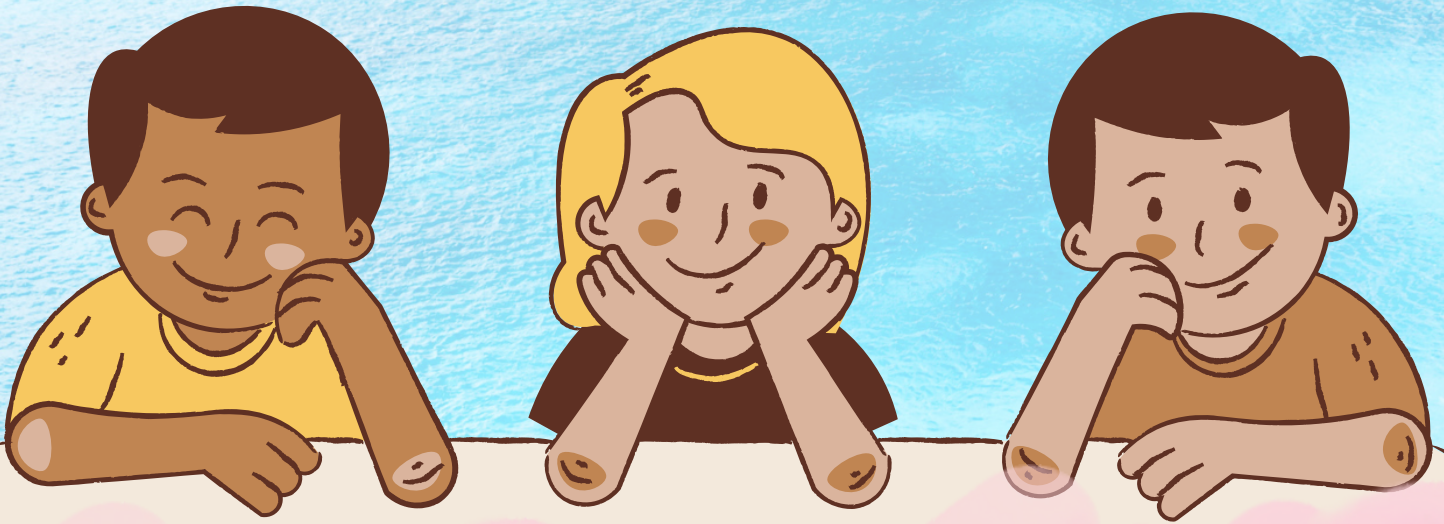


109TH WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

24th September 2023



"Free to choose whether
to migrate or to stay"



Meeting with Children



Introduction

Dear Children, we are gathered here to celebrate the World Day of Migrants and Refugees; it is the day marked to remember the people who migrate from one place to another in order to earn a good living and those who are refugees at different places due to various reasons like wars and natural disasters. So, let us pray for all those who lost their family members: parents, children, friends, relatives etc because of different wars and natural calamities and also those people who migrate from one place to another in search of good work in order to help their family. May God, our Creator, protect and keep them safe from all danger and harm and may He be their guide and strength in their life's journey.

Now let's have some exciting time with one another by knowing each other through activities of "Building the Connection" in line with the theme "Freedom to choose whether to stay or to migrate"

Web of Joy: Building the Connection

This activity will create an atmosphere to know each other by passing the yarn/rope by having the freedom to choose to whom to pass the yarn. This will enable to understand that each one has their freedom to choose... which cultivates the right to freedom of movement too.

Participants: Mix group of children (local, migrants and refugees)

Age: 7 to 13 years

Duration: Depends upon the mobility of the children

Group size: 10 to 12 children

Requirements: Bundle of yarn (wool) or a rope

Space for activity

Proceed of activity:

- Make some good space in the room/hall for the children to have the activity.
- Ask the children to form a circle (some elders or volunteers can help the children to form a circle)
- The instructor narrates the activity to the children.



Way towards activity(instructions):

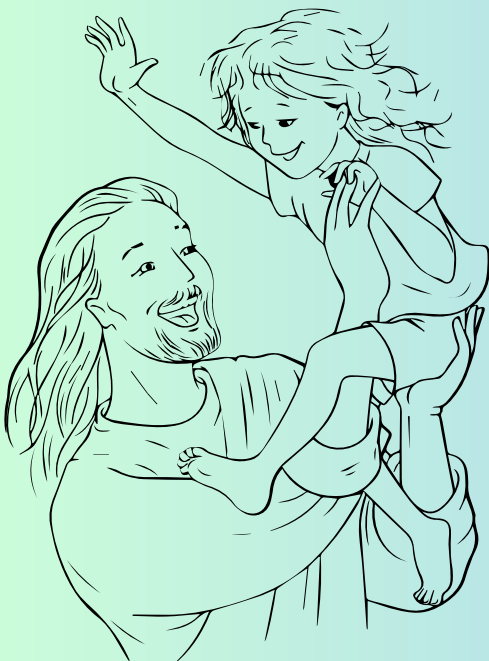
The yarn/rope is placed in the hands of one child. Before passing the yarn/rope the child needs to introduce herself/himself to the group and throw it to the opposite direction pointing out the other child by giving some signal (instructor/volunteers make sure the child throws the yarn/rope to the first child it chooses). The activity will go on till all the children introduce themselves to one another.



Goal of the activity:

Making the children get familiar with each other by making their own choice of whom they want to get connected with. This activity enables the children to practice the **FREEDOM to CHOOSE** by themselves. It also allows the children to build their bond with one another. The main objective of this activity is to create an atmosphere of familiarity and have the opportunity of one's own choice to make the decision.

Reflection



Jesus loves us and welcomes each one of us whether we are rich or poor, intelligent or less intelligent, fat or thin, tall or short. He loves us equally without making any differences. Jesus is asking to us to do the same, love all because we are all the children of God.

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13: 34 - 35).

Imagine, there is a big banquet set before you, with different food, snacks, sweets, desserts, chocolates, juice, soft drinks and many more. The owner of the banquet tells you, “take what you want”. Hearing this you start taking whatever is there...making the choice to take what you like most. In the same way, Jesus has placed so many things in front of us. Some things we get with our choice and some without. We try our best to get what we like or sometimes just leave it in the hands of God.



There are some people who move from their place of origin to another place, from one country to another country or within the country in search of work or due to war, natural disasters like floods, earthquakes or cyclones. May be their homes have been destroyed or are no longer safe to live in. Or they might need to move, so that they have a better chance of earning money for their family. People keep moving sometimes making a choice or sometime due to some circumstances. Making a choice in life is not easy... sometimes we have to forego what we like the most, it may be our home, village, school, state, friends in the neighborhood and school, even the food about which we are crazy and many more.

We know the story of the birth of Jesus. He was a migrant from birth, “Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem...with Mary to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child” (Mt.2:4 -5). This decision of moving by Joseph was made under the political scenario, a displacement due to new laws of the place or country. Next, “An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said: Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him” (Mt.2:13). The flight of the Holy family into Egypt was not the result of a free decision, nor were many of the migrations that marked the history of the people of Israel. The decision to migrate or to move from one place to another should always be free, yet in many cases, even in our day, the displacement from one’s own place brings risk to the people, especially the vulnerable children (Pope Francis message on the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2023).



We hear and read the issues that take place in and around the world. Wars between two countries, conflict in the families, communal riots, floods due to heavy rainfall, earthquakes and so on. All these things bring chaos in the life of the family, and children in their innocent age have to face this turmoil. Children becomes more vulnerable beings and fall the prey to human trafficking. As we celebrate this World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2023 (WDMR), with the theme, "Freedom to Choose whether to Migrate or to Stay", let us all join together to create a safe place for all, specially for those who are displaced from their hometown or country due to various reasons, and take a decision to build a safe environment where love and respect with dignity is natured in our hearts. Let's journey together with love and care for one another.

