

SCENARIO: *Rasha, a young refugee in Kakuma Refugee Camp*

Objective: To gain an understanding of the experiences of refugees. Why do people become refugees? What challenges do they face? How can we help?

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Read Rasha's story. Then:

- 1** *Discuss the scenario. For example: What is the refugee crisis here? What is Rasha's life like? What challenges does she face? What would you do in Rasha's shoes? What is the Christian response?*
- 2** *Act out the scenario and create your own dialogue. (optional)*

Note: Rasha's story is fiction, but it is representative of real-life people and situations.

Rasha is your typical 13-year-old girl, but she's also in very extraordinary circumstances. Rasha is a refugee in Kakuma Refugee Camp. Ever since she was a little girl, she remembers having lived here. Her father, mother and older brothers remember a different time, a better time, in their home country of Ethiopia. But Ethiopia seems like a faraway land, one she has never known. All Rasha knows is Kakuma, and it feels like its own country. It is in the desert, far from the rest of the world, and is divided into zones. There are people from other countries, like Somalia and South Sudan. Kakuma is so isolated that in Swahili, the word *kakuma* actually means "nowhere."

Rasha is often told by her father why they had to flee when she was just two years old. It seems strange for her to think that their own country is so dangerous that they cannot return there. It is unfathomable for her to think that anyone would want to hurt her and her family because they are of Oromo ethnicity.

Rasha is also very busy, all the time. Every day, she wakes up before the sun rises to start the fire and make the tea and porridge for her family. Then she helps her mother with Amene and Mona, her younger sisters who were born in the camp. She washes and dresses them, and feeds them before she herself can eat. Then she walks





Like “Rasha,” Elisa is living and attending school in Kakuma. She is from South Sudan and has come to the refugee camp because of the civil war in her country. Elisa wants to help others. She wants to study to become a doctor someday. Photo by Paul Plett/CLWR

to the community well to get water for the morning. In her hand she carries the big UNHCR water jugs. They get very heavy on the way back home. Rasha will have to get water several more times during the day. Then she does chores around their home. Their home is a one-room rectangle made of four mud-brick walls and a metal roof. She must put away the mattresses for the day and clean the inside.

When Rasha is done with chores, she heads out to school. It takes her about 40 minutes to walk there. When she reaches her classroom, she finds her friend Lelisa and sits beside her so that they can comfortably share a textbook. With over 100 students in the classroom, it is

difficult for each one of them to get a textbook. School is Rasha’s favourite part of the day. She loves to learn about everything, especially about other places in the world, and math. She is top of the class, but it is a hard position to maintain. Sometimes she has so many chores at home that she often arrives late to school, or not at all.

When Rasha returns home after school, her younger sisters run out to greet her! They are very excited and keep jumping up and down. When she asks why they are excited, she notices that the rest of her family is also smiling. They are each holding white bags with blue writing on them. She realizes there is one for her too.



Inside she finds three coiled notebooks, some pencils, pencil crayons and other school supplies. She asks where these came from, and her mother replies that workers from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) came to the area earlier that day and were handing these bags out to everyone. Her mother, father and brother received what they called “personal hygiene kits.” The kit she received, along with her sisters, was called a “Learning and Living Kit.” She was beyond excited. She needed new supplies desperately, and they are expensive to buy in the camp.

Her mother also showed her several colourful blankets, made with small patches of cloth. They were so beautiful and perfect for the cool desert nights. Where do these come from? Everything is so beautiful! Her mother explains that the LWF workers said that these were gifts from Canadian Lutheran World Relief, another organization that worked with LWF. Somewhere, across the world, there were people in a country called Canada who were thinking of them and wanted to share that they cared by sending them these gifts. Rasha hugged the gifts to her heart and thanked God for the kindness of strangers.

Consider: How can we respond?

- *Pray for refugees around the world. Pray for peace and safety in their home countries.*
- *Pray for sponsors to come forward to help refugees move to Canada and start a new life in safety. Learn more about refugee sponsorship here and discuss it with your congregation:*
<http://www.clwr.org/Get-Involved/sponsor-refugees.cfm>
- *Prepare and send CLWR We Care kits for people in refugee camps. Learn how to make kits here:*
http://www.clwr.org/What-We-Do/make_kits_and_quilts.htm
- *Give money to support refugees. Donations make it possible to provide food, water, safe shelter, clothing, latrines, school supplies, medical care, counselling and much more to the people who need it most. Check <http://www.clwr.org/donate> and click on Emergencies to find out about Canadian Lutheran World Relief’s current calls for support for refugees.*

Websites consulted in creating this resource: uniteforsight.org, hdr.undp.org, mercycorps.org, savethechildren.org

