



Toolkit for Immigrant Sabbath April 30-May 2, 2010

May 1 is a day of celebration in many cultures, a day when workers have gathered to call for justice, and in recent years, it has also become a day when immigrants and friends of immigrants take to the streets to celebrate the contributions of immigrants in our communities and to call for humane, just immigration reform. This year, May 1 also falls within a crucial time in the push for immigration reform: in recent weeks, President Obama, Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), and other prominent senators have all restated their commitment to enacting immigration reform, but if they are going to follow through, **they need to know that people of faith care for immigrants and are committed to seeing immigration reform accomplished this year.**

This is a critical time – we are so close to seeing immigration reform enacted, and yet still so far away. We all need to show our support to see immigration reform over the finish line!

Show your care and commitment by including a focus on immigrants in your worship service April 30-May 2, 2010:

1. Does your congregation offer ESL classes, conduct a detention visitation program, or have a relationship with an immigrant congregation? **Invite an immigrant friend of your community to share his or her story of migration.**
2. **Offer your own testimony of why immigration reform matters to you as a person of faith.**
3. **Encourage your clergy or lay leaders to offer a sermon, litany or other major focus on immigration in worship.** Check out [this link](#), and [this one](#), for sermon resources.
4. **Remember immigrants in your prayers within worship:**
 - a. Pray for the protection of immigrants, who face family separation, exploitation on the job, racial profiling, fear and uncertainty.
 - b. Prayer for Members of Congress, that they would have the moral courage and wisdom to move comprehensive immigration reform forward
 - c. Check out the [Worship Resources](#) below for more ideas.

Make sure others in your town, city or area know that your faith community cares about immigrants:

- **Organize your faith community to call your Members of Congress on the Monday following Immigrant Sabbath**—let them know that you're praying for them and for immigrants, and tell them why you care about immigration reform and want them support comprehensive immigration reform.
- **Invite members of your faith community to write letters, or even a brief postcard note, to your Members of Congress before your worship service**, ask God's blessing on your messages during the service, and deliver them to your Members by dropping in to their local office or scheduling a visit.
- **Post your worship service plans on the IIC Web Calendar**, <http://www.interfaithimmigrationcal.org/>. Posting your activities also helps advocates in Washington, DC let your members of Congress know the great work you're doing to support for immigration reform!

I. **Worship Resources**

A. **ADDITIONAL PRAYERS**, PP 3-7

B. SERMON RESOURCES, LITANIES, ETC.

Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform Sermon Illustration Packet
<http://faithandimmigration.org/resources/sermon-illustration-packet-immigration>

Church World Service – The Bible as the Ultimate Immigration Handbook:
<http://www.churchworldservice.org/Word/refugees/Biblehandbook.doc>

Interfaith Worker Justice Remember the Immigrant Litany (bulletin insert):
http://www.iwj.org/doc/rem_immigrant.pdf

Interfaith Worker Justice Celebrating Immigrants Interfaith Service:
http://www.iwj.org/doc/celebrating_immigrants.pdf

Jewish Mini-Service for Justice and Peace
<http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/05/jewish-prayer.pdf>

Justice for Immigrants Prayer of the Immigrant (see “[Additional prayers](#)” below)

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service’s Prayers for Welcome:
http://www.lirs.org/site/c.nhLPJ0PMKuG/b.5608987/k.A586/Pray_for_Welcome.htm

Mennonite Central Committee Washington Memo Worship Resources (scripture, reflection, song, prayer): <http://washingtonmemo.org/newsletter/spring09/worship-resources/>

United Church of Christ Immigrant Rights Sunday worship resources (includes sermon starters, prayers, etc):
<http://www.ucc.org/justice/immigration/worship/worship-resources/WorshipResources.html>

United Methodist Church – Responding with Faith to Immigration:
<http://www.umc-gbcs.org/site/apps/nl/newsletter.asp?c=frLJK2PKLqF&b=3876267>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Sermon : Audacity to hope for reform?
<http://www.usccb.org/mrs/>

Immigrant Sabbath, April 30-May 2, 2010
Additional Prayers

Prayer of the Immigrant

You are the God who bears the brunt of the question, "Why didn't you stay where you belong?" You feel the red-faced embarrassment when we hear, "Keep your distance, you foreigner, with your different-colored skin and your strange-sounding speech, with your culture, food, religion, and clothing that are inferior to my own."

You are the God who sits along side of us who work in sweatshops, with our bloodshot eyes and aching fingers squinting under the soul-less glare of a florescent light.

You are the God who rises early in the morning with us as we go to harvest fresh vegetables and fruits picked with fingers stained by the pesticides and fungicides that penetrate our skin.

You are the God who stands with us in the chill of the morning in the parking lot at Home Depot, with anxious stomachs hoping that we too would be picked to work just for that one day.

Loving God, as we stand before you today, help us to remember that when we speak of immigrants and refugees, we speak of Christ.

Hear our prayers for necessary, just, and comprehensive immigration reform.

Make us strong in the work for immigrant justice and remind us that our work is no easier than the every day work of our immigrant sisters and brothers.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

from [Justice for Immigrants](#), a campaign of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Prayer of the Buen Coyote

You walk with us in deserted places,
And show us the way to Promised Land.

Guide us through the thorny thickets that entangle us,
the arid refuge of serpents and scorpions that puncture our resolve.

That our determination to continue in your ways,
Despite the hardships we encounter,
Will never falter.

Por favor Buen Coyote, for it is in your name, Jesus Christ, we pray.

Submitted By: George Tatro

We Are Persons, Each of Us

by Ruth Duck, from Bread for the Journey: Resources for Worship

Leader: O God, we are persons, each of us.

People: We stand alone in history, yet there are others, only a hand's length away, with whom we could join our spirits, to bring into being a soul-force that might spread to many and transform us all..

Leader: Make us aware, O God, of the pain of the world.

People: Help us to hear the cry of the oppressed.

Leader: The poor,

People: The prisoners,

Leader: Make us aware, O God, of the joys of life.

People: Help us to hear the beauty of the earth.

Leader: Of people,

People: Of ourselves.

Leader: O God, help us to listen.

People: For in listening, we will speak of our love.

Leader: And by listening

People: We will be moved to act in faith.

Candle-Lighting Prayer

Greeting: Members of congregation light candles

1st Person: I will light a light in the name of God who lit the world and breathed the breath of life into all people red and yellow, black and white; rich and poor; documented and undocumented; citizens and residents -- all God's children all our sisters and brothers.

2nd Person: I will light a light in the name of the Son, the refugee, migrant, undocumented Christ, who saved the world and stretched out his hand to all people of the world.

3rd. Person: I will light a light in the name of the Spirit who embraces the world and travels with each and every one of us. The Spirit, who migrates with and blesses all souls. The Spirit of hope and love and peace.

4th Person: I will light a light in the name of every undocumented persons living in the shadows and praying for life and legislation that will set them free.

5th Person: I will light a light of hope that will out shine the darkness and illuminate the day that no one in this great country will have to live in the shadows but all will walk openly as welcomed sisters and brothers.

God of the citizen, the legal resident, the undocumented, and the stranger, you are made known in our Savior Jesus Christ. Born as a migrant, exiled as a refuge, he knew the pain of homelessness but taught his friends the meaning and challenge of love. Lead us in learning to love the strangers in this land as we build communities rooted in hospitality and just. Teach us to love as we would have you love us. Give us the courage to stand for justice and hold your people in our hearts. Teach us the words you would have us speak as we call for immigration reform in this land. Amen.

A Litany for Seekers of Justice

Let us pray for the seekers of justice among us.

Grant, almighty God that all who confess your name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory to the world.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor and welcome one another and serve the common good.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give us a reverence for one another, enable us to see every one from every nation as a sister and brother - children on our Creator. Let us live in service to others and to your honor and glory.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless all whose lives are linked with ours be they documented or undocumented.

And grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as Christ loves us.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit living in the shadows and hoping for the day they can be fully alive.

Give them courage and hope in their troubles. Let them know that there are those among us who are seeking justice and praying and working for the day they will live among us, no longer in the shadows but as legal residents in this land.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Be with each and everyone of us, who stands for justice, calls for legalization, workers rights, and family unity. We seek to do you will. With with each of us and guide our steps as we say, Here we are, Lord, send us.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We offer these prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

adapted from a litany in the Book of Common Prayer U.S. A. 20th Cent. Alt.

By the waters of the Rio Grande

By the waters of the Rio Grande,
There we sat down and there
We wept
When we remembered Zion.

On the willows there
We hung up our guitars

For there the Border Patrol
Asked us for songs

And the vigilantes asked for laughter
Saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

How could we sing the Lord's song
In a foreign land

By the waters we weep and we remember
We remember Mexico and El Salvador
We remember Burma and Tibet
We remember Colombia and Chile
We remember Cuba and Haiti
We remember Darfur, the Congo, and Romania

By the waters we remember

On the willows we hung up our guitars
We hung up our hopes
We hung up our homes, our land, our dreams
We hung up our poverty, our hunger, and our thirst
We hung up our friends, our traditions and our culture
We hung up our family ties, our food, and our language

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?

We sing only the song of the homeless, the unemployed

The laments of hunger and thirst, of death and destruction

The songs of the songless, the hungry, the thirsty

The songs of the dying.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?

By Joan Maruskin, Church World Service