

Refugee Education and  
Engagement Project  
*Young Readers Guide*

A collection of stories to encourage thoughtful discussion, understanding, and compassion for refugees and immigrants

*Suggested Reading for Young Readers*

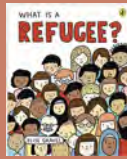


**The Journey by Francesca Sanna**

With haunting echoes of the current refugee crisis, this beautifully illustrated book explores the unimaginable decisions made as a family leaves their home and everything they know to escape the turmoil and tragedy brought by war.

**Lubna and Pebble by Wendy Meddour**

Lubna's best friend is a pebble. Pebble always listens to her stories. Pebble always smiles when she feels scared. But when a lost little boy arrives in the World of Tents, Lubna realizes that he needs Pebble even more than she does.



**What is a Refugee? by Elise Gravel**

Who are refugees? Why are they called that word? Why do they need to leave their country? Why are they sometimes not welcome in their new country? Explore what it means to be a refugee.

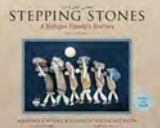


**Story Boat by Kyo Maclear**

When a little girl and her younger brother are forced along with their family to flee the home they've always known, they must learn to make a new home for themselves — wherever they are. And sometimes the smallest things — a cup, a blanket, a lamp, a flower, a story — can become a port of hope in a terrible storm. As the refugees travel onward toward an uncertain future, they are buoyed up by their hopes, dreams and the stories they tell — a story that will carry them perpetually forward.

**Stepping Stones A Refugee Family's Journey by Margriet Ruurs**

This story shares the journey of a young girl named Rama and her family. Their happy, peaceful life is disrupted by war, and Rama watches as life changes and friends and neighbors move away. Eventually, it is Rama's family's turn to leave on the difficult journey to start a new life.



**Marwan's Journey by Patricia de Arias**

Marwan is a young boy on a journey he never intended to take, bound for a place he doesn't know. On his journey, he relies on courage and memories of his faraway homeland to buoy him. With him are hundreds and thousands of other human beings, crossing the deserts and the seas, fleeing war, and hunger in search of safety. He must take one step after another—bringing whatever he can carry, holding on to dreams.

**Counting Kindness; 10 Ways to Welcome Refugee Children by Hollis Kurman**

Arriving in a new place is stressful for newcomers, especially when the newcomers are little ones. But this beautiful counting book helps readers see the journey of finding a new home and the joys of being welcomed into a new community. From playing to sleeping, eating to reading, celebrating to learning, Counting Kindness proves we can lift the heaviest hearts when we come together. Endorsed by Amnesty International.



**My Name is Not Refugee by Kate Milner**

A young boy discusses the journey he is about to make with his mother. They will leave their town, she explains, & it will be sad but also a little bit exciting. They will have to say goodbye to friends & loved ones, and that will be difficult. They will have to walk and walk and walk, and although they will see many new & interesting things, it will be difficult at times too. A powerful & moving exploration that draws the young reader into each stage of the journey, inviting the chance to imagine the decisions he or she would make.



**Four Feet, Two Sandals by Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed**

When relief workers bring used clothing to the refugee camp, everyone scrambles to grab whatever they can. Ten-year-old Lina is thrilled when she finds a sandal that perfectly fits her foot until she sees another girl with the matching shoe. But soon Lina and Feroza meet and decide that it is better to share the sandals than for each to wear only one.



**Lost and Found Cat by Doug Kuntz and Amy Shrodes**

When an Iraqi family is forced to flee their home, they can't bear to leave their beloved cat, Kunkush, behind. So they carry him with them from Iraq to Greece, keeping their secret passenger hidden away. But during the crowded boat crossing to Greece, his carrier breaks and the frightened cat runs from the chaos, disappearing. After an unsuccessful search, his family has to continue their journey, leaving brokenhearted. A few days later, aid workers in Greece find the lost cat. Knowing how much his family has sacrificed already, they are desperate to reunite them. A worldwide community comes together to spread the word on the Internet and in the news media, and after several months the impossible happens—Kunkush's family is found, and they finally get their happy ending in their new home.



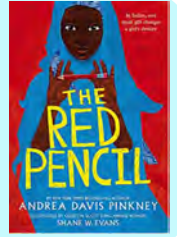
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**The Red Pencil by Andrea Davis Pinkey**

Life in Amira's peaceful Sudanese village is shattered when Janjaweed attackers arrive, unleashing unspeakable horrors. After losing nearly everything, Amira needs to find the strength to make the long journey on foot to safety at a refugee camp. She begins to lose hope, until the gift of a simple red pencil opens her mind -- and all kinds of possibilities.



**Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai**

Hà has only ever known Saigon: the thrills of its markets, the joy of its traditions, and the warmth of her friends close by. But now the Vietnam War has reached her home. Hà & her family are forced to flee as Saigon falls, and they board a ship headed toward hope—toward America. This is the moving story of one girl's year of change, dreams, grief, & healing.



**Nowhere Boy by Katherine Marsh**

Fourteen-year-old Ahmed is stuck in a city that wants nothing to do with him. Newly arrived in Brussels, Belgium, Ahmed fled a life of uncertainty and suffering in Aleppo, Syria, only to lose his father on the perilous journey to the shores of Europe. Now Ahmed's struggling to get by on his own, but with no one left to trust and nowhere to go, he's starting to lose hope. Then he meets Max, a thirteen-year-old American boy from Washington, D.C. Lonely and homesick, Max is struggling at his new school and just can't seem to do anything right. But with one startling discovery, Max and Ahmed's lives collide and a friendship begins to grow.



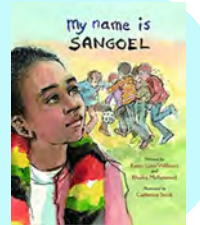
**When Stars Are Scattered by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed**

Omar and his younger brother, Hassan, have spent most of their lives in Dadaab, a refugee camp in Kenya. Life is hard there: never enough food, achingly dull, and without access to the medical care Omar knows his nonverbal brother needs. So when Omar has the opportunity to go to school, he knows it might be a chance to change their future . . . but it would also mean leaving his brother, the only family member he has left, every day.



**My Name is Sangoel by Karen Williams and Khadra Mohammed**

Sangoel is a refugee. Leaving behind his homeland of Sudan, where his father died in the war, he has little to call his own other than his name, a Dinka name handed down proudly from his father and grandfather before him. When Sangoel and his mother and sister arrive in the United States, everything seems very strange and unlike home. In this busy, noisy place, Sangoel quietly endures the fact that no one is able to pronounce his name. Lonely and homesick, he finally comes up with an ingenious solution to this problem, and in the process he at last begins to feel at home.



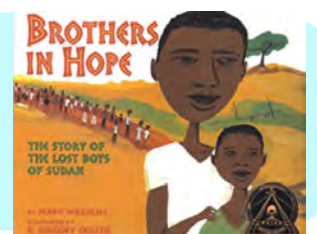
**Refugee by Alan Gratz**

Josef is a Jewish boy living in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he & his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world. Isabel is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots & unrest plaguing her country, she & her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety in America. Mahmoud is a Syrian boy in 2015. With his homeland torn apart, he & his family begin a long trek toward Europe. All three go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge. But there is always the hope of tomorrow.



**Brothers in Hope by Mary Williams**

Eight-year-old Garang is tending cattle far from his family's home in southern Sudan when war comes to his village. Soon Garang meets other boys whose villages have been attacked & they become a moving band of thousands, walking hundreds of miles seeking safety. Based on heartbreaking yet inspirational true events in the lives of the Lost Boys of Sudan, this is a story of remarkable & enduring courage, an amazing testament to the unyielding power of the human spirit.



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**The Best We Could Do by Thi Bui**

This beautifully illustrated and emotional story is an evocative memoir about the search for a better future and a longing for the past. Exploring the anguish of immigration and the lasting effects that displacement has on a child and her family, Bui documents the story of her family’s daring escape after the fall of South Vietnam in the 1970s, and the difficulties they faced building new lives for themselves.

**Stormy Seas by Mary Beth Leatherdale**

The phenomenon of desperate refugees risking their lives to reach safety is not new. For hundreds of years, people have left behind family, friends, and all they know in hope of a better life. This book presents five true stories about young people who lived through the harrowing experience of setting sail in search of asylum: Ruth and her family board the St. Louis to escape Nazism; Phu sets out alone from war-torn Vietnam; José tries to reach the U.S. from Cuba; Najeeba flees Afghanistan and the Taliban; Mohamed, an orphan, runs from his village on the Ivory Coast.



**A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park**

Tom Bouchard: captain and star of the Enniston High School soccer team; boyfriend to one of the prettiest, most popular girls; and third in his class finds his life turned upside down after the events of 9/11. Enniston has become a “secondary migration” location for Somali refugees seeking a better life after their country is destroyed by war. Tom hasn’t thought much about his Somali classmates until four of them join the soccer team, including Saeed. But when Saeed’s eligibility is questioned and Tom screws up in a big way, he’s left to grapple with a culture he doesn’t understand and take responsibility for his actions. The refugees came out of nowhere and vanish just as quickly. And Tom may find himself going nowhere, too, if he doesn’t start trying to get somewhere.

**Refugee Boy by Benjamin Zephaniah**

Walk in the shoes of Alem and you will learn what it's like to be a boy without a country. Alem's father is Ethiopian and his mother Eritrean, and as long as these two countries are at war, Alem's family is not welcome in either place. So Alem's father does what at first seems unthinkable - he leaves Alem in England, alone, in the hope that he will find safety as a refugee. Though the Refugee Council in London takes Alem's case, through the legal processing, finding a foster family, and entering school, it is Alem's courageous and caring character that wins him the friends, the respect, and ultimately, the legal permission to stay in England and start his own, new life.



**Baddawi by Leila Abdelrazaq**

An arrestingly drawn debut graphic novel, Baddawi is the story of a young boy named Ahmad struggling to find his place in the world. It explores the childhood of the author's father from a determinedly boy's-eye view. Ahmed was raised in the refugee camp of Baddawi in northern Lebanon, one of many thousands of children born to Palestinians who fled (or were expelled from) their homeland during the 1948 war that established the state of Israel. Ahmad's dogged pursuit of education and opportunity echoes the journey of the Palestinian people, as they make the best of their existing circumstances while remaining determined to one day return to their homeland.

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*Suggested Reading for Adults*

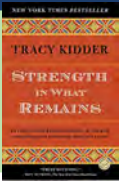
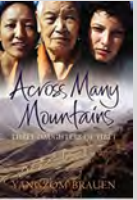
**A Hope More Powerful than the Sea: The Journey of Doaa Al Zamel by Melissa Fleming**



A Hope More Powerful than the Sea chronicles the life of Doaa, a Syrian girl whose life was upended in 2011 by the onset of her country's brutal civil war. Doaa and her fiancé decide to flee to Europe to seek safety and an education, but four days after setting sail on a smuggler's dilapidated fishing vessel, their boat is struck and begins to sink. This eye-opening true story represents millions of unheard voices of refugees who risk everything in a desperate search for the promise of a safe future.

**Across Many Mountains: Three Daughters of Tibet by Yangzom Brauen**

Kunsang thought she would never leave Tibet. One of Tibet's youngest nuns, she grew up in a remote mountain village where, as a teenager, she entered the local nunnery. When Chinese soldiers began destroying her monastery, she and her family were forced to flee across the Himalayas in winter. She spent several years in Indian refugee camps. Yangzom Brauen has rescued the story of her inspirational grandmother, writing a book full of love and endurance, and giving us a rare and vivid glimpse of life in rural Tibet before the arrival of the Chinese.

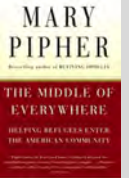


**Strength in what Remains by Tracy Kidder**

Tracy Kidder gives us the story of one man's inspiring American journey and of the ordinary people who helped him, providing brilliant testament to the power of second chances. Deo arrives in the United States from Burundi in search of a new life. Having survived a civil war and genocide, he lands at JFK airport with two hundred dollars, no English, and no contacts. Then Deo begins to meet the strangers who will change his life, pointing him eventually in the direction of Columbia University, medical school, & a life devoted to healing.

Lost Boys from Sudan, survivors from Kosovo, families fleeing Afghanistan and Vietnam: they come with nothing but the hope and desire to experience the American dream. Their endurance in the face of tragedy and their ability to hold on to the virtues of family, love, and joy are a lesson for all Americans. Their stories will make you laugh, weep, and give you a deeper understanding of the wider world in which we live. The Middle of Everywhere moves beyond the headlines into the homes of refugees from around the world. It opens our eyes--and our hearts--to those with whom we share the future.

**The Middle of Everywhere by Mary Pipher**



**The Other Side of the Sky by Farah Ahmedi**

Equal parts tragedy and hope, determination and daring, Ahmedi's memoir delivers a remarkably vivid portrait of her girlhood in Kabul, where the sound of gunfire and the sight of falling bombs shaped her life and stole her family. She narrowly escapes death when she steps on a land mine. Eventually the war forces her to flee, first over the mountains to refugee camps across the border, and finally to America. Ahmedi proves that even in the direst circumstances, not only can the human heart endure, it can thrive.

**The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini**

The unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, caught in the tragic sweep of history, The Kite Runner transports readers to Afghanistan at a tense and crucial moment of change and destruction. A powerful story of friendship, it is also about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption; and an exploration of the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies.

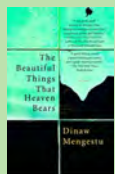


**Those We Throw Away Are Diamonds by Mondiant Dogon**

When Mondiant Dogon, a Bagowe Tutsi born in the Democratic Republic of Congo, was only three years old, his father's lifelong friend, a Hutu man, came to their home with a machete & warned the family they were to be killed within hours. Dogon's family fled, initiating a long & dangerous journey into Rwanda. They made their way to the first of several UN tent cities in which they would spend decades. But their search for a safe haven had just begun. Rarely do refugees get to tell their own stories. We see them only for a moment, if at all, in flight...

**In the Sea there are Crocodiles by Fabio Geda**

In early 2002, Enaiatollah Akbari's village fell prey to the Taliban. His mother, fearing for his life, led him across the border. So began Enaiat's remarkable five-year ordeal through Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and Greece, before he eventually sought political asylum in Italy, all before he turned fifteen years old. Here Fabio Geda delivers the moving true story of Enaiat's extraordinary will to survive and of the accidental brotherhood he found with the boys he met along the way.



**The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears by Dinaw Mengestu**

Seventeen years ago, Sepha Stephanos fled the Ethiopian Revolution for a new start in the United States. Now he finds himself running a failing grocery store in a poor African-American section of Washington, D.C., his only companions two fellow African immigrants. Years ago and worlds away Sepha could never have imagined a life of such isolation. As his environment begins to change, hope comes in the form of a friendship with new neighbors Judith and Naomi, a white woman and her biracial daughter. But when a series of racial incidents disturbs the community, Sepha may lose everything all over again.

**The Lost Boys of Sudan by Mark Bixler**

In 2000 the United States began accepting refugees from one of Africa's longest civil wars. They were just some of the thousands of young men, known as "Lost Boys," who had been orphaned or otherwise separated from their families in the chaos of a brutal conflict that has ravaged Sudan since 1983. The Lost Boys of Sudan focuses on four of these refugees. As we immerse ourselves in their daily lives, we also get to know the social services professionals & volunteers, celebrities, community leaders, & others who guided them toward self-sufficiency.

