

REFLECTION GUIDE

Genesis of Exodus

Violence, Poverty, and Social Disintegration: The Root Causes of Central American Migration

Purpose

Much of the work related to immigration advocacy is about building relationships with at-risk, vulnerable communities to learn how to appropriately accompany and support. The first step in relationship-building is learning context. The purpose of this reflection guide is to offer a framework to assist in diving more deeply into the materials provided by the Office of the General Assembly focused on root causes of migration from Central America. It is meant to help facilitators lead meaningful group discussion, reflection, and Bible study while utilizing the said materials. Groups that work through the six-session guide will walk away with a fuller understanding about why people make the difficult decision to migrate north and why people of faith can see why immigration is an essential biblical issue. This education experience will serve as a jumping point to becoming more involved in their communities.

Choose how to use the resources

This reflection guide is to be used in a six-session mode utilizing:

1. the story map during the first four sessions—Introduction, Root Causes, Victims, and Journey;
2. the film as the fifth session;
3. planning the community response as the sixth session.

Six-Week Bible Study Schedule	Resource to Review and Discuss
Week One	Story Map Introduction Section
Week Two	Story Map Root Causes Section
Week Three	Story Map Victims Section
Week Four	Story Map Journey Section
Week Five	Film, <i>The Genesis of the Exodus</i>
Week Six	Use the “Resource” section found in https://genesisofexodusfilm.com/ to determine what your community is called to do.

Or, an alternative method is to use one section of the story map or the film by itself for a single event.

Notes for the Facilitator

Creating a Safe Space

Let people know that these resources may contain triggers for some. There are stories of rape, exploitation, and violence throughout. Create a space for those who need to decompress. Make confidentiality in group discussions mandatory. Establish ground rules for discussion behavior (find example of ground rules in Appendix A). Have a pastor or counselor on call in case someone needs additional support or guidance. Have tissues available.

Stories and information included in these resources may not be appropriate for young audiences. Our suggestion is to use the materials with youth of high school age and older. Review content with youth advisor prior to using with the group to be sure the content is age appropriate.

Find links to the story map, film, and resources at: <https://genesisofexodusfilm.com/> and review to determine the plan that works for you.

Determine who to invite

You may have an established small group with whom you wish to review and discuss the resources or you may want to open the opportunity up to a larger group. The reflection guide can be used with a Sunday school, a weekly dinner group, Bible study group, or a community action group. The guide can be used in faith-based or secular groups. Consider what it is that brings your particular group together and how their personal backgrounds and stories can enhance the discussion and bring about a sense of community between those in the room and those whose stories are lifted up in the resources.

If you are using the six-week session suggested above, you may decide to review the story map with a small group and then host the larger community for the showing of the film, *The Genesis of the Exodus*. If you are planning action at the end, consider who in your community may be an ally and invite them to some or all of your gatherings. For ideas of who could be a local ally, review the “Finding Community Partners” section of the page titled, “Resources” at: <https://genesisofexodusfilm.com/>.

Planning your time together

Preparation

1. The leader/facilitator should review the section ahead of time to familiarize the information and data illustrated. You will need to be able to explain the information to the group (or invite someone else to do that). Write down any questions you may have and email the Office of Immigration Issues at Teresa.Waggener@pcusa.org or Amanda.Craft@pcusa.org.
2. Create and print flyers to hang and pass out or invite people via email and social media to your event(s).
3. Please choose a location with strong WiFi or create a “hotspot” as all the story map resources are only accessible online. You may request a downloadable version of the film, *The Genesis of the Exodus*, if you are concerned with buffering during the showing of that resource.
4. Choose a room set up that allows everyone to view the materials and keep in mind that the video clips and film have subtitles. Everyone will need to be in view of and able read the entire screen. Everyone will also want to hear the audio.
5. Plan for at least an hour to review and reflect on each session using the story map and planning time. More time will be needed to review and discuss the film as it is forty-five minutes in length.
6. Review the suggested discussion questions and determine which will work for your group considering personal backgrounds and stories that can enhance discussion.
7. If this is an interfaith or secular group, the Bible study, prayers, and/or hymns in the sessions may be disregarded or changed to meet the needs of the group. HOWEVER, be sure to still show the contents of the corresponding story map section or video.
8. Diverse participation is encouraged during these sessions. We suggest utilizing mutual invitation (found in Appendix B) or another method like it to ensure all participants have place and voice at the table. Review the method prior to introducing it at the event. If the group breaks into

several small groups, be sure to have process facilitators with each group that is trained in using a method like mutual invitation.

9. If reviewing a section of the story map, consider the size of your group to determine what is the best way. Some parts of the story map are text and some are videos that can be played. Do you ask your group members to have already consumed the material in advance? Or do you take the time and ask volunteers to read certain sections aloud? Be sure to explain this before the meeting. If you decide to invite individuals to read sections aloud, invite them in advance so they have time to prepare.

Materials and Equipment needed

- Bible (or printouts of scripture passages)
- Copies of Mutual Invitation Guidelines (Appendix B)
- Copies of Reflection Questions found in each session
- Copies of icebreakers if activity utilizes paper
- Sheets of paper and pens/pencils for note taking and journaling
- Sign-in sheet
- Poster board with established ground rules (Appendix A)
- Computer
- Projector
- WiFi or hotspot
- Speakers
- Poster paper and markers for note taking (report back) and creating ground rules
- Pens, pencils, note paper
- Snacks to offer at each session
- Nametags

At the gathering(s)

- Set up room to maximize viewing and hearing of the materials. Also, be sure that people can easily break into smaller groups for discussion.
- If this is a mixed group, have nametags available at entry.
- Have handouts ready at the door as folks come into the room.
- Open with welcome, prayer, snacks, and/or an ice breaker to help people feel welcome.
- Pass around a sign-in sheet for those who wish to remain in contact.
- Employ the format you have decided upon while preparing for the session. If others are helping with different parts, like reading aloud, touch base with them at the beginning of the event, and coordinate how you will call on them. Make sure you have proper audio and projection equipment.
- Use the questions you have chosen in advance to start the discussion. If it is a large group, have people break into small groups and then report back to the larger group.
- If this is a faith group, choose which scripture you wish to reflect on and make it part of the discussion. If this is not a faith group, choose your ice breaker well so you can pick up on shared values and commonalities to highlight during the discussion.
- We hope you schedule time at the end of your gathering(s) for a chance to plan action. It is our deepest hope that communities will become more than educated by these resources. We want communities to be more welcoming and responsive to the needs of the widows, orphans, and

strangers who are now our neighbors. Please review the “Faith in Action” section of the page titled “Resources” for inspiration at: <https://genesisofexodusfilm.com/>.

Session I—Story Map Section “Introduction”

Goals for lesson

To understand the migration issue from the U.S. The information in this session gives a clearer picture about migration along the southern border of the United States. After this session, participants will be better informed about who is crossing the border, how they are crossing the border, and at what levels they are crossing the border.

Note to facilitator

Suggested icebreaker is one that facilitates deeper personal understanding of one’s migration.

One example: Outline an imaginary U.S. (or world if you have guests who have lived internationally). Ask folks to stand in the location of their birth. Then ask them to move to the next place they lived and invite them to reflect silently about why they moved there. Ask them to move two more times inviting them to reflect why they moved.

After the fourth move, have folks introduce themselves—name, if they attend the church or are part of a community organization, and what surprised them most about their own migration experience. May need to do this in small groups if there are too many people.

Suggested scripture passages for the Bible study: [Have copies of scripture passage(s) for participants.]

Luke 10:25–37, *The Good Samaritan*

Genesis 1:27, *The Creation*

Presentation of material from story map suggestions:

1. Have one person read aloud all text on screen.
2. Have one person read aloud the larger text and another read the information in the text boxes.
3. Everyone reads through the text in unison.
4. Leader/facilitator talks through graphic information.

NOTE: Always leave time to stay on the slides with statistical information. As the facilitator, point out the trends of what the information on the slide is sharing. For example: on the first slide with bar graph, point out the different groups represented and the corresponding statistical information (i.e., in 2016, just over 400,000 unaccompanied minors crossed the U.S. southern border seeking asylum in the United States).

Introduction of session

We have heard many statistics and rhetoric about migration across the southern border of the United States. Today (or this morning or this evening) we will be digging deeper into the true picture of what migration looks like for those who live south of the U.S.-Mexico border. Through this time, we hope to learn more about our neighbors.

Setting ground rules

Since you will be discussing sensitive and sometimes polarizing themes, it is important to establish ground rules about how to respectfully listen, share, and question. You will find an example of ground rules in Appendix A. Please feel free to make changes to those rules as the group sees necessary. Read through them and receive confirmation of agreement before moving on.

Bible study process

1. Break into small groups of about six people. Be sure they can all see the screen. Have a small group facilitator with each small group.
2. Introduce Mutual Invitation and how to use it. Be aware that some, or many, in the group might already be familiar with this process. Stress that this process is about learning to listen to and value each other.
3. Read Luke 10:25–37 AND/OR Genesis 1:27. [Can either be read by one person aloud or in unison.]
4. Using Mutual Invitation, invite folks to lift up the word or phrase that stuck out to them in the Bible passage[s].
5. After sharing in small groups, direct people to the screen.
6. Use the presentation method you've selected for this section [suggestions listed in Notes to Facilitator section above].
7. Reread the scripture passage.
8. Invite participants through Mutual Invitation to lift-up how they heard the passage differently after reviewing the materials presented in the story map "Introduction" section. Encourage participants to be brief in their explanation [1–2 minutes per participant in each small group].

Small group discussion time

After the Bible study, move into discussion mode.

Have small group select a notetaker and discuss the following questions. Small group facilitator should make use of Mutual Invitation.

Question suggestions for small-group time:

What did you learn? Any surprises?

What do you have to add?

Has this crisis affected you? Your community?

How do you perceive this crisis is viewed in your community?

If your community could respond or improve its response in one way, what would you wish that could be?

Ask each small group to report back on highlights—what they heard as commonalities in the group and where the group struggled with the information presented.

Journaling exercise

Invite participants to take ten minutes to journal, or draw, or doodle about what they learned during this session.

Suggested questions to spark thinking:

What ideas have been changed after today's session?

What do you want to remember to share with others about what you learned at today's session?

What still unsettles you after today's session?

Where did you hear God's voice in today's session?

Closing prayer

Dear loving and faithful God, you call us your children, all of us. We are made in your image, all of us. Help us to be patient and to value the human right to migrate to seek safety, security, and a better life. Help us to understand how our neighbors do the same.

In your mercy. Amen.

Session II—Story Map “Root Causes”

Goals for the lesson

The goal of this session is to understand why people from Central America are making the perilous journey to the United States. During this session, participants will receive a historical analysis of countries in Central America and how those have led to the current situation. It also highlights the push factors that play out in the decision to flee their countries of origin and seek safety in the United States.

Notes to facilitator

Suggested icebreaker is one that illustrates our understanding of how we’ve learned about the other or stranger in our midst.

Have materials ready for letter writing (blank paper with pens/pencils) OR for collage making (blank paper for base, magazines, newspapers, scraps of material, buttons, glue, markers, crayons, pens, pencils, etc.).

Icebreaker Suggestion:

Conocimientos exercise [found in Appendix C]

Presentation of material from story map suggestions:

1. Have one person read aloud all text on screen.
2. Have one person read aloud the larger text and another read the information in the text boxes.
3. Everyone reads through the text in unison.
4. Leader/facilitator talks through graphic information.

NOTE: Always leave time to stay on the slides with statistical information. As the facilitator, point out the trends of what the information on the slide is sharing. For example: on the first slide with bar graph, point out the different groups represented and the corresponding statistical information (i.e., in 2016, just over 400,000 unaccompanied minors crossed the U.S. southern border seeking asylum in the United States).

Bible study scripture passage suggestions: [choose one and be sure to have copies for participants]

Exodus 1:8–21, *The Righteous Resistance of Shiphrah and Puah, the midwives*

Deuteronomy 26:1–11, *Our Duty to Remember Our Ancestry When We Give Thanks*

Bible study process

1. Break into small groups of about six people. Be sure they can all see the screen. Have a small group facilitator with each small group.
2. Introduce Mutual Invitation and how to use it. Be aware that some, or many, in the group might already be familiar with this process. Stress that this process is about learning to listen to and value each other.
3. Read Exodus 1:8–21 OR Deuteronomy 26:1–11. [Can be read by one person aloud or in unison.]
4. Using Mutual Invitation invite folks to name an image that came to mind as they listened to the scripture passage.
5. After sharing in small groups, direct people to the screen.
6. Use the presentation method you’ve selected for this section [suggestions listed in Notes to Facilitator section above].
7. Reread the scripture passage.

8. Invite participants through Mutual Invitation to lift-up how they heard the passage differently after reviewing the materials presented in the story map “Root Causes” section. Encourage participants to be brief in their explanation [1–2 minutes per participant in each small group].

Small group discussion time

After the Bible study, move into discussion mode.

Have each small group select a notetaker and discuss the following questions. Small group facilitator can encourage the use of Mutual Invitation.

Questions suggestions for small group time:

What did you learn? Any surprises?

Discuss your roots. Do you know where your ancestors are from?

If so, were your ancestors in a position of power? Marginalized? In the U.S? Elsewhere?

How did that affect their stability? Where they lived? Their/Your attitudes?

Did they choose or were they forced to migrate? Why?

Ask each small group to report back on highlights—what they heard as commonalities in the group and where the group struggled with the information presented.

Write a letter to an ancestor OR make a collage

Write a letter to an ancestor that has played a significant role in shaping how you perceive those who are different than you, especially those coming from other countries. Encourage participants to ask about their curiosities—why they called certain groups by certain names, why they were afraid of others, or why they did not trust others.

Make a collage about your past experiences with immigrants. Use pictures, words, colors, or objects that represent how you have been taught to view and think about immigrants.

This is not about judging past generations, but about making ourselves more aware of the baggage we carry with us that influences how we engage. Participants are not expected to have the answers. This is a private letter that is an example of what would be a private conversation. Invite participants to take the letters with them.

NOTE: These letters and collages will not be read by or shared by others. It is a private exercise.

Closing prayer

God, we know your children are suffering. We know that we all suffer together. Help us remember that our ancestors migrated to seek something better. Helps us to understand that our siblings are faced with unthinkable adversity and persecution that force them to make difficult decisions. Help us to see their faces, to learn their stories, to see them as part of your family.

Our Lord in your mercy. Amen.

Session III—Story Map “Victims”

Goals for the lesson

The goal for this lesson is to meet victims that because of the push factors learned in Session II flee, seeking safety in the United States. This section introduces the groups of people most at-risk and why they are targeted in their home countries. This lesson introduces participants to those personal stories shared in the victims’ voices and in voices of those who work with victims.

Notes to facilitator

Personal stories and images shared in this section cover serious themes. Please review videos and written materials before the event to ensure themes are age appropriate. Warn participants at the start of the gathering that themes of violence in this session can trigger personal reactions.

This session includes a dramatic interpretation of one of the scripture passages (Exodus 2:1–10) and a current experience of migration. *Mothers of the River* can be found in Appendix D. You will need to work in advance with two women who can present the piece.

Icebreaker suggestion:

Biblical references [have Bibles available for participants].

Invite participants to reflect on a scripture passage they turn to when they have faced or are facing difficult moments. Have them write down those passages. Once everyone has finished, ask that they line up according to the books in the Bible and the sequence of scripture within each book. Have each person introduce themselves, the scripture passage they’ve chosen, and why it is significant to them.

If this is an interfaith or secular group gathering, invite participants to think about inspirational quotes that have consoled or inspired them during difficult times. Have them line up alphabetically by the first word of the quote. Invite participants to share their quote.

Bible study scripture options: [have copies available for participants of the selected passage]

Exodus 2:1–10, *The Resistance of Jochabed and the Mercy of Pharaoh’s Daughter*

Matthew 2:12–23, *Mary and Joseph Flee with Jesus*

Presentation of material from story map suggestions:

1. Have one person read aloud all text on screen.
2. Have one person read aloud the larger text and another read the information in the text boxes.
3. Everyone reads through the text in unison.
4. Leader/facilitator talks through graphic information.

NOTE: Always leave time to stay on the slides with statistical information. As the facilitator, point out the trends of what the information on the slide is sharing. For example: on the first slide with bar graph, point out the different groups represented and the corresponding statistical information (i.e., in 2016, just over 400,000 unaccompanied minors crossed the U.S. southern border seeking asylum in the United States).

Bible study process

1. Break into small groups of about six people. Be sure they can all see the screen. Have a small group facilitator with each small group.

2. Introduce Mutual Invitation and how to use it. Be aware that some, or many, in the group might already be familiar with this process. Stress that this process is about learning to listen to and value each other.
3. Read Exodus 2:1–10 or Matthew 2:13–23. [Can be read by one person aloud or in unison.]
4. Using Mutual Invitation, invite folks to ponder the following after they listened to the scripture passage:
 - a. For Exodus passage—What one thing would you make sure you send with a child?
 - b. For Matthew passage—What one thing would you take with your family as you fled?Share your answers to the questions.
5. After sharing in small groups, direct people to the screen.
6. Use the presentation method you've selected for this section [suggestions listed in Notes to Facilitator section above].
7. Reread the scripture passage.
8. Invite participants through Mutual Invitation to lift-up how they heard the connections with the biblical passage in the materials presented in the story map "Victims" section. Encourage participants to be brief in their explanation [1–2 minutes per participant in each small group].

Small group discussion time

After the Bible study, move into discussion mode.

Have each small group select a notetaker and discuss the following questions. Small group facilitator should make use of Mutual Invitation.

Question suggestions for the small group time:

What did you learn? Any surprises?

Which film clip spoke to you the most and why?

Have you or someone close to you ever had to move unexpectedly? For work? After a natural disaster? For health? For safety? To leave a relationship? Another reason? (Share only as you feel comfortable.)

How far did you or that person you know have to move? How difficult was it?

Ask each small group to report back on highlights—what they heard as commonalities in the group and where the group struggled with the information presented.

Dramatic presentation

Mothers of the River

Closing Prayer

God, they flee in the middle of the night. They run from violence, poverty, and despair. They run to protection, safety, possibility, and hope. Let us be a sign of hope for those we encounter.

Amen.

Session IV—Story Map “The Journey”

Goals for the lesson

The journey from Central America to the United States is one of great risk and danger. The goal of this session is to learn more about those realities as we reshape the narrative of migration to the United States from along the southern border. This session is to help participants understand the dangers a person accepts as they seek protection and safety in the United States.

Notes to facilitator

Personal stories and images shared in this section cover serious themes. Please review videos and written materials before the event to ensure themes are age appropriate. Warn participants at the start of the gathering that themes of violence in this session can trigger personal reactions.

Icebreaker suggestion:

Step In/Step Out exercise found in Appendix E.

Bible study scripture options: [select one passage and have copies for all participants]

Genesis 18:1–16, *Abraham Receives Strange Visitors*

Exodus 14:21–25, *The Hebrews Escape Through the Red Sea*

Presentation of material from story map suggestions:

1. Have one person read aloud all text on screen.
2. Have one person read aloud the larger text and another read the information in the text boxes.
3. Everyone reads through the text in unison.
4. Leader/facilitator talks through graphic information.

NOTE: Always leave time to stay on the slides with statistical information. As the facilitator, point out the trends of what the information on the slide is sharing. For example: on the first slide with bar graph, point out the different groups represented and the corresponding statistical information (i.e., in 2016, just over 400,000 unaccompanied minors crossed the U.S. southern border seeking asylum in the United States).

Suggestion for Closing Prayer:

The closing prayer is one that was written by the Reverend Mark Koenig while he was director of Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations. Have copies of the prayer and invite participants to stand and each read a line as you go around the room.

Bible study process

1. Break into small groups of about six people. Be sure they can all see the screen. Have a small group facilitator with each small group.
2. Introduce Mutual Invitation and how to use it. Be aware that some, or many, in the group might already be familiar with this process. Stress that this process is about learning to listen to and value each other.
3. Read Genesis 18:1–16 or Exodus 14:21–25. [Can be read by one person aloud or in unison.]
4. Using Mutual Invitation, invite folks to ponder the following after they listened to the scripture passage:

- a. For Genesis passage—What have you liked about offering hospitality to others? OR When have you enjoyed receiving hospitality?
 - b. For Exodus passage—When have you noticed God has protected you?
Share answers in small groups.
5. After sharing in small groups, direct people to the screen.
 6. Use the presentation method you've selected for this section [suggestions listed in Notes to Facilitator section above].
 7. Reread the scripture passage.
 8. Invite participants through Mutual Invitation to lift-up how they heard the connections with the biblical passage in the materials presented in the story map "The Journey" section. Encourage participants to be brief in their explanation [1–2 minutes per participant in each small group].

Small group discussion time

After the Bible study, move into discussion mode.

Have small group select a notetaker and discuss the following questions. Small group facilitator should make use of Mutual Invitation.

Question suggestions for the small group time:

What did you learn? Any surprises?

Which film clip spoke to you the most and why?

Share about journeys you have taken. What are some of the mercies you have received? Hardships you have endured?

If your community could respond or improve its response in one way, what would you wish that could be?

Ask each small group to report back on highlights—What they heard as commonalities in the group and where the group struggled with the information presented.

Closing prayer

Found in Appendix F—Prayer written by Mark Koenig while he was director of Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations. Have copies for participants and invite them to stand in a circle and each read a line.

Session V—Film Viewing, *The Genesis of Exodus*

Goals of the lesson

Invite the congregation and community to view the film, *The Genesis of Exodus*, [<https://genesisofexodusfilm.com/>] as way for others to understand the reasons why people make very difficult decisions to migrate from Central America in search of protection and safety in the United States. This viewing could also be shown as part of a community organizing event. Or this film can serve as the first meeting to mobilize a community to learn about this topic in order to organize a response.

Notes to facilitator

Be sure to publicize event well in advance.

Choose a location that can comfortably fit the estimated number of attendees. Check out and plan for the equipment needs for viewing the film well before the event.

Invite leaders from the community or church that you would like to be at the event. You or someone else should contextualize the viewing as part of a method to organize a community or congregation. You may want to think about inviting Teresa Waggener (Teresa.waggener@pcusa.org) and/or Amanda Craft (Amanda.craft@pcusa.org) to attend, if they are available.

Have the next planning event for mobilization ready so you can invite attendees to participate. Again, have publicity ready to pass out about that next gathering.

Session VI—Resources

Goals for the lesson

The goal is to understand more deeply the issues of migration in the local community and to formalize and organize a plan of action and to mobilize the necessary partners to implement a plan. We hope you schedule time at the end of your gathering(s) for a chance to plan action. It is our deepest hope that communities will become more than educated by these resources. We want communities to be more welcoming and responsive to the needs of the widows, orphans, and strangers who are now our neighbors. Please review the “Faith in Action” section of the page titled “Resources” for inspiration at: <https://genesisofexodusfilm.com/>.

Notes to facilitator

Be prepared to or invite someone else to moderate panel/forum discussion.

Invite community and/or church leaders who can speak to the following themes that connect with an immigrant’s experience: (1) Someone accompanying change and transformation in country of origin of immigrants in your community; (2) Those offering welcome and accompaniment here in the United States; and (3) Advocacy to change laws and policies that make it much more difficult to find protection in the United States.

Review the “Faith in Action” section of the page titled “Resources” for inspiration at: <https://genesisofexodusfilm.com/>. Share information either by printing materials or by showing the participants how to access online material that can be found from the linked website that will be helpful and informative for your group as they contemplate action.

Panel/Forum

Invite each invitee to talk about the issue of immigration and how they are working to address the root causes or difficulties one faces when they arrive in the United States.

Share materials you found from the “Resources” section online [either printed or online].

Choosing how to act:

By written vote or by open discussion, have people select which kind of response they would like to be engaged with most. By majority, choose to follow up with that organization and prepare how to be involved.

HOWEVER, we encourage individuals to be involved in any way they see fit. Encourage organizations to share information about how people can be a part of what they do. Encourage them to invite folks to join up.

Optional Event

Mission Fair with organizations working on immigrant rights and advocacy to set up booths to talk with interested individuals about what they do and how people can be involved.

Appendix A

Ground Rules

It is helpful to establish simple ground rules to guide conversations. The group may be invited to identify the rules that work for their process. The following are common ground rules that could be used or adapted by the group.

- Take responsibility for what we say. Use “I” statements.
- Think carefully and prayerfully before we speak.
- Treat each other respectfully.
- Listen to understand, not to debate.
- Ask for clarification when necessary, in an effort to understand one another.
- It is always okay to pass. We do not have to respond to every question.
- Maintain confidentiality. What is said in the group stays in the group.

Appendix B

Mutual Invitation

Mutual Invitation is a method of conversation that makes space for everyone to listen and everyone to speak. Everyone comes to a conversation with different habits, cultures, and styles of conversation. These dynamics bring with them ways of using personal power in a group—some people are eager to speak, others hold their cards close to the vest, and still others may wait to hear what the group thinks and develop their view from there. Mutual Invitation makes room for all these different customs, habits, and styles. And Mutual Invitation encourages intentional listening and full participation.

a. Norms of Mutual Invitation:

- (1) Who gets to speak first is chosen by an impartial standard (e.g. who has a birthday closest to today, who was born the furthest geographically from where we are today, who woke up the earliest, etc.).
- (2) While one person is talking, everyone else ONLY listens (that means do not interrupt with questions, comments, affirmations, or disagreements).
- (3) When the person speaking is finished, he/she then invites the next person by name to speak.
- (4) If the person who has finished speaking forgets to invite the next person, no one else in the group should do it for her/him. Simply remind her/him that s/he can now invite someone to speak.
- (5) When you are invited to speak, you can choose to speak at that time or you can pass. Even if you pass, it is still your turn to invite the next person to speak.
- (6) Whoever went last on the first question begins speaking on the second question or passes and invites someone else.

b. Suggestions for getting started:

- (1) Share the norms of Mutual Invitation with the group and make sure everyone understands the method.
- (2) Have a practice round using a Bible passage and a Lectio Divina format to get used to how Mutual Invitation works.
 - (a) You can have a designated passage read aloud by a volunteer.
 - (b) The question for response in the round of Mutual Invitation can be something like:
 - (i) What is a word or phrase in the passage that makes an impression on you?
 - (ii) What is difficult about this passage?
 - (iii) How is God calling you in this passage?
- (3) Use a low-stakes question to try a practice round: What is your favorite food? Where did you live when you were ten-years-old? What is the furthest you've traveled from where the group is meeting at that time?
- (4) Resist the urge to have a facilitator. Mutual Invitation will facilitate your conversation and the process makes a facilitator not only unnecessary, but problematic for the process to work. Everyone will have a chance to speak and everyone will practice the art of intentional listening by observing the norms of Mutual Invitation.
- (5) If there is someone in the group who is not observing the norms, call a timeout and reread the norms to remind the group of the method of conversation being used for the discussion. Do not

ignore when the norms are violated. It is important for the group to be good stewards of the process for it to work.

For additional information on Mutual Invitation, see Eric Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*. (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 1993).

Appendix C

Conocimientos Exercise

Conocimientos is a Spanish word that means knowledge of people and places. The exercise refers to a process of introduction, to build an intentional community of equals transcending our differences in terms of race, gender, age, status, and more. It is a process devised by Eric Law, an Episcopal priest and a consultant for multicultural leadership and organizational development. Law adapted the process from the Los Angeles Regional Office of the National Conference for Community and Justice, and it is found in his book, *The Bush Was Blazing But Not Consumed: Developing a Multicultural Community Through Dialogue and Liturgy* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1996). The following describes the process a facilitator may use for people to introduce themselves to each other and the group. This is an adapted version from material included in the Antiracism Training Manual, first edition, prepared by the Racial Ethnic Ministries program area, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in 2002, 228–233.

1. Before the gathering, post the *conocimientos* categories on newsprint. The six categories are: your name; meaning of your name; your birthplace; your grandparents' birthplaces; one value you learned from your elders that you will pass on to future generations; and one thing you will not pass on.
2. Explain that this is an abbreviated version to fit time limitations. However, the exercise is used to guide people to get to know one another across racial differences. It is devised with the intention of building a community across our differences. The focus can be replaced on any types of differences that divide us.
3. Review the *conocimientos* categories.
4. Begin by introducing yourself by using these categories. Explain that they will move the process around the circle until everyone has been introduced. Each person will have one minute (or other length of time, depending on the number of participants). Ask if there are any questions.
5. Because of time limitations, groups should not be larger than six people per group. Divide into smaller group as necessary
6. OPTIONAL (may not have time to complete debrief). To debrief the exercise, use the following questions once everyone has introduced themselves. If group size allows, you may want to handle the questions in the larger group. Debrief questions are:
 - a. How did it feel?
 - b. How did it compare to other forms of introductions?
 - c. What have you learned about yourself and others through this sharing?
 - d. What do you see as the strengths of the *conocimientos* categories?

Some of the strengths of the process you may want to point out include: It is human focused rather than functional focused—asks about who we are rather than what we do; it connects us to our past—we are related to those who have gone before us; it connects us to each other as we hear similarities; it points out diversity among us; it reminds us that how we perceive others and racism are taught (we pass things along); it reminds us that we are not bound by the past (we don't have to pass everything along).

Appendix D

Mothers of the River

The materials to read and present *Mothers of the River*, the story of Jochabed, Moses' mother and the Unaccompanied Minor's mother can be found as a pdf here -

http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/mid_council_ministries/mothers_of_the_river.pdf

Appendix E

Step In/Step Out

Ask participants to stand in a circle facing each other. Explain that you will read a statement and participants will decide if that statement applies to them or not. If the statement applies, the participant will take one step forward toward the center of the circle. If the statement does not apply, the participant will remain standing where they are. Ask participants to reflect on each statement before making the decision to step forward or not. Remind participants that the interpretation of statements is completely individual, and that there is no right or wrong interpretation.

Read the statements one by one. Give time for participants to make their decision, time for discussion if needed, and then ask participants to step back if they have stepped into the circle.

This is an activity to allow participants to identify similarities and differences, whether between cultures, countries of origin, or individuals.

You can select statements that relate directly to your topic, or some low-risk statements such as those below:

1. I had breakfast today.
2. I like the snow.
3. I like to play or watch sports.
4. I consider where I live to be my home.
5. I was born in the United States.
6. I have lived in another country or other countries than where I currently live.
7. I speak more than one language.
8. I have moved often.
9. My parents are not from the United States.
10. My grandparents are not from the United States.
11. I have friend(s) who were born in another country.
12. I have taken a difficult journey.
13. At some point during this exercise, I chose not to respond even though the statement applied to me.

Appendix F

Prayer

God of the journey,
We remember that Mary and Joseph
Had to flee to Egypt,
Taking Jesus to safety,
Leaving home behind.

Remembering,
We pray for sisters and brothers
Around your world Who are forced to leave their homes.
We pray for brothers and sisters who are
Driven from home by natural disasters.
We pray for sisters and brothers who are
Driven from unnatural acts of violence and persecution.
We pray for brothers and sisters who are
Driven from home because of inadequate responses to natural events.
We pray for those who leave their countries and cross borders.
We pray for those who are internally displaced,
Finding new places to live within their own country.

We pray for those who are exposed to freezing cold and searing heat,
Those who lack food, water, shelter, and other necessities of life,
Those who are exploited, violated, and abused, and
Those who mourn the loss of place and all that brings.

We give thanks for the strength, courage, and grace of our sisters and brothers
Who are refugees or internally displaced.
We give thanks for the contributions they make in their new places
And for the ways in which they enrich our lives.
Guide the leaders of the world to find creative ways to respond,
To extend protection and provide safe-haven,
To care compassionately and respectfully for the needs of our sisters and brothers,
To address the situations and circumstances that force people to leave their homes.
To do justice and to seek peace.

Show us ways that we can support our brothers and sisters whom we encounter.
Inspire us to engage in the efforts to create a world
In which all have a safe place to call home.
We pray in the name of the refugee Jesus, Amen.

—Mark Koenig, Director, Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations