

BRIDGING YOUTH TO YOUTH

AMMPARO Youth Group Curriculum



MODULE 1: Root Causes in Central America



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

AMMPARO

Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities

MODULE 1: Root Causes in Central America

FACILITATOR INTRODUCTION

Facilitator notes

Thank you for your interest in the well-being of unaccompanied minors and their families! This three-session module seeks to introduce ELCA youth to:

- life for young people in Central America today;
- the assets and characteristics that young people bring to their challenges;
- the hazards and helpers on the journey to the U.S. border;
- programs that the ELCA offers to accompany these youth in North America (the ELCA funds programs that accompany youth in Central America, implemented by companion churches there);
- ways their youth groups can accompany these youth; and
- a group of young people from Central America, in a facilitated phone or Skype conversation.

Some of this material is intense. Much of the violence that these young people experience every day is gender-based and sexual. While this module focuses on seeing assets and strengths and accompanying people in a crisis situation, there are many references to rape, murder, and assault, especially in the role-play activities. Use your judgment in how to present this material to your group—but please don't sanitize the dangers.

Contact the AMMPARO team right away to set up your phone call

Session 3 includes a telephone call with youth from the Salvadoran Lutheran Church. Arranging a time that is safe and convenient for both groups takes some doing. When you begin this program, please contact AMMPARO Program Director Mary Campbell at mary.campbell@elca.org or 773-380-2618 to begin the process of arranging the call with the Salvadoran Lutheran Church, the translator, and your group. The call will need to be scheduled during the afternoon so that Salvadoran youth aren't out at night.

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SESSION 1: LIFE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Learning objective

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- explored the circumstances of Central American youth whose lives are greatly affected by the gangs and violence around them,
- found points of connection,
- begun to understand the larger context of violence in Central America, and
- gained insight into why young people make the long journey to the border.

PREPARING FOR THIS THREE-SESSION WORKSHOP

Equipment and supplies

- Map of central America for the wall
- A marker and a pad of colorful 4x6" or 6x8" Post-its for each participant to take notes for the Journey Wall
- Laptop, projector, Internet connection and wall to project web-based videos
- Candles, a cloth, a cross (perhaps from El Salvador) to set up a central table or altar for prayer
- A basket for slips of paper
- A copy of St. Francis's prayer for each participant (or projected on wall)
- Music and lyrics, in English and Spanish, for "Nada te Turbe." Lyrics in both languages can be projected or written on a poster on the wall.

Links you will need

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=go1-BoDD7CI
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GpzW5zRJtY

Before the session

Choose a space that includes a large empty wall. This is where you'll create the Journey Wall—a place where participants can post facts, stories, questions, and lessons learned and review them easily before each session. Each session, you will add more material. You can invite church members in to view the wall on a Sunday or create it on easels so it can be moved to another part of your church building. The goal is to keep the Journey Wall up during all three sessions.

- Create labels with these headings for the wall:
 - The Journey Wall
 - Reasons for leaving
 - Personal strengths
 - Signs of hope
 - Questions I have
- Place the "Journey Wall" label at the top or to the side and arrange the others so that there is plenty of space to post items in each category.
- Write and post these definitions on the Journey Wall.
 - **Unaccompanied minor:** A person under the age of 18 who has been separated from both parents and other relatives and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom is responsible for doing so.

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- **Refugee or asylum-seeker:** Someone who is unable or unwilling to return to his/her country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.
- Copy the statistics page and cut into slips for the basket on the table.
- Copy the stories on the story sheets and cut so each one is on a separate piece of paper. Read the stories ahead of time, and on your copy of the stories, note strengths that each kid has shown in his/her situation, so you can prompt others to see and name strengths.
- Make copies of St. Francis's prayer to distribute to participants.
- Find out the names of organizations in your area that work with refugees and migrants to prepare to assign a participant to learn more in Part 5.
- Prepare lyrics to "Nada te Turbe."

Roadmap for this curriculum

Comments to the leader will be *written in italic*. Everything else is something that you will be saying in these or your own words during the portions where you talk.

SESSION 1: LIFE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Roadmap for session 1

- Welcome, opening prayer, and warm-up video (5-8 minutes)
- What's behind the journey (15 minutes)
- Activity: The context of Central America (15 minutes)
- Activity: Voices of Central American youth (10-15 minutes)

- Wrap-up and sending: Finding hope (10 minutes)

Part 1. Welcome, opening prayer, and warm-up video (5-8 minutes)

Gather in a circle, near or around the table with the cross and candles. Ask someone to light the candles. Welcome everyone. Take a few minutes to check in on everyone.

If your group participated in the Migrant Journey at the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering, use this introduction. If you didn't, skip this paragraph.

Remember how we took the "migrant journey" at the Youth Gathering in Houston? For those who weren't there, who can tell us about it? What else do you remember? What stood out for you? Where were the migrants from? Why were they leaving their country?

Thank everyone for their contributions. If details are missing, add some yourself to prompt other recollections.

We are going to spend our next three meetings learning more about the lives of young people who live in three Central American countries—Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. We will find out why so many are choosing to risk the dangerous journey to leave their countries, trying to come to the U.S. Some of these young people come to the U.S. with their families. Some come by themselves. We will also talk to a young person from El Salvador by phone, so we can hear about his/her life firsthand.

A lot of what we will learn about these young people will be very hard. Their lives can be filled with violence and danger. The good news is that they are very strong and determined. Also, people of faith are helping them, through the ELCA and companion churches in Central America. We will learn how we can support them, too.

Let's begin by praying. Because we will encounter a lot of violence during this session, let's open with St. Francis's prayer for peace. We'll read it responsively, alternating the lines. I'll start.

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Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

Sit in silence for a moment or two.

Part 2. What's behind the journey (15 minutes)

Has anyone here ever taken a plane trip alone,
without an adult? Tell me about it. What was it like?
Why did you go by yourself? Who took care of you on
the way? What could you *not* do? How did you feel?

Airlines call someone under 18 who is traveling
without a parent or guardian an “unaccompanied
minor.” This is also a legal definition. Could someone
read the definition posted on the wall?

Some of the young people you will meet tonight came
to the U.S. as unaccompanied minors. They may have
traveled in a group, but they had no parent, guardian,
or stewardess with them. They walked or took trains
for two thousand miles or more. Some of them
brought along their little brothers or sisters or their
own toddler or baby. Some of them may still live in
the U.S. without family.

Unaccompanied minors from Central America who
reach the U.S. border are also considered refugees.
Could someone please read the definition of refugee
from the wall?

Pass out the Post-its and pens.

Can you imagine what might make you leave your
home and your family and travel two thousand
miles without a parent ... not for a vacation? The
young people in this video explain why they took
the migrant journey. Let's listen to them. Each
time you hear a reason for leaving—for example,
a threat—write it on a separate Post-it. It takes
a lot to leave your home and travel a dangerous
path to a place you don't know. As these young
people tell their stories, listen for the qualities that
helped them survive and succeed. Are they brave?
Faithful? Optimistic? Every time you recognize or
hear a positive quality or characteristic, write it on a
separate Post-it.

Show the eight-minute [video](#).

What did you hear? Whose story do you remember
best? What reasons for leaving did you write down on
your Post-its? What strengths did you hear and see?

Do you know anyone who has had to leave a place
because it was too dangerous?

*If you know such a story, please share it. If a
participant mentions a schoolmate, probe this to
draw a connection between violence in Central
America and in your own town.*

Let's stop and pray for these kids—that Jesus might
walk with them as they try to stay in the U.S., go to
school, and recover from their experiences.

Improvise a short prayer.

Part 3. The context of Central America (15 minutes)

I have a basket here of facts about Central America.
Can you please take out two or three slips [*depending
on the number of participants*], read them, and then
post them on the wall under one of the labels? We
are building a wall of stories and learnings to help us
record what we are learning together.

Participants read and post on wall.

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Now please add the Post-its you wrote as you were listening to the video, in the “Reasons for leaving” part of the wall.

Participants post on wall.

Now please add the Post-its you wrote as you were listening to the video, in the “strengths” part of the wall.

Participants post on wall.

Let’s step back and look at this wall. What are you beginning to see about life in Central America? About the young people who make the journey?

Discussion.

What is making people leave? *[Violence, threats, no ability to dream.]*

Let’s explore how this happened.

Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador—the “Northern Triangle” of Central America—were rocked by civil wars in the 1980s. In Guatemala, 36 years of war killed as many as 200,000 civilians. In El Salvador, 13 years of war between the military-led government and leftist guerrilla groups left about 75,000 people dead. Honduras did not have a war of its own but felt the effects of wars in neighboring countries. It was a staging ground for the U.S.-backed contras, a right-wing rebel group fighting Nicaragua’s Sandinista government during the 1980s.

What happens in war? *[People die, people are wounded, buildings are destroyed, life is hard, etc.]*

Civil war leaves countries in very bad shape. People are damaged. Buildings and bridges are damaged. So are institutions such as courts, schools, and the police force. Another problem that happens after wars is what to do with the men and women who were fighting. How do they lay down their arms and become part of a community again?

When the wars in Central American countries ended, many men who had been soldiers found themselves with no work. At the same time, the U.S. had been

deporting to El Salvador large numbers of gang members who had been imprisoned in the Los Angeles area. They had launched gangs in the U.S., and in the chaos that followed the wars, the Northern Triangle countries weren’t prepared to deal with this influx of criminal activity. It was easy for the men to get guns. They were used to intimidating or harming people and had connections to the Mexican drug cartels. They started to sell and ship drugs. They started to extort money from other people or kidnap them and hold them for ransom. They used their force to bribe police to look the other way or tell them when someone complained. And they began to recruit younger boys to join gangs and made them store and sell drugs, collect extortion payments, and even murder other people. They began to pressure girls to be their girlfriends. Today the largest gangs have about 85,000 members, and there are many smaller gangs as well.

Your house might be on a block controlled by one gang. Your friend might live on a block controlled by another gang. Your school might be in a place controlled by yet another gang. The gangs have lookouts who watch to see what happens on every block. Walking to school or visiting your friend will be dangerous if those gangs think you’re part of the gang on your block. And you could always be caught in the crossfire of a battle between gangs.

The police are afraid too. They are very heavily armed and stop a lot of people, mostly young, that they think might be in gangs. But they may also be accepting money from a gang. If they are, and you go to the police to complain that you are being harassed by a gang member, they might tell the gang about your complaint.

It’s very dangerous, so you don’t go out much. In some neighborhoods, you can’t leave your house at night. If you are being threatened by gang members, you will hide in your home or someone else’s.

Any questions?

Hearing about this, and building our wall of facts, what questions would you like to ask a young person

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who lives in Central America? What do you want to know? Write down your question or questions on your Post-it and put it on the wall in the “Questions I have” section. We are collecting these questions to prepare for our phone call with young people from Central America that we will make in our third session together.

Participants write and post.

Part 4. Voices of Central American youth (10-15 minutes, depending on the number of participants)

Thanks for posting your questions. Now, on a Post-it, write the places you go during the week—places such as school, your friends’ houses, the store, sports practice, whatever you do.

How would it feel if you couldn’t go to these places because it was too dangerous? Even going to school?

Discussion.

Let’s hear from some more youth who live under the threat of gangs every day. Choose a piece of paper and read it to yourself. Then we will go around the circle and each one of us will read the paper out loud. I’ll read one too.

Find all the stories in the Life in Central America stories on page 10.

After reading my story, I am amazed at how *[brave/courageous]* _____ was when he/she _____ *[describe an action]*. I’m not sure I could do the same thing myself in that situation. *[Call on someone]*, what did you notice about the person whose story you read?

Listen for answers—besides fear and intimidation, can they mention any other quality this person must have, such as bravery, the ability to live in a difficult situation, etc.?

Let’s pin these stories to our wall.

Based on these stories, what else would you like to add to our list of questions we’ll be asking during our phone call? Something you want to know about? For me, I think the question I am most interested in is _____? *[Have an example ready. Participants write down questions and post on the wall.]*

Part 5. Wrap-up and sending: Finding hope (10 minutes)

All of these stories are hard. It is hard to feel hope in these situations. When you are in trouble, how do you stay hopeful? *[If no response, suggest a couple of resources—friends, faith, etc.]*

Re-read your story again, looking for signs of hope. What do you see? *[Lead off with your story. Could be that the family is still alive. There are relatives to go to. There are people helping. Etc.]* What do you think Ana, Juan, Edwin, and their peers need in order to be safe again? *[If no response, suggest—bravery? Maybe hope? Faith? A sense of a future?]*

In our next session, we will look at signs of hope that come from young people and families who are rebuilding their lives, and the people who are helping them in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, and the U.S. Congregations here and in Central America are very actively offering ways to help young people who stay or are returned home, like Diego, support themselves and feel safe.

When we have our Skype session with young people in Central America, we will learn more reasons to hope.

There are ways we can join the effort to support these young people. One way is by recognizing that they already live among us. At your school, are there students who have come from somewhere else? Do you know their stories? *[Call on people to share.]* As we wrap up this session, I’d like to challenge you to get to know someone in your school who may have made a journey. Tell us, next week, something about his/her story. I’d also like to ask one of you to learn more about *[name of group]*

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in your area that works with migrants or refugees]. Who can check its website this week or stop by the office to learn more about its work? This will be very helpful to us in the next session when we look at how we might accompany young migrants. *[Assign this task to a volunteer.]*

Thank you.

Let's stop now and take a breath. *[Pause for breathing.]* We'll sit in silence for a moment, and then we'll learn a song together.

A few moments of silence.

"Nada te Turbe" is a quiet song that is used in quiet Taize prayer services. It reminds us that God is with us even during frightening times. Could someone please read the lyrics in English? Now could someone read them in Spanish?

Let's listen to it and then sing along.

Play this [video](#).

A few more moments of silence when singing stops.

Let's pray.

Dear God, you are with us in trouble, you are with us in pain, you are with us in fear. You are also with us in joy! We thank you for this time together, and we ask you to remember all the youth we met this evening in stories. Surround them with your love and strengthen them for their challenges. Be with us all this evening as we take their stories into our hearts and homes. In your name we pray. Amen.

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SESSION 1: LIFE IN CENTRAL AMERICA HANDOUTS AND ACTIVITIES (STATISTICS AND STORIES)

STATISTICS FOR THE JOURNEY WALL

Copy these statistics and cut into slips for the basket on the table, for participants to select, read, and post onto the Journey Wall, under “Reasons to leave.”

Number of homicides per 100,000 people, 2016

El Salvador: 80.9

Honduras: 59

Guatemala: 27.3

United States: 5.3

Source: Wikipedia

Number of homicides per 100,000 people, 2017

San Pedro Sula, Honduras: 51.8

San Salvador, El Salvador: 59.06

Distrito Federal, Honduras: 48

Source: Wikipedia

New York City: 3.4

El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras are ranked among the world’s most violent countries. *Make a slip for your town or nearest big city.*

Statistics on sexual violence

El Salvador: In 2014, 50% of women reported some form of violence.

Guatemala: In 2015, an act of sexual violence was reported every 46 minutes.

Honduras: In 2013, an act of sexual violence was reported every three hours.

Source: Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) & Migration Fact Sheet

New York City: 14 rapes per 100,000 people

Statistics available for your city or region?

Children under 18 apprehended at the Mexico-U.S. border, per U.S. fiscal year

67,789 in 2014

39,399 in 2015

58,819 in 2016

41,435 in 2017

50,036 in 2018

Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Families apprehended at the Mexico-U.S. border, per U.S. fiscal year

8,838 in 2014

39,838 in 2015

77,674 in 2016

75,622 in 2017

107,212 in 2018

Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection

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LIFE IN CENTRAL AMERICA: STORIES

Copy these stories on the story sheets and cut so each one is on a separate piece of paper. Place in a basket for youth to choose and read. Read the stories ahead and, on your copy, note strengths that each youth has shown in his/her situation, so you can prompt others to see and name strengths.

- “ I am Fernando. When I was 14, I was in a car with friends when we were shot at numerous times by gang members. I wasn't hurt, but I had to lie in the blood of my friends, pretending to be dead, in order to escape. ”
- “ I am Diego. When I was 11, I was playing soccer around the corner from my home. My four-year-old sister Rosa was home with my mom. A gang broke in and shot my mother 15 times while Rosa watched. Rosa and I and our other sister, Lisbeth, moved in with our aunts. When we received death threats from the gang that controlled the neighborhood where our aunts lived, we decided to go to the United States. We got to the border but were apprehended and separated. ”
- “ I'm Ana. My dad was murdered by a gang when I was very young. I watched my mother killed by men who broke into our house. My sister Lidia and I didn't know how to take care of our three little siblings. We tried moving to another part of Guatemala, but we couldn't make enough to take care of our little brother and sisters. We never felt safe, no matter where we went. Together the five of us left for the U.S. so we could feel safe, get an education, and have a better life. ”
- “ I'm Marcela, and I can't leave my house. I'm 14, a good student, and active in my church youth group. Last week a very powerful gang member noticed me. He says he wants me to be his girlfriend. I don't know. My parents don't either. They know that the man will harass me or even try to kidnap me to get his way. What shall we do? I am hiding until we know. ”
- “ I'm Juan, and I am in hiding. My mother and I live in a neighborhood controlled by one gang, and my brother Esteban lives in an area controlled by a rival gang. Recently I was walking to my brother's house when I was stopped by gang members. They told me to stop visiting Esteban's house. I visited him anyway. Then the gang ambushed Esteban when he was walking home from church. They shot him several times. Our whole family went into hiding in another town while my brother recovered. We are not sure what to do next. My brother says that since the police can't protect us, all we can do is trust in God. ”

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- “ I’m Paola. My dad left when I was born. My mom went to the U.S. to look for work when I was very young and left me with my grandmother. My grandma was crazy. She would beat me with sticks or belts. When I was 15, I moved in with my boyfriend, but he was violent too. Now I’m 16. I came to the United States with my baby, Brayan, hoping to live with my mother and start over again. ”
- “ I’m Maldonado. I earn 300 lempiras a day, about \$12.50, painting houses and installing Sheetrock. I am going to the U.S. with my wife because I hear that I can earn twice as much there. Also, in Honduras, the gangs make you pay a portion of your salary to them, and if you don’t, they kill you and they kill your family. We hope to be safer in the U.S. ”
- “ I’m Edwin, and I’m 16. I was playing soccer near my house when members of a gang began to shoot at me because I live on a street controlled by a rival gang. They considered me an enemy. I was so scared that the next day my brother and I left for the U.S. We didn’t get there because in Mexico we were deported back to Honduras. I’m still scared. I mostly stay home, except one day a week I attend an alternative high school. ”
- “ I’m Pablo, and I am not leaving my house right now. I just turned 15. A gang is pressuring me to join them. They are telling me that they will kill me or hurt my family if I don’t join. I don’t want to join, but I don’t want to put my family at risk. What shall I do? ”
- “ I’m Esmerelda, and I am 15. My mom is a nurse with a good income. The gangs have asked her for money and told her to pay or be killed. My mom’s hospital transferred her to an island to protect us, but it didn’t take long for them to find us. She had to continue to pay extortion money. In four years she has been transferred to four cities, but the gangs always find us. Once they broke into our house and held a gun to my mom’s head until she paid them. It was awful. She went to a high police authority in my country, and they assigned her an agent, but the agent kept texting asking where she was. We realized that they were giving the information to the gangs. I think that is how the gangs were able to find us, no matter what. Then they started threatening to kidnap my sister and me. My parents got tourist visas, and we went to the U.S. to apply for asylum. ”

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SESSION 2: ACCOMPANYING YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE JOURNEY

Note: This session may run 75 minutes.

Learning objective

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- grasped the dangers that face young people who make the journey,
- learned about some of the people who help along the way,
- been introduced to the concept of accompaniment,
- reflected on the situation of migrants and refugees who may be in their social or school networks,
- learned how the ELCA and companion churches accompany these young people on their journey,
- found points of connection with young migrants, and
- identified places where your congregation might be able to make a difference.

PREPARING FOR SESSION 2

Equipment and supplies

- Map of Central America for the wall
- Laptop, projector, Internet connection and wall to project web-based videos
- A marker and a pad of colorful 4x6" or 6x8" Post-its for each person to take notes for the Journey Wall
- Candles, a cloth, a cross (perhaps from El Salvador) to set up a central table or altar for prayer
- The CAPSA prayer for safety for migrant children—copied onto Journey Wall or PowerPoint slide
- Seven cans or containers for slips of paper used in the Journey role-play, labeled 1 through 6
- The “Bridging Youth to Youth, Module 1, Session 2: Accompanying Young People on the Journey” document that includes the “Journey role play” sheet on page 19
- One copy of Jenna’s story, included in this file, for a participant to read and post on Journey Wall
- The “Bridging Youth to Youth, Module 1, Session 2: Accompanying Young People on the Journey” document list of ideas and functions for Welcoming Congregations on page 31
- PowerPoint slide showing map of Welcoming Congregations across the U.S.
- Music and lyrics, in English and Spanish, for “Nada te Turbe.” Lyrics in both languages can be projected or written on a poster on the wall

Links you will need

- Five minutes on [“The Beast,”](#) the freight train that carries many migrants north
- Three minutes on [how villagers feed passengers on the Beast](#)
- Three minutes on the [ELCA Guardian Angel program](#)

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Before the session

- Make sure the Journey Wall is up and visible in the room.
- Create a poster for the prayer for the safety of migrant children to post on the Journey Wall or a PowerPoint slide.
- Cut the Journey role-play stories into slips and place them in cans 1-7 around the room. Making a binder of all stories, dangers, helpers, etc., will help you lead the activity and discussion.
- Cut the functions of Welcoming Congregations into slips and place them in a basket.

SESSION 2: ACCOMPANYING YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE JOURNEY

Roadmap for session 2

- Welcome, opening prayer, and warm-up (5-8 minutes)
- The journey and helpers along the way (15 minutes)
- The border and into the U.S. (10-12 minutes)
- How we can accompany migrant youth (10 minutes)
- Planning the international call (12 minutes)
- Wrap-up and sending (3 minutes)

Part 1. Welcome, opening prayer, and warm-up (5-8 minutes)

Welcome everyone. Take a few minutes to check in on everyone.

In our last session, we met some young people struggling to live amid violence and threats from gangs. All of them are trying hard to survive and make their lives better. I've been thinking about them this week. What about you?

Specific prompts as needed. Could take a moment to walk by the wall and review the stories.

Did you talk to a schoolmate who is a migrant or refugee? Tell us about him/her. What is his/her story? Is he/she accepted at school? What do you think are the challenges for him/her?

Ask participant who volunteered to investigate a local group working with refugees and migrants to give the name of the group and a sentence or two about what it does.

When we left off last week, kids were planning to go north. What happens along the way? Today we'll explore that journey and learn about the people who accompany and help them along the way. We'll look at what happens when they arrive at the U.S. border and ways we can join other congregations in supporting young people seeking safety and opportunity.

Let's begin by praying for the safety of migrant children and families on the journey, and for justice as they reach their destinations.

Ask a participant to read the prayer posted on the wall as others listen:

Lord, No one is a stranger to you and no one is ever far from your loving care. In your kindness, watch over refugees and asylum-seekers, those separated from their loved ones, those who are lost, and those who have been exiled from their homes. Bring them safely to the place where they long to be and help us always to show your kindness to strangers and those in need. We ask this through Christ our Lord, who too was a refugee and immigrant and who travelled to another land searching for a home. Amen.

Source: Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum, Australia

In our last session, we learned the term "unaccompanied minor." What does it mean to be UN-accompanied? Yes, it means being on your own.

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So what does “accompanied” mean? Yes, when you are accompanied, you are not alone. You are with someone else.

What difference does that make, especially on a long journey? *[Affirm responses or prompt participants: Someone to talk to? Someone to help you when you need it?]*

Let’s learn a little more about the journey. Afterward we’ll continue to explore the idea of accompaniment and its significance.

Part 2. The journey and helpers along the way (15 minutes)

Imagine you are leaving San Pedro Sula, Honduras, to go north. You might take a bus to the Guatemalan border and perhaps across Guatemala. When you reach the border town of Tapachula, Mexico, you head northeast toward the Veracruz and then walk along the Gulf of Mexico to McAllen, Texas. It’s estimated that walking from San Pedro Sula to McAllen, Texas, would take 501 hours, or 42 days. Some people ride a bus or jump onto “the Beast,” a network of freight trains that runs north across Mexico. Even so, your journey will be long. If you are trying to reach San Diego, your journey will be even longer.

Your goal is to surrender yourself to border authorities, so you can officially enter the U.S. and launch your asylum application. The journey is difficult and dangerous. Let’s hear from some migrants taking the train.

Show this five-minute video.

Trying to reach the U.S. border, what do you need? Of course, friends or family to accompany you through the dangers along the way. How about water? Food? Can anyone think of anything else? *[Prompt: What about clothes? Papers? Blankets? Medicine? A hat?]* Is it easy to get these things when you are in an unfamiliar place or don’t have the money to purchase them?

Let’s try to get a taste of what it’s like to walk two thousand miles across a country you don’t know to

reach another country you don’t know. All along the way, there will be threats. All along the way, there will also be helpers. Let’s meet a few now.

Show this three-minute video of volunteers feeding people as they ride “the Beast.”

To begin to imagine what happens along the journey, I have placed cans around the room. Please walk around and draw a slip from each can. Can #1 will give you the name and age of someone making the journey. Slips from can #2 will indicate problems you may have while still in your own country. From can #3, take two slips, each one describing a hazard you may encounter along the way. If you draw two slips that are identical, please put one back and draw another one. Can #4 will introduce you to people who will help you along the way.

Participants take a minute to walk around the room picking out slips. They read them and return to their seats.

Let’s go around the circle and read our four papers to learn about the journey, the threats, and the helpers. Please read the slips in order.

Everyone shares the slips in order: #1, #2, #3, #4.

What’s your reaction to these stories? Can you imagine yourself or your siblings making a similar journey? *[Affirm answers.]* How did the helpers on slip #4 accompany the person you read about? What might have happened if no one had helped? *[Call on someone to share his/her slip and then go around circle. Affirm all answers.]* Please pin your “helper” slips *[slip #4]* to the board under “Signs of hope.”

I have one more story about people walking along with migrants. This comes from a young woman named Jenna.

Call on someone to read this story and hand him/her the sheet, included in the Journey stories sheet.

“I’m Jenna. I’m 22 and I am volunteering in Mexico City through the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program. I serve in a small shelter for

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migrants with 24 beds. The people who sleep in the shelter are mostly from Honduras and are on their way to the U.S. Recently some other volunteers and I visited some migrants sleeping without much shelter in a concrete field. A man from my shelter asked a woman there if she was cold. When she nodded, he immediately shucked off his heavy winter jacket and gave it to her, waving off her thanks. Just a few minutes later, I watched as another one of our migrants ran after a mother with a child on her hip to give them his scarf. I thought of Matthew 25:36, where Jesus says, “I needed clothes and you clothed me,” and verse 40, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” Here were migrants helping migrants, spending six hours in the freezing rain passing out clothes and backpacks and salvaging medicine from damp boxes. Not only did they show up, but they gave the shirts off their backs—quite literally—and without one single complaint. They talked to fellow Hondurans, played with children, joked around with other volunteers. They were generous with their time and their love and didn’t expect anything in return. It is beyond humbling to watch someone give the jacket off their back, not knowing where they’ll get their next jacket from, but giving it all the same. I was ashamed when I realized I couldn’t imagine parting with my favorite blue peacoat, particularly when it was freezing outside. Talk about a reality check.”

Who was helping whom here? How?

Part 3. The border and into the U.S. (10-12 minutes)

Now it’s time to get to the border. First, let’s review the definitions of “unaccompanied minor” and “refugee/asylum-seeker” posted on our Journey Wall. *[Ask someone to read.]* People seeking asylum must be granted refugee status. In order to do that, you need to already be in the country in which you are claiming asylum, or else at a port of entry such as an official border crossing. Often that means surrendering at a border crossing and letting yourself be detained. Then, in custody, you can ask for asylum. If the U.S. government agrees that someone is unable or unwilling to return to his/her

country due to persecution and gives them refugee status, he/she may be eligible to become a lawful permanent resident after one year of continuous presence in the United States.

However, many people cross the border clandestinely and do not “surrender” to a border agent. This may complicate their application. Many people are turned away from the border and refused admittance to the U.S. Recently the U.S. has been sending asylum applicants back into Mexico to wait.

Let’s visit can #5. Even if you drew the slip saying you were returned to your country after being in Mexico, please choose a slip from can #5 to discover some of the things that happen at the border.

Participants walk to can #5, pick a slip, and sit down.

Call on someone to read his/her story. Everyone reads.

If you were talking to a young person who had taken the migrant journey and reached the U.S., what questions would you have about the journey? About helpers along the way? Write your question on a Post-it and put it under the “Questions I have” section of the wall. They will help us organize our thoughts for the call we’ll make in the next session.

Two minutes for thinking and posting.

Let’s talk about these stories. How would you feel to be in a detention center not knowing what will happen next? *[Affirm answers.]* How would you feel to be refused entry to a country you walked two thousand miles to try to enter? *[Affirm answers.]* How would you feel to be separated from your siblings at the border? *[Affirm answers.]*

Fortunately, our church is accompanying young migrants in these situations so that they are not alone. Our church officially defines “accompaniment” this way:

Ask someone to read the definition on the wall: “Walking together in a solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality.”

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What does “solidarity” mean? *[Affirm answers.]* The dictionary says that “solidarity” means to be in agreement and support with a group of people. After learning about these young people, we understand more about their situation. We are in solidarity with them.

What does it mean to be “interdependent”? *[Affirm answers.]* “Interdependence” means that we rely on one another and recognize each other’s gifts. On the “Personal strengths” wall, we have noted bravery and other qualities and gifts that we see in the young people making this journey.

What does “mutual” mean? *[Affirm answers.]* “Mutual” means we support and can learn from each other. In these sessions, we listened to and learned from these young people.

All these words are important to the concept of walking with, or accompanying, other people.

When people arrive at the Mexican-U.S. border, they have a lot of paperwork to do. The young people we met in the last session are hoping to file asylum claims so they can stay in the U.S. and start the process of becoming legal residents. It’s very complicated. People from the U.S. who understand immigration law can make it simpler. That’s why our church opened two programs to accompany young migrants in the U.S.

Let’s pass around cans #6 and #7. In Can #6 we’ll learn what new arrivals to the U.S. need in order to feel safe, to start the asylum process, and not just to recover from the trauma of the journey but to thrive in their new surroundings.

People read slips. This is an opportunity to explore more thoroughly any stories that participants volunteered about migrant/refugee students in their school. Do they have friends? Could the participant be one? What would the migrant need? How can you accompany this person?

This is also the time to follow up on what was learned about local groups helping migrants and refugees. Quick discussion.

As we learned in our journey, some asylum-seekers are not admitted to the U.S. Can #7 tells us what people need when they return to the communities from which they fled.

Part 4. How we can accompany migrant youth (10 minutes)

The Welcoming Congregations program

The good news is that the ELCA is welcoming young migrants and helping them connect to the things they need in order to flourish in the U.S. Working with companion churches in the region, the ELCA is also helping young migrants who’ve been deported back to their home communities start a better, more secure life, so that they no longer feel that fleeing their home country is the only answer.

We can join this effort. One way is by joining the hundred ELCA congregations that have pledged to greet migrants with open arms by joining the Welcoming Congregations Network. This is a project of AMMPARO, Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities. In Spanish, “amparo” means protection of a living creature from suffering or damage.

Let’s hear about how these congregations are accompanying migrants.

Pass around a basket of slips of what these congregations are doing. Read them aloud. Look at the PowerPoint slide showing a map of Welcoming Congregations throughout the U.S. Is there one in your area?

ELCA youth are getting more involved in the Welcoming Congregations program. Did you hear something that we might be able to do as a church or in conjunction with *[name of local organization]* to accompany young migrants? *[If the map shows a Welcoming Congregation in your synod or conference:]* Would someone like to contact *[name of congregation]* to find out what it is doing?

Discussion.

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The Guardian Angel program

Another program is the Guardian Angel program. Let's watch this video to learn more.

Show this three-and-a-half-minute [video](#).

After watching this video, what other ways do you think we might be able to accompany young migrants?

Discussion.

Part 5. Planning the international call (12 minutes)

Through videos and stories, we have begun to understand what life is like for young people in Central America and on the migrant journey. In our next session, we will have a conversation with members of a youth group from our companion church in El Salvador, the Salvadoran Lutheran Church. We'll learn about their lives and share something of our own with them.

The call will be about 45 minutes long. But since everything we say will need to be translated into Spanish, and everything they say needs to be translated into English, we really have only about 20 minutes. To use our time efficiently, we need to choose two people to represent all of us during the call. These people will do the talking, ask the questions we have, and respond to questions the Salvadoran youth may have. Let's take a minute to decide who these two people will be.

Look for youth who won't be shy or tongue-tied and can confidently connect by phone.

To plan our questions, let's review everything we posted on the Journey Wall under "Questions I have." We will probably have time to ask three or four of these questions. Our questions should not make the young people uncomfortable or require them to disclose confidential information. Are there any questions that should be added? We have focused so much on challenges facing these youth that we don't know much about the positive things in their

communities and lives. What could we ask to learn about them?

Discussion. Choose the three or four questions that interest the group most. Make sure there's time to share positive things and that Salvadoran youth aren't asked to disclose anything confidential.

What should we share about our own lives? What would you say about our community? About the positives and challenges facing youth who live here? What positive things can our two conversation leaders share?

Give an example of a challenge and an asset or good thing in your community. Ask for input, discuss, and have youth share their contribution. Together, make a quick outline of final questions and topics to share. You may want to meet with the two conversation leaders to confirm that they understand how to prepare for the call.

Part 6. Wrap-up and sending (3 minutes)

Let's stop now and take a breath. *[Pause for breathing.]* We'll sit in silence for a moment, and then we'll sing the song we learned last week, "Nada te Turbe."

Sing together or repeat [video](#) from last session. Allow a few more moments of silence when singing stops.

Let's pray together.

Dear God, we are grateful that you accompany us each and every day on our journey through life. Thank you for your presence among us and among the youth we met this evening in stories. We pray particularly for the young people we will meet by telephone soon. We don't know them yet, but you do. Be with them as they go about their lives. Surround them with your love and strengthen them for their challenges. May we take all the youth we have met tonight with us and keep them in our prayers this week. In your name we pray. Amen.

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Before the next session

- Contact AMMPARO Program Director Mary Campbell at mary.campbell@elca.org or 773-380-2618 to confirm arrangements for the call. It will need to be scheduled during the afternoon so that Salvadoran youth aren't out at night.
- Review the call outline in session 3 so you can prepare the two call leaders and all participants as they pull together questions and plan the call.

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SESSION 2, PARTS 2 AND 3: JOURNEY ROLE-PLAY

This file contains everything you need for the Journey role-play and the discussion about ways to accompany migrant youth.

Here are slips to cut and place in seven containers for the Journey role-play activity. These include:

- **Can #1: Roles**
- **Can #2: In your country**
- **Can #3: In Mexico**
- **Can #4: Helpers along the way**
- **Can #5: Crossing the Mexico-U.S. border**
- **Can #6: Settling in the U.S.**
- **Can #7: Resettling in your home community**

Can #1: Roles

Ana, 15, traveling with sister Lidia, 13, and two more siblings, ages 7 and 10. They have \$60 and backpacks with water bottles, sweaters, jackets, and socks. Ana is carrying copies of their school IDs, a cellphone, and telephone numbers of relatives in the U.S.

Maria, 17, traveling with her 1-year old son. They have \$40, a cell phone, and a backpack containing diapers, a bottle, and extra clothes, plus Maria's ID and her son's baptismal certificate.

Delia, 14, traveling with her brother Edwin, 17. They have \$20, two backpacks, two blankets, one change of clothes, their school IDs, and contact information for an uncle in Texas.

Edwin, 17, with his sister Delia, 14. Each has a backpack. They had \$50 and cell phones but were robbed even before they got onto the bus to the border of their home country. They do have their school IDs and a sheet of paper with the telephone numbers for relatives in the U.S.

Thirteen-year-old Diego, 14-year-old Rosa, and 16-year-old Lisbeth, all traveling together. In their backpacks are rain jackets and changes of clothes but no blanket. They have water bottles, and each one is carrying \$25 and a school ID. Rosa and Lisbeth have cell phones too.

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Santiago, 18, traveling with an uncle. They have \$100, cell phones, good shoes, and blankets, but no rain gear.

Lorena, 13, traveling with her brother Israel, 15. They left so quickly they have only the clothes on their backs, plus their cell phones and \$40. They don't have any IDs but do have contact info for their mother's sister in California.

Israel, 15, traveling with his sister Lorena, 13. In their backpacks are extra clothes, socks, blankets, a rain jacket, water bottles, sun hats, and \$120 total. They don't have any ID.

Diana, 12, traveling with her 19-year-old aunt. They are carrying backpacks with rain gear and blankets, some clothes, Diana's medication, and their IDs. Each has a cell phone.

Can #2: In your country (six scenarios—OK to copy several times for large groups)

You are harassed by gangs who boarded your bus to the border.

You are frightened of being forced to be a gang member—you left in a hurry.

You have to buy food at a market, but you have little money left.

You left your water bottle on the bus you took to the border.

You are harassed by gangs who boarded your bus to the border.

You are frightened of being raped by a gang—you left in a hurry.

You are harassed by gangs who boarded your bus to the border.

You are frightened of being forced to be a gang member—you left in a hurry.

You have to buy food at a market, but you have little money left.

You left your water bottle on the bus you took to the border.

You are harassed by gangs who boarded your bus to the border.

You are frightened of being raped by a gang—you left in a hurry.

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Can #3: In Mexico

You are intercepted by Mexican soldiers at the southern border and returned to your home country.

It's hot and dry, and you are thirsty.

You board "the Beast," but strangers try to hurt you.

You sleep outside during a big rainstorm. All your clothes are muddy.

A dog chases and bites you.

You are not feeling well and can't keep up with the group you are following.

You fall and twist your ankle. While you are resting, your group goes on ahead.

Your little sister has hurt herself and is crying. She wants to go home.

You are kidnapped. The kidnappers use your cell phone to call your family in Honduras and demand money. They say that if they don't get it, they will kill you.

While you are riding the train called "the Beast," you see someone fall off.

The coyote guiding you demands an additional \$500 and says that if you don't pay, you will be handed over to the Zetas, a Mexican drug cartel known for preying on migrants in transit. If you can't pay them, they will execute you.

Someone robs you and takes your papers. Now you can't prove who you are when you arrive at the U.S. border.

Someone robs you of your cell phone and uses it to call your relatives and demand money. Plus, you don't have your relatives' numbers written on paper.

You are robbed twice. The first time they took your money and your cell phone. The second time they took your school ID, so you don't have any identification anymore.

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Can #4: Helpers along the way

While you are riding the Beast, people in a village throw sopas and water to you and other migrants.

On a rainy night, a family let you sleep on their covered porch.

You get to rest for two days at a migrant shelter.

The people of a town along the way offer you tamales and water bottles.

A church invites you in for a meal, lets you use the bathroom to wash up, and lets you call your mother. When you leave, a church member gives you a water bottle.

A woman gives you a homemade empanada. She blesses you and wishes you well. She knows you are trying to better your life.

A truck driver pulling a flatbed semitrailer invites your group to ride on the back for 15 miles.

Someone from an evangelical church gives you fresh tortillas and a bowl of stew.

A man who sees you are alone tries to attack and rob you, but another migrant steps in and chases the man away.

You are invited to spend two days at the home for migrants shelter "Bethlehem" in Tapachula, on the Mexico-Guatemala border. This shelter provides respite and services to all migrants and medical support to pregnant women and girls.

Can #5: Crossing the Mexico-U.S. border

You successfully crossed the border between checkpoints, but you were picked up by U.S. Border Patrol 10 miles north of the U.S. border, sent to a detention center, and deported back to your country.

At the U.S. border, you surrendered to the border patrol and were detained in a very cold detention center for 10 days. Then you were released to your U.S. relatives. Now you are waiting for a court date to determine your status and are trying to find out what you should do when the court date is set.

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You crossed the border successfully, but you and your siblings were separated. Your two sisters were sent to your mother in Los Angeles, but you and your brother were sent to a detention center. You have talked to your mom only once. She knows where you are but hasn't been able to help you be released.

You crossed the border successfully and received a Notice to Appear (NTA) with no court date.

You crossed the border successfully and were given a court date. You are staying with relatives but can't read the English-language asylum papers, don't understand the process, and don't have an interpreter for court.

You crossed the border successfully, but someone decided your story was not compelling enough to find that you have a credible fear of returning to your country. You were deported back to your country.

You were turned away at the U.S. border because the border patrol agent didn't think you were from Central America. Now you are sleeping at a shelter for migrants in Tijuana, deciding what to do next.

Can #6: Settling in the U.S.

You need someone to welcome you.

You need a place to stay.

You need someone to help you find the relatives you are looking for.

You need a way to learn English.

You need a way to learn how to live in the U.S.

You need a lawyer to help you with your legal situation—one that doesn't charge much.

You need help to get into school while you are still a Spanish speaker.

You need help finding free medical care for the injuries you suffered on the journey.

You need help finding counseling so you can work through the trauma of the journey and the things you experienced along the way and in your home country.

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Can #7: Resettling in your home community

You need someone to welcome you.

You need bus fare to get from the government's repatriation center to your home community.

You need a safer place to stay—a gang still controls the neighborhood where you were living before you emigrated.

You need to get back into school in the middle of the school year.

You need help finding free medical care for the injuries you suffered on the journey.

You need help finding counseling so you can work through the trauma of the journey and the things you experienced along the way.

You need a way to make money to pay back the debts you accumulated from the journey.

You need job training to qualify for better-paying jobs in the future.

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SESSION 2, PART 4: HOW WELCOMING CONGREGATIONS ACCOMPANY MIGRANT YOUTH

Cut these into slips for participants to pull and discuss.

Pray for justice for migrants.

Advocate for public policy that will positively impact the current immigration crisis, such as ending family separation and seeking alternatives to the detention of children in prisonlike facilities.

Educate your community about immigration issues and migrant rights.

Offer a church home for migrant children and families.

Attend immigration hearings with a young migrant.

Write a reference letter for a young migrant.

Provide emotional and spiritual support for a young migrant.

Offer English as a Second Language classes for migrants and refugees.

Invite migrants for meals and fellowship.

Offer hospitality to migrants who come to town for court hearings and accompany them to court.

Secure free legal counsel for migrants and asylum-seekers.

Visit young migrants in detention facilities.

Partner with a local organization helping migrants and refugees with specific tasks.

Fund the purchase of international phone cards or cell phone plans for migrant youths.

One church offered a “Three Kings” party at a local detention facility. They brought in everything needed to celebrate the arrival of the magi, a traditional holiday in Central America.

One church opens its doors twice a month to receive migrants, feeding them, providing them with overnight shelter, and allowing them to call their families so they can buy a bus or plane ticket to get to their court date on time.

One church gave its contact information to its companion synod in El Salvador, so that if young people came to Milwaukee, they could come to their church.

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SESSION 3: GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Learning objective

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- gotten to know young people from Central America by phone,
- shared their own stories with them,
- reflected on the conversation and what they felt and learned, and
- listed next steps the group can take in order to accompany Central American youth in the North American context.

PREPARING FOR THIS THREE-SESSION WORKSHOP

Equipment and supplies

- The Journey Wall with maps, photos, Post-its, map of Central America
- Laptop, projector, Internet connection for Skype conversation, and a wall to project call if video is possible
- A marker and a pad of colorful 4x6" or 6x8" Post-its for each person to take notes on the conversation, for the Journey Wall
- Candles, a cloth, and a cross (perhaps from El Salvador) to set up a central table or altar for prayer
- Music and lyrics, in English and Spanish, for "Nada te Turbe." Lyrics in both languages can be projected or written on a poster on the wall

Before the session

- Follow up with AMMPARO Program Director Mary Campbell to confirm arrangements for the call.
- Make sure the Journey Wall is up and visible.
- Check that your internet/phone connection is working.

- Confirm that youth leading the call are prepared with questions and stories to share from your own context.
- Write "Que Dios los bendiga" on a large Post-it for the wall, or on a PowerPoint slide.

SESSION 3: GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Roadmap for session 3

- Welcome, opening prayer, and warm-up (4-5 minutes)
- The call (50 minutes, including connecting)
- Debriefing and what's next (15 minutes)
- Wrap-up and sending (4 minutes)

Part 1. Welcome, opening prayer, and warm-up (4-5 minutes)

"¡Bienvenidos!" Who can tell me what that means?

Yes—it means "welcome." Today we will be greeting and welcoming two youth from the Salvadoran Lutheran Church. Let's practice saying "bienvenidos" to one another. *[Practice saying the word.]*

Before we place our call, let's pray.

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God, we thank you for this gathering and the time we are about to share with new friends in El Salvador. May we welcome them and their stories with open hearts and minds. Help us listen with our whole selves, share our own stories with courage, and find ways to be companions on the journey. In your name we pray. Amen.

In a few minutes we'll place our call and meet *[insert names if you know them]*. Our call leaders have created a plan around our questions. Here are a few other things to know:

- The call is 45 minutes, but translating back and forth means it will really be just 20 minutes. That's not much time to cover lots of ground! When it's your turn to talk, be very concise.
- *[Designate a youth]* will keep time for us and give us a heads-up when 30 minutes have passed, and again when we have five minutes to go.
- We won't be asking questions that are inappropriate or asking for too much personal detail.
- If the conversation leaders are asked a question by the Salvadoran youth that they can't answer, it's OK to turn to someone else in the group to answer it.
- Give our Salvadoran guests your complete attention throughout the call, even when you don't understand what is being said.
- Use your Post-it Note pads to jot down anything you want to remember—things that stand out, that particularly affect you.
- When we end, let's all say "Que Dios los bendiga"—may God bless you. Let's practice a few times.

Part 2. The call

(50 minutes, including connecting)

- Start with greetings and introducing all the participants. Give a group hello and welcome ("¡Bienvenidos!").

- Listen as the Salvadorans introduce themselves.
- Give the translator an opportunity to say hello and introduce him/herself too!
- Be sure to say how much you appreciate their willingness to take the time to talk and share about their lives.
- Start by naming your church and community—where you live and worship. Share a bit about your community—your school, your church, your activities, some highlights and challenges.
- Segue into questions and conversation.
- The person keeping time should signal when the call reaches 30 minutes, and again at 40 minutes so you can start moving toward ending the call.
- Be sure to thank everyone again for participating, especially the translator (it's hard work).
- Group goodbye—"¡Que Dios los bendiga!"

Part 3. Debriefing and what's next (15 minutes)

Help participants debrief the call with these discussion questions:

- What are your overall impressions of what you heard?
- Is there anything you want to share from your notes?
- What positive things did you hear?
- What challenges did you hear?
- How do they meet those challenges?
- How does God walk with them?
- How do other people walk with them?
- Can you see yourself in their stories?
- What have you learned?
- How might we accompany migrant youth?

MODULE 1: Root Causes in Central America

Now that we've had this great opportunity to talk with [names] and hear their stories, let's identify what's next for us as we seek to walk with migrant youth and families in our communities. We can learn more, we can share what we have learned with others, and we can move ahead in being part of the movement to welcome and accompany youth.

Depending on your sense of next steps, discuss one of these options and affirm any other ideas that youth may propose.

Learn more:

- **Invite a migrant community organization to come** and talk about its work and how you can participate.
- **Take the Migrant Journey** as a youth group and then offer to lead a similar trip for members of your congregation.
- **Learn more about issues facing migrants** through the AMMPARO Facebook page, [Facebook.com/ELCAammparo](https://www.facebook.com/ELCAammparo).
- **Commit to doing the next modules**, including module 2 on migrant youth in U.S. communities or module 3 on refugee youth in Cairo, Egypt.
- **Visit Central American youth** in El Salvador, Honduras, or Guatemala.
- **Undertake an immersion experience at the U.S.-Mexico border** (AMMPARO offers some trips).

Share what you have learned with others:

- **Have an "open house"** where the youth group invites church members to view the Journey Wall and hear about the call.
- **Share some stories of youth**, including the ones you met on the call, at worship or in your congregation's newsletter.
- **Create a slide show of images and learnings** from these sessions to show during worship.

Commit to supporting the AMMPARO network:

- As a youth group or as a congregation, **join the AMMPARO network as a Welcoming Congregation**. A Welcoming Congregation makes four commitments: 1) to spiritually and pastorally accompany migrants in its community, 2) to physically accompany migrants in its community at ICE check-ins and to get them needed services, 3) to pray for justice for migrants, and 4) to advocate for the human rights and protection of migrants. To see how youth might participate:
 - list concrete ways to accompany migrant youth and families in your community, inspired by what you learned about the Welcoming Congregations program in session 2, and
 - talk to migrant organizations in your community.
- **Create an advocacy campaign in your congregation** centered on one of the many issues found on the ELCA AMMPARO Facebook page, [Facebook.com/ELCAammparo](https://www.facebook.com/ELCAammparo).

Encourage the group to commit to an action step and create follow-up plans in another meeting.

Part 4. Wrap-up and sending (4 minutes)

End the session with a "popcorn" prayer that invites youth to add petitions for people the group has learned about or met via phone or video during the last few weeks. Conclude the prayer by thanking God for the opportunity to learn more about youth in Central America and asking God to help the group discern how best to accompany them in their journey.

Dismiss the session with everyone saying, "¡Que Dios te bendiga!" God bless you!