

# REFUGE

## ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR AGES 7-14

### Introduction

Being confined to our homes has prompted many of us to reflect on our personal space and the importance of our communities. But, before this lockdown began, [more than 70 million refugees and internally displaced people around the world](#) had been forced to leave their homes, communities and sometimes families, and start over somewhere new.

The coronavirus pandemic is having devastating impacts everywhere, but the poorest and most vulnerable people are likely to be hardest hit - both at home and in communities across the world. Refugees living in camps often aren't able to leave. They will have little to protect themselves; many are sharing one tap between up to 250 people with less than 3.5 square metres of living space per person - smaller than the average UK bathroom.

Use these activity ideas to help children think about what home means to them, start to understand some of the reasons why people might move within and between countries, and develop empathy for people forced to flee their homes. Children and their households are also invited to creatively share their experience of staying in one space because of self-isolation and social distancing by making a doll's house in a shoebox for the Virtual [Giant Dolls' House](#) project.



Photo: Tommy Trenchard/Oxfam

## Important note

- Issues associated with migration and refugees are complex and can be difficult to unpack with children and young people. The aim of the following activities is to prompt reflection on the value of our homes and communities, as well as some initial thinking around these issues. See the **Further learning** section for some useful resources and links to support any teachers, parents or carers who wish to explore this topic in more detail.
- There are many children and young people in the UK who will have been directly impacted themselves by some of the issues raised in these activities. Some of these activities may therefore need adapting depending on children's personal circumstances.

## What does home mean to you? (15 min+)

**Learning aim:** To reflect on what home means to us personally.

- Ask your child to think about what home means to them. Possible discussion questions include:
  - Is home just a building or a set of rooms, or is it something more than that? If so, what? For example, home might be associated with family and friends, the place we grew up, daily routines or a sense of belonging.
  - How does your home make you feel? These feelings might be both positive and negative, particularly with the current context.
- Perhaps your child could create an acrostic poem, where the first letters in each line spell out 'Home is' or an associated word or phrase. Or perhaps they could use painting or drawing to express their thoughts and ideas.

## What would you take with you if you had to leave home? (30 min)

**Learning aim:** To develop critical thinking skills and build empathy for people forced to flee their homes.

- Ask your child to think of five things that they would take with them if they had to suddenly leave their home and might never be able to come back.
- Ask your child to draw or write these items in an outline drawing of a suitcase. They could use the template provided in the **Suitcase** activity sheet or design their own.
- Discuss their ideas.
  - What would you take with you?
  - Why did you choose these items?
  - Was it difficult to decide? Why?
  - What would you miss if you had to leave home? Encourage learners to think about other aspects of their life such as friends, school and extra-curricular activities, as well as physical objects.
- Older children could be challenged to narrow their list down to four items, then three and so on.
  - Which item(s) were you left with?
  - Why did you choose this/these item(s)?



Photo: Aurélie Marrier d'Unienville

## Push and pull factors (20 min)

**Learning aim:** To recognise some reasons why people might move between and within countries; to develop critical thinking skills and build empathy for people forced to flee their homes.

- Explain to your child that people might leave their home and move within and between countries for many different reasons.
- Some people choose to move (for example, someone who moves to another town or country to get a better job). Some people are forced to move, (for example, someone who moves as result of war or famine). Refugees and asylum seekers fall into this second category of forced movement.
  - **Push factors** are the reasons why people leave an area.
  - **Pull factors** are the reasons why people move to a particular area.
- Discuss potential push and pull factors that might cause some people to move within or between countries. For example, push factors might include poverty or conflict; pull factors might include better work opportunities or to be near family or friends.
- You could use the **Push and pull factors** activity sheet to prompt this discussion. Print off and cut out the boxes and help your child to sort these into push and pull factors. If you don't have a printer, you could copy these factors onto sticky notes or small pieces of papers for your child to sort.
- With older children, you might want to discuss which of these push factors relate to someone who could be legally classified as a refugee. Under the [United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention](#), a refugee is defined as someone with a "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."

- Finish by asking your child how they would feel if they suddenly had to leave home. Discuss their ideas. If your child completed the previous activity, they could draw or write these feelings around their suitcase outline.
- See the **Further learning** section for other Oxfam Education resources and useful links to investigate the topics of refugees and migration in more detail.

### Make a dolls' house in a shoebox (60 min+)

- The [Giant Dolls' House](#) project is a collaborative arts project which aims to raise awareness of the importance of a home and community for all and to celebrate a united diversity.
- The project is currently calling on children (and adults) of all ages to make a doll's house in a shoe box to creatively share their experience of staying in one space because of self-isolation and social distancing.
- All that is required is a box (it doesn't have to be a shoebox!). Ask your child to decorate it in a way that reflects their current experiences, emotions and surroundings, or something else that helps them find comfort in in these times. Your child could make the box on their own or together with other members of their household.
- Everyone is invited to send in photographs of their finished boxes, along with a short story or explanation about it: what you made and why, or a thought to go with your box. These images and stories will be used to create one big global community Giant Dolls' House to celebrate [World Refugee Day](#) on 20th June 2020. See the [Virtual Giant Dolls' House](#) instruction sheet to find out more.



Photo: Nigel Willmott/Oxfam

- In 2019, the Giant Dolls' House project team spent four days in Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan which is home to nearly 80,000 Syrian refugees, many of whom have been there for years. Camp residents were invited to make a room in shoebox – a vision of home, memories, hopes for the future or anything they felt like making. In the UK, schools, artists and refugee groups also took part in the project which culminated in an exhibition at the V&A Museum of Childhood in London.
- See the [Giant Dolls' House on Instagram](#) to view some of the imaginative boxes that were created last year.



"When I first started this project, I had to think what I can do in my spacious box. ...First, I made a bed to think of my dreams. Next, I made a bathtub to paddle in and have fun. By the way, I put plants and flowers all around to represent all the glorious nature. But most of all, I love, love, love the rainbow wall..."

**Pupil from a primary school in London**

"I built this dolls' house to remind me of my home in Syria as I don't want to forget about it. I miss home... The most important thing of a home is to feel safe for myself and my children. I didn't feel safe in Syria."

**Za'atari camp resident**

## Further learning

- **Teaching Controversial Issues guide**

Topics such as migration and refugees can provoke strong, varied and often contradictory responses. See Oxfam's **Teaching Controversial Issues** guide for guidance, strategies and practical teaching activities for managing controversial issues both in and out of the classroom.

[www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/teaching-controversial-issues](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/teaching-controversial-issues)

- **Dollar Street**

Developed by [Gapminder](http://Gapminder), **Dollar Street** is an interactive online platform which uses photographs and statistics to provide a fascinating insight into the lives and homes of people all over the world. Explore what home is like elsewhere in the world, identify similarities and differences, and think about the inequalities that exist between and within countries.

[www.gapminder.org/dollar-street/matrix](http://www.gapminder.org/dollar-street/matrix)

- **Stand with Refugees**

With links to different subjects, this Oxfam resource supports children aged 7-14 to strengthen their enquiry skills, think critically about why some people are forced to flee, and develop empathy for others.

[www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/stand-with-refugees](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/stand-with-refugees)

- **BBC Teach – Seeking Refuge**

These animated stories provide a unique insight into the lives of young people who have sought refuge in the UK.

[www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/pshe-ks2--ks3-seeking-refuge/zn8bpg8](http://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/pshe-ks2--ks3-seeking-refuge/zn8bpg8)

- **Global Dimension**

The **Global Dimension** website brings together resources, case studies and background information on a wide range of topics and issues to support global learning.

<https://globaldimension.org.uk/>

- **The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)**

The **UNHCR** website has a range of teaching materials on refugees, asylum, migration and statelessness, including useful facts and figures, explainer animations and child refugee stories.

[www.unhcr.org/uk/teaching-about-refugees.html](http://www.unhcr.org/uk/teaching-about-refugees.html)

- **Refugee Council**

See the Refugee Council website to find out more about refugees and the asylum system in the UK.

[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/stats](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/stats)

- **Refugee Week**

Refugee Week takes place every year across in the world in the week around World Refugee Day on 20th June. This year it will be taking place as a digital festival with online events and at-home activities to celebrate the contribution of refugees and encourage better understanding between communities.

<https://refugeeweek.org.uk/covid-19-and-refugee-week-2020/>

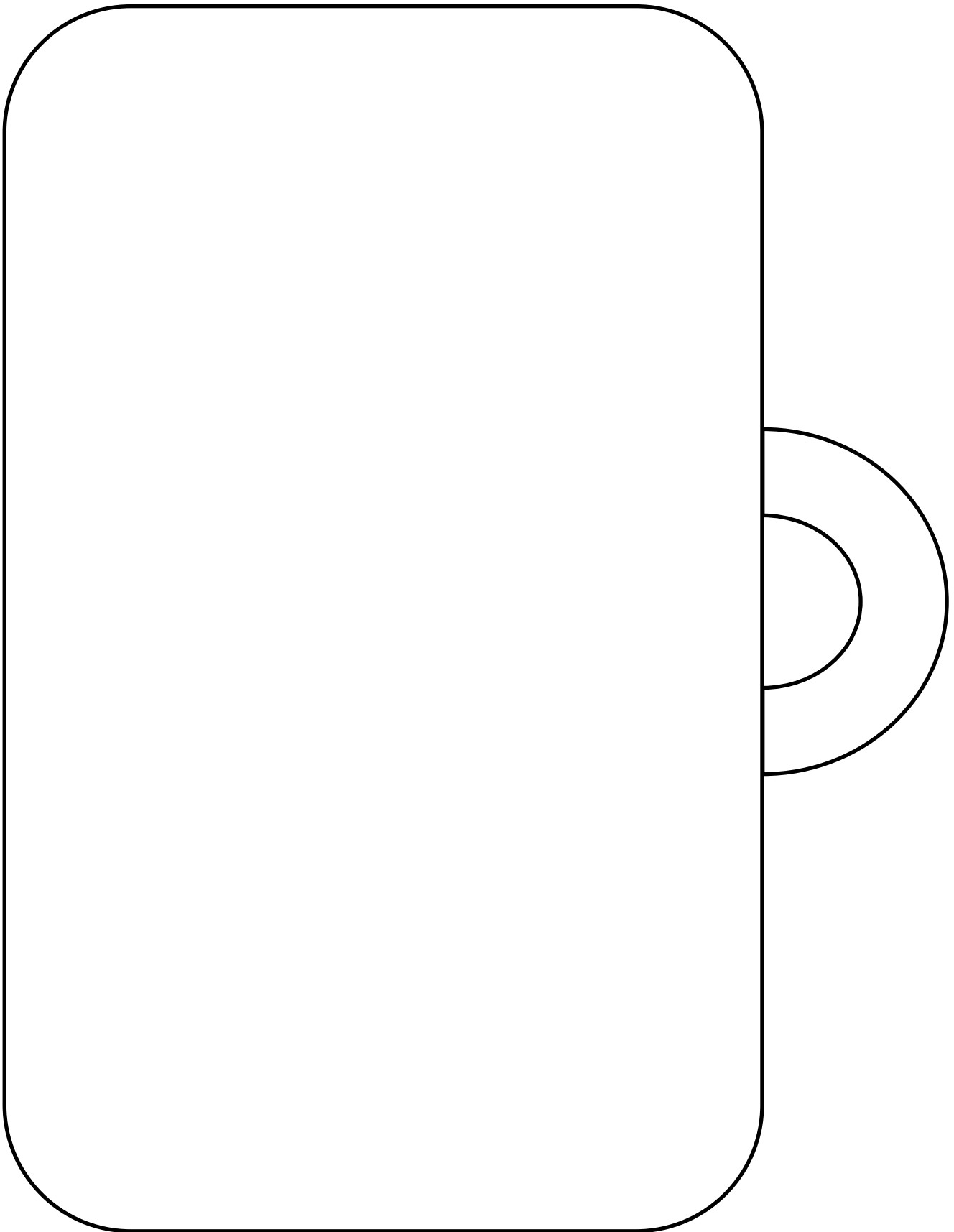
- **City of Sanctuary UK**

City of Sanctuary supports groups and individuals across the UK (including schools) to help provide welcoming places of safety for all and offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.

<https://cityofsanctuary.org/>

## Packing my suitcase

## Activity sheet



## Push and pull factors

## Activity sheet

Push factors	Pull factors
Lack of services (for example schools and health care)	Better work opportunities
Being unsafe	Better services (for example, schools and health care)
Poverty	Safer, with less crime
High levels of crime	To be nearer family or friends
Crops failing	Political stability
Disasters such as earthquakes, flooding or drought	More fertile land for growing crops
Conflict	Less risk from disasters such as earthquakes, flooding or drought