



LOVE changes EVERYTHING

Leaders Guide

Sunday School Open Forum for Adults and/or High School Students

Encourage adults and high school students to engage in this discussion as an intergenerational experience or side by side in separate rooms with encouragement for follow up conversation in the home.

The Process:

Let people know that you will be talking about immigration as a moral concern.

Create a meeting space that is welcoming. EX: Chairs that can be gathered into a circle or round tables.

Welcome people as they arrive. Pay special attention to visitors or young people.

You may want to create a safe place for this conversation with one of the following informal covenants:

Tent of Mercy – We will respectfully engage a conversation about Immigration Reform as moral concern that will engage many diverse points of view. All views are welcome. People will not be judged by their view. This is a safe place where people of faith can wrestle with critical issues facing our country, ask questions to learn more and appreciate the variety of views represented in our church.

Group Covenant – Ask the group present what boundaries should be agreed on in order to have a safe environment for dialog. List these goals on a large paper or chalk board to keep them in front of the group as a reminder throughout the conversation. Some boundaries to suggest include: listening to each other, speaking without discounting differing views, agreeing to disagree, everyone is encouraged to participate.

Ask the participants to sit in small groups of four. The key to listening is to be in small groups.

Give each group a large piece of paper. Ask one person in the group to be the recorder.

Ask the following series of questions below.

Between questions invite the recorder to share with the whole group from their group of four.

Before the next group of questions, ask everyone except the recorder to move to a different group.

The Discussion:

Use handouts (available on www.gulfcoastsynod.org) and the following three rounds of questions to discuss Immigration Reform as a moral concern:

1st Round: Share your answers to the following questions:

Where did your family immigrate from? Unless we are Native Americans, all of our families have immigrated to the United States.

Why did your family come to the United States?

Where did they enter? What do you know about this?

Share what you know about their first few years in this country.

Note: Allow enough time for each person to answer these questions (about 10 minutes) between rounds. Check in with the whole group before moving to Round 2:

- 1. How many of you know a lot about your family's immigration story?**
- 2. How many of you know nothing?**

Comment: Our family stories are important. They are part of who we are and how we are shaped. You might be surprised to learn how many of your family practices, values and traditions are shaped by your country of origin or immigration story.

2nd Round: Give each group the "Immigration Quiz" (The leader will need the Quiz with Answers document.)

Invite people to work together as a group to complete the quiz.

Review the answers to the quiz with the whole group.

Ask the group to discuss the surprises about immigration or the confirmation of their thinking about immigration in the United States.

Comment: You may want to handout the Quiz with Answers or give the group the synod website so they can check out the sources to the questions after this class.

3rd Round: Give each group the "Interfaith Platform on Immigration Reform" Handout.

Invite the group to discuss the platform by reading each point.

Encourage them to share where they agree, have concerns or disagree with the Interfaith Platform.

How could this statement impact the ministry of the congregation?

Comment: You may want to provide a copy of this handout for each participant. Invite the group to continue learning about immigration reform as a moral concern by using resources on the synod website (www.gulfcoastsynod.org.) A group may wish to form a deeper study group to study scripture or to read *They Are Us*, by Stephen Bouman, using the questions in the back of the book for on-going dialog.

Take Action:

Pass out advocacy postcards. Encourage the group to complete these cards. Collect the cards and mail them to the Synod Office so a large package of cards can be mailed together to Austin for greater impact.

Recommendation for conversation in the home:

Watch the movie "Gran Torino" (if rating is age appropriate) and discuss the role of the Lutheran Church.

Hand out the list of Bible verses relating to immigration for personal reflection.

Pray Together:

Ask each group of four to close the Sunday School session in prayer. Encourage the prayer to include concern for the more than 12 million immigrants in our country.