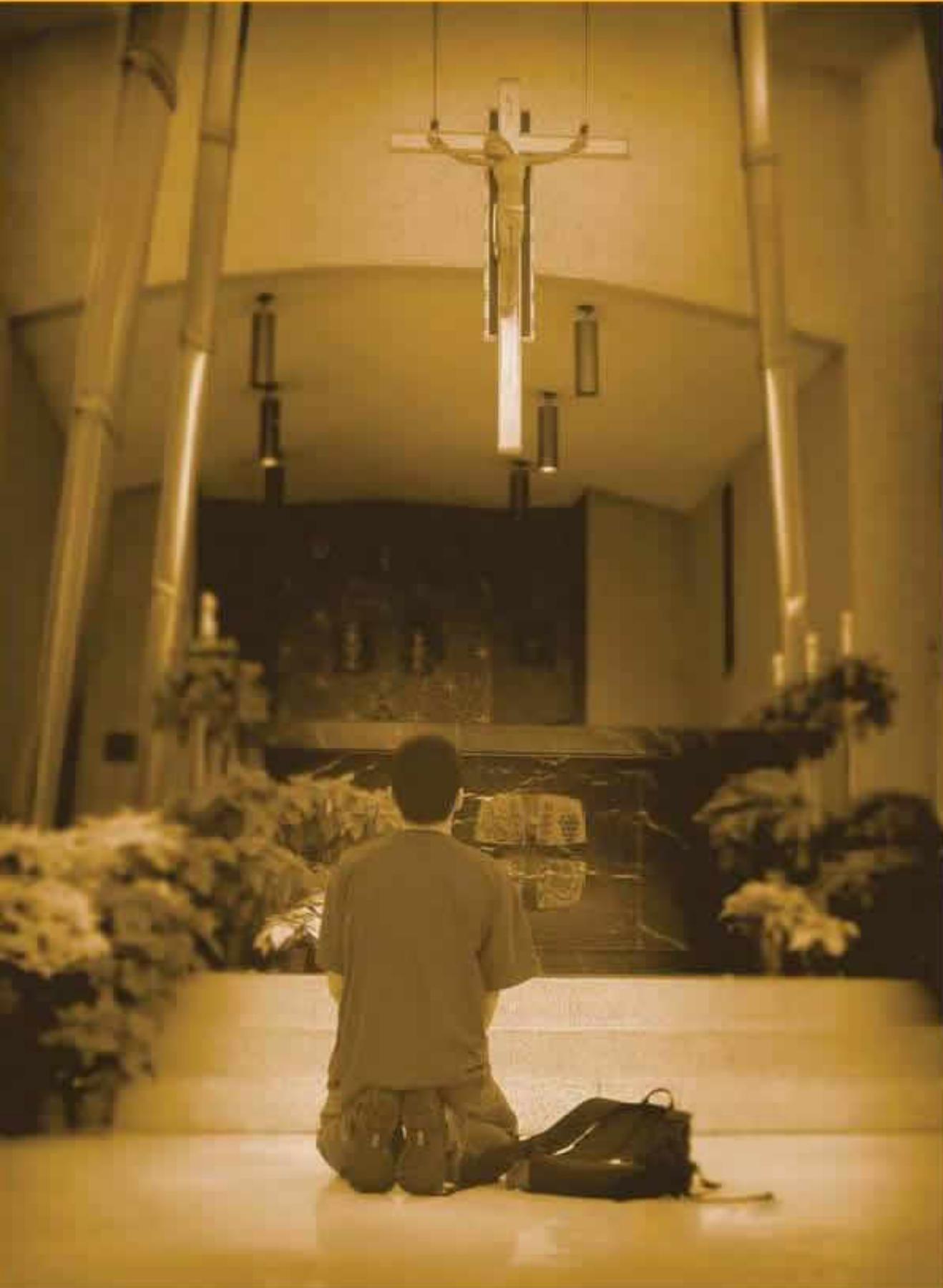


# A DVD Discussion Guide



**Strangers No Longer**

# Strangers No Longer

## A Discussion Guide

(<http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/snldvd.html>)

This discussion (or study) guide was developed to accompany the film, *Strangers No Longer*. The objectives of the film and guide are to (1) familiarize the audience with Catholic teaching regarding migration, (2) expose the audience to contemporary immigration realities and the ills of the current immigration system from the Catholic perspective, and (3) encourage the audience to become actively engaged in bringing about needed change.

Although this material can be used in a variety of settings and with multiple audiences (i.e., college classes, agency trainings, adult study groups in faith communities, groups of high school youth in schools or faith communities, etc.) the primary audience is parishioners.



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

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## I. Tips for Organizing Discussion and Study Sessions

### A. Suggested audiences and settings...

The goal of the *Strangers No Longer* video is to influence people's attitudes toward immigrants from a Catholic perspective. Therefore, Catholics comprise the primary audience.

Organizers should consider strategies for reaching Catholics to view the film and to have discussions about the issues raised. This can be accomplished in a variety of settings: parish meetings, high school and college classes, diocesan agency trainings, adult study groups, events organized by diocesan priest councils, parish councils, social justice/action trainings, etc.

When extending invitations to the target audiences, it will be important to have secured the support of the leadership attached to the group. For instance, when inviting parishioners, ideally the pastor would be willing to extend the invitation and otherwise encourage broad participation.

### B. Preliminary considerations for study session facilitators...

***Becoming familiar with film and study guide...*** Facilitators should read through this entire guide and watch the DVD before beginning the study session. Identify issues raised in the film that you may need more exposure to yourself, or that you may be uncomfortable with, and give yourself time to reflect.

***Knowing your audience...*** Begin to anticipate your audience. For instance, will your audience be familiar with immigrants and/or immigration policies? Will emphasis on Catholic teachings or emphasis on the humanitarian nature of the issue be more compelling? The issues raised may bring up painful memories or strong feelings for some members of the group. Try to anticipate how your audience will react and prepare to constructively channel these reactions toward an outcome in which the program's objectives can be accomplished. Also, ensure that you are familiar with the relevant resources in your parish/diocese/community that can be tapped as part of the program and to address issues raised by the audience.

***Preparing audience prior to viewing/study session...*** Encourage your audience to begin thinking about the subject prior to the screening of the film and study session. You could have them research background information available from the *Justice for Immigrants* Campaign website ([www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)), for example. Other useful background information includes the pastoral letter issued by U.S. and Mexican bishops titled, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*. This publication is also available on the website at <http://www.usccb.org/mrs/stranger.shtml#2>

***Arranging for materials to be used during the session...*** Consider what materials should be made available to the audience at the study/discussion session and allow enough time to either order these or download and copy them for distribution during the session. Ideally, each participant will have available at the session a packet of materials, to include such items as the agenda for the day's session, copy of the resource bibliography, copy of the *Strangers No Longer* pastoral letter (or a summary), and other materials deemed appropriate and useful.

Consider any adaptations of the materials available from the JFI Campaign that may be necessary for your audience and circumstances. For instance, you may wish to localize questions used during the study session.

Prepare sufficient copies of the *Pre-Session Questionnaire and Answers* to be distributed, as appropriate, before and after the viewing.

Consider ordering Justice for Immigrants wrist bands for your audience. These are available to you for \$1.00 a piece, but you can resell them for a suggested donation price of \$5 or \$10, to help defray some of the costs of conducting the screening.

### **C. Preparations on the day of the session...**

***Setting up logistics...*** Test the audio/visual equipment.

***Prepare an area where Scripture*** can be displayed reverently, and open the Bible to any of the passages listed below. Try to have enough Bibles on hand so that individuals and small groups can refer to these or other Scripture readings before or after watching the DVD.

Exodus 23:9	Leviticus 19:32-34
Mathew 25:35-40	Mark 12:30-31

***Arrange seating,*** depending upon the size of the group, so that small group (no more than 10) discussions are possible.

***Make name tags available.***

As appropriate, have a ***sign up sheet*** on which participants can record their email and other contact information. (This information can be used for follow up activities that might evolve.)

### **D. Conducting the session...**

***Open with a prayer...*** Praying for God's presence during the session will be an important grounding for the group's discussions. Any number of approaches to this prayer could be pursued. Consider using the prayer card available on the JFI website at [www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/PrayerCard.pdf](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/PrayerCard.pdf).

***Introductions...*** Prior to viewing the DVD, give participants a chance to introduce themselves (if the study group doesn't already know one another.)

***Review agenda...*** Reiterate for everyone the purpose of the session and how the session will be conducted. Establish any necessary ground rules.

***Establish ground rules... Review agenda...*** Make sure everyone understands right up front what the expected outcomes are and the process for the session.

***Group trust and dynamics...*** Facilitators should take time to establish ground rules or a group covenant. As part of that process remind people that there may be multiple viewpoints, and that each person's experience and thoughts are to be listened to and respected, even if there is direct disagreement. Another way to increase the emotional

safety in the room is to arrange the seating in such a way that participants can both hear and see each other during the discussion. However, avoid a tight circle, which can feel too personal for some participants. (Round tables create a good environment.)

***Potential challenges in discussion facilitation...*** Chances are your group will be made up of people with a variety of different personalities and comfort levels in sharing their ideas, reflections, and questions. If you have a person, or several people who are dominating the conversation it may be helpful to simply ask, "Is there anyone who hasn't shared who would like to say something?" This gives the talkers a chance to listen, and the quieter ones the opening to share without being personally put on the spot.

People may have very different opinions during the discussion. As a facilitator you can stop and remind them of your initial ground rules if someone becomes verbally abusive or personally attacks you or another participant if the discussion heats up.

***Additional tips for facilitators when including youth in the program...*** If you are doing the program specifically with youth, or have some high school age youth in your group, you might consider getting permission from their parents/guardians for their participation. If you are doing this program as part of a school or faith community youth group, you could invite the parents/guardians to an orientation where you can show the DVD.

#### **E. Pre-Session Questionnaire and Answers:**

To enable participants to assess their current attitudes and understanding of immigrants and current immigration policies, have them complete the "Gauging Attitudes toward Immigrants - Pre-Session Questionnaire." This can be done either before the opening session, as people are beginning to sit at their places, or after the introductory session, but before the screening of the film.

Reiterate that their answers will not be shared with others. Once the viewing has concluded, provide participant with the answers handout. Make sure you have sufficient copies to distribute at the end of the viewing.



## Gauging Attitudes toward Immigrants

### *Pre-Session Questionnaire Answers*

1. **False.** Most immigrants come to the United States legally. Of those in the country without proper authorization, just over half came on some type of temporary visa and overstayed their authorized time period. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2005, the foreign-born population in the U.S. was 34 million. An estimate of the undocumented population that year was between 10 and 12 million, less than half of whom crossed the border illegally.
2. **False.** During the decade between 1995 and 2005, the government investment in border security, including for the construction of fences and detection devices, grew more than tenfold. Yet, during this same period the number of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. doubled. When there exists on one side of the border desperate people in need of work and on the other side an economy that demands foreign labor, no border enforcement regime alone can prevent illegal entries. What is more likely to result from a strategy that simply attempts to seal the borders, without addressing other aspects of the immigration system, is more organized crime involvement in clandestine crossings and more deaths of migrants making desperate and dangerous attempts at crossings.
3. **False.** Immigrants, even those without proper immigration status in the country, pay taxes – sales taxes, property taxes, income taxes, Social Security deductions, government license and permit fees, gasoline and beverage taxes, etc. The National Research Council reports that on an individual basis, immigrants contribute about \$80,000 more in taxes than they receive in public benefits over a life time.
4. **False.** According to the Independent Institute and a number of prominent economists, immigrants are a net gain for the U.S. economy. They fill labor demands in critical sectors of the economy; they contribute in taxes and Social Security investments at rates greater than they use in services; and they generate jobs in the American economy through the creation of small businesses at a far greater level than native-born Americans.
5. **True, but...**The 34 million people in the U.S. who are foreign-born (in 2005) represent the largest number of immigrants in our nation's history. However, as a proportion of the total U.S. population, today's immigrants are about 12%, whereas in 1910, the proportion of foreign-born of the U.S. population was 15%. Thus, today we are less a nation of immigrants than we were 100 years ago.
6. **False.** Of the more than 40 million Latinos in the United States, about 75% were born in this country.
7. **False.** Under current U.S. laws, people here without proper immigration authority have committed a civil offense, rather than having committed a criminal activity. Moreover, immigrants are less likely to commit a crime in the U.S. than are the native-born. According to the Migration Policy Institute, the rate of incarceration of foreign-born individuals (.68% of total foreign-born are in jails) is well below that of native-born ones (3.51%).
8. **True.** A principle found in Catholic Social Teaching holds that sovereign nations have the right and responsibility to control their borders in order to serve the common good. Countries that have more wealth have a higher degree of responsibility for welcoming immigrants than do poorer nations.

## F. Screening the Video

To introduce the film, explain that it was designed to expose the audience to today's immigration realities and the need for change. Explain that they will hear what the Church teaches about migration and what changes are necessary from the Church's perspective.

### **Note: Overview of issues to be explored...**

*Call to Welcome:* In this section the audience will be exposed to the scriptural underpinnings to the notion that we are all immigrants. Stories about migration and our responsibilities towards migrants are prevalent throughout the Bible.

*Our Immigrant Heritage:* In this section the audience will identify the history and the tradition of our country as a nation of immigrants. The historic influx of Catholic immigrants and their forming of a true immigrant church.

*New Realities:* In this section the audience will identify some of the push and pull factors forcing people to migrate. Participants will also identify how inadequate our current immigration laws are. In addition, participants will be presented with the recommended principles espoused by the United States Catholic Bishops to reform our broken immigration system.

*Living the Faith:* In this section participants will identify how our church has been transformed by the different flows of immigrants coming to the U. S. In addition, participants will identify what our faith expects of us to ensure that everyone's god-given right to human dignity is respected.

### **Preparation of Additional Materials**

If time permits, it is suggested that you introduce the following resources:

- "Relevant Scriptural Passages" handout included in the Justice for Immigrants Campaign Parish Resource Kit. (Available at [www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/RelevantScripture.pdf](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/RelevantScripture.pdf))
- "Immigration Basics" handout included in the Justice for Immigrants Campaign Parish Resource Kit. (Available at: <http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/ImmigrationBasics.pdf>)
- "Myths: Learn the Facts" (Available at: [www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/Myths.pdf](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/Myths.pdf))
- "Catholic Bishops Call for Immigration Reform" (Available at: [www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/BishopsCall.pdf](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/BishopsCall.pdf))

- For the conclusion of the viewing, you may want to introduce the *Justice for Immigrants* “Pledge Card” available online at:  
[www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/PledgeCard.pdf](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/PledgeCard.pdf).
- You should also consider offering the audience an opportunity to purchase the JFI wristbands, at a suggested donation price of \$5 or \$10.

### **Cueing the DVD**

1. Begin play from DVD start to 1:52 (1:52 minutes long)
2. Begin play from DVD minute marker 1:52 to 5:46 (3:54 minutes long)
3. Begin play from DVD minute marker 5:48 to 12:00 (6:12 minutes long)
4. Begin play from DVD minute marker 12:01 to 22:18 (9:49 minutes long)

## **II. Discussion Ideas After the DVD Viewing**

Take a few minutes to reflect on the following questions, and then form small discussion groups. Please remember that it has often been said that “Introverts think to talk, and extroverts talk to think.” Taking some time for all the participants to write down their thoughts and reflections from the handout may help everyone in the room have an equal opportunity to share their thoughts and insights.

A facilitator in each small group should be identified to help ensure that all members of the group have an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. The handout, *Reflecting on the **Strangers No Longer** Video*, should be referenced and the audience should be encouraged to use these questions to guide their small group discussions.

Consider allowing enough time for small group reports to the larger group before the session is concluded. This plenary session could also be used to ask for input from the entire audience about their overall reflection on the day’s activities and lessons.

## **Reflecting on the *Strangers No Longer* Video**

### Discussion Guide Questions

- Poverty, desperation, pursuit of a better life...are these legitimate reasons for migrating?
- How is the plight of today's migrants similar or different from that of the Holy Family in flight to and exile in Egypt?
- What are your family's immigrant roots and what compelled your ancestors to migrate?
- In what ways does our faith inform our attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policy?
- Which do you think is the greater motivator for people to leave loved ones and risk illegal border crossings: the push of poverty and desperation or the pull of jobs in the U.S.?
- With so many Canadians in the U.S. without proper authority, why do you suppose there are not calls for sealing the northern border?
- In what practical ways can we live our faith in response to the immigration challenges?
- How should U.S. policies toward immigrants be changed?
- What can individuals do to change these policies?

### III. Ideas for Post Session Actions:

#### Parish Group or Ministry

- Learn more about Catholic Social Teaching on the treatment of immigrants by copying and distributing to the group information from the Justice for Immigrants Campaign website ([www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)).
- Organize a letter-writing campaign to appropriate leaders on the need for fair, comprehensive immigration reform during one of the group's meetings. ([www.justiceforimmigrants.org/action.html](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/action.html))
- Organize and sponsor a forum for members of the parish (and perhaps members of nearby parishes) with state or federal elected officials to discuss their positions on the issue.

#### Family

- Talk with your children about Catholic Social Teaching on migration,
- With your children, explore the resources on the website for the Justice for Immigrants Campaign ([www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)).
- Individually or as a family, write letters to elected officials about policies related to the treatment of immigrants in our country. ([www.justiceforimmigrants.org/action.html](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/action.html))

#### School or Religious Education Group (Middle and High School)

- Ask students to visit the website for the Justice for Immigrants Campaign ([www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)) and report on what they have learned.
- Ask students to put together a flier on Catholic Social Teaching on the treatment of migrants to share with parents, faculty, and other students. Or encourage students to create posters or focus a bulletin board on this issue.
- Invite students and parents to start a petition to promote the need for fair, comprehensive immigration reform in our country, or invite them to write letters to elected officials on this issue. ([www.justiceforimmigrants.org/action.html](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/action.html))

#### Individual

- Learn more about Catholic Social Teaching on the treatment of immigrants by visiting the website for Justice for Immigrants Campaign website ([www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)).
- Join your diocesan or regional Justice for Immigrants network or another advocacy group so that you can receive action alerts, and send messages to policy makers on the issue. (<http://capwiz.com/justiceforimmigrants/mlm/signup/>)

### IV. Other Resources Available:

For a comprehensive list of resources available on the topic of migration please visit [www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/ResourceBibliography.pdf](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/ParishKit/ResourceBibliography.pdf)

#### To purchase this DVD,

Please visit [www.usccbpublishing.org/showproducts.cfm?FullCat=160&step=1](http://www.usccbpublishing.org/showproducts.cfm?FullCat=160&step=1) or call toll-free 1-800-235-8722. Para pedidos en español, llame al 800-235-8722 y presione 4 para hablar con un representante del servicio al cliente en español.



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

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