



BIBLE STUDY 3: A refugee's story

Way in/ setting the scene

Ask the group to think of recent conflicts around the world where groups of people have been targeted because of their ethnicity (e.g. Sudan, Kosovo, Serbia, Rwanda, Kurdistan). The gospels tell us that following the birth of Jesus his parents were forced to seek refuge in another country. If they stay in Judea and Herod's soldiers find their son he will be killed - along with all other male children less than two years of age. The wise men from the east had brought gifts of gold and other valuable items to the baby Jesus. While these gifts to the baby Jesus have symbolic or spiritual significance but, seen as valuable 'currency', what better provision for a family with few material resources fleeing into exile?

Activity

What would you consider to be the most valuable things you could take with you if you had to flee the country? Each person suggests two or three most important things they would take. From the long list each person must make one choice, identity papers or food or water could be shared items which would be sufficient for the needs of the whole group, family photos or a toy might be more personal items which would be for individual use. The group would need to negotiate how they will decide between individual needs (e.g. medication) or attachments (something of sentimental value) and the needs of the group.

Read: Matthew 2:1-23

Questions

1. Today several million refugees and internally displaced people live in the countries in and around the Middle East. Imagine if Mary and Joseph were fleeing danger today. What lengths might Joseph have to go to, to get his family to safety? What risks and dangers might they face?

2. What examples from Jesus' life can you think of when he had to rely on the kindness of strangers?

3. Looking at his life, in what ways was Jesus an 'insider' and an 'outsider' in his own society during his earthly ministry?

4. Think about how he related to other 'outsiders' and how his teaching challenged his listeners to cross boundaries and to relate to others in a new way. Who might you see as outsiders? Why?

5. How might the Gospel challenge us to cross boundaries to relate to these people in a new way?

Taking it forward

Think of ways in which the message of Christ as a refugee could be communicated during the Season of Advent