

Becoming Welcoming Communities

Immigration in Light of Biblical Faith



LEADER'S
GUIDE



A Study Guide for Wisconsin Congregations

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The Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC) is a community of Christian denominations that covenant to pray and work together for the unity and renewal of the church and the healing and reconciliation of the world. Tracing its roots back to the early 1940's with an inter-denominational recreational ministry for young people, the Council was incorporated in 1947 and now encompasses 13 denominations with approximately 2,000 congregations and over one million church members. The Council's network of individuals and congregations reaches every corner of the state.

Current members of the Council include: American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Church of God in Christ, Church of the Brethren, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Greek Orthodox Church, Moravian Church, Orthodox Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Milwaukee and Diocese of La Crosse sit as observer members on the Council. Benedictine Women of Madison, Church Women United, the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (Region 9), and the Madison Area Urban Ministry are Associate Members.

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Check our website at www.wichurches.org for the latest information on:

- A downloadable copy of this study guide
- All handouts for each of the four sessions
- Immigration reform advocacy opportunities
- Links to additional resources



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Introduction

People on the Move

We easily forget how mobile people have been throughout history, but we only have to recall familiar Bible stories to bring that lesson home. From the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden, through God's call to Abraham and Sarah to leave their homeland, through the Exodus from Egypt and the Babylonian Exile, to Paul's journeys among the cities of the Mediterranean, Scripture tells us of people on the move.

And, as people move from place to place, they find themselves to be (as Moses said), "strangers in a strange land." Even those of us who stick closer to home can relate. We know how unsettled and anxious we can become on unfamiliar turf, among unfamiliar people. Will we be welcomed or shunned? Helped to find our way around, or criticized for every misstep?

It is not surprising that hospitality and justice for the "resident alien" are key themes in the Bible. "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2) These virtues reflect God's own graciousness to all people and God's special concern for the vulnerable.

Hospitality and justice are important words for us today as we encounter new neighbors who are immigrants and refugees from Latin America, Africa, Asia or Europe. The question we must ask is not, "Who are *they*?" but: "Who are *we*? Are we welcoming people, welcoming churches, welcoming communities? Do we reflect God's grace and justice for everyone, no matter where they are from?"

About this Study Guide

Becoming Welcoming Communities is designed to help congregations respond to immigrants and immigration in light of Biblical faith. The curriculum includes lesson plans for four 45-minute study sessions that weave together Wisconsin history, Bible passages, personal stories, and information on immigration policies.

You can present these sessions in any of several formats. For example:

- Four Sunday morning adult forums;
- A three-hour evening educational event;
- A half-day weekend event;
- An ecumenical study and discussion with other congregations;
- A retreat for your church council or social witness committee; or
- As part of a series discussing key issues in the upcoming state and national elections.

Further Resources

The "Becoming Welcoming Communities" section of the Wisconsin Council of Churches website www.wichurches.org has a downloadable version of this study resource, all of the handouts referred to in each of the four sessions, and links to websites and organizations with additional information.

Invite an Expert

Find someone in your congregation or community who is knowledgeable about the issue and who can come to the class to help lead the discussion, answer questions and provide background. Invite recent immigrants who live in your area to share their own stories. However, don't let any person—even an expert—dominate the discussion.

Advertise

To ensure good participation, publicize the class well in your congregation or community.

- Put up posters for the class in your church building;
- Have articles about the topic in your church newsletter;
- Include an insert about the class in the Sunday bulletin;
- Include references to immigrants during worship, in the prayers and sermons;
- Mention the class in your church's newspaper advertisement;
- Put up posters around your neighborhood;
- Personally invite individuals who might have a special interest in the discussion, or who can contribute to it from their own experience with immigration;
- Consider holding the class at a time other than Sunday morning and reach out to other congregations in your community—make this an ecumenical study event.

Bulletin Board

A few weeks before the class starts, find space in the church for a "Becoming Welcoming Communities" bulletin board. Before and during the weeks the class is being held, post advertisements for the class, handouts, announcements and news clippings collected by members of the class. This will help advertise the class, inform other members of the congregation and visitors about the issue and related community events, and engage class members in the issue between sessions.

Tips for Leading the Course

Familiarize yourself with the issue by reading this guide and some of the additional resources (see above), but don't feel you have to be an expert to lead this class. To help make sure the discussions are constructive and useful, set and enforce rules that will promote mutual respect and understanding, such as:

1. Everyone gets to talk, without being interrupted.
2. Stick to the subject at hand.
3. Listen carefully.
4. If you disagree, do so respectfully.
5. Speak for yourself. Don't put words in other people's mouths.
6. Personal stories are not to be repeated unless the teller gives permission.

Facilitator Trainings

If you would to schedule a facilitator for several congregations in your community, call us at 608-837-3108 or email us at wcoc@wichurches.org.

Let Us Know How It Works!

On the last page of this study is an evaluation form to copy, fill out and mail, fax, or e-mail back to our office.

Session 1

Sojourn to the Promised Land

Goals: Participants will

1. Recognize that migration is a normal part of human history, including Wisconsin's history.
2. Understand "becoming welcoming communities" as a Biblical moral framework for thinking about immigration issues.

Materials Needed (download handouts from www.wichurches.org)

1. Handout: "Immigrants in Wisconsin in the 1800's"
2. Bibles for every class participant
3. Handout: "20th Century Immigration Patterns in Wisconsin" (homework for Session 2)
4. Optional: world map on corkboard and two different colors of map pins

Introduction – 5 minutes

Welcome the class and offer a brief opening prayer.

Introduce the theme of the course by reading aloud the following:

In our mobile world, we find ourselves moving to new neighborhoods, or being joined in our communities by new neighbors. In this course we will explore how we, as Christians, should respond to this reality in our time. What does it mean to welcome or be welcomed? How can our churches show God's love to strangers and newcomers? What does it mean to be a welcoming community?

Invite the members of the class to introduce themselves and answer the questions:

1. In what communities, states, or countries have you lived in the course of your life? (Optional: have the participants put pins of one of the colors in the map to mark some or all of these places. If someone has lived in many places, have them mark two or three of the most significant.)
2. Did you grow up in the same place where your parents were born?

Bible Study – 15 minutes

Introduce the Bible study by reading the following aloud:

The history of almost any settled place on earth tells of the comings and goings of different groups of people. These people may have been in search of opportunities offered by new land for farming or by jobs in growing cities. They may have been forced from their homes by political turmoil, population pressure, economic changes, invading armies, religious persecution, or famines or other natural disasters. Willingly or unwillingly, they left their familiar homes and kindred to make a new life in a new place for themselves and their families.

The Bible is full of stories of relocation and migration – from Adam and Eve being expelled from the Garden of Eden; through the Exodus of the Hebrews out of Egypt into and into the Promised Land; to St. Paul’s journeys among the newly-formed Christian communities around the Mediterranean Sea.

One of the classic Biblical stories of migration is that of Abraham, the spiritual ancestor common to Christians, Jews, and Muslims.

Ask participants to turn to **Genesis 12:1-6** in their Bibles and ask a volunteer to read the passage aloud.

Ask the class to discuss:

1. What did Abram hope to gain by going to another country?
2. What did Abram lose by going?

Ask the class to turn to **Genesis 12:10-17** while someone reads the passage aloud.

Ask the class to discuss:

1. Why did Abram and Sarai go to Egypt? What were the benefits of going to Egypt?
2. What did Abram fear about going to Egypt? How did Abram try to protect himself? How did this work out for him?

Wrap up the discussion by making the following observations:

People who have left their homelands throughout history may not have done so for exactly the same reasons that Abram did. They may not have faced the same problems in their new countries. Still, their stories may be like Abram’s in some ways.

Hardships “pushed” them out of their home places. Visions of a new life “pulled” them to other lands. The new country was a mixed blessing, offering both opportunities and dangers. New circumstances called for new coping skills and strategies, some better than others. The people among whom the migrants settled might welcome them or see them as a problem.

And just as God’s purpose was to bless all nations through Abram, so God also has blessed the world through the gifts that people have brought to the lands and communities where they have settled.

History of Immigration in Wisconsin: the 19th Century – 15 minutes

Ask the class to discuss:

1. Where did your immigrant ancestors come from? How long ago? Where did they settle on first coming to America? (Optional: have the participants put one or more pins of the other color in the map to mark some or all of these places.)
2. Do you have or remember any objects that they brought with them from the “Old Country” or that represent your family’s immigrant roots? What do these objects mean to your family?
3. What examples can you give of foods, objects, clothing, entertainment, etc. that are part of your life that originated in a country or culture different from that of your ancestors?

Distribute the handout, "Immigration in Wisconsin in the 1800's." Ask the participants to take turns reading the handout, one paragraph at a time, in "round robin" fashion.

Ask the class to discuss:

1. What traces or evidence of this past do you see in Wisconsin today?
2. During this period, immigration was not regulated, except for the exclusion of certain "undesirable" groups, and immigration was actively encouraged. How do you think these policies helped or hurt the development of Wisconsin as a whole?
3. Why do you think Wisconsin passed the Bennet Law? Do you think it was justified?
4. Why do you think the Bennett Law provoked such a strong response? Do you think this response was justified?

Class discussion: Being Welcoming Communities – 10 minutes

Ask participants to turn to **Genesis 18:1-8** and follow along while someone reads the passage aloud.

Ask the class:

1. Abraham's hospitality to strangers was in accordance with the customs of the ancient Near East. Why do you think this was such an important custom in that time and place?
2. Is hospitality to strangers still an important practice? Is hospitality something to be practiced only by individuals or by communities as well?
3. What would a hospitable, welcoming community be like for the one who is welcomed?
4. What would a hospitable, welcoming community be like for the established members of the community?
5. "A welcoming community is one where strangers become neighbors." Do you agree? How does this happen? What is the difference between hospitality to strangers and "loving your neighbor" – or is there any difference?

Conclusion

Distribute the handout, "20th Century Immigration Patterns in Wisconsin" for participants to read for next time.

Thank the class for coming, and close with a brief prayer.

Session 2

Practicing Hospitality

Goals: Participants will

1. Discover the Biblical roots to the practice of hospitality.
2. Consider the challenges faced by immigrants to Wisconsin in the 20th century.

Before the Class:

Download and read the article, "Hospitality, A Practice and a Way of Life" (download from www.wichurches.org)

Materials Needed (download all handouts from www.wichurches.org)

1. Handout: "20th Century Immigrations Patterns in Wisconsin"
2. Handout: True-False Quiz
3. Handout: "One Girl's Story"
4. Bibles for every participant
5. Chalk board or easel with butcher paper and felt markers

Introduction – 5 minutes

1. Welcome the class and offer a brief opening prayer.
2. Have the participants introduce themselves to each other.

Bible Study – 15 minutes

Introduce the Bible study by reading aloud the following:

We're going to take a look at a story from the Book of Exodus which reveals the social circumstances of Moses as he is formed as a young adult. It's really the story of an immigrant—Moses—who is forced to leave Egypt and travel to Midian in the East. Pay close attention to the story. What was life like for Moses in Egypt? And what was life like for Moses in Midian?

Ask participants to turn to **Exodus 2:11-22** in their Bibles and request a volunteer to read aloud.

Post the following questions on a chalk board or easel. Ask participants to gather in groups of 3-4 to discuss the questions:

1. What are the reasons that Moses is in such "hot water" with Pharaoh?
2. What was Moses' experience in his new home, Midian? How was it different than Egypt?
3. Why does Moses self-identify as an "alien" at the end of the story?
4. When have you felt like an "outsider"? When has your congregation felt like an "outsider"?

Wrap up the discussion by reading aloud:

Egypt is a powerful empire, where one group of people enjoys wealth and comfort while others are forced to work to support their lifestyle. It is Moses' "home" – but one where he is not "at home," and from which he must flee. Midian is just the opposite of Egypt – a simple, pastoral society, based on sheep herding. Unlike Egypt, there is no forced labor policy in Midian. It is in this "other place" that Moses finds hospitality and, in the end, his true family and home.

Just as the setting of the story changes, so does Moses' own identity. On the one hand, the Hebrew rebukes Moses as another Hebrew, but one who presumes to act like a "ruler and judge" over Hebrews – that is, like an Egyptian (v. 14). Later in the story, the daughters in Midian call him "an Egyptian" (v. 19.) At the end of the story, Moses finds he is "an alien in a foreign land." (v. 22)

Moses had options and choices throughout the story. The choices he made from his passion for justice made him a fugitive, a refugee, and finally a "resident alien." Moses never starts out to be an alien, but becomes one, one choice at a time.

Immigration to Wisconsin in the 1900's - 15 min.

Distribute the True-False Quiz, based on the "20th Century Immigration Patterns in Wisconsin" handout that was distributed at the end of class last week (distribute copies right now to those who were not present last week). Ask participants to work in pairs in filling out the quiz for a few minutes. Share responses with the large group.

Ask the class, *What are the reasons people from foreign lands immigrated to the United States in the 1900's?* As individuals call out responses, make a list on butcher paper.

Distribute the handout, "One Girl's Story." Ask each participant to read a paragraph in a "round-robin" fashion.

Ask the class:

1. Why did Mai Ya's family and other Southeast Asian refugees come to Wisconsin?
2. Why did the U.S. accept them as refugees?
3. What challenges did Mai Ya face in adapting to a new way of life?
4. What opportunities and resources did the community provide for her?
5. Many churches sponsored refugee families like Mai Ya's. Do you know of any examples? Why did they take on this responsibility?

Hospitality – 15 minutes

In preparation for this final segment of the class, download and read the article "Hospitality, A Practice and a Way of Life" by Christine Pohl found at www.wichurches.org

Post the following on a chalkboard or butcher paper, and read out loud:

For centuries, the church has contrasted
conventional hospitality,
which welcomes family, friends and
influential people, with
Christian hospitality,
which welcomes the vulnerable and the poor
into one's home and church.

Such hospitality reflects God's greater hospitality that
welcomes the undeserving,
provides the lonely with a home, and
sets a banquet table for the hungry.

(Note: This arrangement of the text is merely a suggestion – use whatever format will fit the writing space and can be easily read by the class.)

Ask a class participant to read **Matthew 25:35** aloud, then another to read **Luke 14:12-14**.

Ask the class:

1. What are the challenges of practicing Christian hospitality?
2. What are the benefits of practicing Christian hospitality?

Thank the participants for coming, and close with a brief prayer.



Session 3

New Immigrants Living an Old Story

Goals: Participants will

1. Empathize with immigrants' motives for coming to the U.S. and the hard choices they must make.
2. Identify ways that churches and communities can be welcoming places for immigrants.

Materials Needed (download handouts from www.wichurches.org)

1. Bibles
2. Handout: "Recent Immigration in Wisconsin"
3. Handout: Immigrant profiles for exercise. To prepare:
 - a. Copy each page (2 profiles), one sided, on a different color of paper. If you can't copy on different colored paper, use colored markers to mark each profile with a different color. The different colors will help you hand out the profiles to pairs of class members quickly and easily in such a way that no pair will get two of the same profile.
 - b. Separate the profiles by cutting each sheet on the dotted lines (make enough copies to be sure that there will be a profile for each member of the class).
4. Handout: "The U.S. Immigration System" (homework for Session 4)

Introduction – 5 minutes

Welcome the class and open with a brief prayer.

Invite the members of the class to introduce themselves and answer the question:

What do you value about living in the United States?

Bible Study – 10 minutes

Introduce the Bible study by reading the following aloud:

In our mobile world, we find ourselves moving to new neighborhoods, or being joined in our communities by new neighbors. How should we, as Christians, respond to this reality in our time? What does it mean to welcome or be welcomed? How can our churches show God's love to strangers and newcomers?

There are many passages in the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments that talk about how we should treat strangers. The following passage is from Moses' instructions to the Hebrew people in the wilderness, after God had freed them from slavery in Egypt and given the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, but before they had entered the Promised Land.

Ask participants turn to **Deuteronomy 10:17-19** in their Bibles and ask one person to read the passage aloud. Ask the class:

1. According to this passage, how are strangers (or whatever word is used in the translation) to be treated?
2. What reasons are given, or implied, for treating strangers in this way?

Next, read the following:

The letter to the Hebrews is addressed to early Christians in the Roman Empire who have experienced persecution and ridicule from the society in which they lived, and therefore might well be suspicious and fearful of strangers. However, the letter's readers are urged to welcome fellow Christians from other places, who depend on the hospitality of local Christian communities. "Angel" literally means "messenger" and could mean anyone who brings a message of grace from God.

Ask participants to turn to **Hebrews 13:1-3** and have someone read the passage aloud. Ask the class:

1. What reasons are given in this passage for showing hospitality to strangers?
2. The command to show hospitality is followed by statements about empathizing with prisoners and persons being tortured – that is, to imagine what it would feel like to be in their situation. Do you see a connection?

Immigration in Wisconsin: Recent and Projected – 10 min.

Distribute the handout, "Recent Immigration in Wisconsin." Draw participants' attention to the graph on page 1, "Wisconsin's Foreign Born Population: 1850-2000." Ask:

1. *How did events and changes in the world and the U.S. (including but not limited to those listed on the graph) "push" or "pull" immigrants to America (see the table below the chart)? What are the most important "push" and "pull" factors affecting immigration now?*

Turn to the second page of the handout, "Immigrants in Wisconsin: Neighbors, Voters, Consumers, Job Creators" and ask,

2. *What is the relative proportion (percent) of immigrants to native born persons in Wisconsin today, compared to past decades?*
3. *Look at the tables below the chart. What do you think they tell us about the role that recent immigrants, and their children and grandchildren, will be playing in Wisconsin in the future?*

Exercise: Who Are Immigrants Today? – 20 minutes

Discussion in Pairs (10 min.)

Divide the group into pairs. (If there is an even number of class members – not counting yourself – you will sit out the exercise. If there is an odd number, participate in the exercise as a member of a pair.)

Hand out one profile slip to each class member; be sure that no two members of the same pair receive profiles on the same color paper.

Give instructions:

First, one member of your pair reads the immigrant profile he or she has been given to the other. Then, the other member asks the first person the questions listed on the right of his or her slip (the questions are the same for all profiles) . The first person answers each question as if he or she was the person in the profile. Note that some questions may not have clear answers from the information given in the profile – use your imagination or your knowledge of other immigrants' stories.

Then reverse the roles, with the other member reading the profile and answering questions. If you are done before the other pairs, wait or talk quietly until I call us back into the full group.

Full group discussion (10 min.)

After the time for discussion in pairs is over, call everyone back into the full group. Ask the group to discuss:

1. Was there anything particularly surprising, or moving, about the story you read or heard?
2. What ideas has this exercise generated for ways that our church or community could become more welcoming to immigrants and refugees?

Distribute the handout: "The U.S. Immigration System" for participants to read over before the next session.

Thank the participants for coming and close with a brief prayer.



Session 4

Becoming a Welcoming Nation

Goals: Participants will

1. Identify the values behind biblical laws relating to the treatment of strangers and resident aliens.
2. Identify public policy responses to immigration issues that are consistent with Christian values.
3. Learn how to effectively express views on immigration as persons of faith to legislators and other public officials.

Materials Needed (download handouts from www.wichurches.org)

1. Bibles
2. Handout: "The U.S. Immigration System"
3. Handout: "Public Policy Advocacy"

Introduction – 5 minutes

1. Welcome the class and offer a brief opening prayer.
2. Have the participants introduce themselves to each other.

Bible Study – 15 minutes

Introduce the Bible study by reading the following aloud:

In earlier sessions we have seen how migration from place to place and community to community is a recurring theme in the Bible. The people of Israel saw God's presence and saving power in their own history of immigration and emigration. We will now listen to a confession of faith that was part of a ritual for offering to God the first fruits of the harvest:

Ask someone in the class to read **Deuteronomy 26:5-11** while the rest of the class follows along.

Read the following aloud:

Notice that "the aliens who reside among you" are also to enjoy the bountiful fruits of the land. The people of ancient Israel had a strong sense of their identity as a people called to manifest God's generosity, compassion and justice.

The laws of Israel were meant to express that identity in the ways that they ordered their lives as a community. Time and time again, the Prophets like Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah called the people to remember who they were and what God expected of them.

In the last session, we read from Deuteronomy 10:19 that the people of Israel were to "love the stranger." How was love expressed in Israel's law? As we listen to the following passages, notice how God's people are expected to treat aliens, foreigners, sojourners and refugees.

Have one or more members of the class read aloud the following passages while the others follow along in their own Bibles. (You may want to write these passage references on slips of paper and give each reader one, or write them on a chalkboard or easel pad, for easy reference.) Read the explanatory sentence in italics before each passage is read.

Deuteronomy 14:28-29

Deuteronomy contains many of the laws that governed the Jewish people in Old Testament times. Ancient Israel was an agricultural society; each of the twelve tribes was given an allotment of farm land that was passed down from generation to generation— excepting the Levites (the tribe from which Israel's priests came). There were also some people who did not own land on which they could raise their own food. A "tithe of your produce" was a tenth of the food that was harvested.

Deuteronomy 24:14-15

Poor Israelites and foreigners living in Israel who did not own land often had to work for others in order to survive.

Isaiah 16:3-4a

Isaiah was a prophet who spoke to the people of Judah – the southern portion of Israel that was still free after the northern portion had been conquered by the Assyrian empire. Moab was a neighboring nation that had also been crushed by invading Assyrian armies, and Moabite refugees fled to Judah in search of safety.

Ezekiel 47:21-23

Ezekiel was another prophet who spoke to the people of Israel who had been conquered and taken into exile in Babylon, another great empire of the time. In this passage, he looks forward to a time when God will restore the Israelites to their land, which will again be allotted to the twelve tribes.

Zechariah 7:8-10

Zechariah was yet another prophet who looked forward to Israel's restoration. Here, he reminds the people of the justice that God's law requires of them.

Ask the class:

1. What do these passages tell us about how "aliens" [or whatever term was used] are to be treated?
2. Why do you think "aliens" [or whatever term was used] are grouped together with the poor, orphans, and widows? (*Levites, the tribe of priests in ancient Israel, were the only tribe not allotted land of their own, so they were dependent on the community for support.*)

Discussion: U.S. Immigration System – 20 minutes

Introduce the discussion by reading the following aloud:

The United States in the 21st Century is a very different place than Palestine in the time of ancient Israel or in Jesus' time. But we, too, have the challenge and opportunity of becoming welcoming communities for new neighbors from other lands – and for some who are not so new,

but who have been part of our neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and churches for many years. We can't directly apply the customs and laws of the ancient world to our own situation. But we can listen for how God, through Scripture, is calling us to extend compassion and justice to all people, no matter who they are or where they come from.

Distribute handout, "The U.S. Immigration System," to anyone who does not have a copy from the last session, and continue reading:

The immigration issue is complex as well as controversial. Many people – immigrants and native-born people alike, both citizens and non-citizens – believe that the United States immigration system is broken. But they do not always agree on what is wrong or how to fix it.

This handout provides a simplified overview of the immigration system in the U.S., the concerns people have about how the system works or fails to work, and some proposals for resolving them. As we review this sheet, be thinking about the values expressed by the biblical passages we've just been looking at.

(The handout provides only the briefest overview of the U.S. immigration system, problems with it, and some proposed solutions. The discussion may raise questions about the immigration system that neither you nor other members of the class can answer, but don't worry: These are opportunities for members of the class to seek out answers and report back, or for inviting an expert to talk in your congregation at a later date. Links to helpful resources can be found on the Wisconsin Council of Churches webpage on "Becoming Welcoming Communities" www.wichurches.org)

(And, because this issue is controversial and emotionally charged, now would be a good time to briefly review the ground rules for discussion under "Tips for Leading the Course" in the Introduction to this guide.)

Ask the members of the class to spend a few minutes reading the top section of the handout, "Legal Immigration." Ask the class to discuss:

1. In what ways do you think the current system of **legal immigration** reflects the values of **compassion** or **empathy** expressed in the biblical passages read earlier? In what ways does it fall short?
2. Which proposed solutions do you think are most consistent with these values?

Ask the members of the class to spend a few minutes reading the second section of the handout, "Undocumented Immigration." Ask the class to discuss:

1. In what ways do you think the current situation of **undocumented immigrants** reflects or violates the biblical principle of **just treatment** of the most vulnerable?
2. Which proposed solutions do you think are most consistent with the biblical understanding of justice?

Ask the members of the class to spend a few minutes reading the last section of the handout, "Enforcement." Ask the class to discuss:

1. Do you think that a response to illegal immigration that relies entirely on enforcement can ensure the **well-being of our communities**?

2. What does it mean to say that we are “a society of laws”? Is that necessarily the same thing as being a **just and compassionate society**? Why or why not?

Conclusion – 5 minutes

Distribute the Handout, “Public Policy Advocacy” and tell the class:

Proverbs 31:8-9 tells us to “speak out for those who cannot speak . . . defend the rights of the poor and the needy.” One way that we can do that is by communicating with our legislators, expressing our concern for the well-being of the most vulnerable members of our community and asking them to support public policies that are compassionate, just, and that will strengthen our state and nation as a whole.

On the basis of what you have learned in this course, you may want to speak to your representatives in the state legislature and U.S. Congress on behalf of making our nation and our communities more welcoming to immigrants and refugees. This handout will give you some tips on how to do so.

Conclude with an appropriate prayer, and thank the class for their participation.



Evaluation Form

Please help us to track how this resource has been used, support those who use it, and improve on future study guides by copying, completing and returning this form to:

Becoming Welcoming Communities, Wisconsin Council of Churches, 750 Windsor Street, Suite 301, Sun Prairie W/53590. Fax: (608)837-3038. Or scan and e-mail to: wcoc@wichurches.org

When did you hold the class? (Sunday mornings, weekday evenings, weekends, etc.) How many sessions? _____

Who participated? (Members of one church, several congregations of different denominations, etc.) _

What was the average attendance? _____

What follow-up actions is your group or congregation interested in or planning on doing?

Was this study guide informative and helpful to you and your group? Why, or why not?

Additional Comments: _____

Your Contact Information:

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Time Sensitive Material

Becoming Welcoming Communities

Immigration in Light
of Biblical Faith

Route to:

- Pastor
- Adult Education Committee
- Mission/Community Concerns Committee



A Study Guide for
Wisconsin Congregations