

BECOMING WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

Immigration in Light of Biblical Faith:
A Study Guide for Wisconsin Congregations



WISCONSIN COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES
COURAGE. JUSTICE. HOLY IMAGINATION.

Becoming Welcoming Communities - Wisconsin Council of Churches- Session 6, Handout 6A

TAKING ACTION: TODAY, TOMORROW, BEYOND

Here are twenty-one ways you might get started... but don't stop there. Take time to brainstorm. What other action steps can you imagine? What works for your local congregation and the community you serve?

Within Your Local Congregation!

1. Craft a worship service or series around immigrant or refugee issues when pertinent scripture passages come up in your worship planning cycle.
2. Participate in your tradition's dedicated Sunday or week dedicated to immigrant and refugee issues.
3. Produce a series of bulletin inserts, devotions or church newsletter articles about immigration or refugee issues.
4. Create a public display such as an art project honoring the experiences and cultures of immigrants in your area.
5. Submit letters to the editor or an op-ed piece to your local newspaper on the needs and gifts of your immigrant neighbors.
6. Take up a special collection for organizations serving immigrants or refugees, or organizations doing advocacy on this issue.
7. Work to make the invisible, visible: include immigrants and refugees in your individual and community prayers.

Research!

8. Learn more about current issues and policies. See what issues your community has particular passion about and dig into that area.
9. Subscribe to the Wisconsin Council of Churches ENEWS to learn more about faith-based opportunities to support immigrants and refugees, and how to work with other organizations already doing this work effectively. Visit <https://www.wichurches.org/2022/02/newsletters/>

Build Relationships!

10. Expand the circle. Did you begin by having a group from your church do this study? Offer it again with an invitation to the wider community. Plan for additional facilitators from the participants in the first group.
11. Join or host a prayer vigil for immigrants and/or refugees.
12. Patronize small businesses started by immigrants in order to provide economic support.
13. Build authentic relationships with your immigrant neighbors. Share meals, build trust, and get to know one another.
14. Organize an Offering of Letters from your church to local, state, or national government officials to express your support for immigrant-serving organizations and the need for increased budgets for resettlement agencies. Consider taking time during worship to bless this offering. Mail or hand-deliver to elected officials.
15. Organize a social media campaign about welcoming immigrants and/or refugees. Find the Twitter, Facebook and other handles of your representatives and tag them.
16. Explore what it might look like for your church to be part of a sponsorship group for an immigrant household new to your area. Are there other churches you could work with? What supplies would be needed? How long would your commitment be? Does this feel like a call?
17. Does your community have a sanctuary coalition? Explore what groups exist in your area and what they're working on. Build relationships with the members of these groups.
18. Might your community serve as a sanctuary church (hosting those in need of a safe and secure space to prevent deportation) or a sanctuary partner church (supporting other churches who provide the space)? Study what this might mean for you and discern as a community where you are being called.
19. Organize a field trip for members of your congregation to an advocacy day held by a state or national organization active on these issues.
20. Explore in greater detail the intersection of climate change and immigration. Consider who might be willing to work together when you speak about the way these issues influence one another. Begin building allies for future waves of people on the move.
21. Set up a meeting with local law enforcement. Ask them what problems they face because recent immigrants, both with and without documentation, are afraid of the police. Come up with a plan to help build relationships between immigrants and law enforcement.