Discussion Guide for Congolese Refugee webinar and on-demand video

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), especially the eastern part of the country, is scene of some of the world’s most violent and ongoing conflict. As of July 2014 more than 430,000 refugees from the DRC remain in neighboring countries, particularly Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania. In addition, some 2.7 million internally displaced people within the country are fleeing the continuing crisis.

Over the next four to five years, tens of thousands of Congolese refugees are expected to resettle in the United States. Through Episcopal Migration Ministries and The Episcopal Public Policy Network, The Episcopal Church is directly involved in welcoming and supporting these families as they find renewed peace and security in the United States.

The February 2015 webinar will:

- Provide an overview of the conflict in the DRC and the current status of Congolese refugees.
- Examine ways for faith communities to support and advocate for Congolese refugees.
- Discuss what faith communities can do to welcome Congolese refugees as they arrive in the United States seeking safety, peace, and a chance to begin their lives again.

Using this discussion guide, the webinar and on-demand video are ideal for Sunday forums, discussion groups, youth groups, and formation classes.

Reflection Questions

- How much do you know about the violence in DRC? Has this refugee crisis had much coverage in your local news or on social media? Discuss your thoughts on why.
- What responsibility does the United States have in providing aid to refugees from DRC? Why?
- Thinking theologically, what calling do Christians have in serving refugees from DRC or any conflict?
- Are there Congolese refugees in your community?
- How can you and/or your faith community be involved in supporting newly resettled Congolese refugees?

You can find up-to-date statistics on the status of refugees in the world using this link: http://www.unrefugees.org. If you would like to find out about The Episcopal Church’s work in resettling refugees in your community, use the Episcopal Migration Ministries network affiliate map: http://bit.ly/1swkPif.

Activity

Materials:
3x5 cards or paper, pens or pencils
Read this introduction to your group:
Imagine for a moment that you are a refugee. You have to leave your home to go to a new place that is safe. You can only bring what you can carry in a backpack because your only way to escape is by walking 100 miles through the desert. You are in imminent danger so you only have one minute to decide. What 10 items would you bring?

Give participants five minutes to write down their items. Next read this:
Because you have to carry food and water, you have to cross off five items that you will leave behind. You only have one minute to decide what to keep. What is left in your bag?

Discuss with the group what types of items they decided to keep. Items often mentioned often include water, food, a pot, matches, soap, a blanket, a hat, plastic (to make a shelter), a first-aid kit, money, birth certificate or other identification, an address book, photos, clothes, hiking boots, a sleeping bag, medicine, a Bible, food, special jewelry, or a compass. Ask the group how they decided what was most important to bring with them.

With this in mind, discuss what materials might be most helpful to refugees arriving in a new home.

See the related article about the ongoing photo-series, “The Most Important Thing”:
http://unhcr.org/g-5049ea0d6

What next?
Both this webinar and the March #ShareTheJourney pilgrimage to the Great Lakes Region of Africa (http://www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/publicaffairs/sharethejourney-pilgrimage-highlight-refugee-work-domestic-and-foreign) are part of the broader #ShareTheJourney campaign to bring awareness about the plight of Congolese refugees and the ways Episcopalians can be involved in welcoming these new Americans. Be involved by following Episcopal Migration Ministries on Facebook and Twitter (@EMMRefugees) and by sharing your selfie including “#ShareTheJourney with @EMMRefugees”.

Get involved in refugee ministry in your area. Visit the Episcopal Migration Ministries network map to find out if there is a nearby affiliate organization:
http://www.episcopalmigrationministries.org/where_we_work/emm_affiliate_network_map.aspx

Get involved in The Episcopal Church’s advocacy on behalf of refugees and migrants. Join the Episcopal Public Policy Network:
http://advocacy.episcopalchurch.org/app/register?1&m=29629

If you have questions, feel free to call or email Allison Duvall, Episcopal Migration Ministry program manager for church relations and engagement, at (212) 716-6027 or aduvall@episcopalchurch.org.
Episcopal Migration Ministries
Episcopal Migration Ministries is the refugee resettlement service of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society. Each year this ministry works in partnership with its affiliate network, along with dioceses, faith communities and volunteers, to welcome refugees from conflict zones across the globe.

#ShareTheJourney as the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society celebrates 75 years of resettling refugees in the United States. #ShareTheJourney is a multimedia effort to educate, form, and equip Episcopalians to engage in loving service with resettled refugees and to become prophetic witnesses and advocates on behalf of refugees, asylees, migrants, and displaced people throughout the world.

The Episcopal Public Policy Network
The Episcopal Public Policy Network is a grassroots network of Episcopalians across the country dedicated to carrying out the baptismal covenant call to “strive for justice and peace” through the active ministry of public policy advocacy. Episcopal Public Policy Network is part of The Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations in Washington, D.C. The actions, programs, and ministry of the Office of Government Relations are based entirely on policies approved by The Episcopal Church meeting in General Convention or by the Executive Council. As Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori reminds us, “The voices of the people of faith must be a prophetic impetus for lasting change, toward healing the body of God.” [http://advocacy.episcopalchurch.org/home](http://advocacy.episcopalchurch.org/home)