



The Peace Between

Discussion Guide

Introduction

Three countries. Six nationalities. One film.

"The Peace Between" explores how unlikely friendships can begin and continue to grow. We meet three Europeans who have had displaced people come into their country and their lives. And we meet the people who have travelled thousands of kilometres to seek sanctuary in Europe. These are friendships that grew in spite of huge differences.

The short film presents three real relationships, though they are not necessarily models to copy since every friendship is unique. We hope that, by looking at this film, there will be opportunities for honest reflection and discussion about how we all feel about displaced people in our communities. We have provided this discussion guide to help facilitate the conversation.

Viewing asylum seekers through the various lenses of politics, humanitarian need, economic problems or security concerns is valid. This film invites you to pick up a new lens: relationship. It reveals the miracle of friendship stretching beyond vast differences. "The Peace Between" is an opportunity to "meet" real people, both Europeans and those that our cultures call 'foreigners' and to be challenged by how we can be neighbour to one another in spite of barriers.

The goal of this project is bigger than a simple film. We hope that churches as well as student and community groups will create the opportunity for people to view the film and then go a step further. The project envisions that you will provide an intentionally safe space for people to react honestly to the film's content through the sharing of experiences, hopes and concerns. You will find some materials on <https://www.europeanea.org/peace-between-dialogue/> that can help you create a safe space for people to share their very different reactions, to discuss freely, and to intentionally listen to one another.



Content of the Discussion Guide

The Guide provides questions to help facilitate discussion. It also features a small amount of background information for each friendship. To access additional materials for discussion, action, learning, bible study, and prayer, or to support a church service about displaced people, please visit <https://www.europeanea.org/peace-between-dialogue/>.

The questions in this Guide are organized so that you can:

- Discuss all three friendships, if you choose to view the complete film in one event.
- Focus on one friendship by showing that portion of the film, and discuss questions associated with that friendship.
- Put on a series of three discussions, looking at one friendship each time, by using the questions associated with each section as you watch that section.

A few more thoughts:

- There are plenty of questions. Please choose those which are most suited to your context.
- Many of the questions are intentionally suitable for those who do not necessarily have a Christian faith. You may wish to show the film and provide a reflection opportunity for the wider community.
- We also recommend that the discussion leader read the background materials sections in the Guide prior to the event.



Tips for a successful discussion of The Peace Between

The issues of migration and displaced people can be controversial. Some people are interested. Some people want to help or have already befriended a displaced person. Some people are worried. The film, "The Peace Between", and its materials are designed so that anyone can explore the issues in an open way.

For a discussion event to be a positive experience, we recommend that you consider the following steps.

1. Pray. If you expect there to be different perspectives amongst participants, pray specifically for peace.
2. Advertise the event as an opportunity to reflect and to share what we think and feel.
3. Set rules for listening and potentially disagreeing at the beginning of the event. Prepare participants to come as listeners. Encourage them to respect one another even when their views differ. Make sure that the discussion is not dominated by only a few voices.
4. Avoid pushing political lines or perspectives.
5. Familiarise yourself with the Discussion Guide and relevant background information prior to the event. You can access the supplementary materials on the <https://www.europeanea.org/peace-between-dialogue/> that you feel will be most relevant for your audience.
6. Consider inviting a displaced person to the discussion group if you believe this will help, not stifle, open conversation.
7. If it is obvious that all participants are happy to explore the idea of befriending someone who has been displaced, focus on the relevant questions and materials.
8. Allow concerns about migration, asylum seekers, refugees, and displaced persons to be voiced. However, do not let the conversation steer into political debate. Keep the focus on whether a church or community can offer friendship.
9. End on a peaceful note. Watch the time and close on a positive note. Allow time to summarize the conversation and to pray.
10. Consider offering refreshments at the end of the discussion so that one to one conversations can happen.



Disclaimer

In this discussion guide to the documentary "The Peace Between", you will find a lot of questions both for the three films together and for the individual episodes. We don't expect you to discuss all these questions but we do trust that you will pick and choose the questions that fit your local situation/audience the best. Feel free to add your own questions in order to foster a candid and balanced debate on displaced people. We would be more than happy to consider adding them to a next edition of these guidelines.

General questions for those looking at the film of three friendships

Simple ice-breakers

- What struck or surprised you most in these three stories? Why?
- What story spoke the loudest to you? Why?
- Which character was the easiest for you to relate to? Why?
- Which character was the most difficult for you to relate to? Why?

A word about terminology

People may be migrants, asylum seekers or refugees. In this study, we generally use the phrase "displaced" person or people, to include any of these people but to point out that they have moved far from home to a foreign country.

Questions

- Who has met a displaced person? Tell us about them.
- How do you think a displaced person might be similar to us or different to us?
- Can you imagine situations that would make you flee your country? What situations would that be?
- If you had to flee your country, what would you miss the most?

- If you had to flee your country, what would you need the most from the new host country and its people?
- What concerns us about displaced people?
- István, Anna and Sophie don't seem to be thinking about the political and other challenges related to displaced people. They are simply befriending individuals. Why do you think this is so? What do you think of their approach?
- All these friendships bridge one or several differences (of faith, age, culture or ethnicity). Do you have friendships that cross similar boundaries? Can you share some of the beauty of it and of its challenges?

Going Deeper

- What do you think is the role of the government in responding to the needs of displaced people? What do you think is the role of the Church in responding to the needs of displaced people?
- To what extent do you trust or mistrust displaced people? Where does that feeling come from?
- The Bible repeatedly commands that God's people offer hospitality to the stranger and to care for the foreigner and welcome those willing to integrate. (E.g. *Leviticus 19: 34. Matthew 25: 35-45*. See supplementary notes on what the Bible says about the responsibilities of both the foreigner and the host community.) What does this mean for us? What does this mean for our country?
- If you were to consider befriending a displaced person, what would your motivations be for doing so (or not)?

Prayer suggestions

- How would you like to pray for yourself and for your community as you consider the displaced people in your nation or those wanting to come to your nation?
- How would you like to pray for displaced people themselves?



Below, you will find three sections, each focusing on just one friendship. Choose to discuss the friendship that seems most interesting to you. Pick the questions that are most relevant.

István and Raza, Hungary

István is a busy pastor and Evangelical Alliance leader in Hungary. His work includes reaching out to many refugees. Raza is recovering from the trauma of his journey to Hungary as an unaccompanied minor. He is busy seeking to fit into Hungarian life and to finish his education. István and Raza's story shows us that it is possible for two very different and busy people to become friends.

Background materials

Unaccompanied and Separated Children: There are a multitude of reasons that children and young people from Africa, South Asia and the Middle East flee to Europe. Some flee persecution, others' homes were destroyed in war, and others are desperate to live somewhere that they can be educated or earn a living to support their family. They arrive as asylum-seekers and hope for the chance to be granted the right to stay and rebuild their lives. Many are under the age of 18 and, among these are youth that travel without family for months or even years. These are called unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) or unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Since 2013, more than 300,000 unaccompanied and separated children and youth have applied for asylum in Europe.¹ Many have travelled across the continent, while others remain in the country where they first arrived. In many cases, these young people have been without family for months or even years, are living in squalid conditions, are preyed upon by traffickers, smugglers and radical extremists, and exist in a state of limbo – not knowing when or if they will receive asylum or be reunited with family.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00194/default/table?lang=en>

Questions

- Pointing to the platinum in Raza's wrist, István claims that Raza has much value inside. What other values do you appreciate in Raza?
- Put yourself in István's place. What might feel threatening about Raza and why?
- Put yourself in Raza's place. What might feel threatening about István and why?
- István and Raza have different faiths, ages, cultures and ethnicities. They seem to get along very well. Do you have friendships that cross similar boundaries? Can you share some of the beauty of it and of its challenges?
- We might not be able to save the world and to solve all the challenges related to migration, but, according to István, we might be able to save one little starfish at a time. What difference do you think Istvan is making to this one young person, Raza?
- Raza is learning Hungarian and is continuing his education. What can István and others do to help him continue to integrate?

This section features a brief focus on displaced and unaccompanied young people. While considering that Raza and his brother left their home as teenagers and lived for more than a year under a bridge in Greece, discuss these questions:

- What type of situations may have caused Raza and his brother to make this journey without their parents?
- How might their parents feel about their separation? If you are a parent, how would it impact you if your child had to flee home without you?
- What do you think helped them survive all this time?
- How might this impact their futures?
- How might having a friend like István impact their lives?
- What type of help and hope might people from the Church offer to young people in situations like this?

Going deeper

- To what extent do you trust or mistrust foreigners? How reliable do you think your basis is for this trust or mistrust?
- The Old Testament seems to assume foreigners will integrate and adhere to Israel's laws, including religious ones. How do you see this happening with displaced people in your country? How do you feel it should (or should not) happen?
- How can we help displaced people from a different religious background integrate into our societies?



Anna and Dana, Copenhagen

Anna is a typical Danish young woman living in Copenhagen. Dana, from Syria, is still marked by the horror of war she has experienced. She has her family with her but expresses that it is great for her to have Anna as a friend, someone from outside those memories of war; as an older sister figure. They share sadness but also all the normal things that two young women enjoy. Anna's family does not live nearby, and Dana's family is delighted to include her into their home life.

Background materials

If you are going to make friends with a displaced person... tips to remember

- **Call them "my friend"**, not 'my **refugee** friend'. They are an individual person with similar feelings, hopes, and dreams that you experience.
- **Be consistently present and available.** Realize their need for consistency and stability. Commit to one person or one family and extend consistent relationship to them.
- **Be willing to hear and to understand another person's perspective.** Recognize that how they understand faith, politics etc. may be different. Listen. Do not try to change their views.
- **Listen well without offering simple solutions or a 'quick fix'.** Do not assume that you know what is best for them.
- **Connect them to other safe people.** Network them with others who can help them make inroads into the community (E.g. find a job, meet parents at the school, meet neighbours). Help them to understand the routine of the community.
- **Allow them to express fear and anger without judging them.** They may have negative feelings toward the situation they left or towards the current situation in your country. Culture shock is a real part of the process. Listen. Recognise when to invite them to connect with a counsellor. Help them make that connection.
- **Allow them to ask searching spiritual questions without feeling the need to provide and answer.** Avoid pushing them to convert to Christianity. Realize that some 'why' questions do not have easy answers. Be present and compassionate.
- **Do not make promises that you do not intend to keep or cannot keep.** There are outcomes that you cannot control related to visas, laws, and the immigration process. Do not make a promise to do something unless you can make it happen and you intend to do so.
- **When you hear their story, show empathy.** If they have lived through trauma, your empathetic response acknowledges their pain. Feel that pain with them, recognize it and respond compassionately.

- **Respect their boundaries.** For some people, it is part of their healing process to tell their story over and over. For others, the memories are just too painful to share with others, at least for the time being. Respect the person's choice.
- **Recognize that they have something that you need and be humble enough to accept it.** Their life experience, world perspective and skills are as valid as yours. Learn to be humble enough to recognize your need and willing to accept and ask for their help.

Questions

- With her own family elsewhere, Anna has been welcomed into Dana's family. How did Anna's friendship help Dana? Why is this friendship important to her?
- How important is your family to you? Could you do without it?
- Anna mentions several differences in family culture. What differences did you observe? How might Dana and her family feel about these differences?
- What do you think Dana/Anna appreciate about their friendship?
- Dana's memories still cause her great pain. What stories have you heard about the trauma asylum seekers have been through?
- What can help people recover from trauma?
(See <https://www.europeanea.org/peace-between-dialogue/> giving more info & ideas).

Going deeper

- Dana's family warmly welcomed Anna as the older sister in the family. Would you be willing and/or able to do the same to a displaced person living next to you? Why or Why not?
- Anna points out that how her family and Anna's family practise hospitality differs. Often an asylum seeker/refugee longs to offer hospitality, but the invitation or indeed the food may be different to what you are used to. How do you feel about that? If you were to offer hospitality to a refugee, what do you think you might want to bear in mind? Would you be able to receive hospitality from a refugee neighbour? How do you think this would impact you?



Yonathan and Sophie, Brest

Yonathan and Meron are Christian asylum seekers from Ethiopia. They met in the “Jungle” camp in Calais in the north of France and now have a baby. Sophie, from the south of France, also a Christian, was deeply moved by the welcome they offered her in the squalor of the camp and of their joy in worship. Yonathan, Meron and their baby are now in Brest, North West France, waiting to hear if they may stay in the country. Separated from their families, they so appreciate their continuing friendship with Sophie.

Background materials

There are, of course, many Christians among the displaced people who have come to Europe. Many were Christians when they fled home, others have converted on the journey. Christian organisations working with displaced people say that there is a tremendous move of God taking place.

Christians can be especially vulnerable in camps and reception centres because of their faith. They need protection and people to speak up for them. They also crave fellowship with the local Church and a sense of belonging with brothers and sisters. Equally, and especially with the support and encouragement of the local Church, they can be great witnesses within the asylum seeker community.

If you compare the worst countries for Christian persecution with the nationalities of displaced people in Europe, you will notice a sad correlation. It is not an exaggeration to say that, if Christians are deported to some of these countries, they will be in great danger.

Should we favour Christian asylum seekers above others when it comes to selecting who will be granted the right to remain permanently? Syrian Church leaders say a loud and clear “No!” They are horrified at the thought of Jesus’ teaching of the Good Samaritan being forgotten. Christians can be extra vulnerable and we should react accordingly. But asylum should be granted on the basis of individual need alone.

For more background on Christian displaced people, please refer to <https://www.europeanea.org/peace-between-dialogue/>.

Questions

- Have any of you met or heard about Christian refugees? Tell us about them. How is their religious culture and practice similar or different to ours?
- Have any of you met or heard about refugees of other faiths becoming Christian? How did that affect their lives?
- Yonathan had walked across harsh desert landscape, got picked up by a truck, crossed the Mediterranean in a boat and, for five days, had tried to cross the sea to get to the UK. What other stories of tough refugee journeys have you heard? What motivates people to take on these risks?
- Yonathan goes twice a week to the refugee reception centre to see if a decision has been made to allow him to stay in France. What must it be like to have to wait for several years to find out finally if you will stay or be deported?
- Yonathan and Meron want to stay in France because their priority is their “social life”, by which they mean their community of friends, Church family etc. When a refugee has lost their own family, identity, country, everything, how important must it be for them to feel that they are valued by a community and a new sense of extended family?
- How could you help people to feel ‘at home’ in your country?

Going deeper

- Yonathan and Meron seem to have found their place in a local church. To what extent is your community or church open to refugees? What could you do to (further) improve that?
- Is it important that Yonathan and Meron are Christian? Will this help them better integrate into France, which is considered a Christian country?
- If you were forced to flee your home and country and go to a new continent, how do you think the people of the host country might respond to you? How would you hope Christians of this host nation would respond to you?
- Given the responses to the above question, what are some reflections on this verse? “When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.” *Leviticus 19:33-34*.

Three countries. Six nationalities. One Film. And, the challenges that come with finding the peace that can exist between us. May this project be a lens into the human side of the refugee crisis and may it lead all of us to peace.

See <https://www.europeanea.org/peace-between-dialogue/> for details about the makers of the film and creators of these materials.