

## OPTIONAL ACTIVITY 1

### Refugee Role Play

#### Procedure:

**1. Prepare.** Cut out identities from *Refugee Role Play Cards* for each of your students. Each family group has a different number of family members, so try to choose family groups such that every student can have a card and each family can have all of its members. If you have more students than cards, duplicate one or more of the family groups until there are enough cards for everyone.

#### Teacher Tip

This activity may be especially difficult or emotional for students with their own refugee experience. If you have students who may be reluctant to participate in the exercise, either skip the activity or offer an alternative, such as writing a letter to one of the refugees whose video they watched.

**2. Set up.** Pass out an identity card to each student. Shuffle the cards so that students are not sitting near their family members if possible. Before beginning the activity, tell students that they will now be acting out the refugee experience. **Remind them that though it may seem funny to imagine their state being invaded, this scenario has happened to many people who have suffered very real and serious consequences as a result.** They should approach the role play with those people in mind. Read the following scenario out loud and replace the bold items with names and places relevant to your state:

*Citizens of **[Neighboring State]**, wanting more land for their people, have invaded **[Your State]**. Entering the state through the city of **[Border City]**, the people of **[Neighboring State]** have now taken control of the Capitol Building in **[Capitol City]** and the police and National Guard throughout the state. There are snipers in the capitol buildings and **[Major Shopping Center or Stadium]** has been blown up. All interstate highways have been closed. The people of **[Neighboring State]** have taken over the main stadium and are using it as a staging ground for their troops. You have heard rumors that the invaders are going to be going door to door, and unless you can prove that you were born in **[Neighboring State]**, you will be arrested and taken to an undisclosed location. Fighting has begun in **[Capitol City]** and is spreading into the suburbs and rural towns across the state. You can hear the fighting from your house. Mobs of people from **[Neighboring State]** are roaming the streets and have set fire to your neighbor's house. You realize that you must flee **[Your State]** tonight. You have two hours to pack your belongings. Because all of the roads are blocked, you must head toward a refugee camp in **[Other Bordering State/s]**.*

**3. Imagine.** Tell the students to write down ten items that they would bring with them based on their identity, without talking to anyone else. Give them two minutes to decide. Time them and give a warning after a minute and a half has passed.

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**4. Convene the family groups.** Ask students to form small groups with everyone from their assigned family. These small family units must now decide together what they can take with them. Each person can only carry three things. All the items recommended from individual lists must be considered, but with the interest of the family in mind. Each person should construct a list of the three items he or she can carry. The group must take into consideration any elderly, sick, or very young people in the group who cannot carry items. The groups should meet for 5-10 minutes. Time students and give them a warning when a minute remains. Do not let the groups use more than 10 minutes to make a decision; tell them they must leave now with whatever they have chosen at this point.

**5. Decide a route.** Once the time limit has passed, tell the families they now have to decide whether they will flee by foot, escape by boat, or find some other means of transportation. They need to think about where they will sleep, find food, etc. There are refugee camps in the surrounding states where they can stay.

**6. Present and discuss.** Come back together and have each group present their plan. Where did they decide to go? How will they get there? What did they decide to take and why? After each group has presented, discuss the following questions as a class:

### Questions for Discussion

- ? Did you choose items based on what you thought you would need to survive or what would help you remember your life back home?
- ? Do you think you could realistically carry all of the items you chose?
- ? Who had the most say in the decision-making process? Why was that?
- ? How did you feel about what was happening?

**7. Regroup.** Ask students to reconvene with their “families.” The families have now made it into refugee camps. Explain to the students that in the camps, the refugees themselves handle a great many of the day-to-day responsibilities of keeping the camp running. Based on their identity cards, have students write down what kinds of help they would need, either from relief workers or from fellow refugees, while they are in the camp. They should copy the list onto a piece of paper, writing clearly in large enough letters for other students to easily read it. Then, they should make a second list of what they think they can offer to others in the camp based on their identities.

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**9. Share.** Have the family groups post their list of needs on the walls of the classroom and then walk around the room to read other groups' lists. If they can meet any of the needs based on the skills they have to offer, they should make a check mark next to that item on the list. After all the groups have looked at all the lists, go over the needs that aren't being met. Ask students how they think those needs may or may not be met in a refugee camp.

**10. Four years later.** After spending four years in the refugee camp, the families have been safely resettled in a "third country" — your local community.

**11. Welcome.** Families #1 and #2 will play the role of host community. They should outline what they would do to welcome the new families. They should be encouraged to include ideas at the individual, school, and community levels. They should also offer suggestions for the new families on how they can start adapting themselves to their new community.

**12. Adapt.** The other families continue to play the roles of refugees. These students should list what they would do to start adapting to their new school and community, and what their school and community could do to welcome them.

**13. Compare.** Draw a line down the middle of the board. Write "Welcome" on one side and "Integrate" on the other. Have students share the ideas they generated in their small groups. Once they have offered their suggestions, have students identify any of the ideas that might be particularly easy to carry out and circle them on the board. Have students identify ones that might be particularly difficult and put a star next to them.

**14. Debrief.** As a class, discuss how students felt about the role play.

#### Questions for Discussion

- ? Based on the role play, what do you think it would feel like to be a refugee?
- ? What do you think the hardest part of being a refugee would be?
- ? During the role play, did you ever feel that your character's human rights were being violated? When? What rights?
- ? What are ways that governments could better protect the human rights of refugees? What are ways that individuals could better protect the rights of refugees?

## REFUGEE ROLE PLAY CARDS

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| <p><b>Refugee Identities:</b><br/>The refugee identities can be added to and adapted as necessary. You may want to cut and laminate the refugee identity cards for future use. Be sure that you have one identity card for each student in class.</p> | <p><b>FAMILY #1: Grandmother</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60 years old</li> <li>• Teaches 5th grade</li> <li>• Enjoys cooking</li> </ul>                    |
| <p><b>FAMILY #1: Grandfather</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 65 years old</li> <li>• Retired farmer</li> <li>• Collects valuable coins</li> </ul>  | <p><b>FAMILY #1: Grandson</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 years old</li> <li>• Parents have died</li> <li>• Likes to help his grandfather garden</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>FAMILY #2: Father</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 43 years old</li> <li>• Dentist</li> <li>• Likes to jog</li> </ul>   | <p><b>FAMILY #2: Mother</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 44 years old</li> <li>• English teacher</li> <li>• Competitive runner</li> </ul>                       |
| <p><b>FAMILY #2: Daughter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 years old (twin)</li> <li>• Good swimmer</li> <li>• Likes to text with friends</li> </ul>   | <p><b>FAMILY #2: Daughter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 years old (twin)</li> <li>• Very athletic</li> <li>• Just got a kitten</li> </ul>                 |
| <p><b>FAMILY #3: Father</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 years old</li> <li>• Works at local paper mill</li> <li>• Expert handyman</li> </ul>  | <p><b>FAMILY #3: Mother</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 39 years old</li> <li>• Stays at home with children</li> <li>• Skilled at sewing</li> </ul>            |

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| <p><b>FAMILY #3: Daughter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 years old</li> <li>• Looking forward to community college</li> <li>• Has a boyfriend at her high school</li> </ul> | <p><b>FAMILY #3: Son</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 years old</li> <li>• Likes to play soccer</li> <li>• Straight-A student</li> </ul>                          |
| <p><b>FAMILY #3: Son</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 years old</li> <li>• Has health problems and needs regular medication</li> <li>• Loves his dog</li> </ul>                | <p><b>FAMILY #4: Mother</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 55 years old</li> <li>• Works as a doctor</li> <li>• Specializes in family medicine</li> </ul>              |
| <p><b>FAMILY #4: Father</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 56 years old</li> <li>• Works for a newspaper as a business reporter</li> <li>• Loves to cook</li> </ul>                | <p><b>FAMILY #4: Daughter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 years old</li> <li>• Excels at computer programming</li> <li>• Always knows the latest apps</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>FAMILY #4: Daughter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 years old</li> <li>• Wants to be actress</li> <li>• Enjoys hanging out at the mall</li> </ul>                      | <p><b>FAMILY #4: Daughter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 years old</li> <li>• Very studious</li> <li>• Loves to read</li> <li>• Uses a wheelchair</li> </ul>    |
| <p><b>FAMILY #4: Aunt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70 years old</li> <li>• Not able to walk easily</li> <li>• Loves to tell stories</li> </ul>                               | <p><b>FAMILY #5: Single woman</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 42 years old</li> <li>• Owns a hair salon</li> <li>• Her parents live in the capital city</li> </ul>  |

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| <p><b>FAMILY #6: Mother</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 years old</li> <li>• Divorced</li> <li>• Works as a city bus driver</li> </ul>                         | <p><b>FAMILY #6: Cousin</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 years old</li> <li>• College student staying with family</li> <li>• Helps with child care</li> </ul>     |
| <p><b>FAMILY #6: Son</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 years old</li> <li>• Loves to play basketball</li> <li>• Always listening to music</li> </ul>             | <p><b>FAMILY #6: Son</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 years old</li> <li>• Likes animals</li> <li>• Shy</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>FAMILY #6: Daughter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 months old</li> <li>• Has been crying a lot lately</li> <li>• Allergic to milk</li> </ul>            | <p><b>FAMILY #7: Brother</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 years old</li> <li>• Left school to take care of sister</li> <li>• Studied mathematics</li> </ul>       |
| <p><b>FAMILY #7: Sister</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 years old</li> <li>• Has had bad dreams since parents died</li> <li>• Loves building things</li> </ul> | <p><b>FAMILY #8: Mother</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 33 years old</li> <li>• Loves sailing her boat</li> <li>• Works as an accountant at an office</li> </ul>    |
| <p><b>FAMILY #8: Father</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31 years old</li> <li>• Owns a restaurant</li> <li>• Speaks three languages fluently</li> </ul>           | <p><b>FAMILY #8: Son</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 years old</li> <li>• Doesn't like strangers</li> <li>• Always carries his favorite stuffed animal</li> </ul> |