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## Day of Prayer for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Many churches in Australia have encouraged their members – and all Australians – to respond to the needs of asylum seekers and refugees. Knowing and understanding the situation stirs us to commit to action. So that we may know and understand, various churches and agencies have produced study resources. Over the past seven years – or even more – these resources have been available to us. Seven years ago, our hope was that the situation for most refugees and asylum seekers would be vastly different in 2017:

- many people then seeking asylum would now be settled in communities in Australia, having found employment
- children would be in school
- numbers of people seeking asylum would be greatly reduced
- detention centres would be closed

The reality is that not much has changed in seven years.

### Prayers from the richness of the Christian churches

Lord,  
No one is a stranger to you  
and no one is ever far from your loving care  
In your kindness watch over refugees and asylum seekers,  
those separated from their loved ones, those who are lost,  
and those who have been exiled from their homes.  
Bring them safely to the place where they long to be,  
and help us always to show your kindness to strangers and those in need.

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council

### Vulnerable Children

Father, countless lives of Your precious Children have been taken by this conflict which now spans 5 years. Through one of the worst humanitarian crises of our time, we want to remember that you deeply love all children.

Please carry them safely through this conflict, hold them closely in places of refuge and wrap them in your tender compassion may their fathers, mothers, teachers and community leaders seek to protect them from the severity of pain.

For our Christian brothers and sisters, help them to teach their children about Your love in the midst of unimaginable struggles.

Make us people who love and stand up for the most vulnerable. Transform our hearts that we may remember to always pray, seeking Your wisdom and grace.

Through Christ our Lord, Amen

Prayers for Syria, Baptist World Aid Australia

God of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar,  
God of travellers, migrants and refugees.  
Thank you for the beauty and uniqueness of this southern land which we share.  
Grant your protection and grace to all who shelter here.  
Forgive the racism and destruction that have been part of our history,  
and our disregard for the pain and oppression within the Australian community today.  
Help us shed our provincial expectations. Take away our cultural tunnel vision.  
Open our hearts to be caring neighbours to each other.  
Direct our lives to just and peaceful action.

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God of a thousand faces, help us also to acknowledge you are worshipped in many languages, in different songs and rhythms of life from our own.

May we respect these religious insights in each other and assist each faithful expression of you.

We rejoice in you, God, in whose image we are brothers and sisters and by whose example in Jesus Christ we know the breadth and depth of your universal love. Amen

Justice for Asylum Seekers, Resources for Worship, Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

## And reflection

Read Exodus 14: 10-18

- Think about what it might have been like for the Israelites leaving to journey into strange territory. What sorts of fears, real and imagined, might have played on their minds as they set out? What about as the journey went on?
- What do you think the Israelites learned about God from their Exodus? What might they have learned about themselves?
- Try to imagine refugees as they journey into unknown and possibly dangerous territory. What might influence their decisions to risk a dangerous journey from home to a strange country?
- Think about times when God has called you out of your comfort zone and into strange and fearful territory. How easily do you leave familiar places or relationships or even ways of thinking? What is it that makes you want to stay where you are, even when it might not be a safe or good place?

Asylum Seekers and Refugees: Scriptural, Theological and Ethical Approaches Session Two  
*"What have done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Coping with change"*

## Meet the people

### Gambella South Sudanese Response.



Picture-Richard Wainwright/Act for Peace

Kama (18) and her daughter (1) are refugees who collect water from a water point in Akula community in Gambella that is hosting over 1,600 refugees from the Bruer ethnic group from South Sudan. Kama used to have to borrow jerrycans before a DICAC distribution. She now collects water 3 times a day for her family.

Civil war broke out in South Sudan in December 2013 which has created an influx of over 250,000 refugees to the Gambella region of western Ethiopia. Ethiopia is now hosting more refugees than any other African country

## Syrian Refugee settlement Jordan

The Syrian conflict, which started in March 2011, has led to hundreds of thousands of Syrians fleeing their country. The main refugee camp of Zaatari already hosts 80,000 people whilst the vast majority of refugees have settled within the host communities of Jordan. Hafiz and his family fled from Homs to East Amman in Jordan. Hafiz was a baker and his family lived comfortably but his factory and house were destroyed in the Syrian conflict. They stand with the suitcase that they brought their belongings in.



## Thai Burma border



Picture-Ben Littlejohn/Act for Peace

Than and his son Aung are refugees on the Thai Burma Border.

Than fled Burma when his village and farmland was burnt to the ground by the Burmese army and has been in camps since 1994. Through CAN he rents a plot of land and grows vegetables to support his family and generate further income.

Act for Peace supports The Border Consortium (TBC) in providing assistance to Burmese refugees living in refugee camps along the Thai Burma border. The program provides food and shelter, livelihoods and preparedness for return. This includes the provision of rations, housing materials (bamboo, etc), nursery school lunch program, EDGSL, CMT and the Community Agriculture and Nutrition (CAN) program.

## Check out websites.

Discover up-to-date facts and figures, Meet refugees and asylum seekers - hear their stories, Subscribe to a newsletter

- [UNHCR](#)
- [Asylum Seeker Resource Centre](#)
- [Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce](#)
- [Refugee Council of Australia](#)
- [Uniting Justice](#)
- [JustSalvos](#)
- [Jesuit Refugee Service](#)
- [Australian Catholic Refugee and Migrant Office](#)

## The facts!

The study guides produced during previous years are worth looking at again!

- [Searching for Freedom](#)  
(Uniting Justice -Refugee Week 19-25 June 2016)

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- [With Courage Let Us All Combine](#)  
(Uniting Justice -Refugee Week 2015)
  - [Let's Fully Welcome Refugees](#): PARISH PACK Resources for supporting and advocating for asylum seekers and refugees (Anglican Archdiocese of Melbourne)
  - [Asylum seekers and refugees: Scriptural, theological and ethical approaches.](#): Study Guide (Doing Justice Anglicare South Queensland) Two other study guides are also available on this site.
  - [Shelter from the Storm](#). A Uniting Church in Australia Statement on Asylum Seeker & Refugee Policy ( Adopted by the 14th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, July 2015 )
  - [Asylum Seeker And Refugee Policy](#). A Uniting Church in Australia Statement (Adopted by the National Assembly Standing Committee July 2002)

## A Call to Action!

- Host a meal for refugees
- Talk with friends – especially if they express a negative thought
- Collect goods for a refugee centre (toiletries, canned food)
- Write to your Federal MP , [Minister for Immigration](#) or even the [Prime Minister](#)
- Subscribe to a newsletter, Like a Facebook page
- Gather some friends and watch a documentary or a DVD (eg [Mary Meets Mohammad](#) , [Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea](#))
- Sign a petition (eg for changes in Australia's humanitarian refugee policy at [Act for Peace](#))
- Donate (eg [UNHCR Australia](#) , [Refugee Council of Australia](#), [Act for Peace](#), [Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce](#))
- Volunteer – many organisations above could use your help
- Pre –register to take the 2017 Act for Peace [Ration Challenge](#)
- Become a member of an advocacy group (eg, [Refugee Council of Australia](#))