

World Refugee Day

June 20, 2020

Empathy Exercise

I have no idea what it is to be a refugee. Do you? Most of us don't, though a few do. We invite you to join in this empathy exercise to gain a bit of insight and appreciation for what our brothers and sisters, who are refugees, experience.

Imagine.....

Canada is at war with the country of Adanac. For 1 year now the war has been particularly fierce in Alberta. Last week Adanac invaded Lethbridge. Three days ago Nanton fell to Adanac forces. Yesterday



<https://www.dreamstime.com/empty-shelves-bread-germany-image175690822>

Okotoks. Supply lines have been disrupted. Food is

available intermittently. Sometimes there's bread on the shelves; sometimes there isn't. Gasoline for cars is hard to come by. In the last month you have been able to buy only ¼ tank of gas. We've all been asked to install a Calgary Inform app onto our phones, which sends out alerts – good and bad: the war is moving closer; a shipment of bread arrived in the city.



<https://nation.com.pk/05-May-2016/iraq-routed-is-from-ramadi-at-a-high-cost-a-city-destroyed>

Now your Calgary Inform app begins its high pitched wailing siren. Adanac is invading Calgary. Auburn Bay, Cranston and Chapparal have all fallen. You and your family decide to flee. You have 1 hour to pack some things and leave. You'll be travelling on foot as gasoline is not reliably available, so you have to be able to carry whatever you take. You suspect that you will never come back. What will you take?



<https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/caritas-responds-refugee-crisis-greece>

What will you take?

Spend 1 hour – no more – gathering the things you will take with you. Hurry! The Adanacs are coming! You only have 1 hour.



Once you've gathered your things, take a few minutes to discuss with each other:

1. What were you thinking and feeling as you were gathering your things?
2. Why did you choose to take the things you did?
3. What was the hardest thing to leave behind?



Take time to pray for the millions of people for whom this is reality and not just an exercise.



Take photos and share with us by sending them to refugees@bvcchurch.ca. Include a brief message of what this experience was like for you. We'll share your photos & stories by posting them to our website.

**Want to increase the intensity of the exercise?
Don't tell your family when you plan to do this. Spring it on them unexpectedly.**

**Is it too hard to physically gather your things?
Discuss with each other what you would take and make a list. Send us a photo of your list to...**

refugees@bvcchurch.ca