



The Kafley Family's Story

The following information and discussion questions are designed to accompany the ELCA World Hunger Video, The Kafley Family's Story. Find the video at www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources.

INTRODUCTION TO SHARE:

Refugees are people who flee their country because of war, persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution, on account of their political opinion, religion, race or nationality. This group includes forcibly displaced people, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced persons.¹ Some wait for years or decades in a refugee camp in a nearby country or other setting for the situation in their home country to stabilize. During their time of waiting, refugees are susceptible to a number of dangers including human trafficking, food insecurity, stigma and abuse. It is estimated that 7.2 million refugees have lived in refugee camps for at least five years.²

Voluntary resettlement occurs when a refugee cannot stay in the country they have fled to and cannot return to their home country. Fewer than one percent of refugees ever resettle in a third country.³ In the United States, refugees are resettled in nearly every state in the country, often with the help of affiliate resettlement agencies and community-based organizations. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service is one of those agencies, partnering with resettlement groups in 24 states. Resettlement is not a single event, but a process lasting weeks and months where the physical, emotional, mental and social health of refugees needs attention. Since the U.S. Resettlement Program sets a goal for refugees to reach economic self-sufficiency within eight months of arrival,⁴ other organizations and institutions have a valuable role in the process.

This video tells the story of the Kafley family. They were welcomed by a team of individuals from Lutheran Church of the Ascension in Northfield, Ill., and the local refugee affiliate group, RefugeeOne. By offering English language training, employment assistance and other social services, RefugeeOne helps ease the resettlement of refugees. Congregations also help by securing donations, providing food and befriending a refugee family. Groups like these, along with other community organizations, play a key role in the resettlement process by getting the refugees the support they need to build their lives in a new country.

WATCH VIDEO: Length is 8 minutes, 22 seconds

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Organizations like RefugeeOne, as Greg Wangerin shares in the video, provide an opportunity for refugees to "build lives of self-reliance in safety and dignity." What difference do you think this opportunity makes for the Kafley family and other refugees given what they went through to get to the U.S.?
2. How do we usually think of self-reliance? Does our understanding of it change when put into the context of a refugee's story? If so, how?
3. How might Yadu's sense of newness and rebirth conflict with conventional stereotypes of refugees and immigrants? How might people of faith – who have been "born anew" in baptism – better understand and relate to refugees in their communities?



READ EXODUS 12:33-39

The Egyptians urged the people to hasten their departure from the land, for they said, "We shall all be dead." So the people took their dough before it was leavened, with their kneading bowls wrapped up in their cloaks on their shoulders. The Israelites had done as Moses told them; they had asked the Egyptians for jewelry of silver and gold, and for clothing, and the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And so they plundered the Egyptians.

The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. A mixed crowd also went up with them, and livestock in great numbers, both flocks and herds. They baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt; it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In this passage the Israelites are leaving Egypt. Ahead of them is a journey into the wilderness. What are some similarities and differences between the Israelites and that of contemporary refugees?
2. There are a number of times in Scripture where the people of Israel are reminded that they were once foreigners and so they must treat foreigners justly (Leviticus 20:34; Deuteronomy 10:18-19). How might the memory of being "strangers in a strange land" influence our attitudes and actions toward refugees?
3. Often hospitality is thought of as being nice and welcoming. Is there more to hospitality than this? What is the difference between treating refugees hospitably and treating them justly?

ENDNOTES:

1 Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, <http://lirs.org/learn/world-refugee-day/>. As of publication of this document, (Fall 2013), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' core mandate does not include people who are displaced by natural disasters and climate change. However, the migration of people and populations has become an increased concern in recent years and remains an issue that the Commissioner recognizes and responds to due to their area of expertise (see Challenges relating to climate change induced displacement).

2 Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, <http://lirs.org/learn/world-refugee-day/>.

3 Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. <http://lirs.org/mythbusters/>

4 Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Fact Sheet, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr>.