



**A 6-WEEK
INTERACTIVE
BIBLE STUDY**

MIGRATION

EXPERIENCING GOD'S CARE FOR IMMIGRANTS
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SESSION 1 Openings



We're so glad you have chosen to participate in this six-week study on how migration leads to transformation!

In this first session, we will learn about migration—what it is and how it relates to each of us, regardless of whether or not we have personally migrated. We'll spend time reflecting on our own views of migration, and listening to a personal story of migration. We'll also introduce the path point statements (which are like thesis statements) that we will focus on throughout the study. This session sets up the framework through which we will view the topic of migration.





Pulse Check

Migration /mī-'grā-shən/ (noun): the act, process, or an instance of moving from one country, place, or locality to another.

REFLECTION

As we begin to consider the topic of migration, take about fifteen minutes to consider the following reflection questions.

1. How does the topic of migration intersect with your own family story or history?

2. When you think of migration, what are the first associations that come to mind?
What kind of people do you think of as migrants and immigrants?

3. How do you think God sees migration and the people who undergo migration?

INTRODUCTION

Throughout human history, people have been on the move. Scripture is filled with stories of individuals, families, and entire communities moving to a new place in response to God's call and provision—and being praised for their faith and obedience. Jesus himself often moved around in response to opportunities, threats, and the desire to connect with new people.

Today, migration is rarely seen through the lens of faith but is instead inserted into debates about politics, economics, security, and national identity. No matter our background, it can be easy to look at some (or all) immigrants suspiciously. We may wonder if they will compete with us for resources and opportunities. We may wonder if they will change our communities in drastic ways.

But the story of God, as recorded in the Bible, almost always centers on the story of the migrant. God *loves* migrants, *calls* migrants, is *with* migrants. He asks those of us who are not migrants to extend love, hospitality, and generosity to our migrant brothers and sisters. The heart of God is very much built into the migrant experience.



PERSONAL STORY

Every story of migration is different, and the more stories we hear, the more we are able to expand our hearts for the experiences of migrants. Josué Carballo-Huertas migrated with his family from Costa Rica to the United States and he shares about the challenges of leaving a home he loved.

Listen to his story. Then, consider the following reflection questions.

“Leaving the Costa Rican Dream”

BY JOSUÉ CARBALLO-HUERTAS

(from “In Their Own Words: Migration Stories from Around the World”)

REFLECTION

1. What is your initial response to Josué Carballo-Huertas’s story?

2. For most immigrants, leaving their home country and going someplace new is a complex emotional experience. What are the emotions that Carballo-Huertas expresses? How might God work through such multifaceted, weighty experiences?

PATH POINT STATEMENTS

Each step in our discipleship pathway has a statement that captures the main idea of that path point. We begin with an audacious truth (Manifesto) that will frame our entire study on migration; then we move to address a common false belief (Myth) that impedes us from believing God's truth. We then focus on the Word of God and person of Jesus to strengthen our theological understanding of migration (Material), and conclude with practical ways in which God calls us to embody these truths in our everyday lives (Motion).

Read the four statements and answer the reflection question. Then pause and fill out the "what if" questions in the holy imagination exercise. You'll have the opportunity to share your responses.

MANIFESTO STATEMENT

God wants to cultivate the heart of a migrant in each of us.

MYTH STATEMENT

"Migration is a problem."

MATERIAL STATEMENT

God honors the migrant journey and the humanity of all migrants.

MOTION STATEMENT

Migration promotes human flourishing.

REFLECTION

Which of these statements sticks out most to you? Why? What is your initial response to it?

Holy Imagination Exercise

Christians throughout the ages have engaged their holy imagination, also called *faithful imagination*, to expand their capacity for understanding God and his kingdom. Because the above Manifesto, Material, and Motion statements are true (and the Myth statement is categorically false), we can be empowered to imagine how our world might be different.

Take a few minutes to write out at least three “what if” statements that could be true if we recognized migration as part of God’s story for humanity and the importance of cultivating the heart of a migrant. (Examples: What if our societies celebrated and honored migrants and immigrants? What if we learned to live with the faith, courage, and hope that so many migrants have?)

What if ?

What if ?

What if ?

What if ?

Share your statements with the group, as well as any thoughts or reflections this exercise prompted.

BENEDICTION

We have all heard many narrations, interpretations, and perspectives about migration. Approaching this subject with a fresh sense of curiosity and openness can be challenging. The good news is that our God is delighted to bestow wisdom and understanding upon us; we need only ask.

Read this prayer of St. Augustine to close your time this week.

*Look upon us, O Lord,
and let all the darkness of our souls
vanish before the beams of thy brightness.
Fill us with holy love,
and open to us the treasures of thy wisdom.
All our desire is known unto thee,
therefore perfect what thou hast begun,
and what thy Spirit has awakened us to ask in
prayer.
We seek thy face,
turn thy face unto us and show us thy glory.
Then shall our longing be satisfied,
and our peace shall be perfect.
Amen.*

APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Scripture Reading and Reflection

Set aside fifteen minutes to read and reflect on Ruth 1. Journal about the emotions Naomi and Ruth may have experienced as they moved from one place to another while experiencing loss and new relationships. We will spend more time with this passage in the next session.



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