



# Me as a Refugee

## Activity for ages 12 +

**Aim:** To help students empathise with those who are refugees.

It is best to start this exercise with students in a calm relaxed state. You may like to have students lie on the ground and close their eyes for five minutes. Once they are calm and quiet begin reading the following passage to them. Give them time between each point to imagine this scenario is happening to them.

### Imagine that you and your family became refugees:

- ✓ Imagine that your father found out his boss was doing something illegal at his company. His boss, a very rich and powerful man, was afraid your father would report him. Through his connections with corrupt police officers and politicians he arranges to have your father wrongfully arrested.
- ✓ A friend of your father warns him just before the police arrive at your house one night. You and your whole family have only 10 minutes to pack and leave or the police will come and arrest both your parents.
- ✓ What do you take? Do you leave your pets behind?
- ✓ Do you travel by car? What if you run out of petrol and money?
- ✓ Where do you go to be safe? Who can you trust to tell?
- ✓ Imagine that you lose contact with all your family – grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends. Imagine that some of these people are persecuted just for knowing you.
- ✓ Imagine that you and your family are forced into hiding or into a refuge or shelter in another state along with 100 other families in similar situations. You cannot leave this shelter – it is too dangerous for you.
- ✓ Imagine this shelter is in a school hall - how would you get food? Who gives it to you and what happens if it runs out? Remember you cannot leave this shelter.
- ✓ Are there enough showers and toilets for everyone? (There may be 400 or more people in this shelter).
- ✓ Is there room for everyone to sleep? Do you get a bed or do you sleep on the floor?
- ✓ Where do you wash your clothes? How do you get new clothes and toys?
- ✓ Can you continue your education? Or see a doctor if you are sick?
- ✓ Imagine that in the confusion of your escape you become separated from your father and never see him again.

**Discussion:** Give students a few minutes to think about this scenario then ask them to sit up and talk about how they felt.

- Q Did they feel helpless, hopeless and frightened?
- Q Did they feel worried for their future?
- Q Did they have a hard time imagining it?
- Q Do they think they understand the plight of refugees a little better now?