



ARE  
WE  
LISTENING?

*conversation guide*

# Introduction

*Are We Listening?* can be an emotionally and theologically challenging film to watch. That's why we have created this faith-based conversation guide as a companion piece for the stories you've just heard. We encourage you to use the questions below—individually or in a group setting—as a catalyst for connecting your faith with the ongoing refugee crises in Syria and around the world. We pray that this resource creates space to ask difficult questions, step into the shoes of our global neighbors, and mobilize Spirit-led action.

# Making Connections

1 In the film we hear Abdul talk about imagining a different future for his children. Name a time when you have had a similar longing for a family member or loved one.

2 How has this longing shaped your attitude, behavior, practices, or relationships?

3 Have you ever experienced a loss so severe that it altered your worldview? In what ways did your community surround you in that loss? In what ways did you feel alone?

# Biblical Migration & the Birth Narrative

*Consider the migration around Jesus' birth story. Not only did Mary and Joseph migrate to Bethlehem to be registered before Jesus was born (Luke 2:1-5), but they also fled to Egypt after Jesus's birth when Herod sought to kill him (Matt. 2:13-15)."*

1 Does it challenge your perception of what it means to be a refugee to imagine Mary and Joseph fleeing to Egypt with their newborn?

2 Does it challenge your mental model of our Savior to imagine Jesus as a refugee?



# Biblical Migration & the Birth Narrative

*After Jesus was born, the wise men did not return to Herod to report on what they had found. Herod, after discovering he had been tricked, ordered all infants two years old and under who lived in or around Bethlehem to be killed (Matt. 2:16). This is the biblical incident referred to as the massacre of the innocents.*

- 3 Can you identify any similarities between the events around Jesus' birth and the stories you just heard in the film?

*Grief and righteous anger are appropriate responses to the massacre of the innocents. Matthew even quotes the prophet Jeremiah after the massacre, "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more" (Matt 2:18).*

- 4 What would it look like to respond with the same grief and righteous anger to the death and loss from the ongoing civil war in Syria? Does that response come naturally to you or is it challenging?

# Practicing Lament

*This film leaves us in a heavy place emotionally. The spiritual practice of lament can create a sacred space for processing grief, loss, and anger.*

1 Is lament a comfortable or familiar practice for you? Why or why not?

2 What has culturally or spiritually shaped your understanding of lament?

3 In what ways does the practice of lament challenge your expression of faith? In what ways does it deepen or expand your expression of faith?



# Practicing Lament

*The practice of lament can allow us to empathize with people who have a different lived experience than ourselves. In Romans 12:15, Paul implores the believers in Rome to "Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep." Pray the psalm below as a way to practice weeping with those who weep. Hold the stories from the film in your mind as you read out loud Psalm 13:*

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?  
How long must I bear pain in my soul,  
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?  
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?  
Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!  
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,  
and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed";  
my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.  
But I trusted in your steadfast love;  
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.  
I will sing to the Lord,  
because he has dealt bountifully with me.