

BRIDGE BUILDERS IN THE CONVERSATIONAL POTLUCK



A GUIDE TO NAVIGATING CONVERSATIONS ON IMMIGRATION AROUND THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays are a special time to share moments of joy and meaningful conversations with family and friends. Sometimes, though, those conversations can get contentious. **This holiday season, we encourage you to be a bridge builder in the conversational potluck, fostering connections and understanding.**



“

On this continent, too, thousands of persons are led to travel north in search of a better life for themselves and for their loved ones, in search of greater opportunities. Is this not what we want for our own children? We must not be taken aback by their numbers, but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation. To respond in a way which is always humane, just, and fraternal.

”

POPE FRANCIS

Narratives are powerful, collective stories shaped by communities, public figures, the media, popular culture and individuals to help make sense of the world around them. As migration remains a topic of debate, you may find yourself in challenging conversations.

If you feel called to engage, here are some ideas to help you build bridges and amplify narratives that are more welcoming and compassionate.

EXPRESS CONCERN OVER HUMAN RIGHTS

Start migration conversations from a foundation of human rights and human dignity. Shift the perspective from “the other” to “we” and help create a counter-narrative of unity and shared humanity — an “us.”

Use this Migration & Catholic Social Teaching Resource from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Express how you feel. Reflect on your experience or encounters with others to illustrate how this issue shapes your story and influences your view of the world.

TELL THEIR STORIES

Share compelling stories to help others visualize and empathize with the experiences of migrants. Showing these experiences can help build understanding and connection.

Paola’s story of migration from Honduras

The story of Michael Petro, S.J., serving migrant people in Lebanon

Chloe Gunther’s story of her visit to a migrant detention center in the U.S.

Six audio prayers with interviews to migrants from Turkey, Haiti, Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala and Nicaragua.



HIGHLIGHT FACTS

Immigrants Enrich Our Communities

The U.S. has long been a global leader in welcoming immigrants and refugees. Many of the country's most celebrated figures—from scientists and artists to entrepreneurs—were immigrants, showcasing the transformative power of migration.

Immigration brings cultural diversity that strengthens our neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. Festivals, cuisine, art, and traditions from immigrant communities enhance our shared experiences and foster a sense of connection.

Immigrants Contribute to the Economy

Immigrants make up nearly 17% of the U.S. workforce and are overrepresented in industries like healthcare, agriculture, and technology. They help fill labor shortages and drive innovation, with immigrant-founded companies creating jobs and boosting local economies.

Immigrants contribute billions annually in state, local, and federal taxes. Undocumented immigrants alone pay more than \$11 billion in taxes each year, funding public services like schools, healthcare, and infrastructure.

You can continue the conversation and learn more at jrsusa.org/engage

This resource was created by the **Jesuit Refugee Service USA**.

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organization with a mission to accompany, serve, and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. JRS/USA undertakes services at national and regional levels with the support of an international office in Rome. JRS was founded in 1980 by Pedro Arrupe, SJ as a work of the Society of Jesus.

Visit www.jrsusa.org for more information