

Project Lifeline

Standing Up for All the Children
Detained by Immigration

Toolkit for Children and Parents

ProjectLifeline.us

BACKGROUND

This digital toolkit creates the opportunity to learn about immigrants and refugees, which [helps children cultivate empathy](#) for all people. Education of children is the most powerful vehicle for sustained change. As adults, we grapple with the daunting numbers of unaccompanied children who are dehumanized and deprived of basic needs in immigration detention. We recoil from the devastating complexity of our immigration system. We withdraw helplessly from the immense and powerful industry that has been spawned to detain children and families in favor of alternatives. We regretfully concede. Or perhaps we never engage. How would we feel, had we as children learned about the plight of those who flee violence and abject poverty? Would we be moved to action if we knew about the struggles children and their families face when to escape dire circumstances in their countries of origin they must choose a life in the shadows here? What if someone empowered you to walk that mental passage in the shoes of those most vulnerable? Would circumstances be different then? There is only one way to know. That is to do the experiment.

ACTIVE EDUCATION

1. Read together and talk with your children about immigration to our country.
 - a. **Elementary age** – Make your way through our catalogue of age-appropriate books on immigrants and refugees with your child. Talk about your family’s history. Create a family tree. Ask questions: Why did our family first come to America? What was happening in their country of origin that made America look appealing?
 - b. **Middle school age** – Read immigrant stories together. Talk about how friends and families came to America. Ask questions: What was the experience of your grandparents and aunts and uncles? Have children correspond with a pen-pal in another country. Challenge them to research the ways in which the people of that country are more like Americans than they are different from us.
 - c. **Teens** – Share books about immigrants. Research migration patterns and changing demographics in the US. Discuss immigration law. Critically evaluate how race and ethnicity, shifting demographics have shaped our immigration policy. Discover together how to discern bias in sources that cover immigration (media literacy). Read reliable and least biased sources together on the present state of immigration in this country.
2. Explore the many ways in which immigrants shape the world around us.
 - a. **Elementary age** - Challenge your child to identify names of places around town or on road trips where names do not seem ‘American’ to them. Explore why they categorize these names as ‘other.’ Visit your local library and neighborhood/city website or Facebook page/group to find community events that are culture oriented. Organize playgroups that have days focused on different countries. You can find activities, games, and crafts online from those countries (a great free resource is Pinterest). Watch videos together that feature dance and/or music from the country of focus. Ask your children what they enjoy about learning of other cultures?
 - b. **Middle school age** - Ask your child to consider who among their friends they consider ‘foreign’ and why. Have they learned anything valuable from those friends (i.e. how those friends see the world around them, how they inhabit that world)? Are we more like our friends who we regard as foreign than we are different?
 - c. **Teens** - Visit grocery stores and identify the foods that you consider ‘ethnic.’ [Challenge that designation](#). Consider how we can honor the contributions of many immigrant communities to the food we eat without marginalizing, fetishizing, or tokenizing those contributions. Find a recipe or two online, buy the ingredients, and make the meal together.

3. Consider the experience of having to flee your home. Use the links below for more guidance on teaching tolerance and compassion to children.
 - a. **Elementary age** - Ask your children whether they would be afraid if their parents told them they had to leave their homes urgently? What they would pack if they had to leave in a hurry. Give them 5 minutes to pack in a suitcase or bag things that are most important to them. Talk about what things they chose and why.
 - b. **Middle School age** - Brainstorm all the reasons why people may flee their homes. Ask what it would take for each person in your family to decide they could not stay in a place. In an increasingly connected world, does it make more sense for us to have greater or fewer restrictions on movement and why?
 - c. **Teens** - Visit heritage and other history museums to learn about immigration and human rights issues. Ask your child to consider why we have built these museums and who may have been the parties to push for them? Would/should they have been built without the interest of the people represented in them? Discuss the contribution of colonialism and neo-colonialism to the economic and political realities in other countries. Ask your child to explore the function of fear in human behavior (i.e. to ensure survival) and how that fear can be used to manipulate (i.e. when manufactured).

EDUCATIONAL ACTION

1. **All ages** - We invite parents and children to join our viral [#declarewecare grassroots video challenge](#). Children take the perspective of immigrant and refugee children in detention by reading excerpts from representative Flores testimonies while being recorded. Share the videos of your children and others from the website and [Facebook page](#).
2. **Elementary age** - Organize a fundraiser with your child and use funds to purchase and donate new children's books in Spanish to groups that are helping children at the border. Post pictures and video on social media and ask friends to join you to cultivate awareness and move people to action.
3. **Middle school age** - Discuss fourth and fifth amendment rights with your child, as they apply to interrogation of immigration status. Ask your child, who has these rights? Distribute [Know Your Rights cards](#) with them at churches, community centers. Make sure they are language accessible in the communities where you distribute them. Volunteer in your local community with groups providing sanctuary or doing other work that would give your child opportunities to know recent migrants.
4. **Teens** - Learn about the role of city, county, state, and federal officials in immigration policy and enforcement. Have your child design a postcard to mail [your elected officials](#) in which they
 - a. Share what they have learned about immigrant and refugee children, including what concerns they may have.
 - b. Urge them to talk with migrants who have been released from immigration detention to understand intimately how their policies affect real, whole human beings.
 - c. Ask them to visit the U.S./Mexico border to learn first hand about the crisis.
 - d. Ask them to attend immigration court when children have to represent themselves without a lawyer to understand the obstacles and trauma children face.Donate to advocacy and service organizations that support immigrant children.

Books:
CHILDREN

Refugees

NONFICTION

Stormy Seas: Stories of young boat refugees
--Five true stories from 1939 to today
--5-7 grade

Leatherdale, Mary Beth

A Guatemalan Family
--3-5 grade

Malone, Michael

Where Will I Live?
--Photo essay
--1-4 grade

McCarney, Ontario

FICTION

I Lived on Butterfly Hill
--5-8 grade

Agosin, Marjorie

Joseph's Big Ride
--K-2 grade

Farish, Terry

90 Miles to Havana
--4-7 grade

Flores-Galbis, Enrique

Refugee
--3-6 grade

Gratz, Alan

Drita, My Homegirl
--3-5 grade

Lombard, Jenny

Refugees
--Kindergarten

Miller, David

Without Refuge
--4-8 grade

Mitchell, Jane

A Long Walk to Water
--5-8 grade

Park, Linda Sue

Stepping Stones: A refugee family's journey
--K

Rurrs, Margriet

The Journey
--1-4 grade

Sanna, Francesca

Escape from Aleppo
--5-8 grade

Senzai, N.H.

How I Learned Geography
--K-2 grade

Shulevitz, Uri

Close to the Wind
--4-7 grade

Walter, Jon

My Name is Sangoel
--Sudanese refugee
--1-3 grade

Williams, Karen

Four Feet, Two Sandals
--2-5 grade

Williams, Karen

Immigrants

NONFICTION

My Family Divided
--biography
--6-8 grade

Guerrero, Diane

Americanized: Rebel without a green card
--biography
--6-9 grade

Saedi, Sara

FICTION

Return to Sender
--4-7 grade

Alvarez, Julia

Dos Conejos Blancos/Two White Rabbits
--migrants
--K-3 grade

Buitrago, Jorge

Gaby, Lost and Found
--immigration status
--5-8 grade

Cervantes, Angela

The Name Jar
--1-3 grade

Choi, Yangsook

Mama the Alien
--K-3 grade

Colato Lainez, Rene

Rene Has Two Last Names
--K-2 grade

Colato Lainez, Rene

Carmen Learns English
--K-2 grade

Cox, Judy

The Day the War Came
--loss of childhood
--2-4 grade

Davies, Nicola

Islandborn
--K-2 grade

Diaz, Junot

The Circuit: Stories from the life of a migrant child
--4-6 grade

Jimenez, Francisco

Inside Out and Back Again
--bullying, rejection, struggle to fit in
--4-6 grade

Lai, Thanhha

In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson
--3-4 grade

Lord, Bette

My Name is Jorge on Both Sides of the River
--2-4 grade

Medina, Jane

From Far Away
--1-2 grade

Munsch, Robert

A Different Pond
--K-2 grade

Phi, Bao

Grandfather's Journey
--K-2 grade

Say, Allen

Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote --K- 2 grade	Tonatiuh, Duncan
Migrant --2-5 grade	Trottier, Maxine

Human Rights

NONFICTION

This is How We Do It: One day in the lives of seven kids from around the world --K-3 grade	Lamothe, Matt
Every Human Has Rights --photoessay --5-8 grade	National Geographic
I Have the Right to be a Child --2-4 grade	Serres, Alain
A Life Like Mine --how children live around the world --2-4 grade	UNICEF
Our Rights: How kids are changing the world --6-8 grade	Wilson, Janet

FICTION

Sin Agua y Sin Pan/No Water No Bread --K-3 grade	Amavisca, Luis
We Are All Born Free --2-6 grade	Amnesty International
Illegal --6-8 grade	Colfer, Eoin
Mama's Nightingale --parent-child separation --2-5 grade	Danticat, Edwidge
If You Could Wear My Sneakers --1-2 grade	Fitch, Sheree

Other (compassion, empathy, differences in culture, etc.)

NONFICTION

Coming to America --K-4 grade	Maestro, Betsy
La Frontera: El viaje con papa/My Journey with Papa --2-5 grade	Mills, Deborah
Coming to America --2-5 grade	Wolf, Bernard

FICTION	
Wishtree --4-8 grade	Applegate, Katherine
Lucy Broken Girl --4-6 grade	Behar, Ruth
One Green Apple --K-2 grade	Bunting, Eve
From North to South --1-3 grade	Colato Lainez, Rene
Milly and the Macy's Parade --K-2 grade	Corey, Shana
This Is Me: A story of who we are and where we came from --K-1 grade	Curtis, Jamie Lee
The Hundred Dresses --2-4 grade	Estes, Eleanor
Dreamers --PreS-3 grade	Morales, Yuyi
I'm New Here --K-2 grade	O'Brien, Anne Sibley
Someone New --K-3 grade	O'Brien, Anne Sibley
My Diary From Here to There --2-5 grade	Perez, Amada Irma
We Came to America --K-3 grade	Ringgold, Faith
Dear Primo: A letter to my cousin --K-3 grade	Tonatiuh, Duncan
The Day You Begin --K-2 grade	Woodson, Jacqueline

TEEN:

NONFICTION	
Dear World: A Syrian girl's story of war and plea for peace --teen	Alabed, Bana
Someone Like Me --teen	Arce, Julissa
A Hope More Powerful Than the Sea: One refugee's incredible story of love, loss, and survival	Fleming, Melissa
In the Country We Love --teen	Guerrero, Diane
Human Rights in Focus: Illegal immigrants --teen	Haugen, David
Tell Me How It Ends --adult	Luiselli, Valeria
Refugees --teen	Miller, Harry

Just Like Us --teen	Thorpe, Helen
Human Rights in Focus: Refugees --teen	Uschan, Michael
FICTION	
The Secret Side of Empty --teen	Andreu, Maria
A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a boy soldier --teen	Beah, Ishmael
No Safe Place --teen	Ellis, Deborah
The Good Braider --teen	Farish, Terry
Red Midnight --teen	Mikaelsen, Ben
Enrique's Journey --teen	Nazario, Sonia
Outcasts United --teen	St. John, Warren
American Street --teen	Zoboi, Ibi

Websites:

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

--www.aclu.org

Amnesty International

--www.amnesty.org

--Campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all

Catholic Charities

--<https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/our-ministry/immigration-refugee-services>

I'm Your Neighbor

--www.imyourneighborbooks.org

Kids in Need of Defense

-- <https://supportkind.org>

Media Bias Fact Check

-- <https://mediabiasfactcheck.com>

Refugee Center

--<https://therefugeecenter.org>

Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)

– www.raicetexas.org

Teaching Tolerance

--www.tolerance.org

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

--United Nations Human Rights

UNICEF

--www.unicef.org

United We Dream

– unitedwedream.org

Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights

--www.theyoungcenter.org

A [toolkit](#) designed for teachers to teach children about immigration and refugees

Articles:

[Ways](#) to teach children about immigrants and refugees.

[Organizations](#) that offer to help immigrant families.