



Youth role playing activity

Objective: To gain an understanding of the experiences of refugee youth in Canada.

Youth should be divided into four groups and assigned a scenario to read and act out, then reflect on the following:

- **Why do people become refugees?**
- **What challenges do refugees face?**
- **How can we as Canadians and as Christians help refugees?**

Scenario 1

Your high school made an announcement weeks ago to you let you know that they will be getting many new students, many of them refugees from Iran and Iraq. You learn that they may not be able to speak English and that they might need help with obtaining winter clothes and school supplies.

Helping people is important to you, and you feel compassion for the new students, especially after learning about the conflicts in Iran and Iraq. You've always been very active with school and church activities.

What would you do to help?

Scenario 2

A few months ago, a Ukrainian refugee family moved into your neighbourhood, and the teenage son, Pavlo started attending your school. Even though you are curious about Pavlo and his family, neither you nor your classmates talk to him at school.

You keep hearing news about the war in Ukraine and start to feel compassion towards your Ukrainian classmate. At church, you are constantly hearing sermons about "welcoming the stranger," so you feel a conviction to show Pavlo kindness. However, you feel a little shy because you don't know if you'll understand each other, you also fear what other kids will think if you start hanging out with the new guy.

The longer you see him alone at school, the more you feel compelled to do something.

What would you do?

Scenario 3

Abdulhameed and his family have been living in Canada for almost a year. They arrived in Canada from Pakistan, where they resided as refugees from Afghanistan. When the Taliban took control over Afghanistan, Abdulhameed and his family fled because his mother was persecuted for being a teacher at a girls' school. Leaving Afghanistan was hard, but it was necessary to protect his mother and his sisters.

School has been challenging for him, but he learned quite a bit of English at school in Afghanistan. As the oldest child and comprehensive English-speaker, Abdulhameed has been doing a lot of English-Farsi interpretation for his family. It feels like a big responsibility. He's only a teenager, but he's expected to translate when they go grocery shopping, at appointments with the doctor, meetings with his younger sisters' teachers and at many other places.

Abdulhameed wants to be like the kids at school and just hang out with his friends and focus on his schoolwork, but helping his family is very important to him.

If you were Abdulhameed's friend, what would you do?

Scenario 4

Lemlem is teenage girl whose family arrived in Canada with her parents and siblings just four months ago. She and her family were sponsored as refugees by a local Lutheran congregation. You've seen Lemlem around at school, but you don't really talk to her or include her at lunch or during breaks. It doesn't seem like you have much in common with her, but one day, you're assigned to work together on a school project.

Through your interactions with Lemlem, you learn that she speaks quite a bit of English, even though her native language is Tigrinya, because she learned it at school in the refugee camp where she grew up. She and her family are originally from Eritrea. They were forced to flee their home due to her father's political opinions which opposed that of the current Eritrean government. She says her home country was no longer safe for her family, so they were forced to leave everything behind.

Lemlem tells you that she loves Canada but being here has been tough for her: she is struggling with schoolwork, and she hasn't been able to make many new friends.

What would you do?