Tie this back into civic practices and why we should take steps to let our voices be heard.

Lesson 5

Becoming a Welcoming Student

LEARNING OBJECTIVES (LESSON 5 - SLIDE 2)

- Students will explore and reflect on the concept of belonging, discussing personal experiences and the emotional impact of feeling included in a community.
- Students will learn specific actions they can take to help refugee students and newcomers feel welcomed, both in their school and in the wider community.
- By the end of the lesson, the class will brainstorm and decide on a group project that will promote belonging and help refugee students or newcomers feel more comfortable in their new environment.

Materials Needed:

- **A projector screen**
- **Notebooks/Journals**

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

Exploring Belonging (LESSON 5 - SLIDE 3)

In today's lesson, we will focus on what it means to be a welcoming student and how we can foster a sense of belonging for those around us, especially for newcomers like refugees. Belonging is something that everyone needs—whether it is feeling part of a community, school, or group of friends. Through exploring real stories, engaging in meaningful discussions, and reflecting on our own experiences, we will learn how small acts of kindness and understanding can create a welcoming environment for everyone. By the end of the lesson, we will work together to come up with a class project that will help us make a tangible difference in welcoming newcomers to our community.

We are going to begin today's lesson by exploring the concept of belonging, something that is important to all of us. Have students turn to their neighbors and reflect on these prompts:

- What does belonging mean to you?
- Share a time in your life when you felt like you belonged.
- Encourage students to think deeply about the emotions and experiences tied to belonging and how we all need to feel accepted and connected.

ACTIVITY

Belonging: Fugees Academy (LESSON 5 - SLIDE 4)

Now, we will watch a video that highlights the power of friendship and belonging among refugee teens. As you watch Teen Refugees Show Us What True Friendship Looks Like from the Kid President Travel Show, pay close attention to how these young people build strong friendships despite facing many challenges.

[Teen Refugees Show Us What True Friendship Looks Like | Kid President Travel Show Ep 4 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION (LESSON 5 - SLIDE 5)

After watching the video, we will reflect together as a class on what we have learned about belonging and friendship:

- What did you learn from the video about belonging?
- What did you learn about friendship?
- What key takeaways can you learn from this video to make your school a safe and welcoming place for newcomers?
- What specific things could you do to make refugee students feel welcome in your classroom, your school, your neighborhood, and your community?

REFLECTION (LESSON 5 - SLIDE 6)

In your notebook, consider the following questions and write a response or draw a picture of what it feels like to belong:

- What contributes to that feeling?
- What makes you feel like you belong to your classroom, school, and community?

ACTIVITY

Welcoming leads to Belonging (LESSON 5 - SLIDE 7)

At the end of *Brothers in Hope*, we see Tom return to the refugee camp with good news about a new home in the United States for Garang and his friends to move to.

What you do as an individual to make newcomers feel welcome? Here are some possible ideas below:

- Volunteer with your parents at a resettlement organization
- Donate money or items to a local resettlement organization
- Be welcoming to new neighbors in your community through sponsoring and welcoming a newcomer.
- Offer to help newcomers with English or homework in your neighborhood
- Invite newcomers over to community events



Building Belonging Together (LESSON 5 – SLIDE 8)

Now that we have learned about the importance of belonging and how we can welcome newcomers, let's take it a step further by doing something as a class to help create a welcoming environment for refugees in our own community.

As a group, let's brainstorm and come up with an activity or project we can do together. Here are some ideas to get us started:

- **Welcome Kits:** Collect items such as school supplies, hygiene products, or books to create welcome kits for newly arrived refugee students. Then partner with a local resettlement organization to deliver them. Classrooms can also partner with CWS to collect items for kits through the CWS Kits program.
- **Buddy System:** Create a buddy system in our school where students can volunteer to be buddies for new students, helping them adjust and feel at home.
- **Welcome Posters or Artwork:** Design and create welcome posters or artwork that can be displayed in our school or sent to local resettlement agencies or used to welcome newcomers at the airport. These posters can carry messages of kindness, acceptance, and belonging.
- **Host a Welcoming Event:** Plan a welcoming event, such as a lunch or a fun activity, where new students in the community or school can meet others and feel part of the group.
- **Sponsor a newcomer family as a classroom.** You can watch a video on [sponsorship](#) here.

Together, we will decide on one activity we can work on as a class to build belonging and make a difference in the lives of newcomers. Let's talk about what is possible, and how we can all contribute to creating a more welcoming community!

Closing Letter

Dear Educator,

Thank you for guiding your students through the Bridges to Belonging curriculum. We hope you and your class have not only gained a deeper understanding of refugees and resettlement but that it also helped you explore meaningful ways to create a welcoming environment in their own school and community. As students reflected on their own experiences of belonging and learned about the challenges faced by refugee newcomers, you have fostered a sense of empathy, compassion, and global awareness in your classroom.

Please encourage your students to carry these lessons forward—to continue thinking about how small actions can make a big difference in someone's life. Whether through the letters they have written, a class project, or simply being a friend to a new student, your class is now equipped to be ambassadors of welcome and belonging in their school and beyond. Your commitment to fostering these discussions has helped create a more inclusive and empathetic community.

Thank you for your dedication to these important lessons and for helping to inspire the next generation of compassionate, global citizens. If you have questions about the curriculum or have additional questions about how you and your classroom can be more involved in welcoming, please reach out to us at refugeewelcome@cwsglobal.org

Sincerely,

The Team at Church World Service

Appendix

24 Lesson 1:

Optional Deep Dive: Unaccompanied Children

Optional Deep Dive: Asylum Seekers

Optional Deep Dive: Humanitarian Parolees

28 Lesson 2: Matching Sheet Activity

29 Lesson 2: Comic Strip Activity

Who are Unaccompanied Children?

 **ACTIVITY**

Watch [this video](#) to learn more about unaccompanied children

 **REFLECTION**

Who are Unaccompanied Children?

1. Who are unaccompanied children?
2. Why might unaccompanied children migrate to the United States?
3. How many unaccompanied children migrate to the United States each year?
4. What happens to unaccompanied children after their initial arrival in the United States?

Answers:

1. An unaccompanied child is a foreign-born child under age 18 or under the age of 21 for certain programs like Central American Minors (CAM) and without legal status in the United States, whom at the time of their identification by immigration officials is not in the care and custody of their parent or legal guardian.
2. They are often having to flee from their country due to violence, abandonment, and natural disasters and undertake dangerous journeys to seek safety in the United States.
3. Tens of thousands of unaccompanied children seek safety in the United States each year and are highly vulnerable to many risks.
4. Upon initial arrival, unaccompanied children may be kept at the border for at least three days. Then they are transferred to an Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) shelter where they are looked after until they are connected to resettlement agencies and reunified with sponsors who care for them until they turn 18.

Who are Asylum Seekers?

ACTIVITY

Watch [this video](#) to learn more about asylum seekers.

REFLECTION

Who are Asylum Seekers?

1. Who are asylum seekers?
2. What is the difference between asylum seekers and refugees?
3. What are some of the challenges asylum seekers might face?

Answers:

1. Asylum seekers are individuals who have fled their home country due to persecution, violence, or threats and are seeking protection in another country. They apply for asylum to gain legal status and protection as refugees but are not yet officially recognized as such.
2. **Asylum seekers:** Apply for protection after arriving in the country where they seek safety. Their claim is under review to determine whether they qualify for refugee status.
Refugees: Are granted protection before entering a new country, usually after being processed and recognized by international bodies like the UNHCR.
3. **Legal barriers:** Difficulty navigating the complex legal process of proving their need for protection
Limited access to resources: Restricted work authorization, healthcare, housing, and other basic needs.
Social isolation: Language barriers, discrimination, or lack of community support.
Uncertainty: The long waiting periods for decisions on their asylum status, leading to emotional and financial stress.

Who are Humanitarian Parolees?

ACTIVITY

Watch [this video](#) to learn more about humanitarian parolees.

REFLECTION

Who are Humanitarian Parolees?

1. Who are Humanitarian Parolees?
2. How do humanitarian parolees come to the US and how long do they stay in the United States?
3. What are some of the barriers parolees might face in the United States?

Answers:

1. Asylum seekers are individuals who have fled their home country due to persecution, violence, or Humanitarian parolees are individuals granted temporary permission to enter and stay in the United States for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. They are not granted refugee or asylum status but are allowed to enter for a limited time due to emergencies.
2. They are granted entry on a case-by-case basis, often during emergencies like natural disasters, conflicts, or medical crises. Their stay is typically temporary, often ranging from a few months to one or two years, depending on the circumstances.
3. **Legal status:** Parolees do not have permanent residency and may face difficulties transitioning to a more secure immigration status.

Access to resources: Limited eligibility for government aid, including housing, healthcare, and education.

Work challenges: Barriers to obtaining work authorization and difficulties finding employment.

Integration issues: Cultural adaptation, language barriers, and lack of community support.

Refugee

A person who is forced to flee their own country and seek safety in another country.

Resettlement

A family being persecuted in certain countries based on their religious beliefs.

Social and Religious Factors for leaving

Relates to the way in which a country is governed, and the decisions made that can directly affect its citizens.

Physical Factors for leaving

A voluntary, safe, and regulated transfer of people in need of international protection from the country where they are registered to another country which has agreed to admit them as refugees.

Political Factors for leaving

A family facing extreme weather conditions like flooding and tropical storms meaning that it is no longer safe to live in their area.



2024

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in partnership with Devonne Piccaver, Princeton University Student Intern