

Celebrating **Immigrants**

An Interfaith Service

From Interfaith Worker Justice

Invocation

Opening Song

Responsive Reading One:

Leader: We gather today to lift up immigrants who live and work in our community. We give thanks for the many gifts and talents they bring to our nation.

All: We give thanks and pray for all living in our community, but especially those who are immigrants among us.

Leader: There are over 32 million immigrants in the U.S. living and working in cities, suburbs and rural areas across the nation.

All: One in eight workers today is foreign born.

Leader: Except for Native Americans, we were all once new to this country.

All: Some of us came to the U.S. escaping poverty or oppression. Others of us were forced here on slave ships. Still others came seeking opportunity.

Leader: New immigrants come for many of the same reasons. Most immigrants come escaping poverty and oppression and seeking opportunities. Leviticus 19, verses 33 and 34 tell us:

All: Don't mistreat any foreigners who live in your land. Instead, treat them as well as you treat citizens and love them as much as you love yourself. Remember, you were once foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Leader: We serve a God who wants justice for all of God's people.

All: God desires justice for native born and foreign born alike. All people are children of God.

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Stories from Immigrants – Invite immigrants in your community to share why they came here, their hopes for the future, and the challenges they face in the community.

Statements of Support from Faith Traditions – Invite faith leaders from various denominations and traditions to offer words of support from their religious traditions. See *What Faith Traditions Say about the Treatment of Immigrants* found on pages 7-8 at www.iwj.org/pdf/lip2003.pdf

Sing Micah 6:8 by Noelle Damico – Teach the song and then use it as a refrain in Responsive Reading Two.

lyrically Noelle Damico

Do jus - tice, love kind - ness, walk hum - bly with our God. We've got to with - our God.

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Responsive Reading Two – Multiple leaders are suggested.

Leader 1: Immigrants and their children bring long-term economic benefits to the United States. Immigrants add about \$10 billion each year to the U.S. economy. This estimate does not include the impact of immigrant-owned businesses or the impact of highly skilled immigrants on overall productivity.

Leader 2: By conservative estimates, immigrant households paid an estimated \$133 billion in direct taxes to federal, state, and local governments in 1997. The typical immigrant and his or her descendants pay an estimated \$80,000 more in taxes than they will receive in local, state, and federal benefits over their lifetimes.

Leader 3: Despite immigrants' economic contributions to the society, there is no clear road to citizenship for most immigrants. Too many immigrants in the U.S. cannot become citizens under the current laws, so they live in fear of deportation. Immigrants need a clear path to citizenship. We serve a God who calls us to:

lyrically Noelle Damico

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Leader 1: Families make up more than three out of four immigrant households, but many of the families are not whole. Many immigrants live here without their children, spouses or parents. Immigrants need a legal way to reunify their families. We serve a God who calls us to:

All Sing Micah 6:8 in Spanish:

Hacer justicia, amar a la bondad, caminar a la humildad con nuestro Dios. Vamos a hacer justicia, amar a la bondad, caminar a la humildad con nuestro Dios.

Noelle Damico

Ha - cer jus - tia, a - mar a la bon - dad, caminar a la humildad con nuestro Dios. Va - mos a con nues - tro Dios.

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Leader 2: Too many immigrant workers are subject to exploitation in the workplace because they do not have citizenship, do not know their rights, and are denied protection offered by a union contract. In community after community we have seen and heard of immigrants who are forced to work long hours for pittance wages, immigrants who handle dangerous chemicals or equipment without proper protections, immigrants who are traded in slave rings, and immigrants who are threatened with deportation when they complain about working conditions. Such exploitation of immigrants lowers working conditions for all workers. Immigrants need stronger workplace protections and a voice on the job. We serve a God who calls us to:

lyrically

Noelle Damico

Do jus - tice, love kind - ness, walk hum - bly with our God. We've got to with - our God.

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Leader 3: We are a nation known for the protection of civil rights and liberties. Yet many immigrants and communities of color do not feel protected by the police, the corporate leaders or the government. Too often, our religious communities have not stood up to protect immigrants' civil rights and liberties. We cannot let the acts of terrorists deter us from protecting the civil rights and liberties of law-abiding immigrants. God calls us to welcome, not fear, immigrants in our community. We must stand up for immigrants' civil rights and liberties. We serve a God who calls us to:

All Sing in Spanish:

Hacer justicia, amar a la bondad, caminar a la humildad con nuestro Dios. Vamos a hacer justicia, amar a la bondad, caminar a la humildad con nuestro Dios.

Noelle Damico

The musical notation is for a song in G major, 8/8 time. It consists of a single line of music with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in a simple, accessible style. Above the staff, the chords are indicated: G, G/E, G/C, C(add2)/D, D, C(add2)/D, D, G. The lyrics are written below the staff: 'Ha - cer jus - ti - cia, a - mar a la bon - dad, caminar a la humildad con nuestro Dios. Va - mos a hacer jus - ti - cia, amar a la bondad, caminar a la humildad con nues - tro Dios.'

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All: As people of faith, we know God's special concern for immigrants. We will find new ways to act on that concern.
We will pray for immigrants.
We will reach out to immigrants.
We will advocate a clear road to citizenship, reunification of families, a voice on the job, civil rights and civil liberties with our elected leaders.
We will do this because it is best for our nation and because we are called to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God. Amen.

Next Steps for Action – One leader will invite people to register to vote, sign postcards or petitions, or take other appropriate actions supporting immigrants.

Closing Prayer



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