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Crossing Borders: Migration, Theology, and the Human Journey

Facilitator Packet - *SAMPLE*

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Crossing Borders: Migration, Theology, and the Human Journey

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Crossing Borders: Migration, Theology, and the Human Journey

Welcome to the JustMatters module on immigration/migration! You have chosen to facilitate a discussion and study of one of the most critical and controversial issues of our day, an issue that is affecting not only our own country but countries around the world. Through reading and reflection, discussion and discovery, prayer and action, together we all can open ourselves to being informed, formed, and transformed on this topic that is central to Christian identity and affects so many of our brothers and sisters around the world.

You need not be an expert to lead this group; rather, most of you will be a facilitator-learner. That is, most facilitators will be learning along with the group and in so doing will experience the process of deepening their awareness of this issue along with the other participants.

Other than facilitating the discussions and dialogue, a key task of the facilitator will be to keep track of time. The module provides an important *introduction only* to many of the issues surrounding the topic of immigration/migration; thus, there is much information contained in the module. As a result, your group will need to pay close attention to time AND may want to schedule additional time for dialogue beyond the time allotted in the module. In addition, because there is so much material to be covered, it will be helpful to keep the numbers in your group to no more than ten people. You may also want to keep track of the questions you do not get to cover and use these for additional discussion sessions and/or use them as a guide for identifying possible action steps following this eight session program.

Facilitators will find everything they need to coordinate the module program in this guide. Every session begins with a list of the items needed to prepare for that session and a *Note to Facilitators* that will provide information pertinent to the focus of the session. We have also incorporated a *Note to Participants* for every session; these will be part of their assigned reading for each session and will help participants understand and integrate the resource material.

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Crossing Borders: Migration, Theology, and the Human Journey

SESSION ONE

The Contemporary Debate and Public Policy

Immigration is a complex issue that is reshaping the cultural, economic and political landscape of the planet. Anyone who speaks of simple solutions either does not understand it or is not listening. Each group in the immigration debate makes rightful claims to issues like “economic stability,” “American jobs,” “cultural integrity,” “fiscal constraints,” “National Security,” “human rights,” “property rights,” “labor rights,” “law and order” and many other issues. Many are divided over this issue precisely because it creates fault lines between many values that are important to us. Finding common ground amidst the fractious debate is not easy, which is the reason why it has become such an incendiary, political issue.

Daniel G. Groody

* * * * *

Schedule for this Session

| <i>Activity</i> | <i>Minutes</i> |
|--|----------------|
| Welcome / meet and greet | 15 minutes |
| Opening prayer and First Reflection | 5 minutes |
| Group Guidelines | 10 minutes |
| Immigration Congress | 70 minutes |
| Break | 10 minutes |
| Announcements | 10 minutes |
| Immigration Policy | 15 minutes |
| Reflection Two | 10 minutes |
| Closing Prayer/Blessing | 5 minutes |
| Total | 150 |

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Note to Facilitators

Session One covers the following content: The Contemporary Debate and Public Policy on Migration - the complexity of the issue, major players and their positions on the debate, and key values, worldviews and moral choices involved in this issue. Facilitators will need to read through the entire session in advance and do some careful preparation in order to get through all of the material in this session.

It will be critical to keep a close watch on the time and stick to the schedule above in order to complete all the elements programmed into this session. You may need to adjust the time for a particular segment due to group size – e.g. if your group is small, it may not take 15 minutes to complete the welcome / meet and greet; if the group is large, you will need to carefully monitor the time each person speaks. The times given above are the maximum you should allow for each segment in order to finish in about two and one-half hours.

The ritual of lighting the prayer candle (which will be at the start of prayer at the beginning of each session) is meant to symbolize all the migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons on the move around the globe, and specifically the migrants who have died crossing the US-Mexico border – those who have been identified, and those whose lives and names are known to God alone. At this point, however, let the candle simply be thought of as a prayer candle without stating the special significance. This will come out clearly in a later session.

Facilitators will also need to let participants know about the evaluation forms. Please have copies of the evaluation form to give to those participants who would rather complete the paper evaluation than the online version. A copy of the Participant Registration Form will also be needed so that participants can fill it out during the break. In addition, facilitators should have checked out possible locations for attending a migrant mass or worship service and be prepared to schedule something with the group during the announcements.

Objectives for Session One

Note: The objectives for each session are also included in the Participant Packets.

1. To identify and name the complexity of the immigration issue.
2. To identify and name the major voices in the debate and know their positions.
3. To briefly and collectively address these major arguments.
4. To identify the values and world views that shape these positions and to become more conscious of the moral choices that flow from them.

Session One Outline and Notes

Welcome / Meet and Greet (15 minutes)

Facilitator begins the session by reading the following segment from the “Note to Participants” at the beginning of Session One in the Participant Packet:

Welcome! We are here to participate in a study of one of the most critical and controversial issues of our day, an issue that is affecting not only our own country but countries around the world. Through reading and reflection, discussion and discovery, prayer and action, together we will open ourselves to being informed, formed, and transformed on this topic that is central to Christian identity and affects so many of our brothers and sisters around the world.

As with many important issues facing us today, immigration is a complex and daunting topic, one about which we may feel we can do little to effect positive change. This time together is a chance to discover more about ourselves, our God and the millions of people who are on the move in every part of the world. Our time together will be filled with lots of information, and each of us will be called to be good listeners and good stewards of time.

Introductions:

Introduce yourself and then ask participants to introduce themselves by stating their name and giving a *brief* statement as to why they chose to attend this module on immigration and what they hope to gain from it. **Note:** It will be important for the facilitator to keep close track of time; do not let one person talk too long.

Transition the group from this time of meeting one another to the opening prayer and reflection by lighting the prayer candle.

Opening Prayer and First Reflection (5 minutes)

We suggest you light the candle to start the opening prayer each week rather than lighting it before the session begins.

When the candle is lit, have the participants read the respective parts of the **Opening Prayer**, based on Psalm 139. (Ask for volunteer readers or simply go around the circle.)

Reader 1: O LORD, you have searched me and you know me.

Reader 2: You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

Reader 3: You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Reader 4: Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.

All: Not only me and those like me, but also the least of my sisters and brothers around the world.

Reader 5: You hem me in, behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me.

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Reader 6: For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

Reader 7: My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place.

Reader 8: When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body.

All: I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

All: Not only me and those like me, but also the least of my sisters and brothers around the world.

Leader: Our Father, we ask you, through your Holy Spirit, to be present with us here tonight (today), to open first our hearts, and then our eyes and our minds to your truth and to your transforming power. We join together and humbly ask you to do a mighty work in us throughout all of these sessions so that then you might indeed do a mighty work through us. In the strong name of Jesus, we pray, Amen.

First Reflection

Facilitator reads the following:

From the creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2 we know that God made human kind in his own image and breathed into us the very breath of life (Gn 1:26; 2:7). God made human beings, not different nationalities of people from different countries. As we have just read from Psalm 139, God knows each of us intimately and ultimately. We are imbued with the dignity and honor of God, which, as Pope John Paul II notes, is a gift and a responsibility:

At stake is the dignity of the human person, whose defense and promotion have been entrusted to us by the Creator, and to whom the men and women at every moment of history are strictly and responsibly in debt.¹

Responsibility begins with knowledge and we now embark upon our journey through understanding the contemporary discussion on migration.

Pause for a moment of silent reflection.

Group Guidelines (10 minutes)

Distribute the Group Guidelines (Session One-Attachment A) to anyone who forgot to bring their Participant Packet. Share the following about the guidelines:

These guidelines were created for JustFaith groups so they may look familiar to many of you. This document is offered as a starting point for our conversation about the guidelines we will adopt to assure positive, respectful, and productive meetings.

¹ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 47; as reprinted in *Origins* 17 (38), March 3, 1988.

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Give the group one minute to look over the guidelines. Then ask if there are behaviors listed that they want to change and if there are behaviors not listed that they would like to see added. Amend the list as suggested. Then ask the group for agreement using the following question:

Can we agree to commit to these guidelines and hold each other accountable to these behaviors?

If needed, redo the list and distribute copies of the adjusted guidelines at the next session.

Immigration Congress and Role Play (70 minutes)

Participants are divided into three groups and assigned one of the following positions related to immigration:

- Enforcement: some political leaders, U.S. Border Patrol, vigilante groups
- Guest Worker: corporations, some political leaders
- Legalization: Church leaders, human rights groups

Each group is giving information from which they prepare a *brief* presentation for the rest of the group. A discussion follows the presentations

Break (10 minutes)

Have the copy of the Participant Registration Form (Session One-Attachment F) and a pen at a table. Ask each participant to take a minute during break to fill sign this form.

Announcements (10 minutes)

Immigration Policy (15 minutes)

Participants take a short quiz in order to transition the group to begin to think about immigration policy.

Following the quiz, two short sections from “Border Policy: A Faith Response and Comprehensive Immigration Reform and the Root Causes of Immigration” are read. The quiz and reading are not meant to trigger discussion, rather these are meant as a lead-in to the reflection that follows.

Second Reflection (10 minutes)

Facilitator reads the following: *The subject of immigration is not new, but the issue is as important now as ever. Especially as the United States grapples with how to fight terrorist threats from foreign fanatics, the pressure to seal off our American borders is tremendous. While there is a legitimate need to control these borders in the interests of*

national security, my fear is that many people will never hear the other side of the immigration story.²

Though our Immigration Congress and a brief look at policy we have begun to hear the other side of the immigration story and perhaps have been opened to new perspectives. As we continue to study together we will gain more knowledge and understanding into this complex and contentious issue and be better equipped to respond positively to the many challenges it presents to us.

Take a few minutes and ask participants to state, in no more than one or two sentences, either a new fact or a new perspective gained from this session. Facilitators might want to record these comments on flipchart paper and post them at each of the next sessions.

Closing Prayer, Blessing, and Sending Forth (5 minutes)

Leader: Almighty God, we thank you that your power and grace enables us to look at the world with different eyes. In your Kingdom we find healing for our world, answers for our problems, and fulfillment for our emptiness. In your Kingdom we find strength to share and faith to express. In your Kingdom is the Good News of your love and mercy. Help us to share the love, grace, and mercy that we have received from you with all those we meet, especially those in most need. We thank you for this time of study together and we ask that you not allow us to go forth from this place unmoved and unchanged by what we have learned, but that we use it in the service of those who are most vulnerable and that through this witness we may be instruments of a Kingdom of life and build with you a civilization of love. Amen.

(Blessing) May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Corinthians 13:14). Amen.

May this blessing rest upon us until we meet again. As we go in peace from this place, let us echo the words of the Catholic bishops of the United States:

In Unison: The Church, the People of God, is required by the Gospel and by its long tradition to promote and defend the human rights and dignity of people on the move, to advocate social remedies to their problems and to foster opportunities for their spiritual and religious growth.³

Invite participants to extend a sign of peace to one another. Extinguish the candle.

² Daniel G. Groody, *Border of Death, Valley of Life: An Immigrant Journey of Heart and Spirit* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 2.

³ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Resolution on the Pastoral Concern of the Church for People on the Move," November 11, 1976, in *Pastoral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops, vol. IV, 1975-1983* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1983), 366-67.

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Crossing Borders: Migration, Theology, and the Human Journey

SESSION TWO

History of Migration

Gripping human stories of immigrants tug at the heartstrings, reminding many Americans of their ancestors' difficult journeys to this country, the conditions they left, the adversities they overcame, and the dreams they pursued. Today, refugees fleeing political persecution risk life and limb to come to this land of hope and freedom. Boat people flee Haiti in ramshackle boats and make the dangerous journey to America. Impoverished migrants from Mexico, China, and many other countries desperately seek better lives for their families in the United States. Intellectually, the proverbial "nation of immigrants" cannot easily turn its back on these dreamers. In practice, however, it often does.⁴

* * * * *

Schedule for this Session

| <i>Activity</i> | <i>Minutes</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Welcome and Opening Prayer | 10 minutes |
| Global Migration Fact Sheet | 15 minutes |
| US Migration Fact Sheet and DVD | 75 minutes |
| Break | 10 minutes |
| Announcements | 5 minutes |
| Personal Migration Stories | 30 minutes |
| Closing Prayer/Blessing | 5 minutes |
| Total | 150 |

⁴ Kevin R. Johnson, *Opening the Floodgates: Why America Needs to Rethink its Borders and Immigration Laws* (New York: New York University, 2007), 2-3.

Note to Facilitators

Session Two covers the following content: The History of Migration, including migration as a defining and ongoing aspect of human history, the history of migration in the United States, and each participant's own personal migration history.

You will need to have the TV and DVD player with episode one from the PBS DVD, *Destination America*, set up and ready to play before the session begins. It also is important that you start the DVD before the session just to make sure the equipment is working. Technological problems will cut into the time needed to adequately cover the material of this session.

Again, it will be very important to keep a close watch on the time and stick to the schedule above in order to complete all the elements programmed into this session. As facilitator, you may need to adjust the time for a particular element slightly due to group size but the times given above are the maximum you should allow for each element in order to finish in two and one-half hours.

Objectives for Session Two

1. To understand migration as defining and ongoing aspect of human history
2. To understand the history of migration in the United States
3. To understand one's own personal history of migration

Session Two Outline and Notes

Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

Facilitator begins the session by reading the following segment from the Note to Participants at the beginning of Session Two in the Participant Packet:

Welcome to this the second session of Crossing Borders: Migration, Theology, and the Human Journey. As we learned last week, the immigration debate is extremely complex and often a contentious issue, especially when it comes to undocumented migration. It requires openness to a variety of different positions but also conscious attention to the moral dimensions, which are often neglected in public discourse.

Our session this week will focus briefly on the history of migration over time and around the world, the history of migration in the United States, and the history of our own ancestral migrations. Such an approach entails not only reading written texts but also the personal "texts" of our lives.

Leader lights the prayer candle for the **Opening Prayer**, based on Matthew 5:3-12 and Luke 6:20-23.

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Reader 1: Blessed are you who are poor – like 75 percent of the world’s population who live on less than \$10 per day⁵ ...

All: For yours is the Kingdom of God.

Reader 2: Blessed are you who hunger now – like 30 percent of the world’s population who suffer from malnutrition⁶ ...

All: For you will be filled and satisfied.

Reader 3: Blessed are you who weep now – like those families who live in separation and isolation when one member must migrate in order to find work –

All: For you will be comforted.

Reader 4: Blessed are the merciful – like those who provide water in the desert for stranded migrants ...

All: For you will be shown mercy.

Reader 5: Blessed are the pure in heart – like the children who wait in hope for a parent who has crossed the border to return ...

All: For you will see God.

Reader 6: Blessed are the peacemakers – like all people of good will who work for justice ...

All: For you will be called sons and daughters of God.

Reader 7: Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name – like the stranger, foreigner, or alien ...

All: For great is your reward in heaven.

Leader: Our Father, keep us ever mindful of our sisters and brothers who are in most need both here and around the globe. Guide our study with your presence, and help us to come to a greater understanding of what it means to be human and what it means to be Christian. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who first came to us as a migrant, and through his death and resurrection from the dead, now lives and reigns with you and in us, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

⁵ Daniel G. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality, and Justice: Navigating the Path to Peace* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

Important Events in the History of Global Migration (15 minutes)

Using the “Global Migration Fact Sheet” and the four discussion questions provided, the group engages in an open dialogue. The immigration debate is extremely complex and often a contentious issue. It requires both openness to a variety of different positions and conscious attention to the moral dimensions, which are often neglected in public discourse.

Important Events in U.S. Immigration History (75 minutes)

The group will watch the first episode of a PBS documentary and discuss what they saw and heard.

Break (10 minutes)

Announcements (5 minutes)

Personal, Ancestral History of Migration: Reading the Text of Your Life (30 minutes)

For this segment, each participant will give a short presentation, which they prepared in advance of the session. This exercise is designed to help people connect contemporary immigration with their own personal histories and to help break down some of the barriers between “us” and them.

Closing Prayer, Blessing, and Sending Forth (5 minutes)

Leader: As we have now learned or been reminded, we are all immigrants. We have come from someplace else, and indeed this is not our final home. We are still immigrants. Tonight (today) our prayer candle takes on a new and special significance. It burns in memory of all those millions throughout history and all over the world who have left their homes, and likely families, of origin to risk starting over in a new place. And it burns in memory of our own relatives who made the difficult decision and the arduous journey to come to the United States. In a memorial gesture I invite you now to gather here and place your keepsake on the table with the candle.

(Pause for a moment while participants gather around the candle and place their keepsake items there for the remainder of the prayer.)

Our Father, we thank you for those who have gone before us. We thank you for their lives, their faith, and their bravery. We thank you for their sacrifices that have led to a better country, better world, and better life for us. We thank you for our history. We ask you to help us carry on the legacy of courage and faith. We ask you to help us remember that we are all immigrants. We ask you to help us be open-hearted and welcoming when we meet newcomers to our place here.

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(Blessing) May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13). Amen.

Help us, Father, to go in peace from this place encouraged and inspired by our heritage, and willing to allow what we have learned to continue to transform our hearts and lives. Amen.

Facilitator concludes the prayer and the session by extinguishing the candle.

Remind participants to collect their keepsake item.