



DYN MIGRATION

*Ubuntu, "I Am
Because We Are"*

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Objective

Students will CREATE and then PERFORM modern day stories of migration based on the flight of Joseph, Mary and Jesus to Egypt. They will ANALYZE one migrant story and APPLY it in their own lives. They will DISCERN how scripture and Catholic teaching calls us to treat migrants.

STEP 1: PRAY

Prayer for Migrant Families:

Good and gracious God, we thank you for the gift of families. We are grateful for all the joy and love they bring into our lives, and we ask that you provide special protection for all families, particularly those who face hardships as they move in search of a better life. Show mercy to those who travel in danger and lead them to a place of safety and peace. Comfort those who are alone and afraid because their families have been torn apart by violence and injustice. During this Advent Season, as we reflect upon the difficult journey that the Holy Family faced as refugees in Egypt, help us to remember the suffering of all migrant families. Through the intercession of Mary our Mother, and St. Joseph the Worker, her spouse, we pray that all migrants may be reunited with their loved ones and find the meaningful work they seek. Open our hearts so that we may provide hospitality for all who come in search of refuge. Give us the courage to welcome every stranger as if they were the baby Jesus in our midst. Amen.



Adapted from USCCB, Justice for Immigrants

STEP 2: MAKE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Mission Story by Deacon Leonel Yoque:

I was fortunate to be born in a country known as “the land of eternal spring,” a country with extraordinary biological diversity. A land sheltered by a chain of impressive volcanoes, dense jungles, and beautiful lakes and rivers that dot the landscape. Guatemala is a country teeming with life, including numerous species of plants, animals, and ecosystems. It is recognized as one of the 20 most diverse countries in the world, home to a large portion of the planet's known biodiversity. Guatemala is a multicultural country with many diverse ethnic communities and is home to 22 languages, including Mayan languages, Garifuna, and Xinka.

I had a beautiful childhood in Guatemala with my parents and two sisters. I loved outdoor sports, especially soccer, and my dream was to be a professional soccer player. I was also fortunate that my parents sent me to school, and I was able to take some courses at San Carlos State University in the capital city. When I was a teenager, I thought I would live in my home country of Guatemala forever. I never imagined I would have to leave. But in 1987, just as I was turning 18, things in the country started to change quickly. There was a lot of conflict between the military and groups that wanted the government to stop committing social and economic injustices. Cont...



STEP 2: MAKE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS cont...

In rural parts of the country, especially in the northwest where there were many Indigenous communities, violence became more common. Even though some groups were involved in the fighting, many innocent people and communities who had nothing to do with the conflict were caught in the middle. Sadly, this led to serious violations of human rights, including torture and murder and the killing of all the indigenous people in some villages.

▶ In 1989, I started law school because I dreamed of becoming a lawyer. At the same time, I was also chasing another dream: playing soccer. I played for two years in a semi-professional league, which helped pay for my education and some personal expenses.

▶ At that time, many university students in Guatemala supported workers' rights, the formation of labor unions, and stood up for farmers and poor communities—especially Indigenous people. I remember one day, during final exams, we were told to leave the building because there was a bomb threat. Everyone evacuated, confused and scared. We didn't know what was really going on.

▶ A few days later, something terrible happened—about 10 students were killed outside the university. No one ever found out exactly who was responsible. There were rumors that the government believed some students were working with groups that wanted to overthrow the government.

▶ Soon after, things in the city became more tense. The government declared a curfew, which meant no one was allowed on the streets after 6 p.m. The school year was canceled, and all public gatherings were banned. I felt like I had hit a wall. My dreams of becoming a lawyer and a professional soccer player seemed impossible.





STEP 3: EXPLORE SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

READ the following scriptures. REFLECT on the questions

- ▶ Old Testament: [Leviticus 19:33-34](#)
- ▶ Life of Jesus: [Matthew 2:13-15](#)
- ▶ Christian Living: [Hebrews 13:1-3](#)

Why did Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt with the baby Jesus? How do you imagine that they were treated when they got to Egypt?

What do these passages suggest to us or tell us about how migrants should be treated?

How is God asking you to respond to the migrants in your community and surrounding areas?



What Does the Church Say?

Pope Leo XIV on the World Day For Migrants and Refugees:

"This link between migration and hope is clearly evident in many contemporary experiences of migration. Many migrants, 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."

"In a world darkened by war and injustice, even when all seems lost, migrants and refugees stand as messengers of hope. Their courage and tenacity bear heroic testimony to a faith that sees beyond what our eyes can see and gives them the strength to defy death on the various contemporary migration routes."

"At the same time, the communities that welcome (migrants) can also be a living witness to hope, one that is understood as the promise of a present and a future where the dignity of all as children of God is recognized. In this way, migrants and refugees are recognized as brothers and sisters, part of a family in which they can express their talents and participate fully in community life."

Why do you think Pope Leo calls migrants and refugees "messengers of hope?"

What have you seen in your community and in the country about how migrants are currently being treated? In what ways is their treatment following or not following church teaching?

How do you think that your community could be more welcoming to immigrants?

Migrants often bring unique skills, talents, and traditions to their new communities. What is a talent or tradition from your family that you would want to share if you moved to a new place?

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

As you read in the gospel, Joseph and Mary fled with the baby Jesus from Bethlehem to Egypt in order to save Jesus' life, a journey that probably took them weeks. WRITE a modern day story or play based on their lives. IMAGINE what it would be like for a family with a baby to have to flee in the middle of the night from their home. What would they have been able to take with them? Where did they sleep and eat along the way? Were they treated well or poorly in the communities that they had to travel through? What gave them hope as they traveled? How were they received when they finally arrived in their new country, a place where they knew no one and did not speak the language?

Use your imagination to answer these questions as a part of your story or play. Once it is written, ask for classmates to play or read the different parts and either PERFORM your play for the class or record it as a video to be played for them. REFLECT on what you learned from this experience.



The background of the entire image is a photograph showing several people, including children, behind a chain-link fence. The fence is in the foreground, creating a grid-like pattern over the scene. The people are out of focus, but their presence is clear. One person in the center is wearing a white shirt. The overall tone is somber and highlights the theme of immigration and detention.

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Currently over 1 million people who are in the U.S. legally are at risk of losing their legal status and being deported to places like Haiti and Honduras where there is widespread violence. Write to your U.S. Senators asking that they be protected. You'll find a sample [letter](#) at the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns.

BE A GLOBAL NEIGHBOR

Consider helping the children of migrants in Bangkok, Thailand where Wat Prok School, established by Maryknoll two decades ago, has provided education, skill training as well as clothing, food and medical assistance to many Mon boys, ranging from six to seventeen years old, living at a small Mon Buddhist monastery in Bangkok. Visit the [Maryknoll Society](#) webpage for more information.



ENGAGE YOUR FAMILY

DISCUSS with your family - who are the migrant families in your area? REACH OUT to your diocesan Catholic Charities Office to find out ways that you might support them. If you know of a local migrant family or individual, consider INVITING them to your home for dinner.

