

# The Plight of Refugees

SOCIAL STUDIES Age 10–11



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## Learning Aims:

- To understand what a refugee is.
- To understand what asylum is.
- To understand what reasons people may have to flee where they live.

## CONTEXT

The students were learning about conflict in different countries and watched the documentary "I'm Not Leaving". The following week, Carl Wilkens came to the school to visit and with the students discussed the documentary and the themes which featured in the programme. As a follow up, Mr Fontenova did a Friday Focus VR session on conflict and refugees.

## PRACTICAL SESSION



**Refugees Playlist**



**Escaping Conflict lesson plan**

The children looked at several photos and watched a video based around the Escaping Conflict ClassVR lesson plan. The students were asked: What did you see? Did it look how you expected it to? What were the first thoughts that popped into your head when you imagined being in their situation? Were you surprised by what you saw? Why is this?

The discussion included why people are angry and scared; why the conditions are so crowded and dirty; and, whether it is better than where they were before. We then asked the students to consider balancing up whether it was worth it to leave the disaster zone and seek refuge elsewhere or whether the plight would be more dangerous than remaining. This prompted some excellent discussion and encouraged the students to reflect objectively on other people's living circumstances.

## IMPACT ON LEARNING

The children saw first hand some of the things that happen during conflict and understood the terms 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker'. They were empathic to the children who were fleeing their homes, families, friends, schools, country, etc. They were also asked to list five things they would take with them if they suddenly had to flee their homes. It also started a conversation on human rights and if these people's rights are being met: waiting hours in line for a little bit of food, not being able to get clean water to drink or wash up. It was a very powerful learning experience and these students, at just 10 years old, were able to think very critically and objectively.

