



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE of ORANGE

Catholic Leaders – Ideas for the Week of Prayer and Action

On September 27, 2017 Pope Francis is launching a global campaign to support migrants and refugees around the world. In collaboration with the annual celebration of Respect Life Month in October, the bishops in the U.S. are asking Catholics around the country to help kick off the campaign by taking part in a week of prayer and action for migrants and refugees from October 7-13. Catholic leaders across parishes, schools, and universities can animate their communities to participate in the week of prayer and action:

At Masses (Oct 7-8):

- Distribute prayer and commitment sheets in the pews, and say the prayer together at the end of Mass: [English & Spanish](#)
- Use the “Share the Journey” [parish toolkit](#) (with resource in English and Spanish) to: Pray for migrants and refugees in the Prayer of the Faithful, Highlight our commitment to our brothers and sisters who have fled their homes, placing it within the context of our commitment to protecting all human life during the homily, Mention the campaign from the pulpit and include an announcement in your bulletin, and ask a representative from our local [Catholic Charities Office](#) (immigration legal services or refugee resettlement) to say a few words at the end of Mass.

In Schools and Religious Education:

- Kick off the week with a special Mass praying for migrants and refugees.
- Start morning announcements or religious education classes with a [prayer for migrant and refugees](#).
- Showcase [stories and pictures](#) in newsletters and on bulletin boards from migrants and refugees who live both around the world and in the United States.
- Use lesson plans ([elementary and high school](#)) to articulate the reasons people leave their home countries, common myths about the issue, and what the Church teaches about it.
- Learn how [one Catholic school](#) is serving as a bridge for students on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. Lourdes Catholic School, a Platinum level [CRS Global High School](#), integrates social justice, service and advocacy into the school’s curriculum.
- Read a brief reflection by the daughter of Mexican immigrants: “[Bridging Borders for a Culture of Life](#).”
- Share stories of migrants and reflect on those stories as you pray the [rosary](#).
- Find other suggestions for educators at: [education.crs.org/migration](#) or the [Catholic Legal Immigration Network](#).

On Campus:

- Spread awareness about the campaign online by using the hashtag #sharethejourney.
- Host an event or table in a high-traffic area where people can sign up to join the campaign and/or [sign advocacy letters](#) asking Congress to support refugees.
- Plan a solidarity prayer vigil.
- Hold a simulation experience that helps people explore why migrants and refugees feel forced to leave their homes [using this exercise from CRS](#), a [guide from the Catholic Charities of Louisville](#), or the [Refugees Seeking Safety tool from Cabrini University](#).
- [Incorporate curricular resources](#) about global migration into classes that week.
- Organize a speaking event. [Contact your local Catholic Charities](#) or another local agency serving migrants and refugees to identify people who would be comfortable meeting and sharing their stories.
- Learn how [one campus](#) is engaging the entire campus community in solidarity with refugees, and find other campus suggestions at [university.crs.org/migration](#) or the [Catholic Legal Immigration Network](#).

And at Community-Wide Events

- Host a community-wide prayer for migrants and refugees.
 - Invite people to participate in communal prayer like a [prayer vigil](#), [rosary](#), [posadas](#), Holy Hour, or Stations of the Cross for the intention of migrants and refugees. Consider incorporating a walk into these prayer options to symbolize migrants and refugees on the move, with whom we share this earthly pilgrimage. [See how one diocese](#) engaged Catholics in prayer for migrants.
- Provide opportunities for people to get to know migrants and refugees.
 - Host a potluck gathering including members from your community and migrants and refugees. Organize a speaking event or school assembly in your community. Contact your local [Catholic Charities](#), [CLINIC affiliate](#) or another local agency, such as PCMRT Ethnic and People on the Move Communities serving migrants and refugees to identify people who would be comfortable meeting and sharing their stories. If you can't arrange an in-person gathering, encourage members of your community to get to know migrants and refugees by reading their stories.
- Help people put themselves in our brothers' and sisters' shoes.
 - Hold a simulation experience that helps people explore why migrants and refugees feel forced to leave their homes [using this exercise from CRS](#), a [guide from the Catholic Charities of Louisville](#), or the [Refugees Seeking Safety tool from Cabrini University](#).
- Organize local community service.
 - [Contact your local Catholic Charities](#), [CLINIC affiliate](#) or another local agency serving migrants or refugees to help determine the needs. Then, organize a day of service or a collection of the necessary items. Assistance is often needed in tutoring, language skills development, shelter, basic resource allocation, legal services, tutoring, job training, and transportation, and companionship. Even children can serve by collecting items or designing welcome cards for migrants and refugee families who are arriving in your community. If not already involved, your parish can also become part of the [local Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees Program](#), to organize ongoing program of welcome and support for newly arriving refugees. Contact USCCB Migration and Refugees for more information at MRS@usccb.org.
- Offer a public sign that your community is in solidarity with migrants and refugees.
 - Consider a symbolic gesture to help create awareness, such as pitching a tent on the parish lawn with a sign about standing in solidarity during the week of prayer and action. Display posters or pictures in the gathering space with stories and ways to help.
- Encourage education.
 - Challenge your community to learn about the issue. Invite classes and groups that are already meeting in your community throughout the week to spend some time learning about why people leave their home countries, common myths about the issue, and [what the Church teaches about it](#).
- Rally your community to contact your elected officials.
 - Join [an organization in your community](#) that is advocating for and with immigrants. Check out action alerts about national and global legislation concerning refugees and immigrants from [Catholic Charities USA](#), [Justice for Immigrants](#) (USCCB) and [Catholics Confront Global Poverty](#) (from the USCCB and CRS). Create personalized postcards or letters for people to sign during the week of prayer and action. Schedule a meeting with the offices of your Congressional members in advance of the week of prayer and action and hand deliver these letters or postcards at the meeting. [Here are some tips for how to get started](#).