Council of Christian and Jews
Rabbi-Clergy Action Network

REFUGEE WEEK

18 - 24 June 2018

A CCJ guide for religious communities

REFUGEE WEEK: 18 – 24 JUNE 2018

A CCJ guide for community leaders

Photos clockwise from top left: Jewish refugees arriving in London from Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-S69279; refugees arriving in Lesbos by Charles-André Habib; Iraqi refugee children in Syria by James Gordon.

Introduction 3

Jewish Liturgy. 4

Christian Liturgy. 9

Events to mark Refugee Week. 16

Further Resources and Contacts. 18

"We know that what we can do is small compared with the magnitude of the problem, but we cannot rest so long as there is any sense among us that we are not doing all that might be done."

Archbishop William Temple, Co-founder of CCJ
Speech Supporting Immediate Aid to Jewish Refugees

Welcome to CCJ's guide to Refugee Week, 18 – 24th June 2018. This guide is intended primarily for use by rabbis, clergy, and community leaders, to help you to mark Refugee Week in your own communities. It contains advice on events to run during Refugee Week, as well as Jewish and Christian materials for use in Sabbath services during the week.

The current refugee crisis shows no signs of dissipating. The number of forcibly displaced people worldwide is at its highest level ever, more than even at the end of World War II. Just in the UK, there are an estimated 120,000 refugees. Refugees face tremendous obstacles, both in the course of travelling to safety, and in rebuilding their lives.

This guide was assembled for CCJ's Rabbi-Clergy Action Network. The network aims to facilitate partnerships and opportunities for both rabbis and clergy to work together on social action and to foster dialogue. With members from 17 denominations all around the UK, we operate locally and nationally. If you would like to join the Rabbi-Clergy Action Network or would like more information, please email jessica.spencer@ccj.org.uk.

Coptic Christian Refugees from Eritrea and Ethiopia at the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem. Photo by Ridvan Yumlu.

JEWISH LITURGY

'You shall not wrong a stranger' is the most repeated commandment in the Torah. Refugees, exile, and the refugee experience have a central place in Jewish liturgy. In Refugee Week, you may wish to call attention to some of these occurrences. Here are a few places in the Shabbat services that you may wish to mark:

Kabbalat Shabbat service: Lecha Dodi, verses 7-9

לֹא תֵבֹשִׁי וְלֹא תִכָּלְמִי	Do not be ashamed, do not be confounded.
מַה תִּשְׁתּוֹחֲחִי וּמַה תֶּהֱמִי	Why be downcast? Why do you mourn?
בָּךְ יֶחֱסוּ עֲנִיֵּי עַמִּי	In you the needy of My people find shelter,
וְנִבְנְתָה עִיר עַל תִּלָּהּ	And the city shall be rebuilt on its hill.
וְהָיוּ לִמְשִׁסָּה שֹׁאסָיִךְ	Those who despoiled you shall be despoiled,
וְרָחֲקוּ כָּל מְבַלְּעָיִךְ	And all who devoured you shall be far away.
יָשִׂישׂ עָלַיִךְ אֱלֹהָיִךְ	Your God will rejoice over you
כִּמְשׂוֹשׂ חָתָן עַל כַּלָּה	As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride.
יָמִין וּשְׂמֹאל תִּפְרֹצִי	Right and left you shall spread out,
וְאֶת ה' תַּעֲרִיצִי	And God you will revere.
עַל יַד אִישׁ בֶּן פַּרְצִי	Through the descendant of Peretz
וְנִשְׂמְחָה וְנָגִילָה	We shall rejoice and we shall be glad.

Traunstein displaced persons camp, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Lucy Gliklich Breitbart

Shabbat morning service: Psalm 146

Psalm 146, said during Pesukei D'Zimra:

א הַלְלוּ-יָהּ׃ הַלְלִי נַפְשִׁי, אֶת-יְהוָה.	**1** Hallelujah. **{N}** Praise the LORD, O my soul.
ב אֲהַלְלָה יְהוָה בְּחַיָּי; אֲזַמְּרָה לֵאלֹהַי בְּעוֹדִי.	**2** I will praise the LORD while I live; I will sing praises unto my God while I have my being.
ג אַל-תִּבְטְחוּ בִנְדִיבִים בְּבֶן-אָדָם, שֶׁאֵין לוֹ תְּשׁוּעָה.	**3** Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
ד תֵּצֵא רוּחוֹ, יָשֹׁב לְאַדְמָתוֹ; בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, אָבְדוּ עָשְׁתֹנֹתָיו.	**4** His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his dust; in that very day his thoughts perish.
ה אַשְׁרֵי-שֶׁאֵל יַעֲקֹב בְּעֶזְרוֹ: שִׂבְרוֹ, עַל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו.	**5** Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God,
ו עֹשֶׂה, שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם; הַשֹּׁמֵר אֱמֶת לְעוֹלָם.	**6** Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is; who keepeth truth for ever;
ז עֹשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט, לָעֲשׁוּקִים-נֹתֵן לֶחֶם, לָרְעֵבִים; יְהוָה, מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים.	**7** Who executeth justice for the oppressed; who giveth bread to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners;
ח יְהוָה, פֹּקֵחַ עִוְרִים-יְהוָה, זֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים; יְהוָה, אֹהֵב צַדִּיקִים.	**8** The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind; the LORD raiseth up them that are bowed down; the LORD loveth the righteous;
ט יְהוָה, שֹׁמֵר אֶת-גֵּרִים-יָתוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה יְעוֹדֵד; וְדֶרֶךְ רְשָׁעִים יְעַוֵּת.	**9** The LORD preserveth the strangers; He upholdeth the fatherless and the widow; but the way of the wicked He maketh crooked.
י יִמְלֹךְ יְהוָה, לְעוֹלָם אֱלֹהַיִךְ צִיּוֹן, לְדֹר וָדֹר: הַלְלוּ-יָהּ.	**10** The LORD will reign for ever, thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Hallelujah.

Order of the reading of the Torah: placing of the scroll

וְיַעֲזֹר וְיָגֵן וְיוֹשִׁיעַ לְכָל הַחוסִים בּוֹ וְנאמַר אָמֵן	May He help, shield and save all who seek refuge in him, and let us say, Amen.

ADDITIONAL READINGS AND PRAYERS

Depending on your tradition, you may wish to include some of the following readings and reflections in the service to mark Refugee Week.

Exodus 22:20

וְגֵר לֹא-תוֹנֶה, וְלֹא תִלְחָצֶנּוּ: כִּי-גֵרִים הֱיִיתֶם, בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

On the Refugee Crisis by Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks

I used to think that the most important line in the Bible was 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. Then I realised that it is easy to love your neighbour because he or she is usually quite like yourself. What is hard is to love the stranger, one whose colour, culture or creed is different from yours. That is why the command, 'Love the stranger because you were once strangers', resonates so often throughout the Bible. It is summoning us now. A bold act of collective generosity will show that the world, particularly Europe, has learned the lesson of its own dark past and is willing to take a global lead in building a more hopeful future. Wars that cannot be won by weapons can sometimes be won by the sheer power of acts of humanitarian generosity to inspire the young to choose the way of peace instead of holy war.

Refugee Day Prayer: Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism

And so we pray…

As we recount the centuries of human history,

We pray that one day bondage will lead to freedom;

We pray that indifference will give way to mercy;

We pray that hatred will turn to compassion, and fear turn to hope.

We pray that one day, nations will defy history and proclaim in one voice:

Never again will terror-stricken exiles face angry waters alone;

Never again will vulnerable victims be locked behind barbed wire;

Never again will desperate refugees be turned away at the borders of freedom.

And we vow…

Until that day arrives, we will be the miracle that parts the angry seas for today's refugees.

We will take it upon ourselves to lead the mixed multitude to dry land, and we will bring

them to a place of redemption.

Amen.

Rabbi Marla J. Feldman

Syrian refugees at school in Lebanon. By DFID - UK Department for International Development

Refugee Children: How Can We Not Help

I believe we have a constant responsibility to help our own people, and also to help all who are desperate and suffering, whenever we can. All of us are created in God's image, words which have little meaning unless we live it out through striving for compassion and justice.

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg

Anne Frank, 26 March 1944

How wonderful it is that no one has to wait, but can start right now to gradually change the world! How wonderful it is that everyone, great and small, can immediately help bring about justice by giving of themselves.

JEWISH COMMENTARY

Parshat Chukat

In this parshah, after forty years of wandering in the desert, the Israelites arrive in the wilderness of Zin. Moses sends messengers to the king of Edom to ask for safe passage through the land. The messengers recount the hardships they faced in Egypt and on their exodus, and promise to pass straight through Edom without leaving the road or even taking water from the wells. And yet the king of Edom refuses to allow them passage.

Forbidden from passing through Edom, the Israelites journey to the Amorite border. Here they ask the king of the Amorites for permission to pass through Ammon, again stressing that they will go through in peace. But like the king of Edom, the king of Ammon will not let them through. Instead he assembles his people and brings them out to fight against Israel.

This story, of a refugee people refused entry into other countries, has been borne out many times over the centuries since, both to the Jews and to many other peoples. It brings to mind the terrible voyage of the MS St Louis, which set sail from Germany to Cuba in 1939 with 900 Jewish refugees on board. The ship was turned back in the Cuban harbour. After then being denied entry from the United States and Canada, the MS St Louis was forced to return to Europe.

Sadly, refugees are still often unwelcome today. More than a hundred refugees and migrants die every month on the perilous sea crossing of the Mediterranean. Those who do arrive in Europe often face a hostile reception. They are often forced back across borders, abused, or imprisoned in detention centres.

Earlier in the parshah, when the Israelites complain of lack of water, G-d tells Moses to speak to a certain rock and it will give forth water. But instead of speaking to the rock, Moses strikes it. For this, we are told, Moses will not enter the Promised Land.

Forty years earlier, Moses struck a rock to give forth water, as G-d then told him to. There is a time for striking and a time for speaking, a time for action and a time for words. When it comes to difficult issues in the world today, such as the refugee crisis, it can be hard to see the right response. Let us hope for the wisdom to know when to act and when to speak, and the courage to do what is right.

CHRISTIAN LITURGY

Opening prayers

Blessed are you, O God

Rock of our refuge

Creator of the universe

Who gave us your holy word.

Blessed are you, Lord

Who fed the hungry

Who befriended the homeless

And who protected the dispossessed.

Blessed are you, O Spirit

Who sets the captives free

Who gives strength to the weary

And who guides the wanderers.

Open our eyes, God

That through your Spirit we may worship you in justice and righteousness

In truth and with sincerity.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Displaced Rohingya people in 2012, by DFID Burma

Prayers of confession

Oh Lord our God, who lived as a refugee, you called us to love our neighbour as ourselves. But we have hardened our hearts against those in need.

Lord have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

You told us to judge not, lest we be judged. But too often we listen to the tales of the ignorant, and let our fears shape our judgements.

Christ have mercy.
Christ have mercy.

You said to welcome the stranger. But we have turned away from your word, and failed to welcome foreigners in our land.

Lord have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

God, you formed us and you have shown us the way. The road is narrow that leads to life, and we struggle to follow your teachings. We pray to you for forgiveness and healing, through our saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

The Refugee, Felix Nussbaum, 1939

Prayers of Intercession

God of refuge, we pray to you for those who have fled danger, for those who find themselves in a new land. We pray for those fleeing war, for those fleeing famine, for those escaping from sickness or troubles. We pray for those who must leave their homelands because of changing climates, and those who cannot safely express their beliefs.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of compassion, grant those seeking refuge a new life where they may be safe from hardship. We pray that you deliver them speedily to a new home. We pray that you protect them, as you protected Joseph, Mary, and Jesus in their exile to Egypt. Give them food and shelter, as you sheltered the Israelites through their years in the wilderness.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of justice, we pray for a fairer world. We pray for an end to hunger and war, for a time when nation will not lift up sword against nation. Open our hearts to you that we may hear your word and act upon it, that we may welcome the stranger.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We take a moment of silence to pray for those known to us in need of our prayers.

Silence

May you comfort them in their time of need.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. We say together the prayer that Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,

the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Benediction

As we go from this place and into the world, may we do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

Thanks be to God,

Amen.

Kosovar refugees fleeing their homeland, UN Photo/R LeMoyne

CHRISTIAN COMMENTARIES

The commentaries below are provided for the lectionary readings for Sunday 24 June. All Biblical quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

1 Samuel 17.[1,4-11,19-23,32-49]

Here we see the victory of a shepherd boy over a mighty warrior, of righteousness over physical strength. God does not side with the strong and powerful, the giants of this world. Instead, his champion is an unarmoured boy with a sling.

'The Lord does not save by sword and spear', says David (v. 47). When looking at the great crises of the world today, the answer is rarely a show of military strength. Rather than responding with violence, we must show compassion, forgiveness, and justice.

How can we apply this teaching to our treatment of refugees? We must remember to value the weak and the oppressed, for every one of us is made in God's image. We must not be afraid to fight for what we believe, even when the fight seems impossible, even when we are fighting against giants.

For just as David prevailed armed with only a sling and a stone, so too can we prevail against the giants of prejudice, intolerance, and hate.

2 Corinthians 6.1-13

All are welcome into the Church: rich, poor, men, women, all nations and skin colours. As the text says, 'we are putting no obstacle in anyone's way'. And yet, as Paul reminds us, that wide-open welcome comes with responsibilities.

Paul suffered greatly for his faith. His list of hardships is long; it includes beatings, riots, and hunger. He and the other early Christians took on a heavy burden when they chose to follow Jesus, although it comes too with a great reward.

What are our responsibilities as Christians today? To follow Jesus' teachings: to love our neighbour, to be merciful, to show kindness. There are more refugees now than at any other period, even after the Second World War. Many are fleeing religious persecution, and have themselves suffered beatings or imprisonments themselves for their beliefs. All of them deserve our compassion.

'Open wide your hearts also,' says Paul (v. 13). We must open our hearts, not only to God, but also to those around us. Let us open our hearts to the homeless, the stranger, the oppressed. To those refugees fleeing danger around the world and to those building new lives in Britain, let us open wide our hearts also.

A church built within the refugee camp at Calais. Photo by Global Justice Now.

Mark 4.35-41

The image of the windswept boat, waves beating on all sides, evokes the many boats today making the dangerous crossing of the Mediterranean. More than a hundred refugees and migrants die every month on this journey. Many of us remember the photograph of the body of Alan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned in 2015.

The journey from danger to freedom is always fraught, even for those not risking their lives on the sea. Refugees struggle to escape from oppressive regimes and life-threatening situations, only to find that, once they have left their homeland, more difficulties are ahead of them. They can be trapped in detention centres, forced across borders, and struggle to find adequate clothing and food.

Even once settled in a new county, the life of a refugee is hard. Refugees must adapt to a new culture and society and learn a new language. They often face racial or religious prejudice from those around them.

‘Have you still no faith?’, asks Jesus (v.40). We can struggle to faithfully follow Jesus’ teachings and to practice what he preached. How can we show faith in the face of such suffering? How can we overcome our weaknesses to proclaim our Christian values?

Jesus’ message was one of love, hope, and inclusion. He was a refugee himself, fleeing to Egypt to avoid the murderous Herod. How would he want us to act in response to the refugee crisis? How might he ask us to help those refugees building new lives in Britain?

Jesus was so great that the wind and the sea obeyed him. And yet he chose to come to us in the form of a poor son of a carpenter. His radical mission exposed the chasm between how we treat the oppressed and how we should treat them. He calls us to share his words, and to follow his actions.

Demo "Gleiche Rechte für alle", Vienna

EVENTS TO MARK REFUGEE WEEK

Bishop Angaelos speaks on the plight of persecuted Christians in the Middle East, by Marc Morris.

CCJ also encourages you to host an interfaith event to mark Refugee Week. We suggest contacting other religious leaders in your area to discuss what they are planning for Refugee Week and how you can work together. If you don't already have links nearby, CCJ can help to put you in touch with Christian or Jewish colleagues. We can also support you up to the running of your event.

You might wish to hold an awareness-raising event, an education event, or a community event. Remember to arrange a venue for your event, and to consider budget, venue, refreshments, and publicity. Here are some event ideas to consider:

Speaker events

Do any of your congregants have refugee backgrounds and would be willing to speak about their experiences? You could invite them to speak either as part of a panel or on their own. Here are some other potential speakers:

- Your local MP
- Representatives and volunteers from national refugee organisations. Some possibilities include Refugee Week, Association of Jewish Refugees, Rene Cassin, Women for Refugee Women, Amnesty International, and the Scottish Refugee Council.

- Local refugee agencies organisations. Contact CCJ if you aren't need help finding refugee organisations in your area.
- Journalists: contact local or national papers.

Film screening and discussion

Your church or synagogue could host the screening of a film for Refugee Week, followed by a discussion session about the contents of the film. A good place to start is http://movingworlds.info/. There is a wider selection of films available through the BFI, but be aware that you may need to pay a licensing fee.

Invite refugees in

Host an interfaith community event, such as a communal meal, and invite refugees in your local area to join you. If you aren't aware of any local refugee groups in your area, CCJ can help put you in touch.

Other ideas

If you have other plans for Refugee Week, share them with us! By posting in the Rabbi-Clergy Action Network facebook group or emailing CCJ, you can help other rabbis and clergy to take meaningful action to support refugees in their own communities.

Refugees at the Greek-Macedonian border, 2015, by Steve Evans

Thank you for reading CCJ's guide to Refugee Week. We hope you found it interesting and informative. Do let us know your plans for the week so that we can support you and help you publicise.

FURTHER RESOURCES & CONTACTS

Rabbi-Clergy Action Network facebook group: to informally discuss ideas and find partners.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/rabbiclergyaction/

CCJ Office: for further advice on anything in this guide, in particular help contacting local rabbis and clergy and publicising your events.

Jessica.spencer@ccj.org.uk, 0203 515 3005

Refugee Week: Further general resources for planning a Refugee Week event.

http://refugeeweek.org.uk/

Refugee Week media pack: for how to engage local and religious media. http://refugeeweek.org.uk/resources/event-advice-and-ideas/refugee-week-toolkit/using-the-media/

Support refugees: list of organisations working with refugees. https://www.supportrefugees.org.uk/national-organisations/

Syrian refugee camp in Jordan.

Council of Christians and Jews

cjrelations@ccj.org.uk
020 3515 3003

Mary Sumner House
24 Tufton Street
London
SW1P 3RB

www.ccj.org.uk
facebook/TheCCJUK
@CCJUK