

# Leader's Guide

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## Episode 20

### Caring For Refugees and Immigrants

#### Summary

The greatly increased number of immigrants and refugees seeking healthcare in the U.S. provides a wonderful opportunity to communicate the love of Christ through the care we provide. However, special challenges are also caused by cultural and attitudinal differences. This episode denotes some of those unique challenges and how we can overcome them as we share the love of Christ with our international friends.

#### Speaker

Drs. Andrew and Esther are both family medicine physicians currently working at a clinic that serves a large population of refugees and immigrants. They love coming up with creative ways to serve their community. They enjoy spending time with their two kids, going on hikes and making meals together. Email them at [DrsEandA@gmail.com](mailto:DrsEandA@gmail.com).

#### Discussion Questions

1. **What from this video inspired, edified or challenged you?**
2. **What can we learn from the Bible with regard to our calling to show kindness to refugees from the following passages:**
  - a. Mark 12:31 - Love your neighbor as yourself.
  - b. Leviticus 19:34, Exodus 12:49 - Treat foreigners as native-born.
  - c. Deuteronomy 14:28-29 - Provide for orphans, widows and sojourners.
  - d. Deuteronomy 27:19 - Do not withhold justice from foreigners.
  - e. Hebrews 13:1-2 - Show hospitality to strangers.
  - f. 1 Peter 1:1, Philippians 3:20 - We are sojourners, and our citizenship is in heaven.  
By showing love to earthly sojourners, we are testifying to God's love for us.
3. **What are some of the barriers to caring for refugees and immigrants?**
  - a. Communication - language, culture
  - b. Complex medical and mental health issues
  - c. Mistrust of authority and of the healthcare system for a variety of reasons

- 4. Is there sometimes a language barrier between you and your patients? What are some possible ways to overcome this barrier?**
- Hire employees that speak the languages of your patients.
  - Hire translators.
  - Utilize a translation software program.
  - Have written materials translated into the languages of your patients.
- 5. What qualities do we need to cultivate in order to “understand” our sojourner patients? Consider Philippians 2:3-5, Ephesians 4:2, James 1:19, etc.**
- Philippians 2:3-5 – Humility: think of the needs of others above our own.
  - Ephesians 4:2 – Humility, gentleness, patience; giving people and their needs the time they require.
  - James 1:19 – Listening before speaking; their English may be broken and hard to understand, so this may not be easy.
- 6. Dr. Andrew tells a story of a refugee patient, a physician in his home country, who was having a panic attack. This patient received the treatment he needed, and the compassionate care he received eventually led him to faith in Jesus Christ. Have you seen any patients who turned to Christ during the course of their treatment? What were the key factors in their transformation?**
- 7. What are some practical steps we can take to address the barriers to refugee treatment?**
- Learn a few words of their language, at least to greet them.
  - Ask what their name is, what it means, how to pronounce it.
  - Consider employing a translator, even if it’s not covered by insurance.
  - Become involved with their lives outside of the clinic.
  - Avoid religious icons, which could create defensiveness.
  - Seek to become a part of the community.
  - Grow in knowledge of different cultures.
- 8. Dr. Jeff Amstutz cites the fact that approximately 25 percent of U.S. doctors (both physicians and dentists) are immigrants, and he shares a story of a cardiologist who received the gospel as it was shared with him by a medical colleague.**
- Do you have any colleagues who are immigrants?**
  - Have you had any spiritual conversations with them? Why or why not?**

It would seem likely that almost everyone would know at least someone in healthcare who immigrated from another country. Sometimes we are more spiritually intimidated than we should be by the fact that someone is from another country and perhaps adheres to a different faith. Yet reaching out in love to those of other faiths can create great opportunities to discuss similarities and differences between the world’s religions. We should proceed respectfully, with sensitivity, and also with the confidence that the Christian faith is solid and able to withstand alternative viewpoints. Everyone needs Jesus

Christ, and the fact that a person has a different appearance or culture should not deter us from sharing the love of our Savior.

**9. Dr. Kristin Martel exhorts us to make our treatment area a “sanctuary” for our international patients. What are ideas of how we can do this, and how might the Lord work through our efforts in such an environment?**

The more difficult a person’s life is, the more likely they are to appreciate the blessing of a peaceful place where they can relax and trust those around them without fear. Dr. Martel speaks of giving her refugee patients the “freedom to be able to be who they are, to tell their story; where we take time to listen and ask thoughtful questions about the trauma they’ve gone through or the fears that they have. We validate that they are worthy of being human and loved because they are image-bearers of God. And as we provide that sanctuary, we want to do that in a way that is humble, that utilizes the humility that Jesus gives us, as the way that He cared for people...that they would experience the love of Jesus.”

**10. Dr. Andrew and Esther’s clinic has regular times of celebration. Do you celebrate at your office? Consider the following verses as they relate to the benefits of regular times of celebration:**

- a. Proverbs 15:15 - Our internal countenance will greatly affect how we interpret the events of life. Hearts filled with grace will look for God’s purposes even in negative events. Conversely, those not walking in accord with God’s grace can become frustrated even in the midst of fortuitous occasions.
- b. James 1:17a – All good proceeds from God, and His love takes on many different forms.
- c. Psalms 126:3 – Our gladness can be increased as it is shared with others.
- d. Nehemiah 8:10 - Healthcare is a challenging profession and providing care for refugees has additional challenges that can create discouragement and anxiety. Regular celebration and sharing of positive accomplishments can encourage rejoicing in the Lord.

**11. What is one take-home item from today’s session that you hope to implement?**

## Additional Resources

- 1. *Cross-Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility* by Duane Elmer
- 2. *Ministering Cross-Culturally: A Model for Effective Personal Relationships* by Sherwood G. Lingenfelter