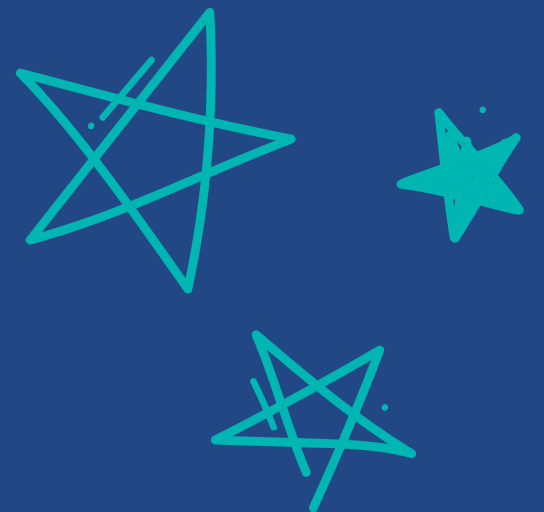


JRS UK PARISH ACTIVITY PACK

Inspired by the Gospel call to welcome the stranger, this pack offers practical ways for your parish to pray, reflect, and act in solidarity with refugees. This resource can be used throughout the year to bring the spirit of welcome and justice into parish life.



About JRS UK

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation with a shared global mission to accompany, serve and advocate alongside and for the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced people. Our work is based on hospitality, carried out in a spirit of compassion and solidarity, encouraging participation and community, aiming to kindle hope, secure justice and affirm the dignity of refugees and forced migrants.

JRS in the UK supports people made destitute by the asylum process through practical support including accommodation, food and clothing; expert casework and legal advice; and a range of classes and activities. JRS UK also runs a detention outreach service at Harmondsworth and Colnbrook, including befriending, social visiting, and casework support. This frontline work informs our research and advocacy for a more just and humane asylum system.

ways your parish can get involved



Include refugee intentions
in Sunday Mass

Organise a donation drive

Host a coffee morning
fundraiser

Write to your MP

Run an awareness session

Celebrate refugee
contributions

Share support on social
media



Include refugee intentions in Sunday Mass

These intercessory prayers are offered to help your parish community pray in solidarity with refugees and forcibly displaced people. They can be used throughout the year, but you could also tie them to specific Church dates or world awareness dates.

Notes

- **Consider linking the homily or parish newsletter reflection to the themes of welcome and justice.** There is an example reflection on page 11
- Consider **inviting someone from JRS UK to speak** briefly at the end of Mass
- Possible dates to link to: **Refugee Week, anniversary of the Refugee Convention, St Josephine Bhakita's feast day, flight of the Holy Family to Egypt, World Day of Migrants and Refugees**



“I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Mt 25:35) For all migrants and refugees around the world, that they may find safety, welcome, and dignity in their journey, and that we may open our hearts and communities to receive them with love.

Lord, in your mercy

“The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble” (Ps 9:9) For all people forced to flee their homes due to war and persecution, that they may find safety, and find hope through the compassion of others.

Lord, in your mercy

“Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ” (Ga 6:2) For all people working to give a warm welcome to refugees, in thanksgiving for their effort and generosity. We pray for organisations like the Jesuit Refugee Service, and all who accompany, serve, and advocate for refugees.

Lord, in your mercy

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2) For our parish community, that we may be moved by the Gospel call to welcome the stranger and act in solidarity with those on the margins.

Lord, in your mercy

“Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression” (Is 1:17) For political leaders and decision-makers: that they may uphold the dignity and rights of migrants and refugees, and work for peace and justice in our world.

Lord, in your mercy

“You shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Dt 10:19) We remember the Holy Family’s flight into Egypt, and all the stories of people forced to migrate in Scripture. We pray for children & families displaced by conflict, that they may be protected, reunited, and given the opportunity to flourish in safety.

Lord, in your mercy

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes” (Rv 21:4) For people who have died on their journey seeking refuge, that they may rest in God’s eternal peace, and that we may honour their memory by working for change.

Lord, in your mercy

Praying with refugees

Find more resources for praying with and for refugees at

www.jrsuk.net/praying-with-refugees

Resources include:

- Guides for hosting a prayer service for refugees
- JRS UK’s Stations of the Cross prayer, bringing together Jesus’ journey to Calvary with refugee experiences
- More intercessory prayers



Organise a collection of essential items for JRS UK

We are always looking for physical donations to support our services to refugees - from toiletries to art materials, can you help?

Instructions

- Visit www.jrsuk.net/current-needs to see the most up-to-date list of items needed. If possible, choose a few specific items to focus your collection (e.g. toiletries, non-perishable food, or good-quality clothing).
- **Set up a collection point** in the church or parish hall. Ensure it is accessible before and after Mass and during parish events.
- **Promote the collection drive** in the parish newsletter, bulletins, and on social media. You can also include a short reflection or quote from Scripture to connect the action to your parish's faith life.
- **Coordinate with JRS UK to arrange delivery** or drop-off.
- If you would like **resources from JRS UK** to advertise this event (e.g. a poster), email uk.outreach@jrs.net



Notice for your newsletter:

This weekend, we're collecting items to support destitute refugees through the Jesuit Refugee Service UK. Please bring **(customise: toiletries, good-quality clothing, and non-perishable food)** to the collection point in the **(customise: church foyer)**. Your generosity will make a real difference in the lives of women, men, and children seeking sanctuary in the UK.

Every year, JRS UK works with over 300 refugee friends from over 80 different countries. Our work includes practical support, casework and legal advice, accommodation, advocacy, and therapeutic activities. We also support hundreds of people every year held in immigration detention next to Heathrow airport.

Find out more about the work of JRS UK:

www.jrsuk.net

Host a coffee morning fundraiser for JRS UK

Turn tea and cake into hope and healing. A simple parish fundraiser can support refugees with food, shelter, legal help, and friendship.

Instructions

- **Choose a fundraising activity** that suits your parish community—popular options include a coffee morning, bake sale, quiz night, or sponsored walk. You could also hold a collection at Mass!
- **Share information about JRS UK's work** and how donations will help. You can order leaflets from JRS UK to display in church or include a reflection or note in the parish newsletter.
- **Decide how you will collect donations:** either centrally and send proceeds via bank transfer (email uk.outreach@jrs.net for details), or order free Gift Aid envelopes from JRS UK. Donors can place their contributions in the envelopes, seal them, and post them to JRS UK.

Notice for your newsletter:

Join us for a **(customise: parish coffee morning)** in support of the Jesuit Refugee Service UK! Enjoy tea, coffee, and homemade treats while raising funds to help refugees rebuild their lives. Every donation helps JRS UK continue their vital work of accompaniment, service, and advocacy.

Every year, JRS UK works with over 300 refugee friends from over 80 different countries. Their work includes practical support, casework and legal advice, accommodation, advocacy, and wellbeing activities. They also support hundreds of people every year held in immigration detention next to Heathrow airport.

Find out more about the work of JRS UK: www.jrsuk.net



Advocate: write to your MP

We invite Catholic communities to lead by example and stand in solidarity with refugees and forcibly displaced people by sharing and advocating for the Gospel call to love the stranger.

Instructions

- **Choose a Sunday or parish event to promote this action**
- **Set up a table with printed postcard templates** or letter sheets, pens, envelopes, and the name and address of your local MP. JRS UK can also send you postcards to use for this activity.
- **Provide guidance on what to include** in the message: express concern for the treatment of refugees, ask for policies that uphold dignity and protection, and mention JRS UK's work.
- **Encourage parishioners to personalise their messages** with their own words or experiences.
- **Offer to collect and post the letters**, or invite parishioners to send them directly.
- **Follow up by sharing any responses received and encouraging continued advocacy.**

Notice for your newsletter:

Living out our Gospel call to love the stranger, we're inviting parishioners to write to their MP to advocate for the rights of refugees. This is a powerful way to live out our faith and speak up for those who are often unheard.

(Customise: After Mass this Sunday, visit our letter-writing table in the parish hall). You'll find templates, pens, and envelopes ready to go.

Example message for your MP:

Dear **(customise: MP name)**, The UK has a proud tradition of offering sanctuary to people fleeing danger. Yet today, our asylum system is failing in that duty. People who need protection are being wrongly refused, not because they are safe, but because the system is broken. Unreasonably high standards of proof, poor decision-making, and a severe lack of legal support mean refugees are often denied safety or left in limbo for years. These are people who have sought sanctuary—yet they are punished instead of protected. As my MP, I urge you to support an asylum system that offers justice and hope. Every person's case must be assessed fairly and fully, with access to legal support and a genuine chance to rebuild their life in safety. A fair system protects – not punishes. Yours sincerely,

Run an awareness raising session with the community

Why not host an awareness session to explore the Catholic response to migrants and refugees? This is a meaningful way to reflect on our shared values of welcome and justice, and to inspire action within your community. It's also a great way to share Catholic Social Teaching and to dive into Scripture together.

Instructions

- **Choose a date and format** for your session. You might host a one-off talk or a more in-depth series using the **'Love the Stranger' resource developed by JRS UK and Caritas Southwark, the 'Love the Stranger Youth Version' by Caritas Brentwood, or JRS UK's own school resources.**
- **Invite a speaker** from JRS UK or a local expert to share insights and stories. Alternatively, use the resource materials to guide a parish-led discussion.
- **Promote the session in your parish newsletter**, bulletin, and on social media. Include a reflection or Scripture quote to connect the event to your parish's faith life.
- **Encourage parishioners to reflect** on how they can respond—through prayer, volunteering, advocacy, or community action.
- **Consider involving local schools or youth groups.** Invite them to create a refugee-themed display in church, featuring posters, Scripture quotes, and prayers.

“I was a stranger and you welcomed me”

Celebrate refugee contributions / host a cultural evening

Host a cultural evening to celebrate the gifts and cultures of all the people in your community. This is a beautiful way to honour diversity and build a welcoming parish environment.

Instructions

- **Plan a multicultural Mass or parish meal** that highlights the richness of refugee cultures and experiences.
- **Invite** everyone in the community to share music, food, or personal stories as part of the celebration.
- **Decorate the space with symbols of welcome and diversity**, and include prayers or reflections that affirm the dignity of all people.
- **Promote the event** in your parish newsletter and on social media to encourage participation and raise awareness.



Share your solidarity on social media

Your parish can help amplify the message of welcome and solidarity by engaging with JRS UK or other refugee organisations online. Sharing your activities and connecting with JRS UK digitally helps build a wider community of support.

Ways to show support online

- **Post about your parish's activities** and tag JRS UK on social media.
- **Share JRS UK's posts** and stories on your parish website and social media channels.
- **Subscribe to receive updates** from JRS UK by email or post. You can also request bulk copies of our quarterly newsletter to distribute in your parish. Visit www.jrsuk.net/subscribe or email uk.outreach@jrs.net to find out more.

Example for your newsletter: Spiritual reflection on Love the Stranger

The Jubilee of Migrants and Refugees invites us to reflect deeply on the Gospel call to welcome the stranger. In **Matthew 25:35**, Jesus says, **'I was a stranger and you welcomed me.'** This simple yet profound statement reminds us that in every refugee and displaced person, we encounter Christ himself. Welcoming the stranger is not just an act of charity—it is a sacred duty, a living expression of our faith.

In his message for the Jubilee of Migrants and Refugees, Pope Leo XIV reminds us that:

“refugees and displaced persons are privileged witnesses of hope. Indeed, they demonstrate this daily through their resilience and trust in God, as they face adversity while seeking a future in which they glimpse that integral human development and happiness are possible.”

Their journeys, marked by courage and resilience, bear witness to a faith that sees beyond suffering and envisions a future where they can safely rebuild flourishing lives.

Unfortunately, people seeking sanctuary around the world are routinely met with hostility. Here in the UK, refugees are met every day with a culture of disbelief, long periods of isolation cut off from public support, and the growing possibility of detention in prison-like settings – all for seeking safety from persecution.

Catholics are called to stand in solidarity with refugees and forcibly displaced people: advocating for safe routes and a warm reception for people seeking sanctuary, where their dignity is affirmed, where they can live and flourish in safety.

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Heb 13:2).

Pope Leo writes that the opportunity to welcome people into our communities **“should be recognized and appreciated as a true divine blessing, an opportunity to open oneself to the grace of God, who gives new energy and hope to his Church”**

This hope is not naïve optimism. It is rooted in the messianic vision of Scripture—a world where **“the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing” (Zechariah 8:5)**, and where **“the skies shall give their dew” (Zechariah 8:12)**. It is a hope inaugurated by Christ and entrusted to us.

As we mark the Jubilee, let us open our hearts to encounter Christ in the stranger. Let us allow their stories to transform our own, and let our parishes become places of welcome, witness, and renewal. In doing so, we participate in building the Kingdom of God—a true homeland for all.

As we pray, act, and advocate together, may our hearts be opened to the grace of encounter and the transformation it brings.

To find out more about the Jubilee and what you can do, visit www.jrsuk.net/jubilee



Find out more about the work of JRS UK at
www.jrsuk.net

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@jrsuk_



/jesuitrefugeeserviceuk



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JRS UK is the refugee agency of the Jesuits in Britain (Jesuits in Britain CIO), a registered charity in England and Wales (1207742) and Scotland (SC053495)



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