

SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS: HOW TO TALK TO YOUR FAMILY ABOUT REFUGEES & IMMIGRANTS

The holidays are upon us and before you know it, you'll be sitting around the dinner table while Aunt Sue continues her tradition of bringing up the most uncomfortable, controversial topics she can think of. We know - normally it's easiest just to sit in awkward silence until she moves on, but this year, we've got your back. Check out our helpful hints for talking to your relatives about refugees and immigrants and learn how you can help change hearts and minds - even Aunt Sue's.

IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES BRING ECONOMIC BENEFITS.

For generations, refugees and immigrants have helped shape the United States into a thriving country by starting businesses, paying taxes, and supporting the economy. This legacy continues today through many economic benefits new Americans bring. In fact, 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies were started by immigrants or their children with countless small businesses being created every day, creating jobs and building a stronger economy for everyone.

PEOPLE MOVE. AND IMMIGRATION ENRICHES OUR COUNTRY.

Does grandma still talk about how her parents celebrated the holidays with traditions from their country of origin? Remind her that means they were immigrants! Our nation has a proud heritage of welcoming immigrants, with many of our own ancestors arriving with hopes of creating a better life for themselves and their families. Immigrants enrich our communities, bringing diversity, resiliency, and new experiences that better our nation.

REFUGEES & IMMIGRANTS ARE PEOPLE JUST LIKE US.

Immigrants and refugees are not different or separate from us - they love their families and have dreams and hopes for the future just like we do. Refugees are men, women and children looking for a safe place to call home and a better life for their families. They are people who have been forced to flee their homes due to violence and persecution. They deserve our welcome and compassion, not hatred and fear. We would certainly want to be welcomed if we were in a similar situation, searching for safety and peace.



REFUGEES RESETTLED IN THE UNITED STATES ARE THOROUGHLY SCREENED.

Despite Great Aunt Lois and Uncle Don's wild claims that we do not know who refugees are, refugees go through health checks, in-person interviews, and multiple security screenings by agencies including the FBI, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, the State Department, and the National Counter Terrorism Center, a process that takes on average 18-24 months.

WE ARE AT OUR BEST WHEN WE WELCOME.

As a country, we are proudest of the moments in our history when we have welcomed people, such as during the 1980s when the United States airlifted hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese refugees. Conversely, we remember with shame when the U.S. government turned away an ocean liner filled with Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany, many of whom were killed during the holocaust. As Americans and as people of faith, we have a responsibility to welcome refugees and immigrants, and to stand with them against policies that would separate families and destroy communities. It is, quite simply, the right thing to do.

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