

HIAS Student Refugee Virtual Book Club



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

What Is the HIAS Student Refugee Virtual Book Club?

Refugees around the world need YOU! Refugees are people who have had to leave their home and seek a safe haven because their home countries are not safe places to be. Jewish tradition teaches us that we have a special responsibility to welcome, love, and protect refugees. HIAS – a Jewish organization that helps refugees and asylum seekers around the world – invites you to pick a book written by or about refugees and start a virtual book club.

How Does The HIAS Student Refugee Virtual Book Club Work?

Step 1

Choose your book. Take a look at the book list on the next page to find a suggestion or Google “refugee books for kids/teens” – there are LOTS of great suggestions!

Step 2

Send an email or text message to 3-4 friends or family members inviting them to join you in reading the book you selected. Consider inviting camp friends, cousins, aunts/uncles, or grandparents who live across the country to join you!

Step 3

Give everyone 2-3 weeks to finish the book, depending on the length of the book you chose. Schedule a video meet-up on that date to help hold yourselves accountable. Create a shared GoogleDoc where everyone can jot down notes about things new things they learned in the book or questions they have about the book that they would like to discuss with friends.

Step 4

On the date you chose in step 3, come together on your chosen video platform (e.g., Zoom, Skype, FaceTime) and talk about what you read. For younger readers, make sure you pick a time when your parents or an older sibling are available, so they can help you focus your discussion. You can use the questions and observations from your GoogleDoc to spark the conversation. Consider using some of your time to write a letter or make a phone call to your Member of Congress asking them to support refugees and asylum seekers using [HIAS’ advocacy talking points](#).

Step 5 (Optional)

Send an email to HIAS’ Rabbi-in-Residence, Rabbi Rachel Grant Meyer, with a screenshot from your video meet-up (also optional) and a few sentences about what you read and what you learned and discussed with friends. HIAS might feature your book club (with your permission!) on the HIAS blog!

HIAS Student Refugee Virtual Book Club Book Suggestions

The grade levels are approximate suggestions. Some readers may want to choose a book from younger or older grades – whatever you choose is great! Once you have chosen your book, you might want to search the internet to see if you can find discussion guides for your selection to help guide your conversation.

Grades 2-3

- [Rosie and Warda and the Big Tent](#) (Nechama Liss-Levinson)
- [Four Feet, Two Sandals](#) (Karen Lynn Williams, Khadra Mohammed)
- [The Journey](#) (Francesca Sanna)
- [Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush's Incredible Journey](#) (Doug Kuntz, Amy Shrodes)
- [Mama's Nightingale](#) (Edwidge Danticat)

Grades 4-5

- [Dia's Story Cloth: The Hmong People's Journey of Freedom](#) (Dia Cha)
- [Drita, My Homegirl](#) (Jenny Lombard)
- [Refugee](#) (Alan Gratz)
- [A Song for Cambodia](#) (Michelle Lord)
- [When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit](#) (Judith Kerr)

Grades 6-8

- [Cry of the Giraffe](#) (Judie Oron)
- [Inside Out & Back Again](#) (Thanhha Lai)
- [A Long Walk to Water](#) (Linda Sue Park, Ginger Knowlton)
- [The Only Road](#) (Alexandra Diaz)
- [The Red Pencil](#) (Andrea Davis Pinkney)

Grades 9-12

- [The Arrival](#) (Shaun Tan; wordless graphic novel)
- [Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees](#) (Deborah Ellis)
- [Escape from Aleppo](#) (N.H. Senzai)
- [The Good Braider](#) (Terry Farish; [discussion guide](#))
- [Nujeen: One Girl's Incredible Journey from War-Torn Syria in a Wheelchair](#) (Nujeen Mustafa, Christina Lamb)
- [Outcasts United: The Story of a Refugee Soccer Team That Changed a Town](#) (Warren St. John)
- [Over Under Sideways Down](#) (Red Cross UK; graphic novel that contains difficult imagery)