

ARIM

REFUGEE EMPOWERMENT HANDBOOK



refugeeministries.org

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PHASE 1: FIND REFUGEES

*"It is acquaintance that awakens sympathy, and sympathy is the spring of effective ministry."
Education p. 262*

Prepare Your Heart

- Pray that God will guide you to some of His “guests” from other countries.

Do Your Research

- Contact a local refugee assistance organization or your local government office of public assistance and ask what refugees are in the area. They may even have a demographics density map.
- Contact a local college or university and find out if they have foreign exchange students and, if so, from which countries.
- Check the "restaurant" and "grocery" sections of your local phone directory to see what ethnic foods are available in your area. This is one indicator of specific ethnic populations in your area.

Look for Opportunities at Church

- Watch for unexpected guests at your church who seem shy and may not be fluent in English.
- Get to know them. Ask where they are from and how long they have been in America.
- Visit their homes (even if you are not the pastor). Their hearts will be warmed to know someone cares.

Look for Opportunities in Your Community

- Watch for people of other nationalities at your local grocery store, post office, or gas station.
- Talk to people you meet in local stores and apartment complexes who look like they may be from another country.

PHASE 2:

CONNECT WITH REFUGEES

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."--MH 143.

Introduce Yourself

- Say hello. Ask if they speak another language. If they are fluent in English, ask if they are bilingual, then ask what languages they speak. If they are not fluent in English, ask if they know another language.
- Be creative. Use “sign language” or paper and pencil. Find a way to communicate (where there is a will, there is a way).

Share Languages

- Help them learn a few new English words and phrases.
- Find out what language they speak. Learn a few phrases in their language and use them to greet others who speak the same language.

Make Friends

- When getting to know refugees imagine yourself in their situation, often with no transportation and few, if any, American friends.
- Exchange contact information if they seem comfortable.
- Stay in touch. Invite them to your home for a meal. Visit their homes (it's not impolite in their culture, it's a sign that you really care).
- Ask about their culture, their country, and their family—here and abroad. Ask what it is like being in North America. Ask what is hard about adjusting to a new country.
- Pray for wisdom to anticipate their needs, and ask them what their needs are. Meet those needs to the best of your ability.

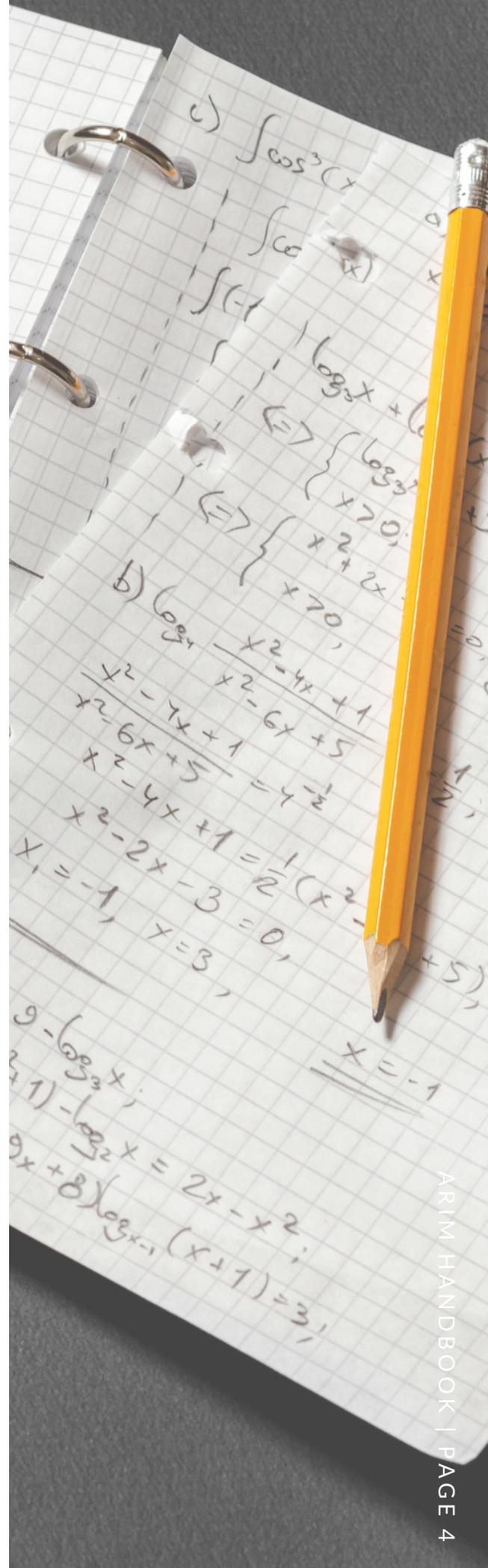
- Be a friend. Invite them to join you for special events and holidays. Provide transportation. Take them shopping.
- Ask your church to pray for your new friends.

Meet the Children's Needs

- Help children with homework.
- Provide music lessons for the children. Help provide them with an instrument.
- Play with the children and organize constructive and educational activities for them.

Help Adults Adjust

- Offer to help the adults learn to drive, study for their citizenship test, etc.
- Invite them to your community services center.
- Organize ESL Classes and/or tutoring for refugees within walking distance from their homes.
- When you find fresh fruits or vegetables on sale, buy an extra bag and drop it by their home unexpectedly.



PHASE 3: INVITE REFUGEES INTO YOUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

“God in His providence has brought men to our very doors and thrust them, as it were, into our arms, that they might learn the truth, and be qualified to do a work we could not do in getting the light before men of other tongues” (Ev 570).

Extending the Invitation

- When you find refugees, immigrants, or visitors from other cultures, tell your church about them. Ask your church to pray for a way to reach out to them.
- Invite your refugee friends to church but don't be offended if they're not ready. Offer to take them (they may not have transportation).
- As your refugee friends begin coming to church with you, introduce them to your friends at church. These connections are crucial.

Once a Few Refugees Begin Coming to Church

- Provide transportation to those who would like to attend but cannot.
- Provide Bibles, Sabbath School lessons, and other materials in their language.
- Provide a room for them to study the Sabbath School lesson together in their language.
- Ask what they need. Prayerfully find ways to help. Remember God has a special love for refugees and often works unusual miracles in their behalf.

- Invite them to give a special music, read a scripture, or pray in their language. Involve them.
- Help their children attend Adventist schools.
- Tell ARIM and your local conference about your church's refugee groups so you can receive updates and additional resources as they become available.
- Plan a special awareness event and invite someone from the community to tell you about their country, culture and experience.
- Assist refugee and immigrant members in resolving Sabbath work issues (Be proactive. They may be too shy to ask).
- Expedite membership transfers to show your eagerness to have them in your church.
- Invite an Adventist pastor to speak to them in their own language and help them organize their group to function more effectively (contact ARIM for details).
- Watch for the time when they will need a time and place to conduct full worship services in their language. Facilitate their search.

As the Group Grows

- Appoint, or ask them to appoint, a representative of their group to be on the church board.
- Give the representative some time at each board meeting to give an update of the progress, needs, and challenges the group is facing.
- Keep dialogue open with the representative as well and other members as their group grows and the needs change.
- Spawn a church plant. Enjoy the fellowship of these brothers and sisters in Christ, but don't discourage them from launching out on their own as a separate and distinct congregation so that they can more effectively reach unreached people of their own language group.

MORE WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

At the Conference Level

- Research refugee demographics in your conference.
- Identify refugee and immigrant populations in your conference.
- Identify volunteers who may already be working with refugees.
- Establish a refugee advisory to meet at least quarterly.

If There are No Refugees in Your Area

- Pray for refugees:
 - That God will put refugees in touch with caring Adventists near their homes.
 - That God will impress our members, who live near refugees, to reach out unselfishly to our refugee brothers and sisters.
- Sponsor refugee children to attend an Adventist School.

- Help sponsor trained refugee pastors to organize refugee congregations where refugees can worship in a language they can understand and learn how to reach out to other refugees who have not yet heard the gospel.

- Donate to provide funds to print and send Bible Studies, Sabbath School lessons quarterly and other materials in refugee languages, to isolated refugees and immigrants.

- Volunteer. No matter what you like to do, your skills can probably be a blessing to refugees, even at a distance.

- Contact us for more personalized information on how you can make a difference in the lives of refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers, international students, and other international guests.

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E.G. WHITE

Review and Herald, Oct. 29, 1914.