

# Be a Beacon of Hope FOR REFUGEES

## HOW TO USE THIS PACK

This pack is designed to help teachers in Catholic schools across the Archdiocese of Edmonton to plan lessons, activities and reflections with their students throughout Lent. The pack contains 6 learning cards, one for each week of Lent. Teachers may choose to use the pack in order or at their own pace.

There is one introductory card which introduces the topic of refugees. Then there are four story cards which recount stories of refugees. The cards also includes background details on the country of origin of the refugees, links to videos/resources produced by CSS as well as links to other organizations.

Finally, there is one **'Action Card'** which helps you and your students plan activities, which can be used to provide direct support for refugees.



## COUNTRIES FEATURED IN THIS RESOURCE PACK

**AFGHANISTAN**

**ERITREA**

**MYANMAR**

**UKRAINE**

## ACTIVITY - *Become a Beacon of Hope*

Invite students to do work around the theme of being a beacon of hope. Students may create a green lantern (see overleaf) to hang in the classroom window. Or students may create a piece of art showing a refugee receiving help. Students could write a composition reflecting on who offers them hope (and help) when times are difficult.



## CST STAR

Each card contains a gold star with a link to a video explaining the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). You can start to explore with this fun video "CST in 3 minutes" [bit.ly/3\\_minute\\_CST](https://bit.ly/3_minute_CST)



# Be a Beacon of Hope FOR REFUGEES

## WHAT IS A REFUGEE?

A **migrant** is a person who has moved from one place to another. The term migrant can include refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants.

A **refugee** is a person who is forced to leave their own country because their life is in danger because of conflict, violence, discrimination or natural disasters. They then seek safety in another country.

An **internally displaced person (IDP)** is someone forced to leave their home because their life is in danger. They seek safety and protection in another part of their own country.

The term '**undocumented migrant**' is commonly used to describe someone living in another country without legal documentation including visas, permits or passports.

**Government Assisted Refugee (GAR)** is a person sponsored to enter Canada by the federal government. In Edmonton, Red Deer and surrounding areas the government asks Catholic Social Services to resettle these people. CSS is known as a resettlement agency.

**Privately Sponsored Refugee** is a person or family sponsored by a group of five individuals in a parish or community group. The refugees receive some government help but the group of five has a special responsibility to help the refugees for their first year in Canada.

## A GREEN LIGHT FOR SAFETY

In Matthew 25 Jesus asks us all to welcome the most vulnerable people in our society. These are the people who have no shelter, no food and no clothing. Refugees come to Canada seeking protection from war, the impact of climate change, torture, and other human rights violations including violence against women and girls.

In recent years the path for migrants and refugees has become even more perilous. In Poland local communities have started to spontaneously offer help to those trying to gain protection in the European Union. This type of spontaneous local support is often called Mutual Aid. Ordinary people who want to help migrants hang green lights at the front of their homes or in the forest. The green light sends a signal that this is a place of safety and support. These green lights in the window are beacons of hope for those who need it most.



*Use the QR Code to access the article: Beyond the Freezing Forest: a Green Light at the Window for Migrants (NYT, Nov. 2021)*

## RESOURCES

How Refugees Come to Canada (CBC news video) [bit.ly/CBC\\_refugees](https://bit.ly/CBC_refugees)

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## BETTY'S STORY

At 15, Betty was just one year away from being conscripted into the Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF). It wasn't the future she wanted. Betty dreamed of completing high school, going to university, and becoming a doctor, none of which would be possible if she remained in her home country of Eritrea. Eritreans are conscripted into the EDF by the age of 16, regardless of gender. Members do not choose their profession, work location, or duration of service. For a young girl like Betty, it's a dangerous life.

Betty's dad, Teklino arrived in Edmonton as a refugee in 2019, with his wife and infant daughter. They were able to resettle in Canada thanks to Catholic Social Services' (CSS) Refugee Sponsorship Program, which supports hundreds of privately sponsored refugees each year. Though Teklino was grateful to have escaped his own conscription and made it safely to Canadian soil, he still feared for Betty, his oldest daughter, who he hadn't seen in more than a decade.

Over the next year, Christina, a CSS' Refugee Sponsorship Program Lead, worked with Teklino to process Betty's file. When the pandemic hit and borders closed, many families, like Teklino's, feared their relatives would not make it safely to Canada. Betty was able arrive in Canada thanks to Christina's persistence. She helped complete paperwork, navigate processes, secure a visa, book flights, and arrange for a flight chaperone for Betty through the International Organization of Migration.

When Betty's plane touched down in mid-December 2020, Teklino was waiting, tears in his eyes. His baby girl had grown up into a young lady since he last laid eyes on her.

Betty immediately enrolled in school and started classes just weeks later. She spoke very little English upon arrival, but has learned quickly. Her father describes her as, "happy, kind, and a good student," who is already excelling in the classroom, and at her many extracurricular activities. "There are lots of future opportunities here for her," says Teklino. "I am excited for her to finish school. Then, she can do or be whatever she wants: a doctor, a computer engineer, an accountant."



Betty recently celebrated her birthday. Her proud father planned a party for their small family, with decorations, gifts, and both Eritrean and Canadian foods. The milestone birthday, which had once meant the end of her freedom, now symbolized the beginning of a promising, bright future for Betty. "I am very grateful to Catholic Social Services," she says. "I am grateful to be here in Canada."

## RESOURCES

To learn more about Eritreans and their difficult journey to Europe read 'My Fourth Time We Drowned' by Sally Hayden.

To learn more about using games in education access this resource 'Using Games in Development Education'.







## ERITREA FACTS

CAPITAL: ASMARA

POPULATION: 6,209,000

AREA (KM SQ): 121,100  
(ROUGHLY ONE-SIXTH THE SIZE OF ALBERTA)

RELIGION: SUNNI MUSLIM, ERITREAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS, ROMAN CATHOLIC, OTHER CHRISTIANS

LANGUAGE(S): AT LEAST 9 LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN IN ERITREA, THE MAIN ONE IS TIGRINYA.

INTERESTING FACT: ERITREA WAS ONCE AN ITALIAN COLONY. ERITREANS ARE PROUD OF THEIR ITALIAN STYLE SWEET TREATS!

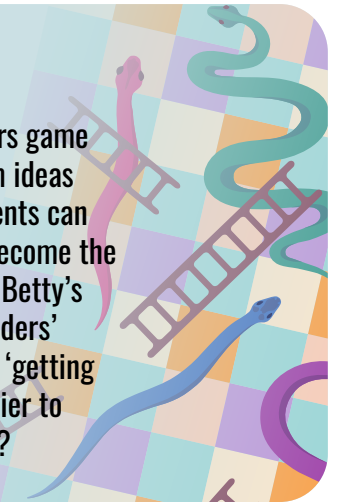
ERITREAN PROVERB: "WHEN A ROAD IS GOOD IT IS USED A SECOND TIME."

## CST STAR

Call to Family, Community and Participation.  
Watch the video [bit.ly/CST\\_Family](https://bit.ly/CST_Family)

## ACTIVITY - *Snakes and Ladders*

Invite the students to work in groups to make their own snakes and ladders game based on the experience of refugees or migrants. Students can brainstorm ideas for the design of the board (eg. changed from a grid to a map.) Then students can create ideas for what becomes the snakes and the ladders. The 'snakes' become the barriers which a refugee could face such as 'separation from family' (like Betty's family); 'no documentation'; 'no money'; 'unhelpful border police'. The 'ladders' become the factors which help a refugee such as 'meeting a kind person'; 'getting help from the United Nations'. Ask students to reflect on whether it is easier to imagine 'snakes' or 'ladders'? What does this say about the refugee story?



# Be a Beacon of Hope FOR REFUGEES

## EXODUS: JOURNEY FROM AFGHANISTAN TO CANADA

A NEW HOME FOR THE LEADING LIGHTS OF THE AFGHAN MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY.

Kabul fell quickly. When the staff of the Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO) left work on Thursday, August 12, 2021, they had no idea they would be fleeing their home country before the weekend was over.

Dedicated to improving the lives of civilians, including war victims, women and girls, AHRDO operated in the heart of Kabul. When the Taliban returned, they were in danger.

Rabia, AHRDO's lead researcher, recalls the chaos at the airport. Staff waited outside while she negotiated for safe passage out. Authorities offered to evacuate only her through Kabul Airport, but she refused. Either they would leave together or not at all.

They went home and packed what they could carry. They decided to leave the country, and take their families with them. The group hired buses to take all 172 staff and family members to Pakistan. They faced Taliban checkpoints and waited for days at the border. After crossing they still feared the Taliban would come for them. The group, half of them children, remained in hiding for five months.

They hoped that a country committed to human rights would come to their aid. In the end, Canada extended a hand. Immigration Refugees & Citizenship Canada (IRCC) created a dedicated immigration stream for human rights defenders, the first country in the world to do so; AHRDO was one of the groups who used it.

On January 11, 2022, they flew from Pakistan. Their trip was complicated by the pandemic, but CSS staff worked quickly to support this large arrival. While in quarantine, CSS staff educated them about life in Canada and worked with volunteers in the local community to bring them Afghan food.

"This is an incredible group and we got to be part of their first steps in Canada; it is a great honour" said Kathryn Friesen, from CSS.

Today many have found meaningful employment and volunteer opportunities. Children are enrolled in school. Young adults have resumed their university studies. The chance for an education is inspiring, because the Taliban banned education for girls.

AHRDO is continuing to focus its efforts on building awareness of the dire human rights situation in Afghanistan.

"We are so grateful to be here, in Edmonton," says Hadi, AHRDO's Executive Director. "The support we have received from CSS and the opportunities we have been given are incredible. Thank you."



## RESOURCES

AHRDO and CSS produced a short documentary called 'Memories in a Box: Across Borders' which tells the story of their journey to Edmonton.

*The documentary can be found at this QR code.*

*NB: The documentary includes one brief reference to sexual violence.*





## AFGHANISTAN FACTS

CAPITAL: **KABUL**

POPULATION: **34,161,000**

AREA (KM SQ): **652,864**  
(ROUGHLY THE SAME SIZE AS ALBERTA)

RELIGION: **SUNNI MUSLIM, SHI'A MUSLIM**

LANGUAGE(S): **DARI, PASHTU**

INTERESTING FACT: **AFGHANISTAN WAS ONCE PART OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE AND IS BELIEVED BY MANY SCHOLARS TO BE THE HOME OF JALAL AD-DIN MUHAMMAD RUMI, KNOWN SIMPLY AS RUMI. RUMI WAS A MYSTICAL ISLAMIC POET WHO CONTINUES TO LIVE AT THE TOP OF THE POETRY BESTSELLER LISTS, EVEN TODAY.**

AFGHAN PROVERB: **"EVEN ON A HIGH MOUNTAIN YOU CAN STILL FIND A PATH."**

### CST STAR

Rights and Responsibilities.

Watch the Video:

**[bit.ly/CST\\_rights](https://bit.ly/CST_rights)**

### ACTIVITY - *Documentary*

Use the QR code overleaf to watch the ARDHO/CSS documentary [28 minutes]. Ask students to take notes about what they see in the documentary. What special kind of work do ARDHO do? Why would the Taliban want to stop their work? How did the group escape from Afghanistan? How did they react when they heard the news about coming to Canada? How has life been since they arrived here? Do you think they miss Afghanistan?





# Be a Beacon of Hope FOR REFUGEES

## FINDING A HOME IN CANADA

Mu Go and Moo Aua Go fled persecution in Burma (now Myanmar) in the early 2000s alongside their parents and younger brother. Mu Go was 8-years-old when they arrived at the Thai refugee camp that would become their home for two decades. Mu Go says living there was “very difficult.” The family had limited access to education, employment, and health care. Their younger brother, Sa Nay, has complex medical needs which could not be met in the camp. His only chance was resettlement in another country.

After waiting many years, an opportunity came for resettlement. It meant, however, leaving their widowed mother behind, as well as as the father of Mu Go’s unborn child. The sisters say it was hard to leave, but their brother’s life depended on it. Seven-months-pregnant, Mu Go took turns carrying Sa Nay on her back as the sisters walked for many miles to reach the plane that would take them to safety.

Catholic Social Services’ (CSS) staff met the siblings at the Edmonton airport in September 2019. They brought them to Reception House, a CSS residence where government sponsored refugees stay for two weeks while staff and volunteers address urgent settlement needs and orient them to life in Canada. The top priority was getting Sa Nay the medical care he needed. Doctors advised Sa Nay would need to live in continuing care, rather than in the community. The sisters struggled with this, as they had spent their entire lives caring for him. Staff helped Mu Go and Moo Aua Go through this challenging process by ensuring they were involved in every decision. Together, they visited care centres and met with doctors. Catholic Social Services even helped secure a wheelchair for Sa Nay, thanks to which, he is mobile for the first time.

“I feel better now, because he is getting the care he needs and we can see he is happier,” says Mu Go. Settlement workers also helped the sisters find housing, arrange language testing, learn to use the public transit system, and grocery shop. A generous Sign of Hope donor helped set up the sisters’ new home, providing furniture, housewares, and baby care items. The donor even filled their home with gifts to celebrate their first Christmas in Canada.

“We are grateful CSS is helping us,” says Moo Aua Go. “Otherwise we would not know how to navigate life in Canada.” Two months after arriving, Mu Go gave birth to her daughter, Sara. Resettlement in Canada means Sara won’t grow up in a refugee camp. As a Canadian-born citizen, she will enjoy all of the rights, freedoms, and opportunities other Canadians experience daily.

Of these, Mu Go says she is most excited for her daughter to go to school and get an education. “Canada is a good country. A free country,” says Moo Go. “We are happy it is our home.”

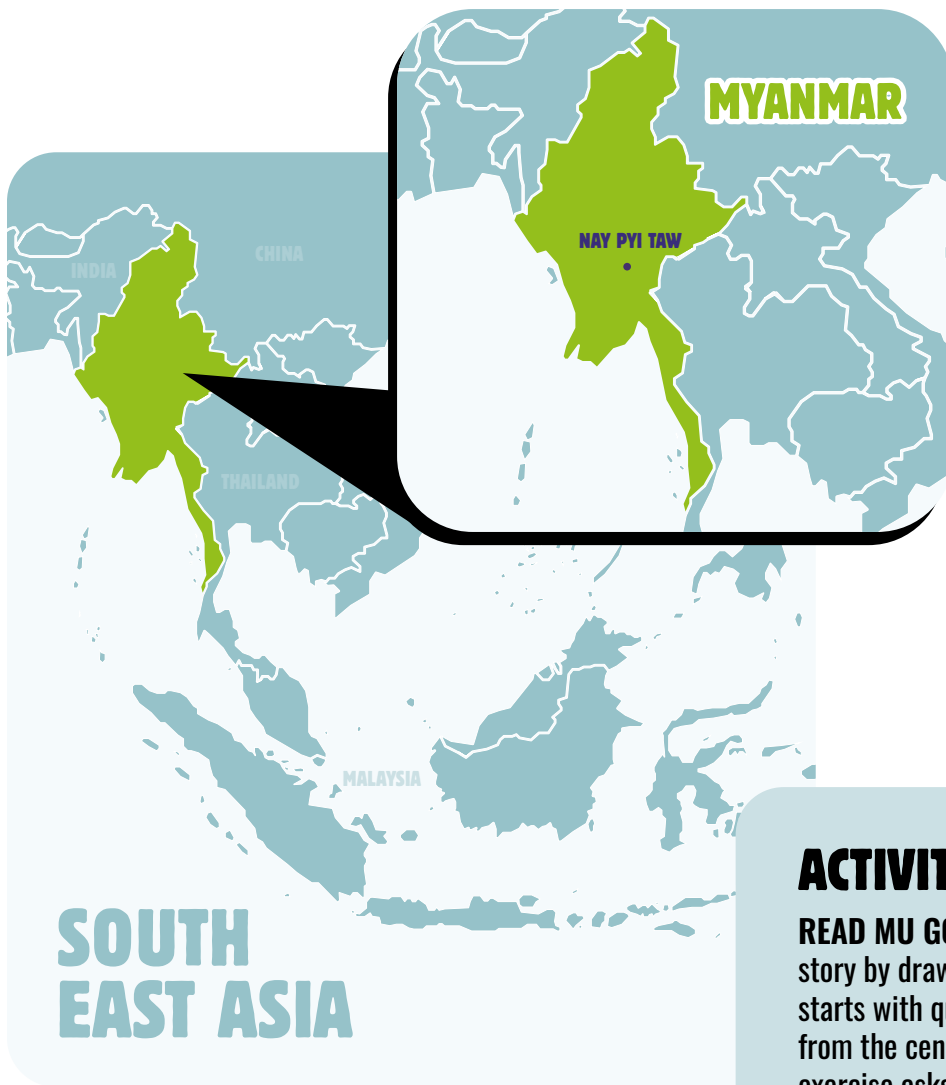


## RESOURCES

Very often extreme poverty and violence are the reason people leave their homes.

*Use the QR code below to access a resource which includes two different games. The first game includes character cards matched with a version of the popular “Would you rather...?”. You may need to adapt the character cards to your specific context. The second game is called the “Big Step” game and asks students to step forward if they have had certain experiences. Again the game can be adapted to the local context.*





## MYANMAR FACTS

CAPITAL: **NAY PYI TAW**

POPULATION: **55,869,000**

AREA (KM SQ): **676,553 (ROUGHLY ONE-SIXTH THE SIZE OF ALBERTA)**

PRIMARY RELIGION: **THEREVADA BUDDHISM**

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE: **MYANMAR (BURMESE) BUT OVER 60 OTHER LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN!**

INTERESTING FACT: **THE COUNTRY IS HOME TO 1000 SPECIES OF BIRDS, OF WHICH SIX ARE ENDEMIC AND 51 ARE ENDANGERED.**

### ACTIVITY - *Walk in Mu Go's Shoes*

**READ MU GO'S STORY.** Ask students to first reflect on Mu Go's story by drawing a 'spidergram'. (A spidergram is a drawing which starts with question in the middle and then has branches coming from the centre with different answers to the question.) For this exercise asks students to answer: "If you were forced to flee your home suddenly what would you carry?"

After a few minutes of reflection invite students to break into small groups. Students can work to identify three items which were common everyone in the group, three items which were only selected by one group member and anything which was different or similar to Mu Go's story.

**IF YOU WERE FORCED TO FLEE YOUR HOME WHAT WOULD YOU CARRY?**

### CST STAR

Life and Dignity. Watch the Video:  
[bit.ly/CST\\_Dignity](https://bit.ly/CST_Dignity)



# Be a Beacon of Hope FOR REFUGEES

## FLEEING WAR, FINDING HOPE

Natalia woke up to the sound of her phone ringing on February 24, 2022. When she answered her father wasted no time, “Russia has invaded. A war has begun in Ukraine. Take your money, buy food. Stay indoors.”

Natalia had grown up in a free Ukraine, but her parents and grandparents had told her many stories of war. Her heart was heavy as she thought, “what will become of my life?”

For days, Natalia kept the blinds drawn and doors locked in her Kyiv home. She heard planes overhead, sirens in the street, bombs in the distance. When she could sleep, Natalia did so on the floor, in the hallway. She feared that if a bomb landed close by, the walls might cave in or the windows might shatter.

In March, Natalia left her home with only what she could carry, and began her harrowing journey out of Ukraine, travelling first by car and then by train, to Poland. A train ride that should have lasted three hours took 24, as they stopped over and over, turning off the engine and lights, waiting for tanks and planes to pass, hoping to remain undetected.

In Poland, Natalia found work and tried to remain busy and distracted. But when she was laid off soon after, Natalia knew she had two options: return to Ukraine or seek refuge in another country. While her heart ached for her friends, family, and home, she knew that returning was not safe.

And so, with less than \$2000 and a single bag, Natalia boarded a plane to Canada in May 2022. She is grateful for the kindness with which she was welcomed. A host family allowed Natalia to live with them in Edmonton while she looked for work and a place of her own, and Catholic Social Services helped her navigate systems, processes, and learn about her new home.

A year later, Natalia says she now has hope for the future. With one piece of her heart in Ukraine, and the other in Canada, she is bravely moving forward.



## RESOURCES

This CBC news video explains how much financial support refugees get from the Government of Canada [bit.ly/CBC\\_finances](https://www.cbc.ca/news/immigration/canada-refugees-funding-1.6488888)

Older students may complete a project about the history of war crimes, the Nuremburg trials after WWII and the formation of the International Criminal Court.

The International Criminal Court: [icc-cpi.int](https://www.icc-cpi.int)

The Nuremburg Trials Project at Harvard University  
[nuremberg.law.harvard.edu](https://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu)

Eichmann in Jerusalem by Hannah Arendt (New Yorker, February 1963)  
[bit.ly/Eichmann\\_Jerusalem](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1963-02-04/eichmann-in-jerusalem)



## CST STAR

Solidarity. Watch the Video: [bit.ly/CST\\_solidarity](https://bit.ly/CST_solidarity)

## UKRAINE FACTS

CAPITAL: **KYIV**

POPULATION: **43,637,000**

AREA (KM SQ): **603,549 (ROUGHLY THE SIZE OF ALBERTA)**

PRIMARY RELIGION: **CHRISTIAN - EASTERN ORTHODOX, UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX, RUSSIAN ORTHODOX, ROMAN RITE CATHOLICS, OTHER CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS.**

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE: **UKRAINIAN, MANY PEOPLE ALSO SPEAK RUSSIAN.**

INTERESTING FACT: **THE COUNTRY IS KNOWN AS THE "BREADBASKET OF EUROPE." IT IS CALLED THIS BECAUSE IT IS HOME TO ENORMOUS WHEAT FIELDS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO BREAD EATEN THE WORLD OVER.**

## ACTIVITY - *Walking Debate*

The war in Ukraine is ongoing. There have been allegations of war crimes. Attuned to the different sensitivities of different age groups invite students to participate in a 'Walking Debate' or a 'Line Debate.' Move all the tables and chairs out of the centre of the classroom so that you have a clear space in the centre of the room. Place a sign on one wall which reads "AGREE" and on the opposite wall which reads "DISAGREE". Invite students to gather along the line. Tell them you are about to read out a statement. When you do they can move in the direction of either sign or else they can stay in the middle if they are not sure. After you read the statement and the students move select individuals to say why they chose that side. Select students from either side of the room and some in the middle. Encourage the students to listen to their classmates and if any of are persuaded by something they hear to move along the line.

### POSSIBLE STATEMENTS:

"What happens to people in another country is not our responsibility."

"Refugees get too much money from the government."

"We have to look after people in our own country first."

"We need a world police to investigate war crimes."

*Note: if forming your own statement try to keep it short and easy to form an opinion on. Also this game works well with an ice-breaker statement, eg. "Wayne Gretzky is the greatest hockey player of all time."*



# Be a Beacon of Hope FOR REFUGEES

## IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT SERVICE

Since 1962, Catholic Social Services has welcomed immigrants and refugees to Alberta.

It takes a lot of courage and hope for the future to come to a new country and build a life. We are here to support newcomers along that journey. Our services are free and offered in English, French and more than 50 other languages.

Services to immigrants and refugees are offered in Edmonton, Red Deer, and Lloydminster.



14246

Number of immigrants and  
refugees served in 2019-20



9943

Number of hours contributed  
by volunteers in 2019-2020



66

Number of languages spoken by  
staff



151

Number of countries  
represented by clients served in  
2019-20





## ACT

Catholic Social Services receives some government support for our work with refugees. But many of our activities rely on financial donations from the community so that we can purchase special items when a specific need arises.

### HERE ARE SOME IDEAS FOR OTHER CLASS ACTIVITIES:

- Organise a sponsored 5km “Run for Refugees” or maybe it is a 100 metre “Hop for Hope” to symbolise the challenge of the refugee journey.
- Hold a sponsored 24 hour food (or screen) fast to understand what it is like to be without something you need, or love.
- On Holy Thursday ask your school principal to wash the feet of a group of students, teachers and parents.

## CST STAR

Preferential Option for the Poor. Watch the Video: [bit.ly/OptionforPoor](https://bit.ly/OptionforPoor)

## LEARN

At the beginning of Lent tell students that you would like them to plan for an end of Lent/Easter activity. Over the course of Lent read all of the stories in this resource pack and complete all of the activities. At the end of each session invite students to make suggestions for the final all-class activity. Select an appropriate activity from the list. Alternatively supply students with a list of recommended activities and ask them to vote for their favourite one.

## PRAY

Lord, Father of our human family,  
you created all human beings equal in dignity:  
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit  
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,  
dialogue, justice and peace.

Move us to create healthier societies  
and a more dignified world,  
a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.

May our hearts be open  
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.  
May we recognize the goodness and beauty  
that you have sown in each of us,  
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,  
and shared dreams. Amen.

- PRAYER TO THE CREATOR BY POPE FRANCIS FROM FRATELLI TUTTI

## A NOTE ON RESOURCES

Resources used in the development of this pack have been developed by the staff of Catholic Social Services. In addition we are grateful to other organizations who make resources freely available online including Catholic Relief Services (Caritas USA), CBC News, Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Trocaire (Caritas Ireland). This resource is published under a creative commons licence, which means it can be used freely with attribution to Catholic Social Services.



Sign of  
*Hope!*