

Series: On the Fringe

Lesson 3: World of Opportunity

Lesson Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Define refugees/immigrants
- Identify Jesus' commendation to welcome the stranger
- Identify behaviours that are positive and negative in integrating new Canadians

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Three pieces of newsprint, prepared according to the Preparation
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ One copy of handout "On the Fringe: Three", cut into slips
- ☐ Container for the strips

Preparation:

Option 1: Before this lesson, prepare to have a guest speaker from a Christian refugee ministry come and speak to your group about the difficulties that face refugees. Prepare the speaker to address some of the concerns of this lesson (see the questions below). Build in times for the students and the speaker to interact and welcome the person to stay

for the whole lesson. Here are two agencies that might help in finding the people or resources you need for this lesson:

Canadian Baptist Ministries – www.cbmin.org; (905) 821-3533

Matthew House – www.matthewhouse.ca; (416) 364-8287

Option 2: Obtain a video or DVD of refugee ministry here in Canada. These resources can be found by contacting the two ministries above. Prepare the equipment and have the video cued before the lesson.

Room Setup: Set up the room as a large semi-circle with space for someone to speak or for a television to be viewed. Hang three pieces of newsprint around the room with the following questions written on them:

1. What is a refugee?
2. Who helps refugees and how?
3. What do refugees have to do with being on the fringe?

Lead In:

As students arrive, give them markers, instructions, and plenty of time to move around the room and write answers to the newsprint questions that are hanging on the wall (they can write the answers right on the newsprint).

When all the students have gathered and had a chance to write an answer or two, regather the group.

Task One:

Divide the group into three smaller groups and instruct each group to take down one of the newsprints. Each group will also need some markers. Tell students that they are going to watch a presentation (speaker or video) in order to learn some more complete answers to the questions. Introduce your speaker or video. Instruct the students to listen carefully and do the following with their newsprints: a) remove or change any answers that they think are inaccurate, and b) add any insights that they take from the presentation.

When the presentation is over, allow each group to present their final answers to the rest of the group, who can listen and decide whether they agree or not. Allow for interaction from the speaker, if you have one, here and throughout the rest of the lesson.

Task Two:

Say something like, *We have established that people who are new to this culture can feel like they are on the fringe. What does this have to do with Jesus?* Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 25:31-46 and ask the others to listen for Jesus' attitude towards refugees. After the volunteer reads, solicit answers from the other students. What did Jesus say

about refugees? Well, he didn't use that word but he did talk about welcoming the stranger. Stranger is like biblical code word for someone that is coming from the outside in. It doesn't mean stranger like the person who tried to steal kids at a playground. Refugees are strangers because they are coming to a place that is strange to them.

Task Three:

Ask students the following questions and allow them to ask you and/or the speaker any questions that remain in their minds about refugees and welcoming the stranger.

- 1. Can you think of a time when you felt out of place, like a stranger? What was it? How were you made to feel included or excluded?*
- 2. How long does it take to feel completely integrated into a new community of people? Can anyone think of any examples? How does that relate to refugees?*
- 3. What can we do here at our church and youth group to ensure that we welcome anyone who feels like a stranger?*

Task Four:

Say something like, We have established that people who are new to any culture can feel like they are on the fringe and that Jesus praised those who cared for strangers. I want us to do some brief skits to make sure that we understand what that might look like. I have some strips of paper here with scenarios on them. I need two volunteers to act out each scenario. The rest of you can watch the scenarios and guess what the instructions I gave to each group were.

Invite the first two volunteers to take a slip and act it out. After each skit, ask the others to guess the instructions from the slip. As you will read below, all three skits display negative behaviours. After each skit is performed and the students have guessed the

scenarios, have them work together to change the skits so that they display positive behaviours. The scenarios are as follows. You can copy and cut them out from page “On the Fringe: Three” and put them in a container:

1. One of you is a student from another country who has just moved to Canada and enrolled in a Canadian school. The other is an existing Canadian student from that school. In your skit, show at least three things that would make the new student feel *unwelcome* in the new school.
2. One of you is a volunteer at a refugee ministry. The other one is a new volunteer at the ministry and a more recent Canadian. In your skit, show at least three things that would make the new volunteer feel *unwelcome* at the ministry.
3. One of you is a youth group regular. The other is a visitor who is new to Canada. In your skit, show at least three things that would make the visitor feel *unwelcome* in the youth group.

Closing:

Ask a student to close your time in prayer, remembering to pray for your guest or the ministry presented in your video.