

One Family Under God
Building a Christian Community
Grades 7-9 Lesson



Goal:

Students will learn that humans are meant for community, which means loving other people and treating them with respect both in theory and in reality. What does this look like in our culture? We explore the topic of immigration through the lens of building a Christian community.

Lesson:

Immigrants and refugees are front-page news every day thanks to the presidential debates and the crisis in Syria and other parts of the Middle East. There are good people on all sides of the debate attempting to find a fix for our broken immigration system in the US, and to provide refuge and aid for displaced persons world-wide. This topic gets to the heart of who we are not only as Christians but as members of the human community. What is our responsibility to our brothers and sisters in need? Where do our borders and national interests end and our vocation to practice justice and peace begin?

Watch:

“Catholic Social Teaching 101: Life and Dignity of the Human Person” video gives a great overview of our understanding of the dignity of each person. Why do we believe this? Where does this come from? What is our responsibility to others?

“Immigration” video provides an overview of immigration in the United States and provides a foundation for classroom discussion. Has immigration always been a part of our country? What was originally intended by immigration? Has that changed today? If so, how and why?

“Children on the Move” and “What Refugees Bring When They Run for Their Lives” offer first-hand accounts from immigrants and refugees. What do they learn from their experience? What is most important to them? What are they fleeing from? What do they hope to find in their new homeland? Do they find it?

“The Millionaires who Welcome People at Sea” tells the story of a family who decided to personally do something to help refugees. What does this story challenge us to do?

Activity:

“Citizenship Test” tests your students’ ability to answer basic questions about the United States. Would they be able to pass the test to be citizens? What do their answers tell us about our own citizens’ understanding of our country?

To learn more or provide a homework assignment, use “Fact Sheet on Immigrants in the US” for review and quiz.

Watch “8 year old Launches Campaign to Help Refugees”. What do students learn about what they can do to help? Is this little girl effective? Why or why not? Is her idea too simplistic or will it actually work? What does this tell us about each person’s responsibility to overcome injustice in the world? Is it enough to just leave solutions to politicians and other adult leaders? Or do each of us have some responsibility for a solution?

Challenge students with a service project from “5 Practical Ways you Can Help Refugees”

Pray:

Loving God,

**We thank you for creating all the people of the world
and for allowing us to learn from their cultures and beliefs.**

**Remind us to see your face when we meet new people for the first time.
Give us courage to welcome them and show them love and courtesy.**

**Grant safety to all immigrants and refugees who leave their homes for a new
land, looking for safety, peace, and opportunity for their families.**

Amen.

