

EXPATS OUT

Aim: to enable participants to experience the unpredictable nature of Christian work overseas.

Audience: teenagers or adults. Any number of people, minimum 4.

Duration: 35 minutes.

Description: a simulation activity in which participants make decisions based upon a narrated story.

Biblical Basis: Psalm 139:9-10.

Equipment: pencils, scrap paper or photocopied sheets, (masters provided).



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Adapted from "A Refugee Simulation" by Pat Baker, published in 'Simulation Games Book 3' © The Joint Board of Christian Education Australia 1986 and used with kind permission.

Leader's Instructions:

1. Divide the participants into groups of four. Exact numbers work best. Add one extra per group if there are any remainders.
2. Give everyone a pencil and either paper or a photocopied 'bag'. Photocopy and cut these in half in advance using master provided.
3. Explain to the participants that they must listen to the narrated story and respond to any instructions. Do not give any further guidelines about how the participants should make their decisions.
4. Read out the Narrator's Script below, pausing between each section for the amount of time indicated.
5. At the end of the script, use the Talk Back section to debrief the simulation with the participants.

Narrator's Script:

1. You live and work overseas and are about to become the victim of a political upheaval. The government has been violently removed from power by an opposition party. All expatriate workers have been ordered to leave the country and you are almost certain that you will never be able to return. You have just 5 minutes to prepare for a journey to an unknown destination. Trucks will be arriving shortly to collect you and your neighbours to take you down to the coast where, hopefully, there will be a boat that can take you to a safe place. Your immediate task is to pack a bag for the journey. In the bag you can carry up to 20 items. You have 5 minutes to decide what to take. (Participants pack by writing down a list of 20 items.)

(Pause for 5 minutes.)

2. Your time is up. Nothing more can be added to your bag. You board the truck which leaves at once. The road is rough and the driver doesn't seem to be too careful. He almost loses control round a curve and the oldest person's bag falls off the truck. The driver doesn't hear your calls to stop and the bag is left far behind. This person has lost everything. Perhaps you can help them by offering to give them something from your bag? They may accept up to 5 items from their fellow travellers. (The oldest person in each group needs to cross off all the items on their list. Anyone giving an item, crosses it off their own list once it is added to someone else's bag.)

(Pause for 1 minute.)

3. Your time is up. No more offers can be accepted. The truck is going more slowly and a strange noise is coming from the engine. Finally the engine dies and the truck rolls to a halt. It cannot be fixed so you will have to get out and walk. Quite quickly you realise that your bag is too heavy to carry. Reduce the weight by removing the heaviest item.

(Pause for 30 seconds.)

4. Your time is up. You struggle on. The youngest person falls into a ditch, injuring themselves quite badly. They can no longer carry their bag and must get rid of everything except the 5 lightest items

in it. Others may help to carry the contents, but remember that no one may carry more than 20 items. You have 2 minutes in which to decide what to do and change the contents of your bags accordingly.

(Pause for 2 minutes.)

5. Your time is up. Anything that no one is able to carry must be left behind. You continue on and at last you reach the coast. Although there is a boat at the quayside, you will have to bribe the captain to take you on board by giving him the most valuable item in your bag. You have 2 minutes before the boat is due to sail.

(Pause for 2 minutes.)

6. Your time is up. Now the captain says there is too much baggage. It must be reduced to a total of 40 items. Together with the other passengers you must decide what is to be left behind. You have 5 minutes.

(Pause for 5 minutes.)

7. Your time is up. The boat sails. Conditions on the boat are very crowded and almost everyone is seasick. A wave swamps the boat. You manage to save your baggage but anything likely to be affected by sea-water is ruined. You have 2 minutes to check the contents and throw away anything that has been damaged.

(Pause for 2 minutes.)

8. Your time is up. Suddenly your boat is attacked by pirates who take all the valuables in your baggage. You have 2 minutes to produce your most expensive belongings. They will kill you if they don't get 1 item from each passenger.

(Pause for 2 minutes.)

9. Your time is up. The pirates have gone and land is in sight on the horizon. You are about to arrive in a safe country and can put these past traumas behind you. What will life be like for you now? Remember that the bag you are carrying contains all you have to survive with. You are homeless and you cannot speak the language of the people around you.

Talk Back:

1. Focus on what *happened* during the simulation:

- What sort of items do the participants have left?
- How long do the participants think they could survive on what they have left in their bags?
- How did the groups work together during the activity?

2. Focus on how participants *felt*:

- How did they feel at each stage of the journey?
- What items were hardest to part with?
- What feelings did they have towards their fellow travellers?

NOTES:

3. Focus on what can be *learned* from this simulation:

- What can we learn about lifestyle?
- What can we learn about teamwork?
- What can we learn about the circumstances in which Christians often work overseas?

Comments to use in discussion:

- Political, religious or ethnic tensions are features of many places where Wycliffe is involved. Other areas are prone to natural disasters. Christians serving God overseas need to be prepared to face dangerous or unpredictable situations in the course of their daily lives.

David Morgan, for example, a Bible translator for the Lobala language, had to be evacuated from the village of Imese where he was working in The Democratic Republic of Congo. This is how he described his experiences:

'We became refugees in a convoy of trucks in an exhausting and very dirty 15-hour-long overland journey. I cannot begin to describe the stunned disbelief, the guilt, the intense sorrow, tears and other deep feelings that overwhelmed me... Our entire support system crumbled around us - communications network, transport, ways of getting money all dried up... My bag with my computer, camera and money and my only change of clothes was stolen... Evacuation like that at short notice is traumatic.'

A month later David returned to the Congo.

What motivates people to live and work in such situations is the conviction that others should have the opportunity to understand God's love for themselves. A couple of months before being evacuated, David Morgan wrote the following in a newsletter:

'Living in Imese may seem to be a waste of time. I have not achieved much: only one Gospel translated so far. Mission strategists might dismiss it as a backwater. But with God I believe this world has no backwaters.'

God doesn't leave any of us to serve him on our own. Whatever situations we find ourselves in, the safest place for any of us to be is here God wants us to be. However uncertain a situation is, we can be certain that God is in it with us.

Psalm 139: 9 -10 says:

'If I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.'

- It isn't just expatriates who are affected by such crises. The local people generally have no way to flee the disasters, so they often face greater suffering than any overseas workers among them. Remember to pray for people trapped by disasters or wars, as well as those driven to become refugees.

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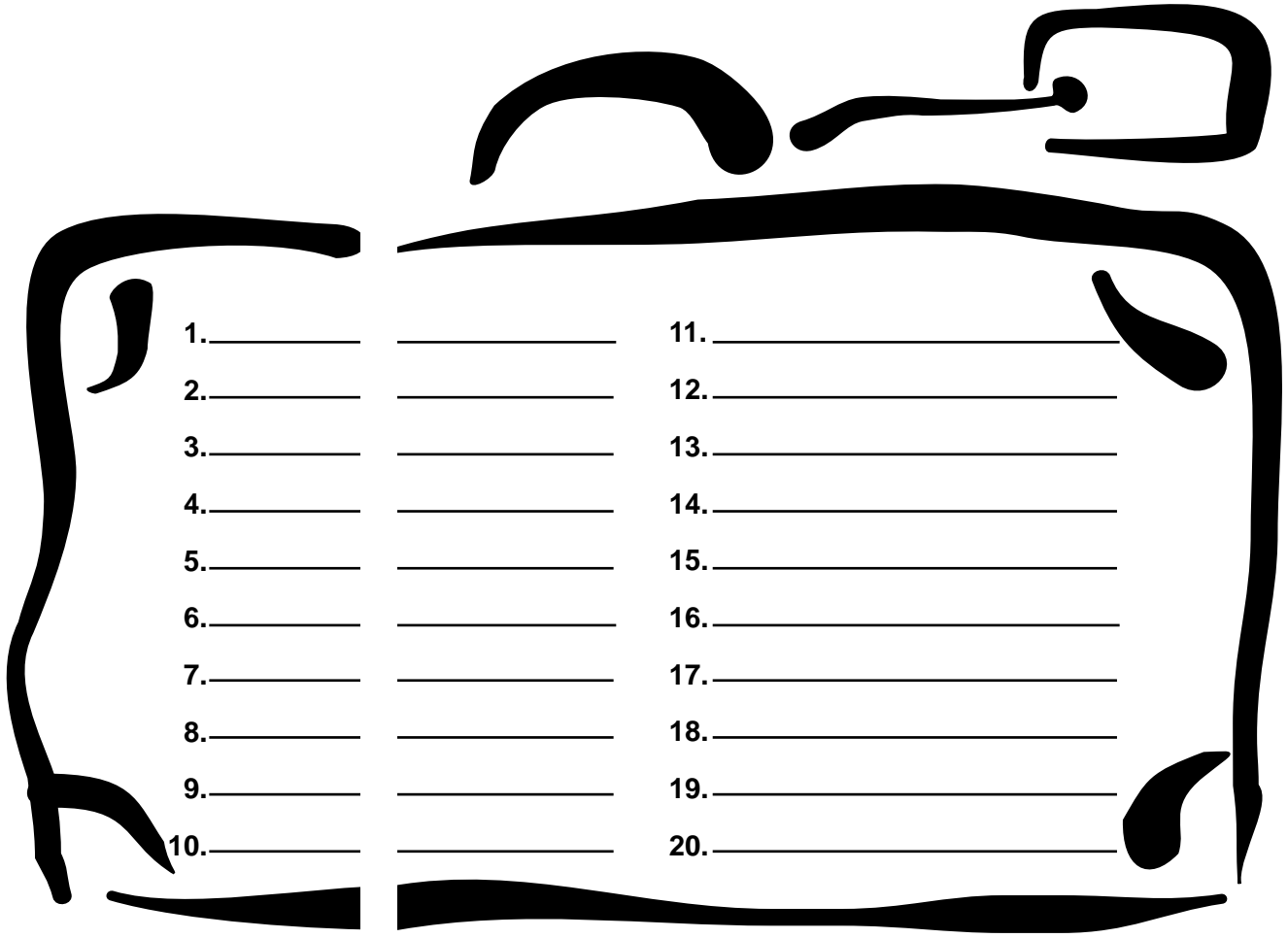
- Today, local people are playing ever-increasing roles in evangelism and mission efforts. If they are providing this backbone of a translation or literacy project, for example, the programme can continue even if expatriates are forced to evacuate. When all Wycliffe workers were forced out of The Democratic Republic of Congo by a civil war, a massive literacy project among the Lobala people continued, because it was led and staffed by local people. Thousands of people were able to continue to learn to read because it was truly *their* project.

Optional Extras:

Make the simulation come to life by acting out some parts of the narration. For example, you could spray water over the participants during the storm at sea using water pistols or plant sprayers or ask someone to act out the role of pirate by taking items from the participants' lists at the appropriate time.

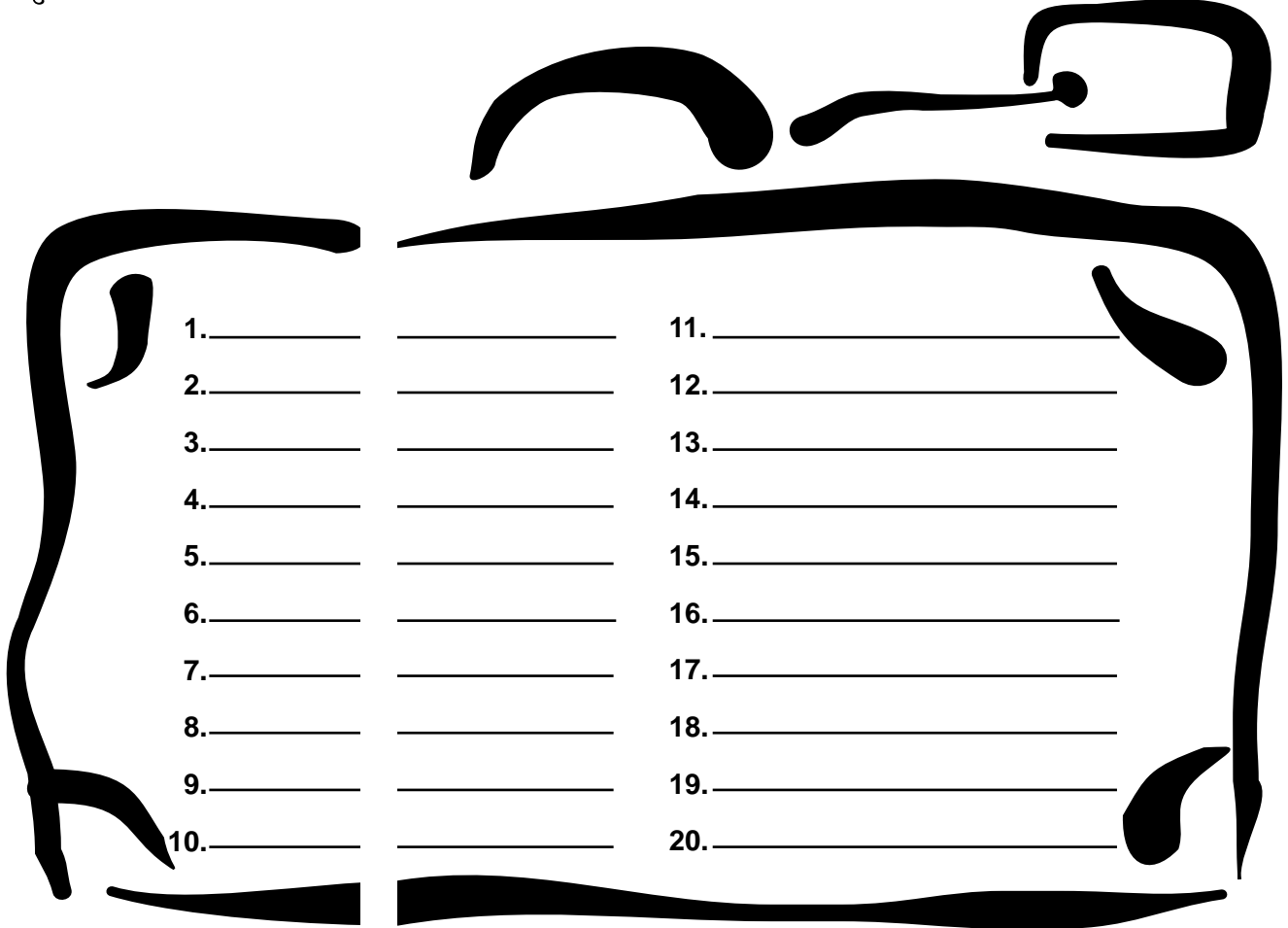
Highlight a current situation where Christian workers are facing difficulties overseas. Newspaper cuttings, articles from Christian magazines or prayer news from mission organisations are ideal for this. End the activity by praying for those who are involved.

With adaptation, this simulation can be used to focus on the experiences of national refugees.



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