

# Get Involved: Pray

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**EMBRACE Prayer Group**  
**January 2015**

'... an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.'

Matthew 2:13

In this time of the year, we often hear this Bible passage about Mary and Joseph with baby Jesus fleeing to Egypt.

Why did Jesus' family have to escape? How much time did they have to prepare for a journey? What were they looking for in Egypt? What emotions did Mary and Joseph experience? What was the most difficult part of this experience? Did people treat them with kindness?

Nowadays there are people seeking a safe place to live, just as the Holy Family did 2,000 years ago. Over 45 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes around the world. About 80% of them are living in developing countries. The UK is home to fewer than 2% of the total number of refugees in the world. The Home Office told the BBC that there were only 240 applications for asylum in Northern Ireland in 2012. Some countries of origin of asylum applicants in N Ireland are: Somalia, China, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Syria, Iran, Nigeria and India.

Milad from Syria says:

'I had applied for asylum as there was no way to go back to Syria. The process was challenging and long. It took almost 9 months. The financial support was just 36.60 pounds for a week (I didn't have right to work during this time) and it was very hard for me. I was able to survive with help of my YWAM [Youth With a Mission] friends and local churches (especially a Catholic Church and Church of Ireland). I have got the refugee status in December. The good news came just two days before my birthday.

This is a short part of my big story in Northern Ireland. The story of challenge, change and hope. I love Northern Ireland so much. I feel it's my home. People are awesome and lovely. I found myself more here. God has blessed me with a great peace here and done a lot of transformation in my life too. I just want to give thanks for all: for God who brought me here, for Northern Ireland – a place of my refuge, for Churches and friends who supported me.'

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## **This month we give thanks for:**

- Churches, organisations, groups and individuals who support and show friendship to men and women who are seeking a safe place to live.
- Gestures of kindness that make people feel welcome and appreciated.

## **We pray for:**

- People who are seeking a safe place in Northern Ireland
- Refugees who are adjusting to life here
- Those whose applications for asylum have been refused, who cannot safely return home, and who are destitute.