

**K-5**

# MIGRATION

## *Families On the Move*

**Vol 7 No. 2 – Winter 2024 /Migration**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

To learn what migration is, and some of the many reasons that people migrate, students will hear a story about a family migrating from Venezuela to the United States. They will **REFLECT** on Pope Francis' message about migration, and that Jesus was a migrant as a child, as well as how the first Christians lived. Students may illustrate or perform the story of the Nativity.

A **DEFINITION** for children: To migrate simply means to move from one place to another. Some kinds of animals migrate, some humans migrate. This has been happening for thousands of years, and it happens for many different reasons.

This very short video is a good explanation for children about human migration

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OfmRQli4BE>

### **STEP 1: PRAY**

As a class or family, look carefully at the illustration by Brother Michael McGrath. This is about migration. Can you find the Holy Family? What do you think Joseph is thinking about? Look at the people coming along with them. What parts of the world do you think they might be migrating from? Do you see the long, long lines of people still coming? Enjoy the donkey. And look for the special way Brother McGrath represents the Holy Spirit.

People have always migrated, for many different reasons. It can be an adventure, but often it is tiring and hard, sometimes it is very difficult and even dangerous. Let us pray for the many migrants in the world now.

**Leader:** Jesus, when you were a baby, you had to migrate with your parents. We are praying today, asking you to watch over children who are migrating now.

For children who migrate because they do not have enough food,

**All:** Migrant Jesus, watch over them.

**Leader:** For children who migrate because there is a war in their homeland,

**All:** Migrant Jesus, watch over them.

**Leader:** For children who migrate so their parents can find jobs,

**All:** Migrant Jesus, watch over them.

**Leader:** For children whose families migrate when their parents hope for a better life for their children.

**All:** Migrant Jesus, watch over them.

**Leader:** For children who migrate because they are treated badly by others in their home countries,



**All:** Migrant Jesus, watch over them.

**Leader:** For children who migrate because their homes are hurt badly by climate change,

**All:** Migrant Jesus, watch over them.

**PRAY** this each week of Advent.

## STEP 2: MAKE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

### MISSION STORY

Miguel was sitting at a table with his family and the people who had welcomed them to this shelter. His family had left their home in Venezuela. After a very hard trip, Miguel was now having dinner with people in El Paso, Texas. All the grown-ups were talking and Miguel was enjoying the picadillo, the ground beef with tomato sauce, with rice and salad. He eyed the bowl of fruit for dessert. And, he heard someone say there would be breakfast the next morning!

Miguel felt good and safe. He hadn’t felt this way in a long, long time. Next to him was his three-year old sister Angelica. Before dinner, she and Miguel had enjoyed playing with some games and puzzles. Angelica had colored a picture too. Their big sister, Ana Victoria, made herself a bracelet. It was good to just do stuff, after their long walk.

“There are terrible troubles in Venezuela,” his father was explaining now. “After we took part in some of the protests against the government, we were in danger and had to leave! We sold everything we owned and left our home.”

Miguel thought of his soccer ball. He wondered how his friends were doing.

“There were many people fleeing,” Mama said. “We managed to get to the border between Colombia and Panama. There we paid a guide to take us part of the way here, a fee for each person in our family.”

Miguel thought of that guide, who was always nervous. He had stayed close to his parents when the guide was with them. Mama continued, “All that was very hard, but then the guide left, and we had to find our own way.”

Ana Victoria took a deep breath. Miguel knew she was remembering those terrible days. Muddy paths along steep cliffs. Steamy forests so dense they could get lost in them. Rivers swollen with swift waters which they had to cross. He took a sip of milk, and thought how glad he was in this shelter tonight!

“We saw many sad things along the way,” Mama said. “We tried to keep the children from seeing that.”

Despite Mama’s efforts, Miguel had understood that there were people who had died trying to make the same trip as they were taking. He also knew Mama was praying all the time they walked and climbed.

“Then we reached the place in Mexico where we boarded ‘La Bestia’,” Papa said.

“That network of trains, heading north?” asked Coralís, one of people who had welcomed them. “That must have been very dangerous!”

“Yes,” Papa said quietly. “Very dangerous.”

Suddenly, Miguel wanted to talk too. “We sat on top of the trains, not in them!” he exclaimed. “And there was no shade. Just hot sun, for miles and miles and miles!”

“For two and a half days,” murmured Ana Victoria.

The grown-ups looked at them with both respect and sadness. But as the adults continued to talk, it became confusing for Miguel. There was something said about new rules for coming into the United States. Words like danger, fleeing, and asylum were used. That last word seemed to give Mama and Papa a little hope.

All this time, Angelica had been quiet. Now Miguel felt a weight against his arm. Angelica had fallen asleep against him! Miguel gently moved her so her head was in his lap. He tenderly stroked her hair to get it out of her face. She had a little milk moustache! Coralís smiled at him. Miguel realized the last time he had seen a kind smile was on his grandmother’s face back home...

Later, when it was time for lights out and Miguel was getting into a nice, clean bed, Papa told him Coralís had helped him and Mama arrange to go to another part of the United States where Papa’s cousin was living. They would leave tomorrow, riding a big bus!

Miguel was very ready to sleep. Unlike all the nights on his travels, he was not hungry and he was not scared. He didn’t know what it would be like to live in this new country, to learn English, and go to school. But for right now, his family was together, and he was safe. He was happy, and now he could go to sleep.

### Vocabulary:

- **Shelter:** a place that covers or protects from weather or danger, such as a picnic shelter in a park; a shelter can also be a building where people can sleep, eat, etc. when they are homeless or fleeing danger.

- **Asylum:** getting permission to stay in a different country to be safe; also, a place of safety;

- **Asylum seekers:** In this story, Miguel’s family were now asylum seekers, people who leave their country, looking for protection from persecution in their home country. They have to wait for a decision from the United States government to see if they can stay.

- **Persecution:** the mistreatment (bad treatment) of a person or group by another group.

### Discuss:

1. Why did Miguel’s family leave their home country?

2. If you had to leave your home, what would you miss?

3. If you meet a child like Miguel, how would you welcome that child?

4. Think about the story of Jesus’ birth. When he was still very young, he had to leave his country too. Compare Miguel’s story with Jesus’.

## STEP 3: EXPLORE SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

**Old Testament:** Based on Genesis 46:2-7

Jacob was an important leader in the stories of the Old Testament. He had many children.

[Story] For years, Jacob had thought his son Joseph had died. Years later, there was a long drought in their country, which caused a shortage of food. Jacob’s other children and grandchildren were suffering with hunger. Then an amazing thing happened: some of Jacob’s grown-up sons found out that Joseph was alive and had a powerful job in Egypt! Could he help them now? They decided to migrate to where Joseph was. It would be good to be in a place where they had enough food! But first they had to leave their own country, where they had lived for many years. They had to leave the home and other people they loved.

- Why did Jacob’s family leave their home and migrate to Egypt?

- What feelings might this family have had about migrating?

**Life of Jesus:** Based on Matthew 2:1-5

For all of history, people have been migrating for many different reasons. In the Scriptures we hear at Christmas, there are two stories of people migrating, and for two very different reasons.

[Story] At the time of Jesus’ birth, a man named Herod was king. He was a cruel man, and he wanted to protect his power. Some distinguished travelers stopped in Jerusalem where Herod lived. These visitors were from countries far to the east of Jerusalem. They were called magi, which meant they were wealthy and privileged people known for studying and understanding things most people did not know. They were astrologers, so they studied the stars. Seeing a new star, they believed it meant a new king had been born. Curious, they left their homes to try to find the king by following the star. The king they sought was the newborn Jesus. They traveled for weeks, perhaps even as long as five months! Probably they had servants and plenty of money. They were not traveling because they had been forced to leave their homes, and they did not travel in fear.

When they arrived in Jerusalem, they could no longer see the star. They consulted King Herod, thinking a king would know of the

birth of a new king. He told them to find the child and to come back to tell him where the baby was. They did not know of Herod's cruelty, or that now Jesus was in danger. They left Jerusalem. Once again, they saw the star, which led them to where young Jesus was. They were joyful and celebrated him. But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod.

Perhaps they felt some fear then? But not as much fear as Joseph felt when he too had a dream. An angel in the dream told Joseph to get up immediately for he, Mary and the baby must leave for another country right away. They were in great danger from Herod. So this family, who had little, had to leave their country, family and friends, and hurry to Egypt. It was likely a hard and dangerous journey, one especially difficult for a very young child. Once they arrived at the new country, they had no place to stay, no people they knew there, and no job. And they would have to stay there until it was safe to return home.

- Name a feeling the magi might have had as they traveled. \_\_\_\_\_.
- Name a feeling that Joseph and Mary may have had as they traveled. \_\_\_\_\_.

**Christian Living:** Based on Acts 2: 42-47

Jesus often spoke of the best way to live with each other. Who were the first people to live this way? We know a few names, but we know more about how these long-ago people lived. Each day they ate and prayed together, and they also pooled their money and possessions and shared everything! They made certain those who were poor were helped. They watched the apostles performing miracles as Jesus had. Often, they felt joyful to be together and to live this way.

Here is a modern-day example of this: The people who run the shelter where Miguel was staying are able to feed guests like Miguel's family because of donations. A group called El Paso Fighting Hunger, donates meat, eggs, potatoes, sweet potatoes, bread, milk, vegetables, fruits, juice, etc. Large grocery stores and bakeries also deliver food that soon cannot be sold now, such as chips, mixed nuts, cookies, croissants, bagels, doughnuts, cakes, etc. And when farm fields produce more food than usual, nearby farmers share these extra vegetables and fruits with the shelter.

When you share meals, fun times, or things with friends or family, how do you feel?

Have you ever helped to get things for others (e.g., a drive for clothing or school supplies)? If so, what did you do to help?

## WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY?

Introduction: Three years ago, it was estimated that 281 million people were migrating in just that year. (Information from the United Nations' International Organization for Migration). Help students imagine this by having a student find out how many people can attend a large event like the Super Bowl and make a comparison.

Pope Francis is greatly concerned about people who must migrate. He says we must ask these questions:

- Where and why are people leaving their homes?
- What happens to them as they move from one place to another?
- Were they free to leave their country?

Can they go back if they want to?

Think about the story in Matthew 2:1-15 and fill in the answers:

## QUESTIONS:

1. Why did they leave their homes?

The Magi: \_\_\_\_\_

Joseph, Mary, and Jesus: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did they leave their homes for opportunities or out of fear?

The Magi: \_\_\_\_\_

Joseph, Mary, and Jesus: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Could these migrants go back home if they want to?

The Magi: \_\_\_\_\_

Joseph, Mary, and Jesus: \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

Introduction for adults:

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are people forced to leave their homes. By the end of 2022, 43.3 million children were displaced because of conflict, poverty, and climate change. This topic and this number are difficult for children to grasp. Help children begin to understand with these activities:

Reasons for Migration: Count the spaces for each missing word, then use the word list to find the correct ones. Read the completed sentences with someone

and discuss them.

Some people migrate because they are being

\_\_\_\_\_, or treated badly, in their country.

Some children's \_\_\_\_\_ need to find better

\_\_\_\_\_ or go to \_\_\_\_\_ in a different country.

In some countries, there is a \_\_\_\_\_ and it is no longer \_\_\_\_\_ to live there.

Some people must move because extreme weather, such as a

\_\_\_\_\_ has caused great damage to their towns.

WORD LIST: hurricane jobs parents persecuted safe school war

- Create a Picture: Reread the story of Miguel in Step 2. Draw a picture based on the story. Will you draw him as he is walking to the border, riding on the dangerous train, or in his new place where he must learn a new language and start school?
- Talking with the Children: Resources for Adults: One way to help children become aware of world migration and \_\_\_\_\_ children is to look for more in-depth information for yourself, some of which you can share with children.

This article is helpful for teachers and parents to better understand the issue of world migration and children. There are two videos within this article: Education is Every Child's Right, is hopeful and shows the importance of education and the efforts being made to give more children this human right. Younger children may need assistance to read the information.

The second video, Episode 3: Jumma is best for grades 4 and 5. It follows a child who is pursuing an education while living in a refugee camp. The boy's thoughts about his life, as well as his drive and emotional maturity, will give young viewers much to contemplate. The adults in the video are also hopeful, responsible people, all in a setting that will likely be new and surprising to many North American children.

<https://www.unicef.org/migrant-refugee-internally-displaced-children>

This is eye opening and would be very challenging for young students to see. However, the children in the video are real. They have experienced these tremendous difficulties. Teachers and parents: watch this video and speak with the children about what you have seen. Each child and class are different, so evaluate carefully if your group is ready to see this.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzdkmb5Zjas>

To further this discussion of children migrants, introduce children to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, an important agreement by countries who have promised to protect children's rights. A version for children to read is included.

<https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text-childrens-version>

## BE A GLOBAL NEIGHBOR

Father Joyalito Tajonera, M.M., is working in Taiwan supporting migrant workers. You can find out more and support this mission by going to [Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers website](#). Together we can make a difference for those on the move in Asia.

The story of the Nativity is beloved and told in many, many ways, from using the exact words in the King James bible translation, to having a mouse share its view from a rafter in the stable. The various versions can give listeners new insights into this important story. Here the emphasis is how the Holy Family experienced having to migrate to Egypt. Encourage children to tell the story using the story below or use their own words. This will help them take this pivotal story into their hearts.

For more information about this aspect of Jesus' life, see: <https://udayton.edu/imri/mary/f/flight-into-egypt.php>

### WAYS TO USE THIS STORY:

**Discuss:** Make a comparison of the Nativity story two thousand years ago with Miguel's story in current times. How are these stories similar?

**Create a Gift Book:** Print out the story for each student, one numbered paragraph per page. Have children illustrate each page, create a cover, and staple them together. They can wrap these as gifts to give to family for friends.

**Put on a play:** Act out the story. Do this at home as a family after you light your Advent wreath, over Christmas at a family gathering; or at your church, during Advent for Christmas (December 24-January 6)

**Make a Video:** Rehearse the play so actors know when to mime actions and the narrator is familiar with the reading. Then make a video of a performance.

Choose a narrator who will read the story with actors miming the action in the story. In addition to a baby doll, you will need people for the parts of Mary, Joseph, a shepherd or two, and an angel or two.

This can be as simple or as creative as you choose. Adults or children can act the parts, gesturing to show what is happening, with no props. However, if your children are inclined to make a bigger production, here are suggestions for uncomplicated props:

For a stable: folding table with a blanket, or the back of a couch for the wall and small table to create low sides.

For animals: stuffed animals, or a compliant pet dog.

For costumes: towels for headdresses and capes; a dowel or cane for Joseph to use as a staff.

### [Story]

1. Mary and Joseph were traveling to the town of Bethlehem. It was a hard time for them because soon their baby would be born. They should be at home, surrounded by family! The baby was very special, for he was God's Son. And yet, here they were, slowly making their way to Bethlehem.

2. Four days later, Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem. They were so tired! And Joseph was worried. The baby would be born very soon, and he could not find any place for them to stay in the crowded town. The exhausted travelers finally found a place—a cave used as a stable for farm animals! God's Son was born in this lowly place.

3. Far from home, Mary and Joseph had no family or friends to welcome little Jesus. Then some shepherds arrived to see the baby! They had never met Mary and Joseph. How did they know about this baby, born in a stable? They said an angel appeared to them. telling of this new child! Then many more angels came, singing joyfully! What an incredible night!

4. But the new parents' joy was short. One night, while Joseph slept, an angel came to him in a dream. The angel said, "The baby is in danger! King Herod fears the child will one day become a greater leader than he is. You must take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Leave at once!" Joseph woke up and remembered his dream. He called out, "Mary! Mary! Wake up!"

5. So once again they were traveling. This time it was with a tiny baby. They had a desert to cross, probably avoiding routes where there would be many people. They also would have needed to be looking out for danger. It was a hot, exhausting walk, and took several days. They arrived in Egypt, knowing they were safe now. But where could they live? How could they buy food? Where could Joseph work? The only thing they knew for certain was that God would watch over them.

6. [Close with a prayer]

**Leader:** Jesus, when you were a baby, you had to migrate with your parents. We ask you to watch over children who are migrating now.

For children who migrate because they do not have enough food,

**All:** Migrant Jesus, watch over them.

**Leader:** For children who migrate because there is a war in their homeland,

**All:** Migrant Jesus, watch over them.

**Leader:** For children whose families migrate when their parents hope for a better life for their children.

**All:** Migrant Jesus, watch over them.

**Leader:** For children who migrate because they are treated badly by others in their home countries,

**All:** Migrant Jesus, watch over them.

**Leader:** For children who migrate because their home is hurt badly by climate change,

**All:** Migrant Jesus, watch over them.

**Leader:** As we celebrate and remember the story of Jesus' birth, let us pray for the earth's peoples wherever they are.

**All:** Amen.

**NEXT ISSUE: GLOBAL SOLIDARITY. COMING LENT 2024**