

## Ideas for Parish Groups

**Interfaith prayer service:** invite a local Muslim, Jewish, or other faith to join in an interfaith prayer service. Get the help of your parish's liturgy director.

**Refugee dinners:** invite refugee families for a shared dinner or potluck.

**Advocate with your elected representatives:** get a group together to visit their office, attend a meeting or town hall, call, or write postcards. Here's where to find your House Representative: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>. Text your zip code to 520-200-2223 and you will receive a text with your Congressional and State Representatives phone numbers. Attend any public meetings, such as school boards or county council, where they are discussing public policy affecting immigrants and refugees.

**Encourage letters of solidarity and support:** Ask your pastor, school's principal or school board, city and county council members, or any organization of group that you are part of to publish a letter of support or solidarity.

**Rice Bowl:** this Lenten program invites Catholics to live in solidarity with our poorest and most vulnerable brothers and sisters through prayer, fasting, learning and almsgiving. Contact the Mission Office: 800-869-7028 or <mailto:missions.office@seattlearch.org> or [www.seattlearchdiocese.org/ricebowl](http://www.seattlearchdiocese.org/ricebowl)

**Plan and lead visits** to mosques, synagogues, or other places of worship for parishioners: <http://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/stand-with-your-muslim-neighbors-and-fight-bigotry/>

**Las Posadas Navideñas:** Encourage and provide support to parishioners who want to participate in this nine-day religious observance meant to honor Mary and Joseph's quest for shelter. Every night from Dec. 16-24, neighbors gather to recreate the Holy Family's experience. They dress up, sing, pray and celebrate the coming anniversary of the Savior's birth. CLINIC invites you to join in the celebration. This resource provides lyrics to the song, helpful tips for planning your own Posadas and modern-day stories of migrants whose struggles are reminiscent of those of the Holy Family. [https://cliniclegal.org/posadas?utm\\_source=CLINIC+Mail&utm\\_campaign=d587757456-posadas\\_2016&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_a33179621a-d587757456-279173773](https://cliniclegal.org/posadas?utm_source=CLINIC+Mail&utm_campaign=d587757456-posadas_2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a33179621a-d587757456-279173773)

**Starter Kits:** to put together refugee resettlement kits for local refugee families resettled by International Rescue Committee. See website at <https://www.rescue.org/announcement/items-needed-refugees-seattle>. This idea could be extended to immigrants, although there isn't a specific agency to work through.

**JustFaith Crossing Borders:** JustMatters Modules are designed to allow small groups to explore critical current issues within the context of the Gospels and the life and example of Jesus. This eight session module on immigration provides participants a chance to find common ground and to discover more about themselves, their values, our God, and the millions of people who are on the move in every part of the world.  
<http://justfaith.org/programs/justmatters-modules/>

**Mission trips to the border:** encounter Christ on the margins, experience the Church as Missionary, and enliven your own communities and ministries upon return.  
<http://www.maryknoll.us/home/mission-trips>

**Respectful Dialogues:** plan and lead small group discussions for parishioners from all along the spectrum from immigration advocates to anti-immigration. Check out *Contemplative Dialogue Circles* and other resources from The Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center.  
[www.ipjc.org](http://www.ipjc.org)

**ESL tutoring or conversation groups:** contact Chris Koehler at St. James Immigrant Assistance for ideas on how to get this started. [ckoehler@stjames-cathedral.org](mailto:ckoehler@stjames-cathedral.org) or 206-382-4511.

**Donation drives and knitting circles:** see Salaam Cultural Center Medical Missions at <https://salaamculturalmuseum.wordpress.com/> or contact Rita Zawaideh: [rita@caravan-serai.com](mailto:rita@caravan-serai.com). Find their Amazon wish list at [https://www.amazon.com/registry/wishlist/20GJ6K2ZCHG9N/ref=cm\\_sw\\_r\\_fa\\_ws\\_t2\\_OMwzybC7VQ3J1](https://www.amazon.com/registry/wishlist/20GJ6K2ZCHG9N/ref=cm_sw_r_fa_ws_t2_OMwzybC7VQ3J1) or do a search on Amazon.

**Food bank for migrant workers at St. Charles parish,** Burlington WA. Contact Jose Ortiz at [jose@stcharles-burlington-wa.org](mailto:jose@stcharles-burlington-wa.org) to arrange a group visit to help out.

A sampling of other ideas from around the country:

## 2016 Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees (POWR) Program

<http://www.usccb.org/about/resettlement-services/parishes-organized-to-welcome-refugees.cfm>

E-Mail: [dsturm@usccb.org](mailto:dsturm@usccb.org)

The following parishes received grants from this USCCB program to develop ways to foster increased integration of refugees.

Diocese	POWR Program Goals (Summary)	POWR Contact
Baton Rouge, LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch a volunteer-led initiative to help refugee parents maneuver public schools.</li> <li>• Expand ESL beyond four weeks, recruiting volunteers as classroom helpers and conversation partners.</li> <li>• Establish parish-led volunteer programs assisting resettlement case managers from A-Z.</li> </ul>	Lisa Lee, llee@ccdiobr.org
Chicago, IL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish four refugee sponsorship committees consisting of 12 parish members per parish group. Parishes commit to raising three months of rent, plus an additional emergency assistance.</li> <li>• Establish parish employment committees, offering job mentoring and workplace ESL training.</li> <li>• Intensify recruitment of family mentors.</li> </ul>	Elma Kulovic, EKulovic@catholiccharities.net
Cincinnati, OH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a clearinghouse for furniture donations and other goods.</li> <li>• Set up formal mechanism for parish outreach and volunteer recruitment and retention.</li> </ul>	Megan Zarnitz, mzarnitz@ccswoh.org
Cleveland, Ohio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a refined “Refugee 101” presentation to intensify parish outreach, professionalize recruitment and retention.</li> <li>• Organize volunteer appreciation events and quarterly gatherings to encourage peer-to-peer learning, improve volunteer training &amp; retention.</li> <li>• Recruit Catholic volunteer as housing and donations coordinator.</li> </ul>	Stacy Dever, sdever@clevelandcatholiccharities.org

Detroit, MI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish educational materials, including a step-by-step guide on how to adopt refugee families.</li> <li>• Craft an appeal to moving companies for the donation pickup and delivery services.</li> <li>• Assemble volunteer teams specializing in furniture pickups and deliveries.</li> </ul>	Jeralda Hattar, hattarj@ccsem.org
Dubuque, IA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct presentations in refugee-receiving parishes and communities. The goal is to recruit 80% of all parishes attending events.</li> <li>• Match refugee families with church mentors.</li> <li>• Churches commit to providing specific furniture, household items, and initial food assistance.</li> </ul>	Lori Williams, DBQCCCPS@dbqarch.org
Erie, PA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce videos and other educational materials for parish outreach.</li> <li>• Set up information meetings with 25 parishes to garner interest and attract resettlement volunteers.</li> <li>• Attract a minimum of 1,000 people attending resettlement-themed parish gatherings and special events.</li> </ul>	Joe Haas, jhaas@cccas.org
Los Angeles, CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form a refugee services advisory board, comprised of parish and community leaders.</li> <li>• Reinvigorate and expand the network of parish “welcome teams” to provide resettlement support, particularly related to housing.</li> <li>• Recruit parishioners for employment mentorship program, matching refugees with job mentors.</li> </ul>	Sara Tompkins, STompkins@CCHARITIES.ORG
New Orleans, LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify key parish priests, deacons and clergy as ambassadors within the parishes and inter-faith collaborations.</li> <li>• Increase awareness through special events and storytelling.</li> <li>• Professionalize volunteer management and establish formal donations management system.</li> </ul>	Julie Ward, jward@ccano.org