

Circle of Silence

EXPRESS SUPPORT, RENEW HOPE

Conducting a Circle of Silence is one way to engage people with the concerns of people seeking asylum, and encourage reflection and discussion about the treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum in our communities.

Through Circles of Silence we have an opportunity to express support for people seeking asylum, and renew hope for participants through the ritual.

Who is this action for?

This action can be tailored to suit a range of different groups – students in the school yard at lunchtime, a parish in their local community after mass on a Sunday, an organization in their office courtyard or even a parish social justice group outside the offices of the Immigration department.

How are Circles of Silence run?

Circles of Silence have a loose structure, allowing space for individual interpretation and expression depending on the particular location, number of participants and context of the ceremony. At its essence it involves participants standing in a circle of silence in a public space for half-an-hour, with a person on the outside handing out flyers or explaining to the public what is happening.

The Circles of Silence movement originated in Toulouse, France in 2007 among Franciscan groups in an effort to express solidarity with people seeking asylum and immigrants experiencing injustice and who were being silenced.



PLANNING YOUR CIRCLE OF SILENCE

When designing your Circle of Silence, you might consider:

Beginning with a personal testimony of a refugee or migrant about their experience

Beginning with a reflection, prayer or relevant passage

Having participants hold hands, candles or using a symbol to express themselves during the Circle

Having a range of posters, signs or placards can be help by participants or displayed around the circle

Printing flyers to hand out in public

Having the circle for 30 minutes to one hour

Concluding the Circle with another text, passage or hymn

If you want to organize a Circle of Silence in your community, contact JRS/USA Outreach Officer Clara Sayans clara.sayans@jrsusa.org