

Refugees

God's Heart for the Foreigner

A UNIT FOR MIDDLE AND
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
(INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE INCLUDED)

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Section #2:

Aliens in the Bible?!

What makes someone an alien? If you're not sure, read on and see if you can give a definition by the end of the next page.

Who is an Alien?



From the very beginning, aliens (AKA foreigners) have been on God's heart. Think about the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were the first people forced to leave their home. Now, of course, this was due to their own disobedience, but nevertheless, they had to leave paradise and find a new home in a very big world. Even as they left the Garden, God provided for them. Read Genesis 3:21 and write what God provided for Adam and Eve *before* they left the Garden of Eden. _____ In addition, He had a plan for their salvation already in the works (Genesis 3:15 references Jesus). He's pretty amazing like that!

Adam and Eve weren't labeled as aliens, but that's exactly what they were. And not long after them, more people were displaced. The Bible uses many different words to describe people moving from place to place. While you won't see the word "refugee" among them, you will see many others. Read the verses below and underline the term used to describe someone from another country or place.

"He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing." Deut. 10:18

"You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land." Deuteronomy 23:7

"So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, 'Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?'" Ruth 2:10

"Hear my prayer, O Lord, And give ear to my cry; Do not be silent at my tears; For I am a stranger with You, A sojourner, as all my fathers were." Psalm 39:12

List the words you underlined here:

It is important to note that God does not define what kind of "alien" is represented in the terms above. He doesn't differentiate between an immigrant, refugee, or migrant. Why do you think He doesn't specify a certain type of alien? _

DEFINE: Who is an alien? _____



Are Refugees in the Bible?

While you won't find the word "refugee" in the Bible, you *will* find many stories of people who had to leave their homes and go on a journey of some kind or another. Some of these people would be considered refugees today. Others would be considered migrants or IDPs. Whatever label may have for them, God addressed them all when speaking of foreigners, aliens, sojourners, and strangers. (We will get to that in the next few lessons.) In this unit, we are looking to understand the heart of God. So let's start in the Bible with some stories of travelers. Choose two of the stories below and read them in your Bible. Then answer the questions in the boxes.

Ruth 1:1-7

1 Kings 19:1-9

Matthew 2:13-18

Acts 8:1-8

Story #1

Verses: _____

Who were the sojourner[s] in this story? _____

Where were they from? _____ Where did they go? _____

What label would you give the travelers in this story? (Use page 10 to help you)

Why did they have to leave their home? _____

What is God's role in this story? _____

Story #2

Verses: _____

Who were the sojourner[s] in this story? _____

Where were they from? _____ Where did they go? _____

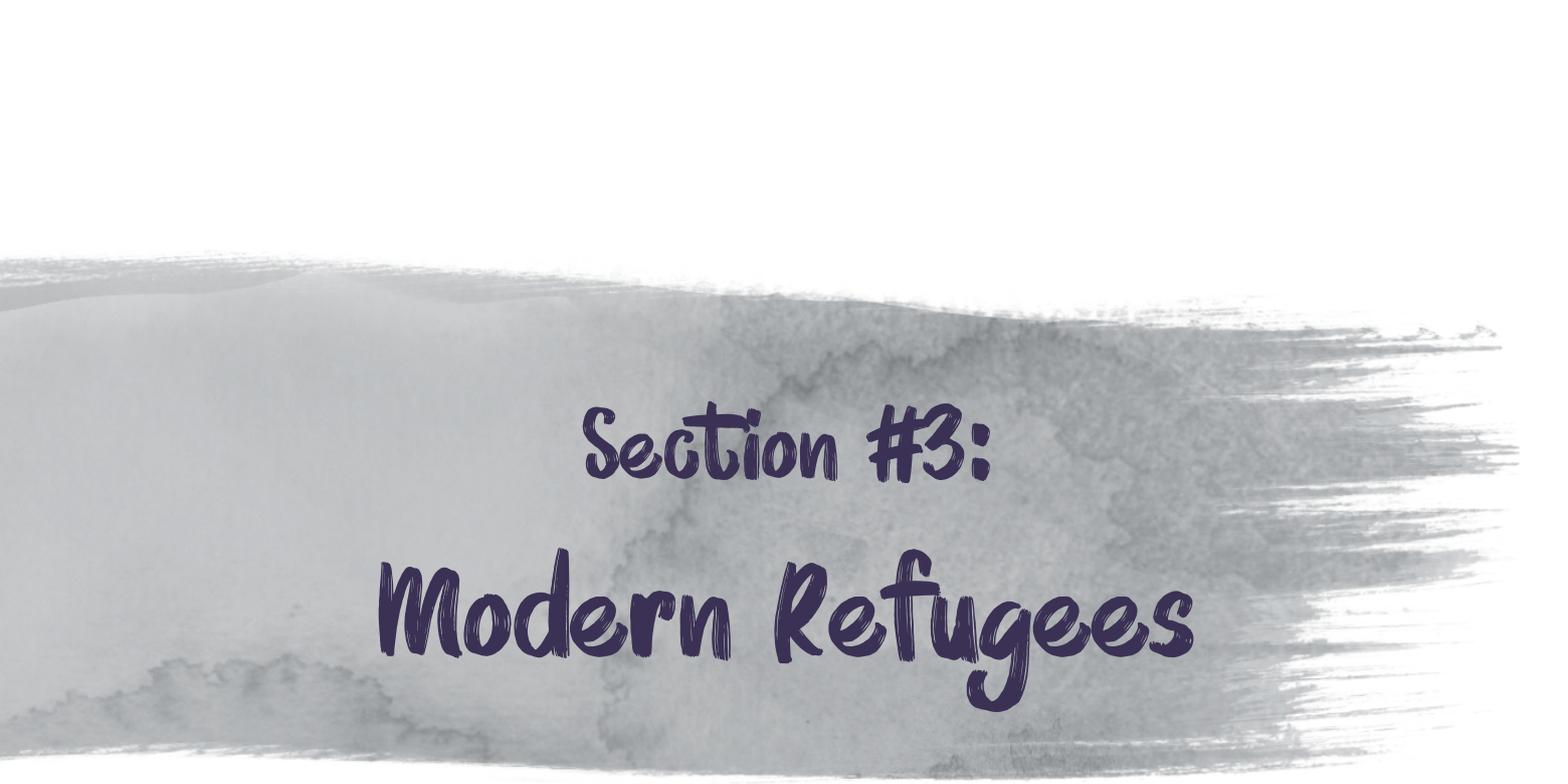
What label would you give the travelers in this story? (Use page 10 to help you)

Why did they have to leave their home? _____

What is God's role in this story? _____

Look for commonalities between the stories. What did the people have in common? What common themes did you notice? _____

Take a step back from these stories and try to see them as lessons from God. What do you think God is saying about refugees in these stories? Think about how it is written and the details that are highlighted to help you find God's message.



Section #3: Modern Refugees

In this section, you're going to choose 2-3 books to help you get a fuller picture of modern refugees. You can choose from the "Refugees Book List" on the next two pages or find your own books. You can choose from a range of fiction and nonfiction, novels and picture books. You can choose books about the same country or time period, or you can choose books about completely different places/times. The important thing is to choose books that look interesting to you.

Whichever books you choose, remember, the book you're reading is **someone's story**. Someone's reality. Let each story sink in and imagine what it would be like to have that story be your story. As you read, complete one "Book Response Page" each day. There are eight of them, and they can be done in any order.

Be sure to add each book to your Refugee Chart (pp. 6-7)



BOOK RESPONSE: DAY 1

Title: _____

Author: _____ Pages read: _____

People in this book...

...fled from (country):

...fled to (country):

Reason for leaving:

Describe your main character's losses up to this point. Think about how these losses have affected their outlook.

Describe the main person in your book. What stands out to you about him or her?

Describe the attitude with which this person approached becoming a refugee. How does their outlook/attitude help or hinder them?

If you were in the same situation as this person, what would be the hardest part for you? Why?

BOOK RESPONSE: DAY 2



Title: _____

Author: _____ Pages read: _____

People in this book...

...fled from (country):

...fled to (country):

Reason for leaving:

In most books, characters face numerous conflicts. Some are external (man vs. man, man vs. society, man vs. nature), but others are internal (man vs. self). What conflicts has your main character encountered in your book?

CONFLICT CHART

Man vs. man	Man vs. society
Man vs. nature	Man vs. self

Which conflicts on your "Conflict Chart" seem avoidable? Mark them with an "X".

Which ones are unavoidable? Mark them with a star.

How does this affect your perspective on the people in your book?

Which conflict seems to be the most significant for the main character in this book? Why?



God of the "Least"

God constantly speaks about the underdogs, those considered to be the "least" by people around them. The widow, the orphan, the foreigner, the poor--God knows they are the most vulnerable. He knows they are the most likely to be looked down on and even persecuted or oppressed, so He tells His people over and over how to care for them. Read **Psalm 146:7-9** below and circle any people considered to be the underdogs, the vulnerable, the "least".

⁷ He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.
The Lord sets prisoners free,
⁸ the Lord gives sight to the blind,
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,
the Lord loves the righteous.
⁹ The Lord watches over the foreigner
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

Earlier in this study (p.19), we read Jesus' words about caring for people in need. **Reread Matthew 25:34-40 in your Bible.** Pay special attention to verse 40.

Verse 40: "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sister of mine, you did for me.'"

Look closely at who Jesus is talking about. Who's the King? That's Jesus. Who are the "least of these"?

Jesus' _____ and _____

That's right! They are His family--far from the least! They are His precious brothers and sisters. How does this change your view of people are considered the "least" by society? How can you allow this knowledge to shape your thinking? Let's start by asking God to help us see with His eyes



Father God, thank you for showing us your heart for anyone who is suffering or struggling in some way. Please help us see them the way you do. Please show us the opportunities you have for us to help, and then give us the strength to follow through. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Instructor's Guide

The following pages are for instructors and provide information about the unit, including how to access online materials, a book list with extra information about each book, lesson guides, and more.

How to Use This Curriculum

Materials

1. **Refugees Notebook with Instructor’s Guide** (You’re holding it now!)
2. **Books** (not included with this curriculum): Students read books of their own choosing to deepen their understanding of the refugee experience. A guide of recommended books is provided on pages 52-54.
3. **Website:** This curriculum requires the use of the Internet. Online resources allow students to get the most up-to-date information about refugees and their stories. Sites chosen for content and quality are linked via our **bethehands.org** website. Other times, students must search on their own for topics that match their chosen novels.
4. **A Bible:** Your preferred version.

Unit Overview The Refugees unit is divided into 4 major sections:

SECTION 1: What is a Refugee?

Students learn vocabulary and current facts about refugees.

SECTION 2: Aliens in the Bible?!

Students take a walk through the Bible to see how God addresses foreigners through the law, the prophets, and the words of Jesus Himself.

SECTION 3: Modern Refugees

Students look at modern refugees through literature and nonfiction books. They are encouraged to read multiple perspectives. See book list on pages 52-54.

SECTION 4: How Can I Help?

Students plan and implement a project to make a difference either “doing something” or “telling someone” about refugees.

“Section Guide” Format: The Section Guides include:

- **OVERVIEW** of what your student will learn in that section.
- **MATERIALS** of what will be needed for that
- **LESSON** information and **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**
- **EXTENSION IDEAS** if you want to go a bit deeper.
- **ANSWER KEYS** to provide answers. However, many questions are open-ended, so the key will simply say “Answers will vary,” as appropriate.
-  The **GROUPS** box gives ideas to adapt lessons to a group.

Getting in the Bible

There are many opportunities for students to get into the Word in this unit. The focus of this unit is on what God has to say about foreigners, aliens, strangers, and sojourners. Key concepts are:

- God provided for His people when they were foreigners
- God directed His people to care for foreigners in His law, the prophets, and the words of Jesus
- God is present and loving even in the most difficult circumstances
- God is a God of the “least of these”, and that is how we should live as well.

“HEAR FROM GOD” sections:



“Hear from God” sections are woven throughout the unit to help students get in a habit of listening for God in their lives. God is constantly speaking to us if we will **be still** and listen. It’s not an audible voice we are listening for, but the still, small voice of God.

We hear God speaking in many ways:

- Through the **Word of God** (God will NEVER go against what the Bible says)
- Through **wise counsel** of other believers
- Through our **conscience**: a sense of right and wrong
- Through **repetition**: something keeps coming up--this could be a Bible verse, song/ lyrics, or people telling you something
- Through **peace** in our spirits: His will brings peace to our hearts

These are some of the ways we hear God. It takes practice to stop the distractions around us and listen for God’s quiet whisper. This exercise is not meant to be intimidating but is simply meant to help kids begin the practice of listening for God. Encourage your student to pray, ask, and wait. Then write what stands out to them. There is no right or wrong answer. **Emphasize the importance of practicing the habit of listening and not worrying about getting it just right.**

Using the Website



Whenever you see this icon, students should go to **bethhands.org**.

NOTE: This web page requires a password. The password is: **Matthew2540**

↳ Click on “Resources” in menu the bar

↳ Then click on “Refugees Student Resources”

↳ Find on the Heading that matches the one in their Student Notebooks

Internet Safety Guidelines: Sites were chosen for content quality and reading level. We check our links on an ongoing basis, however, sites are constantly changing. *Be the Hands* is not responsible for the content of any link and/or outside website. We recommend previewing and monitoring sites as your child uses them.

Section Guides

SECTION 2: Aliens in the Bible?!

OVERVIEW: Students dive into the Bible to develop a deeper understanding of God’s heart for the foreigner through Bible stories, God’s Law, the prophets, and the words of Jesus Himself.

MATERIALS: Student Notebook, Bible, bethehands.org 

LESSONS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Aliens in the Bible?! (p. 13)

- Compare terms from this lesson to the one on page 10, i.e., “How is a sojourner similar/different to a migrant?”

Are Refugees in the Bible? (p. 14)

- How do you see God at work in the stories you read? What does each story tell you about the heart of God?

Exodus=Exit (p. 16)

- How were the Israelites’ perspectives accurate/inaccurate in their view of God?
- How do you think their experiences as refugees would play into how they treated other travelers they met later on?

#1 God’s Law (p. 17)

- Reread the first two verses from the table in this section. Both end with the same phrase, “I am the Lord your God.” Why does God say this in conjunction with these laws? What does this signify to you about the importance of the words He just spoke?

#2 The Prophets’ Message (p. 18)

- What do the verses in Isaiah and Jeremiah let you know about the heart of God? Why wasn’t following the Law enough by itself?

#3 The Words of Jesus (p. 19)

- Discuss Matthew 25:31-46 and how these verses compare to the message from Jeremiah and Isaiah. How are they similar/different?
- Where have you had the “opportunity to do good” in your life? (Gal. 6:10)

Reflecting on the Heart of God (p. 20)

- What have you learned about God’s heart for the foreigner?

EXTENSION IDEAS

1) WORD STUDY: Use an online concordance to find how often the terms (sojourner, stranger, alien, foreigner) are used in the Bible. Which is used most often? Why do you think that is? How many times does God's Word address these groups of people?

2) WORD STUDY: Look up the Hebrew or Greek words for the various terms used in the Bible. What are they? How do they help you understand these terms better? (Blue Letter Bible app is a great place to do this.)

3) MAP IT: Find a map of the Old and/or New Testament to show where the people in the stories traveled.

ANSWER KEY:

Aliens in the Bible?! (p. 13)

- God made clothes and gave them to Adam and Eve
- stranger, alien, foreigner, sojourner
- The reason for their journey is not what causes Him to care for them. God loves all people, regardless of how they came to be sojourners.

Are Refugees in the Bible? (p. 14)

Ruth 1:1-7--Elimelek and family; from Judah; went to Moab; migrant; left because of famine; God provided them with food and wives (story continues with Ruth and Naomi migrating back to Judah)

1 Kings 19:1-9--Elijah; not told in these verses, but he came from Mount Carmel; to Horeb; IDP; fleeing persecution of Jezebel; God sent an angel to help him

Matthew 2:13-18--Joseph, Mary, and Jesus; from Bethlehem; to Egypt; refugee; fleeing persecution by King Herod; God protected Jesus and brought Him back to Nazareth when it was safe

Acts 8:1-8 and 11:19-24--apostles; from Jerusalem; scattered throughout Judea, Samaria, Cyprus, Antioch, Phoenicia; IDP and refugees (depending on where they went); fled persecution; God spread the Good News of Jesus all over the region

Exodus=Exit (p. 16)

- Label that Traveler: Abraham (immigrant), Israelites during famine (refugees)
- Exodus 16 and 17 shows God providing in the following ways: God gave them bread from heaven (manna), quail, water from a rock, and victory over the Amalekites who attacked them



SECTION 2: Aliens in the Bible?! (Continued)

ANSWER KEY (CONTINUED):

#1 God's Law (p. 17)

Bible Verse	What God says about how to treat foreigners	Reason
Leviticus 19:9-10	When you harvest, leave the edges for the poor and foreigner	To make sure they get enough to eat
Leviticus 19:33-34	Do not mistreat foreigners. Treat them as native born	Because they were once foreigners in Egypt themselves
Deuteronomy 10:18-19	Love those who are foreigners (provision of food and clothes by God)	Because they were once foreigners in Egypt themselves
Deut. 14:22 & 14:28-29	Provide for them every three years from the tithe	So that the Lord your God may bless them in the work of their hands
Deuteronomy 27:19	Do not withhold justice from them	So they won't be cursed

#2 The Prophet's Message (p. 18)

- Isaiah 58:3-4 Displeasing to God: exploiting workers, quarrelling, strife, striking each other
- Isaiah 58:6-7 Underline: loose the chains of injustice, set the oppressed free, share your food with the hungry, provide poor wanderer with shelter, clothe the naked
- Jeremiah: What TO do (do what is just and write, rescue from the hand of the oppressor); What NOT to do (do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, fatherless or widow; do not shed innocent blood)

#3 The Words of Jesus (p.19)

- Matthew 25:31-46 Underline verses 35-36
- Three ideas of how to help people in both Isaiah and Matthew --1. feed the hungry; 2. give stranger shelter; give clothing to those who need it



GROUPS

“Are Refugees in the Bible?” Jigsaw: Assign students to specific verses so all the stories are covered. Spend time discussing the types of travelers in each story.

“#1 God’s Law,” “#2 The Prophet’s Message,” and “#3 The Words of Jesus” Posters: Have groups of students each take a lesson and create posters of the most important takeaways of what God is saying to His people. What does this say about the heart of God?

“Reflecting on the Heart of God” would be a good homework assignment. Students can share their thoughts at the following class time.