

On the move

We adapted this popular group activity so that it could still be used by isolated individuals. It is a way to begin to understand some of the dilemmas faced by refugees.

If you have been forced from your home or country, this resource may be upsetting. Please consider whether you wish to continue reading.

You will need a pen, paper and an empty bag. Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Read each section slowly, make the decision you are asked to make, then move on.

Section one

You are about to go on a journey into the unknown. You don't know if you will ever be able to return to your home. War has broken out in your country. You can hear the sound of gunfire and you know that fighting must be very close by. You have to escape quickly. You have been told that trucks will soon arrive to take you, your family and neighbours to the coast, where you hope to find a boat to take you to safety. There is no time to waste. You have to be quick.

The first thing you must do is pack a bag for your journey. In your bag you may carry no more than six items. Look at the belongings list (below) and choose your items. Think carefully about what you really need to take. Don't forget: your items might be heavy to carry or difficult to look after. Write or draw on slips of paper the six things that you want to take.

You will be travelling with five members of your family. Decide who they are.

Section two

The truck has arrived. You can't take anything else. Bring your bag with you and climb on the old wooden truck. You are on your way. Take a last look at your home. You are very unhappy because you have to leave your dog behind but there is nothing that you can do. You start to cry as you think about all the happy times that you spent with him and wonder what will happen to him now. The seats in the truck are hard and narrow and, whichever way you sit, you cannot get comfortable. The driver is in a hurry to get you to safety. He speeds along the road and almost loses control as the truck screeches around the corner. One member of your family (choose who this is) is thrown from their seat and their bag flies out of the back of the truck. The driver cannot hear you hear you calling to stop, so the bag is left far behind.

This person has lost everything. You help them make up for this loss by giving them something from your bag. Choose one item to give them. What have you been left with?

Section three

The truck has to climb up a steep mountain. It gets slower and slower and a strange choking noise comes from the engine. You wonder if this truck will ever get you to the coast. You hear a mighty bang and the truck grinds to a halt. Something is very wrong with the truck's engine and it cannot be fixed. You must continue the journey on foot, but you find that your bag is too heavy to carry.

Make your bag lighter by taking out the heaviest item. Decide what this is and leave it behind. What have you been left with?

Section four

You struggle on but you find it harder and harder to keep going. It is a hot day and the sun is beating down. There has been no rain for more than a year so the roads are hard, full of holes and difficult to walk on.

One member of your family falls and hurts their leg. They cannot go on without help. Some of your group will have to carry them. The rest of the family will have to help carry their belongings.

Remember, no one may carry more than six items. Decide which two items you will offer to carry (choose two from the list of belongings below, write them on paper and add them to your bag).

Section five

You continue on and enter into a thick green forest. You are all very tired, especially the oldest people in your family, but you have to keep on going. You need to slash and cut your way through the trees. What will you use to do this?

At last you can see the sea and you know you have reached the coast. The injured person and their helpers are able to carry what is left of their own belongings. Return their belongings to them.

Section six

You are overjoyed to see the fishing boats waiting in the bay. But unfortunately the boats are very small and none can take more than four people. You must split up into groups of four. This is very hard to do and you may become very upset. You want to stay together and are frightened of what might happen if you separate but you have no choice.

You have two minutes to sort out your group – who will you go with?

Section seven

The fisherman will not let you onto his boat without payment. You have no money but he agrees to let you on board in exchange for the most valuable thing in your bag.

Decide what you will give him.

The boat is very small and the fisherman now says that you have too much luggage. No one may carry more than two things. Decide what you will leave behind. What do you have left?

Section eight

The boat sets sail. The sea is rough and stormy. The boat starts to leak and sea water floods in. You manage to save your bag but it is soaking wet and anything which could be affected by water is ruined.

You have a minute to check the belongings in your bag and throw away anything that is spoilt.

Section nine

At last you can see land. It has been a terrible journey! You are anxious to find out what has happened to the others in your family and hope they have arrived safely too. What will happen now? You don't know but you hope for peace and safety.

Section ten – reflect

- How would you feel if you were told that you were in great danger and quickly had to leave behind your friends, home, the things that belong to you and maybe even some of your family?
- Did you choose to bring the right things for the journey?
- How did you feel when you had to give up your belongings?
- What was the most difficult part of the journey?
- How did you feel when your family had to separate?
- What five words best describe how you feel now, at the end of the journey?

If you wish to take action in solidarity with refugees, try going without a pillow – or even your bed – for a week. Imagine what it is like to be unsure whether you will have somewhere to sleep. Why not write or say a prayer for people facing this sort of journey today, and find out about groups and organisations supporting refugees in your local area? Find out more about the [stories of refugees around the world](#).

List of belongings:

- A spare set of clothes
- A favourite doll
- A thick blanket
- A favourite action figure
- Quilt
- Teddy bear
- Wellington boots
- Family photograph
- An umbrella
- Wedding photo
- A raincoat
- Baby bottle and baby food
- A change of shoes
- Nappies
- Your pet
- A potty
- iPod
- Sewing/knitting box
- Money
- Plastic sheet
- Your jewellery
- Your favourite book
- Camping stove
- Cooking pot
- First aid kit
- A chair
- Kettle
- A mattress
- A tent
- A set of cutlery
- Pet food
- DVDs
- A camera
- iPad
- A washbag
- Mountain bike
- A sharp knife
- A laptop
- A basket of food
- A portable TV
- A container of water
- Mobile phone
- Rope
- Other _____