

# TURN THE TABLES

## ON THE REFUGEE CRISIS



A project of Repair the World,  
in partnership with HIAS.

# HOST GUIDE

## Welcome to Turn The Tables



### DEAR HOST,

On behalf of the teams at [Repair the World](#) and [HIAS](#), we want to THANK YOU for hosting a **Turn the Tables Dinner** as part of the #SupportforRefugees Passover campaign. **Repair the World** is a national nonprofit that mobilizes Jews to give time and effort to the causes they're passionate about. **HIAS**, the world's oldest, and only Jewish, refugee resettlement organization, is committed to helping refugees find ways to live in safety and with dignity as we also mobilize the Jewish community's response to the global refugee crisis. Together, we have teamed up to bring the Jewish community together to explore how the complex narrative of Passover liberation can inspire us to take action on the global refugee crisis. **This April**, you will join thousands of people across the country in dining and serving together and engaging in important dialogue about the global refugee crisis.

So, you might be asking yourself, what does service have to do with the refugee crisis? At a time when many voices across the globe argue that welcoming refugees is not their responsibility and that supporting refugees in their country will deplete their nation's resources, we can change that narrative through service. The Passover story challenges us to remember – and even relive – a time when Jews found liberation by finding abundance in the scarcity. Let's also challenge ourselves to see that we can continue to find liberation through sharing our resources with others. When we volunteer with the many organizations that provide essential services like access to English language tutoring, housing, job training, food, education or after school care, we **strengthen the systems that benefit everyone in our communities**, including refugees.

This **Host Guide** contains several different discussion activities to help you facilitate constructive and meaningful conversations. We encourage you to invite a diverse array of backgrounds, perspectives and experiences into your discussion and to please use the activities that most resonate with you and your guests. While some activities are designed to be traditionally Shabbat/Jewish holiday-friendly, feel free to adapt the activities to best meet all customs and personal needs of those at your dinner. We hope that you and your guests leave your dinner:



With a heightened **AWARENESS** about the global refugee crisis



Having had an opportunity to **SPEAK UP** about the complex issues surrounding this crisis



Inspired to **TAKE ACTION** by volunteering your time.

Between April 15-30, thousands of Jewish young adults will show up for refugees in their community as they begin their volunteer commitments and provide support to sustain refugees in the months and years to come.

It's because of leaders like you that the world can change: table by table and city by city. Thanks again for all you do – and all you will do to make this dinner possible!

The Teams at

**REPAIR  
THE WORLD**

[www.werepair.org](http://www.werepair.org)

&

**HIAS**

[www.hias.org](http://www.hias.org)

**A TURN THE TABLES Dinner has several ingredients: a tasty meal, some meaty (or vegetarian) conversation about important issues, and an opportunity to get involved.**

## GETTING STARTED

- 1. Read through the Host Guide in its entirety** before choosing which portions you wish to use for your dinner.
- 2. Collect and print the necessary materials and supplies** as outlined throughout the Host Guide.
- 3.** Print a copy of the **Respectful Conversations** sheet to have on hand throughout your dinner and to review in advance. It offers guidelines for facilitating fair and meaningful discourse about sensitive subjects.
- 4.** As you read through the guide, **be mindful of the space and environment** in which you will host your dinner. Think about how you want to set up the seating so it's conducive to respectful conversation and dialogue.

## SIMMER, DO NOT BOIL.

**Productive discomfort is encouraged.**

Feeling slightly uncomfortable and stretching a bit out of your comfort zone can generate learning and growth. Before starting the program, take a few minutes for your guests to understand your intention in maintaining a safe space that allows each of you to experience some productive discomfort during the evening. You might consider sharing the **Respectful Conversations** sheet with everyone present.

## WHET YOUR APPETITE



### Serving the Appetizer: Opening Activity

We believe that setting intentions for conversations about complex issues that challenge our vision of a just society is critical to fostering a productive, respectful and inclusive experience. The **“Lean Out/Lean In”** activity asks you to begin your dinner by reflecting on the ritual of reclining at the Passover Seder. The goal of this activity is to start the meal by leaning in to the conversation you are about to have and reflecting on the ways in which you have experienced both abundance and scarcity in your own life.



### Plating the Salad

You know how parents always say that salad is the foundation of any good meal? So are definitions and a hearty list of quick facts! Before you delve into your entrée, help your guests get on the same page by reviewing some basic definitions and facts connected to the global refugee crisis.



### Choosing and Digesting your Discussion Entrée

Select the entrée below that you'd like to chew on. Each option takes a look at a different aspect of the global refugee crisis. Feel free to bring additional sources that you have come across into your meal to guide your own discussion.

- Discussion Entrée Option 1: Refugees Voices: An Exploration of Abundance in Refugee Art**  
This entrée gives guests the opportunity to explore different mediums of refugee art - visual, poetry, and spoken word - to get to know who refugees are and how their experiences affect the lives they rebuild.

*(Continued on the next page)*

- **Discussion Entrée Option 2: 31 Governors Say No**  
This discussion option will give participants the opportunity to discuss the debate around welcoming refugees in the U.S. in the political arena, particularly the recent backlash against supporting Muslim refugees in the wake of various terrorist attacks.
- **Discussion Entrée Option 3: Passover Text Study**  
This entrée takes a look at a handful of texts from the Passover Haggadah to explore how the themes of moving from scarcity to abundance in the Exodus narrative might teach us something about how to engage with the contemporary refugee crisis.
- **Discussion Entrée Option 4: Take on the Refugee Crisis with a GameStorm** (that's a game + a brainstorm)  
[The Hive](#), a special projects unit of [USA for UNHCR](#), is transforming the ways in which Americans engage with the refugee crisis. Through this card game, guests will have the opportunity to match Actors and Tools to come up with creative solutions. And yeah, we know that pairing together two cards probably won't produce a complete plan for solving a major problem, but it will certainly raise new questions for conversation and will get us thinking about resources we can use to create change.
- **Discussion Entrée Option 5: Create Your Own** (and Additional Resources!)  
For additional sources and more information about the global refugee crisis check out HIAS' resource page at [www.hias.org/resources](http://www.hias.org/resources).



### Concluding with Dessert: Closing Reflections and Commitments

Just as we conclude our meal on a high note with dessert, we want to conclude our conversations with an opportunity for reflection. The “**Fill Someone's Cup**” activity will allow you and your guests to reflect on the evening and make a commitment to action.

## TAKE ACTION

At a time when many voices across the globe argue that welcoming refugees is not their responsibility and that supporting refugees in their country will deplete their nation's resources, we can change that narrative through service.

When we volunteer with the many organizations that provide essential services like access to English language tutoring, housing, job training, food, education or after school care, we strengthen the systems that benefit everyone in our communities, including refugees, those who are most vulnerable.

The goal of Turn the Tables Dinners is to inspire action and we hope that your guests end the meal feeling committed to creating change. Before your dinner, we encourage you to visit [weRepair.org/passover](http://weRepair.org/passover) and identify a future opportunity for you and your guests to commit to doing. Inspiration is powerful but also fleeting. Seize it by asking guests to sign-up for a follow-up action before they leave.

Get involved in the Repair the World and HIAS Passover campaign and show your #SupportforRefugees by joining the movement.

And don't forget to tell us how it goes! Email us at [passover@wepair.org](mailto:passover@wepair.org). Or connect with us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram @RepairtheWorld, @HIASrefugees #SupportforRefugees #TurntheTables

## IF YOU NEED SUPPORT

While we can't help you cook dinner, we can help you prepare for your Turn the Tables conversation. Have a question or need clarification? Be in touch with HIAS Educator Rabbi Rachel Grant Meyer at [rachel.grant.meyer@hias.org](mailto:rachel.grant.meyer@hias.org).



## RESPECTFUL CONVERSATIONS

Discussing stories of seeking refuge can feel very personal, as many of us may have ancestors who- or maybe we ourselves may have left one home for another in search of safety and a better life. When we think about refugees, especially as their stories are interwoven with the American experience, imagery along the lines of Emma Lazarus's poem "The New Colossus" is what often comes to mind:

*"Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she  
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

Given the sheer number of individuals whose ancestors or who themselves came to the United States for refuge, **it's easy for this perspective — one of welcome and safety — to dominate how we think of refugees.** Moreover, engendering compassion and empathy for those fleeing persecution, like Jews' spiritual ancestors escaping Egypt, resonates strongly with the Jewish obligation to connect the suffering of others with our own communal suffering.

Others' stories, however, are at odds with these narratives of welcome and safety. For many African-Americans, family narratives of enslavement and involuntary servitude are more aligned with this description from PBS's "Africans in America" of a journey across the Atlantic Ocean:

*Africans were often treated like cattle during the crossing. On the slave ships, people were stuffed between decks in spaces too low for standing. The heat was often unbearable, and the air nearly unbreathable. Women were often used sexually. Men were often chained in pairs, shackled wrist to wrist or ankle to ankle. People were crowded together, usually forced to lie on their backs with their heads between the legs of others. This meant they often had to lie in each other's feces, urine, and, in the case of dysentery, even blood. In such cramped quarters, diseases such as smallpox and yellow fever spread like wildfire. The diseased were sometimes thrown overboard to prevent wholesale epidemics. Because a small crew had to control so many, cruel measures such as iron muzzles and whippings were used to control slaves.*

Still others' narratives are about being displaced within the US, the Trail of Tears and the deportation of the Cherokee nation in the late 1830's being one such example. Here, an enlisted US army soldier describes some of what he witnessed:

*On the morning of November the 17th we encountered a terrific sleet and snow storm with freezing temperatures and from that day until we reached the end of the fateful journey on March the 26th, 1839, the sufferings of the Cherokees were awful. The trail of the exiles was a trail of death. They had to sleep in the wagons and on the ground without fire. And I have known as many as twenty-two of them to die in one night of pneumonia due to ill treatment, cold, and exposure. Among this number was the beautiful Christian wife of Chief John Ross. This noble hearted woman died a martyr to childhood, giving her only blanket for the protection of a sick...*

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## Respectful Conversations



*...child. She rode thinly clad through a blinding sleet and snow storm, developed pneumonia and died in the still hours of a bleak winter night, with her head resting on Lieutenant Greggs' saddle blanket.<sup>1</sup>*

These three excerpts illustrate the diverse ways that individuals think about coming to the United States and how they connect with stories of displacement and safety.

When we convene for dinner, all of these narratives may be present in the room, and as facilitators, we have to keep them all in mind. It's important to make space for people to tell their stories, to hold appropriate space for personal pain, and to honor multiple truths. We also need to recognize the limitations of these dinners and our own pastoral care and support skills, and need to avoid becoming paralyzed by feelings of guilt or shame that may come up for us or other folks in the room.

To be clear, the potential for tension isn't localized to how slavery and displacement complexify dominant narratives of refuge. Your dinner guests may include someone who personally experienced persecution that drove them to the United States, and another individual who claims membership in an ethnic or religious group that played a prominent role in initiating that same oppressive conduct. **Our aim through Turn the Tables dinners is to educate others and ourselves about today's refugees and the challenges they face, and to empower all of us to action.** Understanding and appreciating your guests' perspectives will better enable you to connect them emotionally to the narratives in these materials, link their stories with others', and bring them into the issue at the focus of these events.

By keeping the above in mind and by using the tips on the following pages, we hope you will be able to facilitate a meaningful and productive conversation.

## OVERALL TIPS

The first step to working towards a better society is to talk openly and honestly about the issues that affect our communities. Talking about injustice is challenging, which is why this section about *how* to have the conversation is much longer than the actual discussion questions! As the host of your group, you are responsible for creating a safe space in which participants can express their opinions thoughtfully and openly, ask difficult questions, and where the feelings of the group are valued and protected.

- Acknowledge that the global refugee crisis is complicated and far-reaching; we're not going to cover all aspects of this issue.
- Appoint a facilitator.
- Acknowledge that you might have moments of discomfort – and that it's okay.
- Establish group ground rules.
- Do not tokenize people – everyone should only speak from their personal experience.
- Ensure that everyone who wants to speak, gets a chance to speak.
- Be respectful of introverts – and of silence.
- Avoid the terms “right” and “wrong.” Try not to use charged language.
- If you're offended, share – don't blame. Use “I” statements to avoid blame.
- Provide context.
- Don't get stuck in facts.

<sup>1</sup>Birthdays Story of Private John G. Burnett, Captain Abraham McClellan's Company, 2nd Regiment, 2nd Brigade, Mounted Infantry, Cherokee Indian Removal, 1838-39.

### DIGGING IN

**APPOINT A FACILITATOR.** Before you begin, decide among your participants who should lead the discussion. The best leader is likely you, but ask a friend if you're not comfortable in that role. A facilitator guides the discussion – they don't dominate it. If things get out of hand, or if voices are being blocked out, the facilitator intervenes.

**ESTABLISH GROUP GROUND RULES.** Before your program begins, collectively establish a set of rules for your discussion. These could be formal, such as "whoever holds this spoon speaks," or "if you agree, snap your fingers." These rules could also be informal, including "whatever is said in this room stays in this room."

**DO NOT TOKENIZE PEOPLE.** Individuals can only speak to their own experiences. Do not look to others to speak on behalf of their race, gender or ethnicity.

**ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE MOMENTS OF DISCOMFORT.** It can often be the elephant in the room, but, in many cases, it helps to say out loud what others are feeling: "I know we don't usually talk about the refugee crisis, and it might make you or others feel uncomfortable, and that's ok."

**ENSURE THAT EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO SPEAK, GETS A CHANCE TO SPEAK.** Very frequently, individuals who are most comfortable expressing their opinions out loud can dominate conversations. The facilitator should respectfully ask for the opinions of others if a few voices begin to dominate the conversation.

**BE RESPECTFUL OF INTROVERTS – AND OF SILENCE.** Make sure the facilitator is noticing who is not speaking. Encourage those individuals to contribute, but do not force them. Similarly, if the conversation reaches a point of silence, do not push people to speak. Be respectful of reflection.

### IF THE DISCUSSION BECOMES HEATED OR UNCOMFORTABLE:

**TRY NOT TO USE CHARGED LANGUAGE.** If someone says something offensive, assume that they simply do not realize that they have said something hurtful. Calling them a racist is one surefire way to make the situation a lot worse. Use the opportunity to share what has offended you and to educate.

**IF YOU'RE OFFENDED, SHARE – DON'T BLAME.** Ignorance is not animosity. Use the "I felt... when you..." format to discuss how you personally perceived someone's statement. You could say, for example, "I felt offended when you said that your grandfather worked himself into the middle class, and therefore anyone could achieve the American dream if they tried hard enough. In my experience, some of the opportunities available to your grandfather weren't available to a lot of people because of formal or informal restrictions and institutional racism."

**AVOID "RIGHT" AND "WRONG."** While some opinions are commonly accepted as "right," it is unproductive for conversations like these to cast someone's statements or beliefs as "wrong."

**PROVIDE CONTEXT.** Even though it's difficult, try to explain why you believe what you believe. Provide examples, facts, and stories to illuminate your opinions, and encourage others to do the same.

**DON'T GET STUCK IN FACTS.** People often claim truth or fact to back up their opinions without considering other people's perspectives or the limitations of their own knowledge. Remind people that this is a conversation. Everyone's personal experience matters. Recommend that people share information to deepen the discussion, not to shut down the conversation.

*Never forget: This very moment, we can change our lives. There never was a moment, and never will be, when we are without the power to alter our destiny. This second, we can turn the tables on resistance. This second, we can sit down and do our work. -Steven Pressfield*

## LEAN OUT/LEAN IN

*“NONE OF US IS FREE UNTIL ALL OF US ARE FREE”*

### ITEMS NEEDED

- One pillow to pass around the table
- Copies of [Appetizer \(Opening Activity\): Lean In/Lean Out](#) handout

### FRAMING

Through Passover celebrations, the Jewish people celebrate in the fact that, though our ancestors were once slaves in Egypt, we are now free. As we recline on pillows like the nobility used to, we enjoy the fact that, while we were once slaves who dined in a hurry, we are now free to enjoy ourselves.

Yet we know that we live in a world where all are not yet free. While we can and should appreciate the freedoms we enjoy, we recognize that there are still 60 million displaced people throughout the world, of whom 20 million are refugees – people who have been forced to flee their home country due to persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. In fact, the current refugee crisis is worse than at any time since World War II. Fleeing violence and persecution, the world’s refugees are some of the most vulnerable human beings around the globe.

Recently, there has been tremendous backlash against refugee resettlement in the United States for a variety of reasons including fear and xenophobia. There are many across the country who argue that the global refugee crisis is not their problem, that supporting refugees in their country is not their responsibility and will deplete the nation’s resources or threaten national security.

This thinking is antithetical to the message of Passover. The symbols of Passover remind us that, from scarcity, can come abundance. When the Israelites fled slavery in Egypt and had no time to bake bread, we took matzah with us. Now, as we look to the Passover Seder and remember the Exodus, we are commanded to break that bread and share it to show that, as long as there are people suffering in the world, none of us is really free. While we dip our vegetables in salt water to remember the bitterness of slavery, we specifically dip karpas, a green vegetable, to represent the possibility for renewal and rebirth that can come from freedom. We eat charoset, a mix of apples, raisins, nuts, and cinnamon. Even as it symbolizes the mortar between the bricks that the Children of Israel painstakingly laid as slaves in Egypt, its ingredients are sweet to remind us that, despite the incredible difficulties we experienced, there is always the hope for sweetness, the hope for redemption.

How, then, at a season when we are challenged to remember a time when Jews found liberation might we challenge ourselves to see that we can continue to find liberation through sharing our resources with others? How can we see sharing our resources as a way of living from abundance, rather than scarcity? How can we see sharing our resources as liberation not just for refugees but also for ourselves?

When we think about the journey to freedom that the Jewish people have taken since the Exodus, we know that it has not been a short road. And, so, both because of our values and because of our history, the Jewish community has a unique role to play in supporting contemporary refugees in rebuilding their lives with abundance. Tonight’s dinner gives us the opportunity to explore the connection between the global refugee crisis and the complex narrative of Passover liberation.

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### HOST INSTRUCTIONS

The host should begin by reading the framing below:

Passover is the opportunity for the Jewish people to celebrate the fact that although our ancestors were once slaves in Egypt, we are now free.

But we know that all are not yet free. While we appreciate the freedoms we currently enjoy, we recognize their fragility against a disturbing reality: there are still 60 million displaced people throughout the world, 20 million of whom are refugees. In fact, the current refugee crisis is worse than at any time since World War II. Fleeing violence and persecution, the world's refugees are some of the most vulnerable human beings around the globe.

There has been tremendous backlash recently against refugee resettlement in the United States for a variety of reasons, such as fear and xenophobia. There are many across the country who argue that the global refugee crisis is not their problem, and that welcoming refugees into their country is not their responsibility. They may even say that allowing refugees into the United States will deplete the nation's resources or threaten national security.

This thinking is antithetical to the message of Passover. The symbols of Passover remind us that, from scarcity, can come abundance:

When the Jewish people fled slavery in Egypt and had no time to bake bread, we took matzah with us. Now, as we look to the upcoming Passover Seder and remember our Exodus, we are commanded to break that bread and share it so that we see that, as long as there are people suffering in the world, none of us is really free.

While we dip our vegetables in salt water to remember the bitterness of slavery, we specifically dip *karpas*, a green vegetable, to represent the possibility for renewal and rebirth that can come from freedom.

We eat *charoset*, a mix of apples, raisins, nuts, and cinnamon. Even as it symbolizes the mortar between the bricks that the Children of Israel painstakingly laid as slaves in Egypt, its ingredients are sweet to remind us that, despite the incredible difficulties we experienced, there is always the hope for sweetness, the hope for redemption.

How, then, at a season when we are challenged to remember a time when we found our own liberation, might we challenge ourselves to see that we can continue to find liberation through sharing our resources with others? How can we see sharing our resources as a way of living from abundance, rather than scarcity? How can we see sharing our resources as liberation not just for the refugees but also for ourselves?

When we think about the journey to freedom that the Jewish people have taken since the Exodus, we know that it has not been a short road. And, so, both because of our values and because of our history, the Jewish community has a unique role to play in supporting contemporary refugees in rebuilding their lives with abundance. Tonight's dinner gives us the opportunity to explore the connection between the global refugee crisis and the complex narrative of Passover liberation.

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## Appetizer (Opening Activity)



**Next, the host should share the following with guests:**

Traditionally at the Passover seder we recline on pillows like nobility used to, to show that while we were once slaves who ate hurriedly, we are now free to dine leisurely and enjoy ourselves. In our conversation tonight we are holding both scarcity and abundance - the idea that both can coexist - and we have to get from one to the other. To do that, rather than recline the way we usually would at a Passover Seder, tonight, we are all going to lean into what might be a difficult conversation.

Instead of sitting back on a pillow and comfortably leaning out of the conversation, we are now going to pass around a pillow and each take a turn placing it behind the person sitting next to us so that, together, we can all lean into the productive discomfort - the space where change starts to occur - for the conversation we are about to have together.

While you lean in, think silently about one intention you have for your own participation in tonight's conversation.

After the group has finished leaning in, pass out the **Appetizer (Opening Activity): Lean Out / Lean In** handouts, pose the following questions to the group and have everyone find a partner to answer the following questions. Remind guests to first introduce themselves to each other.



**When is a time in your own life when you have experienced abundance coming out of scarcity, when less was actually more or when less became more?**

**How did that experience enrich your life in positive ways?**

**Were there ways that experience was still difficult, painful, or scary?**

**Bring the group back and thank everyone for sharing.**

## DEFINITIONS & TOP 5 FACTS

### ITEMS NEEDED

- Copies of [Some Helpful Definitions](#) handout
- Copies of [The Global Refugee Crisis: The Top 5 Facts](#) handout

### FRAMING

In order to enable everyone to participate in our conversation, before you dive into the entrées, you are going to take a couple of minutes to go over some basic definitions and facts about the global refugee crisis since it is a subject many people might not know a lot about.

### HOST INSTRUCTIONS

**Share the framing below with guests:**

You know how parents always say that salad is the foundation of any good meal? So are definitions and a hearty list of quick facts!

In order to enable everyone to fully participate in our conversation, before delving into the entree discussion, we are going to take a couple of minutes to go over some basic definitions and facts about the global refugee crisis since it is a subject many people might not know a lot about.

The host should hand out copies of [Some Helpful Definitions](#) and [The Global Refugee Crisis: The Top 5 Facts](#).

Ask guests to take turns reading aloud first from the “Some Helpful Definitions” handout and then from the “The Global Refugee Crisis: Top 5 Facts” handout. This will help to ground everyone in a basic shared understanding about the difference between refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, and migrants, as well as some basic facts about the global refugee crisis.

After hearing each handout read aloud, invite guests to reflect on the following questions



Which pieces of these facts were new to you?

Was anything that you learned surprising?

If you were trying to communicate the scale and depth of the refugee crisis to someone, what information from the facts you just learned might you use?

## REFUGEE VOICES:

*An Exploration of Abundance in Refugee Art*

### ITEMS NEEDED

- A TV, laptop or tablet with internet connection to play the [YouTube clip of Abdi Farah](#)
- Speakers or an audio enabled device
- Copies of [Abdi “Phenomenal” Farah Spoken Word](#) handout
- Copies of [Refugee Voices: An Exploration of Abundance in Refugee Art](#) handout

### FRAMING

We know that when we see things they become more vivid. The Torah agrees.

When the Israelites stood at Mount Sinai to receive Torah, we learn that they saw the sounds of thunder and lightning and the voice of the horn and the mountain smoking. The 12th century French rabbinic biblical commentator Rashbam comments and says that, yes, they literally saw with these sounds with their eyes.

Can we really see a sound, though? According to Sforno, another rabbinic biblical commentator who lived in Italy in the 15th century, the assertion that they “saw” these sounds means that they came to fully understand the sounds’ meaning. We learn, then, that full understanding comes not just from hearing but also from seeing – from a full sensory experience. Exploring the art of refugees allows us to see their voices and gives us a window into their experience that studying data about the global refugee crisis or reading articles about the politics of the crisis cannot.

### HOST INSTRUCTIONS

**Begin by sharing the framing with guests:**

We know that when we see things they become more vivid. The Torah agrees.

When the Israelites stood at Mount Sinai to receive Torah, we learn that they **saw** the sounds of thunder and lightning and the voice of the horn and the mountain smoking. The 12th century French rabbinic biblical commentator Rashbam comments and says that, yes, they literally saw with these sounds with their eyes.

Can we really see a sound, though? According to Sforno, another rabbinic biblical commentator who lived in Italy in the 15th century, the assertion that they “saw” these sounds means that they came to fully understand the sounds’ meaning. We learn, then, that full understanding comes not just from hearing but also from seeing – from a full sensory experience. Exploring the art of refugees allows us to see their voices and gives us a window into their experience that studying data about the global refugee crisis or reading articles about the politics of the crisis cannot.

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## Dinner Entrée Option 1



Next, pass out the handout “[Abdi Phenomenal Farah Spoken Word](#)” and watch the following YouTube clip of spoken word artist and Somali refugee Abdi “Phenomenal” Farah as a group: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOBBWRfDiPU>.<sup>2</sup>

After you watch the clip, discuss the following questions about his first piece, “More than Heroes,” as a group:



Were there any themes that you noticed in Farah’s spoken word piece?

What was the focus of Farah’s piece? Did this surprise you?

Next, distribute copies of the “[Refugee Voices: An Exploration of Abundance in Refugee Art](#)” handouts, ask guests to find a chevruta (study partner), look at the art and poetry and discuss the questions on the handout with their chevruta.

**A NOTE ABOUT CHEVRUTA LEARNING:** Chevruta learning literally means “friendship” or “companionship.” It is the traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which a pair of students analyze, discuss and debate a shared text. Unlike a teacher-student relationship, each member of a chevruta is on an equal playing field. Also, the purpose of a chevruta is to help you see in a text what you might not otherwise have noticed. While you will be looking at visual art and poetry instead of Talmudic text, the model of chevruta learning can still be powerful, helping you to see things in the art that you may not have seen at first glance and to challenge your assumptions.

There is no right or wrong amount of time to allow for the chevruta learning or set amount of material that has to be covered. If it seems like the energy is waning, take a temperature check and ask if folks are ready to come back together. If they are, bring the group back together to share pieces of what they discussed and their general reactions.

NOTE: If you’re interested in bringing in some more resources, take a look at this additional poetry and spoken word created by refugees:

1. “Home” by Warsan Shire - <http://seekershush.org/blog/2015/09/home-warsan-shire/>
2. “The Icebreaker” by Yovanka Perdigao - <http://brittlepaper.com/2015/11/icebreaker-yovanka-paquete-perdigao-african-poem>
3. Collected poetry by child refugees - [http://www.unhcr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/poetry\\_book.pdf](http://www.unhcr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/poetry_book.pdf)
4. “Refuge” by JJ Bola - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uWqV31QqLo>

<sup>2</sup> Please note that watching a video on Shabbat may violate the practices of some Jews who refrain from using electronic devices on Shabbat or during certain Jewish holidays. If you have any questions about your guests’ practices, we suggest using only the art and poetry materials.



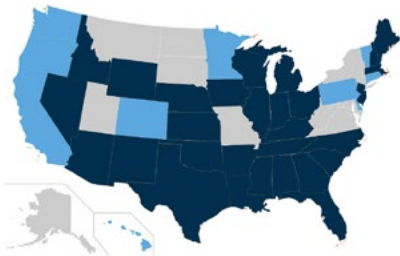
## 31 GOVERNORS SAY NO

### ITEMS NEEDED

- Copies of the [31 Governors Say No \(Articles and Statements\)](#) handout
- A TV, laptop or tablet with internet connection to play the [YouTube clip of John Oliver](#)
- Speakers or an audio enabled device

### FRAMING

At the Passover Seder, we retell the story of the Israelites' exodus from slavery in Egypt. It wasn't just up to the Israelites to leave Egypt, though. Pharaoh had to say yes. Moses had to first put pressure on Pharaoh and then lead the people out of Egypt. God had to part the Red Sea (and provide a lot of moral support along the way). Nachshon had to take the first step into the sea when everyone else put a proverbial finger on their nose and said, "Not it!" Miriam had to lead the women, tambourine in hand. There were lots of players involved, and it was not just a simple decision on the Israelites' part to head towards safety. Similarly, today's refugees need the participation of a variety of actors on the geopolitical stage to find a safe place to call home.



In the aftermath of the attacks in Paris at the Bataclan theatre and at an office holiday party in San Bernardino, California, some members of congress and U.S. governors were faced with a challenge: would they facilitate the resettlement of refugees in the United States or would they block their resettlement? What role would they play in the modern story of the exodus? In this discussion entrée you and your dinner guests will have the opportunity to explore their arguments in favor and against refugee resettlement as well as some of the perceived barriers to resettlement by those who oppose it.

Check this interactive map to find out if the governor of your state was one of the 31 who spoke out against welcoming refugees: <https://www.graphiq.com/wlp/4GWBKhBNq4t>.

### HOST INSTRUCTIONS

#### Begin by sharing the framing below with your guests:

At the Passover Seder, we retell the story of the Israelites' exodus from slavery in Egypt. It wasn't just up to the Israelites to leave Egypt, though. Pharaoh had to say yes. Moses had to first put pressure on Pharaoh and then lead the people out of Egypt. God had to part the Red Sea (and provide a lot of moral support along the way). Nachshon had to take the first step into the sea when everyone else put a proverbial finger on their nose and said, "Not it!" Miriam had to lead the women, tambourine in hand. There were lots of players involved, and it was not just a simple decision on the Israelites' part to head towards safety. Similarly, today's refugees need the participation of a variety of actors on the geopolitical stage to find a safe place to call home.

In the aftermath of the attacks in Paris at the Bataclan theatre and at an office holiday party in San Bernardino, California, some members of congress and U.S. governors were faced with a challenge: would they facilitate the resettlement of refugees in the United States or would they block their resettlement? What role would they play in the modern story of the exodus? Through our discussion this evening, we will have the opportunity to explore some of the arguments in favor and against refugee resettlement as well as some of the perceived barriers to resettlement by those who oppose it.

# HOST GUIDE

## Dinner Entrée Option 2



Next, distribute copies of the **[“31 Governors Say No \(Articles and Statements\)”](#)** handout which includes Senator Sessions’ **“Letter to the Appropriations Committee,”** Ronald Reagan’s **“Statement on United States Immigration and Refugee Policy,”** as well as the articles **“Deal rescinds order preventing Syrian refugee resettlement,”** **“Economics of Syrian Refugees,”** and **“Can Governors Really Say No to Syrian Refugees?”**

Give participants 10 minutes to read or skim the articles. Next, ask guests to find a chevruta, to work through the discussion questions with.

There is no right or wrong amount of time to allow for the chevruta learning. If it seems like the energy is waning, take a temperature check and ask if folks are ready to come back together. When ready, bring the group back together to share pieces of what they discussed and their general reactions.

After you share your reactions, gather your guests around an internet-ready device (laptop, tablet) and finish your entree by watching [John Oliver’s rundown of the refugee-vetting process in the United States.](#)<sup>3</sup>



### A NOTE ABOUT CHEVRUTA LEARNING:

Chevruta learning literally means “friendship” or “companionship.” It is the traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which a pair of students analyze, discuss, and debate a shared text. Unlike a teacher-student relationship, each member of a chevruta is on an equal playing field. Also, the purpose of a chevruta is to help you see in a text what you might not otherwise have noticed. While you will be discussing political discourse instead of Talmudic text, the model of chevruta learning can still be powerful, helping you to see things that you may not have seen at first glance or to challenge your assumptions.

<sup>3</sup>Please note that watching a video on Shabbat may violate the practices of some Jews who refrain from using electronic devices on Shabbat or during certain Jewish holidays. If you have any questions about your guests’ practices, we suggest using only the art and poetry materials.

## PASSOVER TEXT STUDY

### ITEMS NEEDED

- Copies of [Passover Text Study](#) handout

### FRAMING

The Passover Haggadah is full of imagery that helps us remember what it means to make a full and abundant life out of a narrow place and from meager means. In this entree, you will have the opportunity to look at a handful of texts from the Haggadah that speak about the idea of moving from scarcity to abundance, about making something out of nothing, about seeing beauty and fullness in the least likely places. Explore how these texts might teach us something about how we address the current refugee crisis.

### HOST INSTRUCTIONS

The host should distribute copies of the text study source sheet and then encourage guests to find a chevruta to study and discuss the sources with. They might teach us something about how we address the current refugee crisis.

There is no right or wrong amount of time to allow for the chevruta learning. If it seems like the energy is waning, take a temperature check and ask if folks are ready to come back together. If they are, bring the group back together to share pieces of what they discussed and their general reactions..

**A NOTE ABOUT CHEVRUTA LEARNING:** Chevrutah literally means “friendship” or “companionship.” It is the traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which a pair of students analyze, discuss, and debate a shared text. Unlike a teacher-student relationship, partnered learning puts each student in the position of analyzing the text, organizing their thoughts into logical arguments, explaining their reasoning to their partner, hearing out their partner’s reasoning, and questioning and sharpening each other’s ideas, often arriving at entirely new insights into the meaning of the text.

Read each source out loud together. Spend some time wondering about it out loud together before referring to the guiding questions. Read the guiding questions together. Allow space for each partner have the opportunity to share a response. This is a dialogue and a conversation!

## TAKE ON THE REFUGEE CRISIS WITH A GAMESTORM

(THAT'S A GAME + A BRAINSTORM)

### ITEMS NEEDED

- 1 full set of the **GameStorm** cards<sup>1</sup> which includes:
  - 1 deck of Actor cards (100)
  - 1 deck of Tool cards (100)
  - 1 deck of Impact cards
  - Blank Question cards
- Copies of [Game Instructions](#)
- Pens
- Tape and poster board (optional)

### FRAMING

We live in a world where nearly 60 million people have been forced to flee their homes because of violence or persecution. These people are displaced. They are in a desperate search for better places to live – but often they are forced to travel hundreds of miles through conditions just as bad as the places they are fleeing from. This is a world that needs change.

The following activity is brought to you in partnership with [the Hive](#), a special projects unit of [USA for UNHCR](#), that is transforming the ways in which Americans engage with the refugee crisis.

### HOST INSTRUCTIONS

#### Begin by sharing the framing below:

We live in a world where nearly 60 million people have been forced to flee their homes because of violence or persecution. These people are displaced. They are in a desperate search for better places to live – but often they are forced to travel hundreds of miles through conditions just as bad as the places they are fleeing from. This is a world that needs change.

Tonight we're going to play a card game, brought to us by Repair the World and the Hive - a special projects unit of USA for UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) - and think creatively about putting resources towards this crisis. And while we know that pairing together cards won't produce a complete plan for solving a major problem, it will certainly raise new questions and will get us thinking about what's needed to create change.

Pass out the [Game Instructions](#) and ask guests to read them out loud before starting to play. If you have more than eight people at your dinner, we suggest splitting guests up into smaller groups.

*(Continued on the next page)*

<sup>1</sup>GameStorm card sets will also be available for purchase at <http://turn-the-tables.org>

# HOST GUIDE

## Dinner Entrée Option 4



After a few rounds of game play, bring the group back to reflect on the experience. Note: if you divided your guests into multiple games, invite players to tape up their solutions around the room for others to look at and respond to.

**Pose the following questions to the full group:**



How did it go? What felt energizing and what felt challenging?

Did any new complexities and/or questions come up during the game that you haven't explored before?

What are you left thinking about?

Invite guests to snap photos of their completed Impact cards and keep the conversations going on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by tagging @repairtheworld @USAforUNHCR #TurntheTables





## CREATE YOUR OWN (AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES!)

Have you come across an engaging video, article or piece that you want to use as a prompt for discussion with your guests? Are you interested in facilitating a conversation without a source? Do you want to ask your guests to each bring an interesting source with them to dinner and use those to prompt discussion? Go for it!

We like to think of Turn the Tables dinner conversations as places to talk about the thought-provoking pieces about pressing issues that pop up on your Facebook feed. The dinners give us a chance to have those conversations in real-life, over a meal (the ultimate Jewish parlor meeting), in a way that actually leads to action.

We strongly recommend opening with the Appetizer and Salad courses and closing with a Dessert reflection. We also suggest creating Guiding Questions beforehand to go along with the sources you choose.

The following steps will walk you through the process of creating your own entrée.

### STEP 1

Choose an engaging article, video, poem, podcast excerpt, comic, social media conversation, text, essay, series of photo, chart, map, BuzzFeed list, art piece etc., focused on on the global refugee crisis to use as a discussion prompt.

**Looking for inspiration? Check out these additional resources:**

**REFUGEE STORIES:** Use these powerful narratives about the lives of contemporary refugees to spark conversation.

1. <http://lifeonhold.aljazeera.com/#/en/portraits/home> - “Life on Hold” is an interactive web documentary that highlights the stories of ten Syrian refugees.
2. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/syrian-refugees/story/refuge/> - “Refuge” is the project of reporter Kevin Sullivan and photographer Linda Davidson who went to Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon in October 2015 to try to document the size and complexity of the Syrian refugee crisis and to show its effects on the lives of individual refugees as well as the lasting impacts on the countries hosting them through 18 personal stories of a wide range of refugees - widows, orphans, the wealthy, the wounded, children, the elderly those surviving in camps, and those suffering in urban slums.
3. <http://www.refinery29.com/syrian-refugees/> - “Daughters of Paradise” provides intimate portraits from the lives of three Syrian refugee women.
4. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-sight/wp/2015/10/14/they-made-the-long-rough-journey-to-cross-the-u-s-border-alone-here-are-their-faces-and-voices/> - “Unaccompanied” is an audio-visual story of young asylum seekers in the Washington, D.C. area who were among the thousands of children seeking refuge from the violence of Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala created by photographer Oliver Contreras and CARECEN, the Central American Resource Center.
5. <http://innovation.unhcr.org/15-ted-talks-on-refugee-resilience/> - UNHCR rounded up 15 of the most inspirational and beautiful Talks from refugees and the humanitarians working with them that highlight the resilience of refugees from around the world.

# HOST GUIDE

## Dinner Entrée Option 5

### ARTICLES ABOUT THE GLOBAL REFUGEE CRISIS

1. “A Call To Welcome Asylum Seekers From Central America” (<http://www.thejewishweek.com/editorial-opinion/opinion/call-welcome-asylum-seekers-central-america>)
2. “We Should Have Seen This Refugee Crisis Coming” (<http://www.wired.com/2015/09/able-predict-refugee-crisis/>)
3. “Are Cities And States Prepared To Host More Refugees?” ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/us-refugees\\_us\\_560aae8be4b0af3706dde699?2lz0k9=](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/us-refugees_us_560aae8be4b0af3706dde699?2lz0k9=) )
4. “Kenya: Faith in a Protracted Refugee Crises” ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/katherine-marshall/kenya-faith-in-a-protract\\_b\\_9086794.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/katherine-marshall/kenya-faith-in-a-protract_b_9086794.html))
5. “Refugees In America’s Healthcare System: How Refugee Families Get The Care They Need To Build New Lives” (<http://www.medicaldaily.com/refugee-healthcare-371676>)

### VIDEOS ABOUT THE GLOBAL REFUGEE CRISIS

1. <http://www.hias.org/hias-for-the-refugee> - Watch HIAS’ 2-minute video to learn more about the work of the world’s oldest, and only Jewish, refugee resettlement organization.
2. <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/europe-refugees-migrants-crisis/412465/> - With numbers like “60 million displaced people” and “20 million refugees” being thrown around in the media, it can be hard to wrap your head around what that means in real terms. This drone footage of refugees crossing into Slovenia from Croatia may help you visualize the magnitude of the crisis.
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jgfl8PRTLns> - Samantha Bee brings some comedy to the issue of refugee resettlement in the United States.
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umqvYhb3wf4> - John Oliver talks about the refugee crisis in Europe.
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvOnXh3NN9w> - Kurzgesagt - In a Nut Shell explains why the Syrian refugee crisis is all over the news and how it is all related to the war in Syria.

**FILMS ABOUT THE GLOBAL REFUGEE CRISIS AND REFUGEE STORIES:** Consider screening all or part of a film about the refugee crisis or a particular refugee community as a jumping off point for conversation. Here are some recommendations:

1. Refugee Kids: One Small School Takes on the World (Renee Silverman and Peter Miller) is a short documentary that follows students at a New York City summer program for children seeking asylum from the world’s most volatile conflicts. The film presents an intimate, emotionally gripping account of the students’ stories of escaping war and conflict and resettling in America, chronicling their triumphs and setbacks as their lives unfold over the course of one formative summer. Refugee Kids humanizes complex geopolitics and depicts the challenges and urgency of immigration to America in an increasingly dangerous – and interconnected – world. You can download the film for \$11.99, with \$2.00 of your purchase supporting the Repair the World and HIAS #SupportforRefugees campaign.
2. Rain in a Dry Land (Anne Makepeace): An official Selection of the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival 2006, this film follows the lives of two Somali Bantu families who leave the Kakuma refugee camp and are resettled in Springfield, MA and Atlanta, GA. You can rent Rain in a Dry Land on [Amazon](http://www.amazon.com) for \$2.99.

# HOST GUIDE

## Dinner Entrée Option 5



3. Lost Boys of Sudan (Megan Mylan and Jon Shenk) follows two young refugees from the Dinka tribe, Peter and Santino, through their first year in America. Along with 20,000 other boys, they lost their families and wandered hundreds of miles across the desert seeking safety. After a decade in a Kenyan refugee camp, nearly 4,000 “lost boys” have come to the U.S. As Peter and Santino set out to make new lives for themselves in Houston, their struggle asks us to rethink what it means to be an American. You can stream Lost Boys of Sudan for free [here](#).

What resonated with you when you first read/watched/absorbed this prompt? (In other words, why are you choosing this prompt?) What are the key points you want guests to delve into deeper during this entrée?

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Looking at your answers to the questions above, think about pairing the prompt with a second prompt that looks at the topic from a slightly different perspective. (Choose a second engaging article, video, poem, podcast excerpt, comic, etc. and think about bringing in a different modality). Ask yourself the same questions above about what resonated and why you are choosing this prompt.

### STEP 2

Design some “Guiding Questions” that spark discussion about the prompts. If you chose two prompts, put them in “conversation” with one another. These questions should get at the reasoning for why you’re choosing these two prompts and the points where you want to delve deeper. (Think: a few, well-crafted questions.)

**Some great questions to start with are:**

- What does each prompt suggest about the global refugee? What’s similar and what’s different about each perspective?
- What resonated with you when you read/watched/listened to/absorbed each prompt? What didn’t resonate?
- What came up for you as you looked at / read this prompt?
- What, if anything, surprised you? What, if anything, didn’t?
- What does the prompt make you want to learn more about?
- What troubled or inspired you about the prompt?

### STEP 3

Create/print any handouts and gather any materials you might need to help your guests engage with the prompts.

### STEP 4

Tell us how it goes. Share your materials and sources with us at [passover@wepair.org](mailto:passover@wepair.org) and connect with us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @RepairtheWorld, @HIASRefugees, #SupportforRefugees #TurntheTables

## FILL SOMEONE'S CUP

After your entrée has concluded, take some time with your guests to reflect on your next steps. Hopefully, your conversations have both enriched your understanding of the global refugee crisis within the context of the Passover narrative and have inspired you to want to take some action - no matter how big or small! - on behalf of the world's refugees.

**As your meal concludes, the host should read the following to guests:**

We are going to conclude our dinner tonight with a celebratory toast - a l'chaim.

Rather than filling our own cup tonight, though, and focusing on our individual freedom, let's fill someone else's cup and recognize that, collectively, we have the resources to help each other reach liberation if we are willing to share our resources and collaborate – whether those resources are time, money, skills, or any of the other gifts we bring to the global refugee crisis.

Many of us around the table may already share our resources in different ways - volunteering in our communities through direct service programs such as mentoring or food banks - or by providing pro bono services, through charitable donations or by advocating or lobbying officials. For others we may still be exploring the ways we're hoping to share our resources and are looking for outlets to do so.

As you think about your next steps for getting involved with the global refugee crisis, HIAS can be a great place to start. HIAS is mobilizing the Jewish community's response to the crisis and has lots of resources for volunteering, doing advocacy and giving tzedakah that you can find on their website at [www.hias.org](http://www.hias.org). As a part of this campaign, Repair the World and HIAS are also curating an ever-growing map of volunteer opportunities to provide #SupportforRefugees, available at [weRepair.org/passover](http://weRepair.org/passover) by clicking on "Volunteer Now." Check it out after dinner or after Shabbat if that's your practice!

We are going to finish off by raising our glasses together, but I want to invite you to fill someone else's cup instead of your own. As you fill someone else's cup, let's share with each other our answer to the following:



**"I am committed to sharing my resources in service of liberation for the world's refugees because..."**