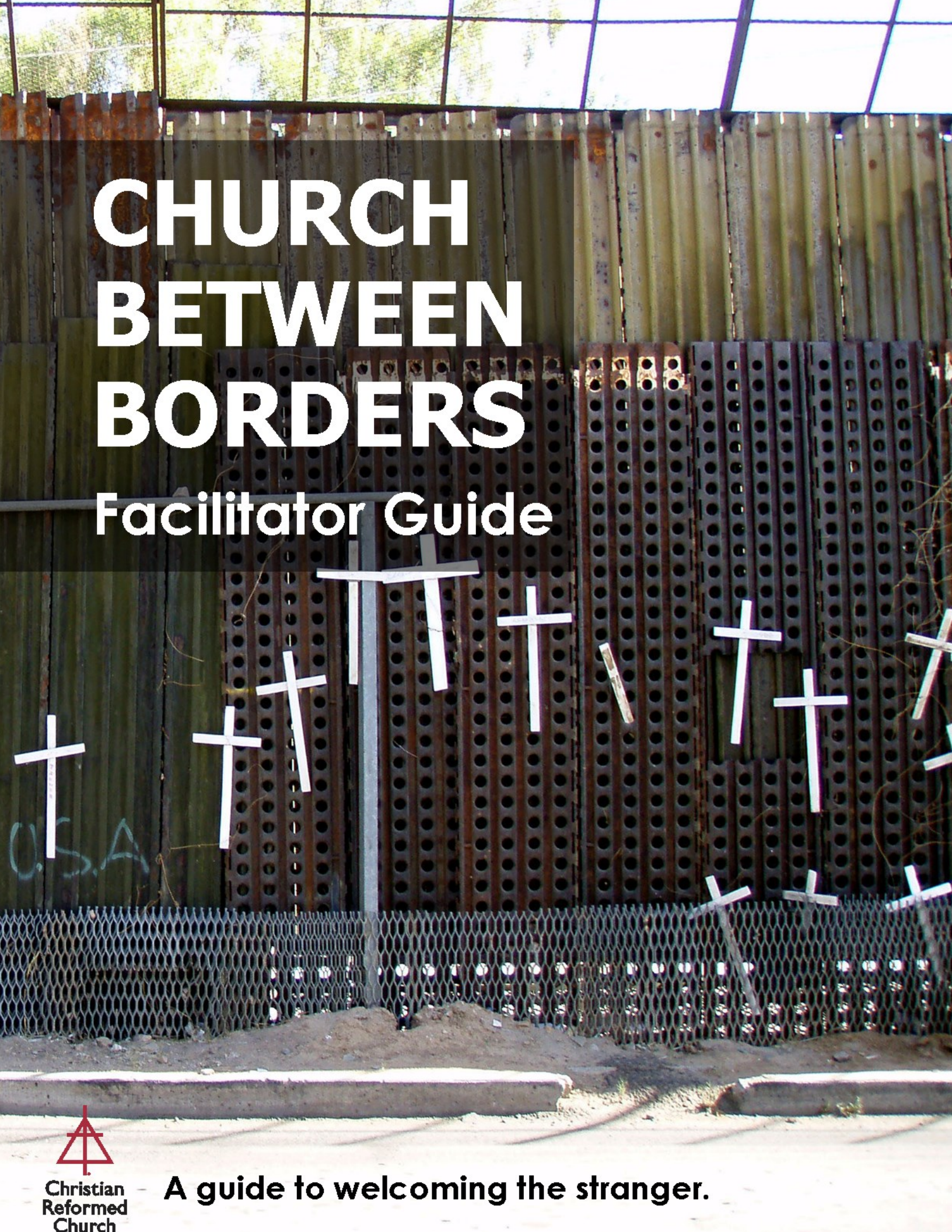


CHURCH BETWEEN BORDERS

Facilitator Guide



Christian
Reformed
Church

A guide to welcoming the stranger.

Church Between Borders

Facilitator guide overview

The Church Between Borders book is designed for you to be able to facilitate this workshop without needing to be an expert on immigration policy. We have created this facilitator guide to provide you with tips and helpful information that you may include throughout the workshop. This guide is a supplement to the Church Between Border book. If you are interested in facilitating sessions 3 & 4 you may do so but there is not a guide with tips.

What does this facilitator guide include?

Session 1: How the System Works

An interactive exercise exploring how the U.S. immigration system works, its many complications, and why it is often considered unjust and outdated.

Session 2: Immigration Storyline

This session has been used by hundreds of groups across the U.S. to learn about the changing American immigration system, discover where one's family fits in, and hear how God has used — and continues to use — the church.

How long does it take?

This workshop is typically done one session at a time over a four week period (if completing all 4 sessions). One hour is ideal for each session. If you only have one hour total with a group, it is recommend doing the first session, however, you are free to choose the one that will work best for your audience.

As a facilitator you are in control of this workshop. You know your context and how much time you have. Feel free to omit a section or add a section from the Church Between Borders book if you'd like.

Where can the workshop be presented?

The workshop has been used in adult education classes, college classes, high school and middle school classes, conference sessions, classis meetings, and more.

What do I need to facilitate each session?

- You must have the Church Between Borders book and it is highly recommended that all participants also purchase the Church Between Borders book. These can be ordered on Faith Alive's website for \$5 each.

www.faithaliveresources.org/Products/810815/church-between-borders-participants-guide.aspx

- It is important that each participant has the book because there is supplemental reading that answers common questions that almost everyone has and you will not have time to answer every question.
- Each session requires different materials and can be found on the first page of the session in the Church Between Borders book.
- All printable materials can be downloaded from the Faith Alive website found above.

Further questions?

For any more questions, email Kris Van Engen at kvanengen@crcna.org

HOW THE SYSTEMS WORKS

Tips for facilitating session 1

Supplies: Identity cards, “four doors” forms, “four doors” station labels, “cheat sheet” can be downloaded for free at Faith Alive’s website found on the facilitator guide overview page.

1. Welcome and Introduction

- Briefly talk about the goals of the session or someone might stop you partway through and ask, “where is this going? What is the point of all this?”
- Allow participants to introduce themselves to each other in small groups or as a large group as time permits.
- There won’t be time to cover every detail about immigration so encourage participants to do further reading in their *Church Between Borders Booklet*.

2. Bible Study

If there is a different Bible study on immigration that you would like to use, feel free to substitute that one. We also encourage you to check out the Bible study in session 3 of *Church Between Borders* which focuses on a Biblical understanding of hospitality and philoxenia (love of the stranger) vs. xenophobia (fear of the stranger).

3. “4 Doors” Exercise

When passing out the identity cards explain that these are based on real stories of people who have tried to immigrate to the United States. These are all people who want to come and stay permanently (not temporary visas). It answers the often-asked question, “Why don’t they just get in line?”

After you pass out the identity cards, explain that there are four visa options to immigrate permanently and legally to the United States. We call these the 4 “lines”. As you are explaining what the visas are, spread the 4 visa piles in different parts of the room.

1. If you are coming to work, fill out the EMPLOYMENT visa.
 2. If you are coming to join family in the United States, fill out the FAMILY visa.
 3. If you are fleeing persecution, fill out the REFUGEE/ASYLUM visa.
 4. If you are coming from a country that doesn’t already have a lot of immigrants in the U.S., fill out the Diversity visa. Countries that are barred from the diversity line are listed on the diversity form.
- ⇒ You may also note that the paperwork at each station is not the complete visa form, but the described standards and wait times are real.

Ask participants to read their identity card and identify the primary reason they hoping to immigrate to the United States and invite them to find the visa that would work best for them. **Note:** If information is not on your card, presume that you do not have it (for example, a college degree).

As they are filling out the forms. ask them to find out if they are able to legally immigrant to the US.

Noteworthy points to emphasis during workshop:

Employment:

- You must already have a job offer. Being willing to work is not enough.
- A way to get around this is having a lot of money (500,000 to invest).
- Nurses, electricians, teachers are not considered highly skilled professions. Nuclear physicists are.
- Your employer has to really, really want you (wait a long time, pay a big fee) -- this is to prioritize hiring US citizens.

Family:

- Only specific relationships can petition for one another. (Grandma's, aunts, or cousins, etc do not qualify for the family visa preference system). Just immediate family.
- It makes a difference if your family member is a citizen or legal permanent resident
- The extremely long wait times are a major flaw in this system

Refugee/ Asylum:

- Refugee = someone who already has their papers when they come here; asylum = someone who arrives to US borders on their own and claims asylum, but their situation may be the same: they're fleeing persecution based on race, religion, national origin, political opinion, or membership in a specific social group.
- Extreme poverty is not "persecution" and does not qualify someone for refugee or asylum status.
- You have to be able to prove the severity of your plight (and the one who knows how to do that best is a lawyer. your chances are MUCH better if you have a good lawyer, and often the poor don't.)

Diversity:

- Lottery system (system picks names at random)
- Chance of being selected for this visa is .006 or 1 in 160
- Not for poor people— must have high school education and work experience

4. Debrief

Refer to Church Between Borders book for debrief instructions.

Here are some other facts that you might want to share as you debrief the exercise:

- There aren't nearly enough visas (in high-skilled or low-skilled ends of the spectrum) -- and Congress sets these limits. So for example, there are only 5,000 visas/yr for low-skilled workers through this system. Most low-skilled workers come on temporary visas (even though the need for their work isn't temporary!).
- A word about temporary visas (see the supplemental sheet about H-2A and H-2B visas): There aren't nearly enough of these temporary ones, either -- 70% of our immigrant farmworkers are undocumented (because there aren't enough visas to meet the employment need). This isn't fair for our farm workers OR the farmers who employ them.
- The wait times are long (can be longer than a person's lifetime, since your line is based on your gender, age, country of origin, and family relationship)
- Your refugee designations often have to do with our political relationship with your country of origin (e.g. If you get off a boat on the shores of Florida and you are from Cuba, you're a refugee. If you're from Haiti, you're an undocumented immigrant.)

Note: Encourage people to read some articles at the end of session 1 in the Church Between Borders book to gain further insight to how our system works and its brokenness.

IMMIGRATION STORYLINE

Tips for facilitating session 2

Supplies: The timeline can be downloaded for free at Faith Alive's website found on the introduction page. You can hang it up before the workshop so people see it as they come in. It also works to pass out the timeline cards to participants and then they hang the cards, building the timeline as you go. For example, The first five people hang the first five cards, people hang their personal stories if they fit in that time period, the group talks about the welcoming and denying factors during that time period, when the discussion concludes people tape up cards for the next section, and so on.

1. Welcome and Introduction:

During this time you may pray together and introduce the session.

2. Bible Study:

If there is a different Bible study on immigration that you like feel free to substitute that one. If you did not the previous week, we also encourage you to check out the Bible study in session 3 of Church Between Borders which focuses on a Biblical understanding of hospitality and philoxenia (love of the stranger) vs. in xenophobia (fear of the stranger).

3. Immigration Policy Roots Exercise:

1. Use a whiteboard or a large piece of paper. Draw a chart with two columns: 1. Welcome, 2. Deny.
2. As instructed in the participant guide people will give answers to help the facilitator fill out the chart.
3. This is an important warm up to get the group thinking about why a country might welcome or deny immigrants but don't spend too much time on this. A deeper story of welcoming and denying will emerge as you go through the timeline together.

4. Immigration Storyline:

Once everyone's story is taped to the wall you will walk together as group along the timeline, hear stories from people who want to share and discuss the historical events. This can get long and boring so here are some tips to keep it engaging.

1. Limit the amount of time people spend telling their own stories. Don't dwell too long on follow up questions to individual stories.
2. Discuss the timeline in chunks of 5-8 cards based on time period. For each chunk ask the questions, "What policies were meant to welcome during this time period? Which policies were meant to deny? What were the reasons behind the decision to welcome or deny?"

Noteworthy points to emphasis during workshop:

- 1965 is the last year that our immigration system changed -- if your family came before that date, they were immigrating under a fundamentally different system than the one that we have today. And under this system, white people from Western Europe had were given priority and had a very open fast track to legal entry. (If you hear someone say, "Well, my family came legally, they should

- In recent years, we have started to see the states most impacted by our broken immigration laws do some pushing back on the federal government, as if to say, "If you're not going to do anything, then we'll take matters into our own hands." Much of this has been struck down as unconstitutional, but still Congress has not made meaningful change for either the immigrants or the states who are most impacted by immigration patterns.
- The shift in "where" the government housed our immigration enforcement is telling: first it was in the Department of Treasury (economic issue!), then it was Bureau of Labor (jobs issue!), then it was Department of Justice (public safety issue!), then it was Department of Homeland Security (terrorism issue!).
- You may prompt the participants to think about how immigrants have been scapegoated throughout US history for economic struggles.