

The Refugees (the Christmas story with Mary, Joseph and Jesus)

(Crowd of 3-4 people stood around, arms folded muttering, looking at some people)

Crowd 1 – Look at them. What are they doing here?

Crowd 2 – It's the census. They have to come here.

Crowd 3 – Well I don't want them here. They should stay in their own place, not come and take over where we live.

Crowd 1 – Well I've been needing a room for months and have had to wait. But they've just come in here and people are offering them accommodation. What about us locals?

Crowd 2 – But aren't we supposed to love the alien, the stranger?

Crowd 3 – Loving them is one thing. But them coming in here with their strange accents and ways is another thing.

Crowd 2 – But they're the same as us!

Crowd 1 – I heard that they're being given free food and all kinds of freebies. I've had to work for every penny.

Crowd 2 – We all have. But they have been forced to come here. They're not asking for anything. And besides, I know that many of them have got money and are paying higher than normal prices, with landlords taking advantage of them...

Crowd 3 – I bet they'll take our jobs as well. They'll probably get lower wages than the rest of us so we'll lose our jobs. Someone should do something.

Crowd 2 – If it's anyone's fault it's the governor for ordering this census.

Crowd 1 - They'll probably all just live in the same area together and not get involved with the rest of us. They always do these outsiders. They never want to integrate.

Crowd 3 – Yeah and they bring their religion and customs with them.

Crowd 2 – Listen, they are from the same country as us. Even if they were different, shouldn't we welcome the stranger – they're lonely, lost and looking for answers. We can help them, surely.

Crowd 1 – I don't want anything to do with them.

Crowd 3 – And look there. Isn't that Joseph and his 'woman', Mary. She's pregnant you know. They don't even have any morals these people. She's clearly been up to something immoral.

Crowd 2 - I've heard that they haven't done anything wrong but that it was an act of God.

Crowd 1 – Is there something wrong with you? She's pregnant and I heard they weren't even married. So either they've been sleeping together before they're married or she's been seeing someone on the side. If I were Joseph, I'd dump her.

Crowd 3 – No wonder they've got their heads down. Shame on them. (Starts shouting at them), "Shame, shame, shame!"

Crowd 2 – Why are you doing that? Haven't you ever done anything wrong?

Crowd 1 – Well I hope his family has nothing to do with him. I'd be ashamed to have someone like that in my family. All it takes is one bad egg and all the young people around here are going to be doing immoral things. They're promoting sin.

Crowd 3 – I hope they're not allowed into the Synagogue. I'm going to have words with the Rabbi. He's a close friend of my family and myself. I'll make sure they won't be coming into the Synagogue.

Crowd 1 - And I'm going to make sure no-one gives them a room.

(Crowd 1 and Crowd 3 leave the stage)

Crowd 2 – *(Pauses)*. All we have is a stable. But I'm going to make sure they have a room with us, are well fed and looked after as best we can. It's the least we can do.

(Looks at audience). What would you do?

(Walks off stage).

Issues relating to the sketch

This sketch isn't to take any kind of moral high ground against any one way of thinking or another but is here to get us to ask questions of ourselves and our attitudes towards refugees, asylum seekers and people from other nations who move elsewhere for work.

We don't hold any specific political view about refugees but we do know what the Bible tells us about loving God, loving people and making the name of Jesus known through word, deed and action.

Issues relating to the sketch

1. How do you feel towards refugees? How do you think they feel?
2. Can you relate to anything anyone says in the sketch?
3. No matter what you think, what kind of attitude do you have? Is it one of love?
4. There are some real issues around integration when people of different cultures live together. There are very real issues of Christians not getting to the UK from places like Syrian refugee camps because they are forced out by extremists. There have also been true accounts of Christians being killed or even thrown overboard from boats by extremists. There have also been reports of terrorists entering Europe pretending to be refugees. How do we react to this?
5. What can we do to reach out to people who are different?
6. Joseph, Mary and Jesus were refugees on two occasions in different ways. The first time was when they had to go to Bethlehem because of the census. The second time was when Herod was killing children under two so they had to escape quickly to Egypt. What can we learn from this story?
7. How would you handle the refugee crisis in the world if you were in charge?