

THREE STAGES OF AN IMMIGRANTS EXPERIENCE

Immigrant Terms

- Refugee: someone who is forced to flee their country due to war or persecution. When they arrive in their new country, they have legal status and are eligible for assistance.
- Asylee: a person who meets the definition of refugee but is already present in the new country or is seeking admission at a port of entry. Their claim is yet to be evaluated.
- Undocumented immigrant: a foreign-born person who doesn't have legal documentation or right to be or remain in the country they are residing in.

Arrival Stage: First 3 months

- When the refugee or asylee arrives and begins to get set up in their new city and home.
- Newcomers need help understanding: the mechanics of their new apartment, paperwork, setting up English classes, and how to pay bills.
- They need to know the closest resources such as stores, phone shops, walmart and the library.
- Finding a job is crucial.
- Need genuine friendship
- Spiritual needs in this stage vary depending on their faith.

Adjustment Stage: 4-5 years

- Need community, people who understand where they have come from.
- They need to find a way to re-create their culture.
- Help understanding our systems.
- Many families are still in poverty and struggle to find adequate employment.
- Language is critical for a refugee or asylee to move through the adjustment stage.
- Need help navigating the school system for their children.
- Our friends need emotional support.
- Spiritually, our new friends need Jesus!

Acculturation Stage: 4-5 years

- To become acculturated means that a person is making their new country truly home.
 - An important goal of this stage is self-sufficiency.
 - Navigating this stage is not easy and not all immigrants are successful.
 - Offer a place of belonging and integration to them—so they are not marginalized.
 - They need genuine friendships with native English speakers.
 - Continue with spiritual conversations and inviting them into more with Christ.
 - Children also need a link to their home culture. Parents are often concerned that their children maintain their mother tongue and this can be challenging.
 - In this stage people are often on their own to figure out many things as refugee cases are closed by the agencies after five years.
 - They are vulnerable to scams as well as getting stuck in a dead end, low paying job that does not maximize their interests or skills.
-