

Book List for Primary Schools

A Safe Place to Live / written and illustrated by Bic Walker

Bic Walker escaped with her family from Vietnam as a refugee in 1979 when she was 3 years old. This is a true picture book story based on her journey to Australia.

Finding Hope / written and illustrated by Bic Walker

This is again based on a true story, that of Cambodian Srey, who as a four year old lost her mother to AIDS and was sent to the "hope for Cambodian Children" orphanage. Here Srey finds her hope and shares it with the world.

The Little Refugee / written by Ahn Do and Suzanne Do; illustrated by Bruce Whatley

Anh Do's inspirational story about his family's incredible escape from war-torn Vietnam and his childhood in Australia, told especially for children.

Suitable for 4 – 8 years

Yong / written by Janeen Brian

The journey of an unworthy son. "*Yong, my father said one night as I sat on the earthen floor, stroking my pet cricket and determined to save it from being eaten. 'You will come with me to Australia.'*" Yong doesn't want to leave Guangdong to travel to the goldfields of Ballarat. But as the firstborn son, he has no choice. On the long and treacherous journey, Yong strives to be an honourable son, while he and his father face many hardships and dangers. But in his heart he knows the shameful truth – that his honour is a lie. Can a journey change lives? Has Yong the courage to face what lies ahead? While set in the 1850s, the story has strong parallels with recent world events and the plight of refugees and asylum seekers.

Miranda Going Home / written by Eleanor Spence

When thirteen-year-old Miranda's parents die she is sent to live with her strict Jewish grandparents in Palestine at the time of the Roman occupation. Separated from her grandparents during the Roman attack on Sapphoris, Miranda and the baby she rescued find shelter with Jeshua and his family in Nazareth. There she learns kinship with the Jewish faith, and to cope with the racial and religious prejudices of the era

Suitable for 9 – 14 years

The Day War Came / written by Nicola Davies; illustrated by Rebecca Cobb

Imagine if, on an ordinary day, war came and turned your town to rubble. Imagine going on a long and difficult journey – all alone. Imagine finding no welcome at the end of it. Then imagine a child who gives you something small but very, very precious... When the government refused to allow 3000 child refugees to enter England in 2016, Nicola Davies was so angry she wrote a poem. It started a campaign for which artists contributed drawings of chairs, symbolising a seat in a classroom, education, kindness, the hope of a future. The poem has become this book, movingly illustrated by Rebecca Cobb, which should prove a powerful aid for explaining the ongoing refugee crisis to younger readers.

£1 from every copy sold goes to the charity Help Refugees. See <https://helprefugees.org>

The Unforgotten Coat / written by Frank Cottrell Boyce

This is a magical story of a summer of friendship which also explore the plight of refugees, a story of friendship in the midst of adversity. The book is enriched by atmospheric Polaroid photos. Two refugee brothers from Mongolia are determined to fit in with their Liverpool schoolmates, but bring so much of Mongolia to Bootle that their new friend and guide, Julie, is hard-pressed to know truth from fantasy.

The Lotus Seed / Sherry Garland ; illustrated by Tatsuro Kiuchi

This is the story of Ba, a Vietnamese girl whose escape from the devastating war in Vietnam, told by her granddaughter. "My grandmother saw / the emperor cry," she says, "the day he lost / his golden dragon throne." Wanting a memento of the event, the child "plucked a seed / from a lotus pod / that rattled / in the Imperial garden." Eventually, Ba arrives in America: "a strange new land / with . . . towering buildings / that scraped the sky." (Kiuchi's overhead perspective of skyscrapers and streaming traffic is an especially striking image.) Ba plants the lotus seed; when it blooms, she gives each of her grandchildren one of its seeds so they will recall the land of her birth. The lotus, she tells them "is the flower / of life and hope."

Suitable for 8 years up

Boy Overboard / written by Morris Gleitzman

Jamal and Bibi have a dream: To lead Australia to football glory in the next World Cup. But first they must face pirates, storms, and assassins. Can Jamal and his family survive their incredible journey and get to Australia?

A Country to Call Home: An Anthology on the Experiences of Young Refugees and Asylum Seekers / edited by Lucy Popescu

Focusing on the fate of refugee children and young adults, this book is aimed at children and adult readers alike, and features work from many. There are tales of home, and missing it; poems about the dangerous journeys undertaken and life in the refugee camps; stories about prejudice, but also stories of children's fortitude, their dreams and aspirations. The book implores us to build bridges, not walls. It is intended as a reminder of our shared humanity, seeking to challenge the negative narrative that so often cloud our view of these vulnerable young people, and prevent us giving them the empathy they deserve. It includes commissioned stories, flash fiction, poetry and original artwork.