



Prayer for Syria & Syrian Refugees

Before the service make sticky-notes and pens available (eg set up some tables around the room with the notes and pens or place them at the end of each pew) and designate an area on a wall for sticky notes to be stuck (test it beforehand to make sure the notes will stick to the surface. If they will not stick up some sheets of cardboard).

Introduce the prayer session by explaining that:

- Syria is the epicentre of the world's refugee crisis. Out of a population of 22 million, 5 million have fled the country as refugees and another 6 million are internally displaced;
- We will watch two short videos that will help understand what's happening in Syria and its impact on people;
- Everyone will then be invited to write down their hopes for Syria and its refugees and place them on a "Hope for Syria" wall as an act of prayer.

Show the video "Syria's War. Who's Fighting Whom and Why?"

<https://youtu.be/JFpanWNgfQY> and/or "Syrian Kids Explain the War"

<https://youtu.be/2iz2tNiRpeY>

Invite people to take a couple of sticky-notes and write words on them that express their hopes for Syria and Syrian refugees and then stick them to the area you have designated.

Finish by reading this prayer:

Our God,

We are a swirling sea of emotion

as we contemplate the tragedy that has befallen Syria.

We feel anger at the ways violence is employed

to serve the interests of the powerful, yet does so at great cost to people;

We feel despair at the complex history, political interests, and entanglements that make an end to the war seem so far off;
We feel compassion for the children, women and men whose lives been turned upside down,
who have lost people they love,
and wonder what their future will be.

We pray for peace,
We pray for peacemakers to break the cycle of violence and retribution,
We ask that you raise up peacemakers in each of the warring groups and the international alliances that back them.

We pray for those whose lives have been turned upside down by the war.
Give those who have lost family members the space to grieve and the capacity to grieve well;
Give those who have fled the violence places of safety and protection, communities in which they can thrive and begin to hope again.
We pray particularly for the 12,000 Syrian refugees being resettled in Australia.
May the communities in which they settle be open to them, gracious and welcoming.

Finally we pray for ourselves, that you may open our hearts and the hearts of all Australians to their fellow human beings who are suffering around the world.
Grant us an ever-increasing compassion, ever-increasing wisdom, and ever-increasing willingness to be their neighbour.