

# REFUGEE SUNDAY CHILDREN'S LESSON:

ADAPTED FROM THE FIRST CHAPTER OF LALA'S JOURNEY AND CURRICULUM



Lala's Journey is a children's book and set of activities. We train non-credentialed community members to use it to support the kids in their lives.

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

# Refugee Sunday Children's Lesson

*Adapted from the first chapter of Lala's Journey Book & Curriculum*

## Training & Preparation

Lala's Journey program provides training to facilitators before they lead kids through the five sessions. We hope you'll enjoy this preview of the curriculum from lesson one. For more information and to sign up to be trained and lead all five lessons, contact [home@FirstAidfortheSoul.org](mailto:home@FirstAidfortheSoul.org).

## How to Read the Leader's Guide

The facilitator's guide is your detailed script to follow to lead your group. It has everything you need as far as *materials* (things like paper, markers, books, balls, etc.), *equipment* (larger things like projector, TV, recorder, tables and chairs, etc.), *what to say*, and *extra ideas*.

- **What the Children Do**

This is in the left, blue column of the table. It is written as your script of exactly what to say. You can read it directly from the guide. It is bulleted into each individual task (activity). **Actions** and **questions** are in **bold**. "Trust the design of the guide and follow the script!"

- **What the Facilitator Does**

This is in the right, white column of the table (or in an entire white row).

*Notes are in italics.*

- Things you can say are in regular font, and are bulleted.

If the text in one row begins higher than the other (e.g., what the children do begins higher than the notes for the facilitator), then begin in that cell.

*Lala's Journey is a joint project between Life Transitions Refugee ([www.ltrefugee.org](http://www.ltrefugee.org)),  
Echo International ([www.EchoIntl.org](http://www.EchoIntl.org))  
and members of the International Association for Refugees ([www.iafr.org](http://www.iafr.org)).  
Special thanks to Bethany Leuthold (graphic art) and Margaret Bean (curriculum design).*

## Knots are Normal

Materials & Equipment	Preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• String or jump ropes</li> <li>• (String for the optional final activity.)</li> <li>• Whiteboard or paper</li> <li>• (Paper for journal activities)</li> <li>• (Pens/pencils for journal activities)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set out supplies for free drawing time (blank paper or journal covers).</li> <li>• Cut pieces of string 20cm long so each member of the group can be given one. Or use jump ropes if possible.</li> <li>• (For optional final activity: Prepare a larger tangled and knotted ball of string (1m length of string for every 2 people in the group). Each tangle should contain a maximum of 6 pieces of string. If the group is larger (more than 12) use multiple bundles. Make sure both ends of each piece of string can be reached.)</li> <li>• Print out image of knots (in this PDF).</li> <li>• Print out photos from the Lala's Journey book excerpt (in this PDF).</li> <li>• If using journals, write out prompts on a whiteboard or paper. (In the full curriculum, the children use journals each session to capture what they've learned. You can chose to do a journaling activity at the end of this session.)</li> </ul>

### C1: Introduction and the Name Game

*The purpose of this part is to help children feel comfortable by helping them engage with the facilitators and each other.*

- Let's all **stand** in a circle.
- **Think** of something you like or like to do and couple that word with your name e.g. *Dancing Melissa, Pony Kate.*
- Now **introduce** yourself with your name combination.

*Do several rounds of this, making sure everyone gets a turn. Repeat each week if desired.*

*Turn this into a memory game by adding a bean bag or ball. Have them toss it to each other by saying each other's word + name combination before throwing it.*

### C2: "Lala's Journey," Chapter One

- Today, as a church we are celebrating Refugee Sunday. Who can **tell** me what a refugee is?

*Allow any children to respond who want to. Then explain:*

- A refugee is someone who is forced to leave their home because it is no longer safe for them and their family.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How do you think that would feel to have to no other choice but to leave your home?</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Allow for response, then say:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank you for sharing honestly. We can imagine feeling scared, sad, and nervous.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Listen to</b> a story about a girl like you, who had to leave her home to find a safe place.</li> <li>• <b>What kinds of feelings did Lala have about her journey so far?</b></li> <li>• <b>What kinds of ways did Lala's experiences affect her?</b> Look back at the story for clues if you need to.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Read Lala's Journey, chapter one (included in this PDF). Share the pictures.</i></p> <p><i>(Some extra comments for discussion, if needed):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most people who have experienced sad and challenging circumstances struggle for a while afterwards.</li> <li>• It can be very difficult to move on from the events, and recovering can take time. Did you know? Painful and scary experiences can affect our minds, our hearts and our bodies.</li> </ul>
<b>C3: Jump Rope</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Take</b> your piece of string and try to <b>tie</b> a simple knot in it.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Give each child a piece of string. Use jump ropes if possible.</i></p> <p><i>As children are tying knots, describe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you tie a knot, you take the ends of the string on a journey.</li> <li>• Because of the journey the string takes, looping in and out, and up and down, it becomes tied up resulting in a knot. This is the expected outcome. It is normal.</li> <li>• In a similar way when we have been through certain journeys, aspects of our life can become knotted too. When we face a painful or frightening situation we are like a piece of string being looped around. A knot is the usual result of these journeys.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Look</b> at the knot in your string. Can you <b>trace</b> its journey with your finger?</li> <li>• Now, <b>look</b> at this picture of many kinds of knots. Are some more complicated than others?</li> <li>• Try <b>tying</b> two of the complicated knots, or you can make up your own.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Give enough time for the group to finish tying knots in their string.</i></p> <p><i>Allow enough time for the group to tie more knots.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you're done, <b>hold</b> up your piece of string. <b>Look</b> at the knots each of you have tied. Some knots may be big and complicated. The one you tied before is probably smaller and simpler. Some knots can easily come loose and others are more difficult to untie.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Discuss:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knots created through a hard journey like Lala's can also be difficult. They can affect different parts of our lives. Sometimes they come loose over time, and other times we may need help to untie them.</li> <li>• Sometimes, Lala might feel like there is a knot in her mind. She keeps thinking of the same situation over and over. She might have trouble sleeping or have nightmares.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What do you think Jesus would say to Lala about these knots she feels in her mind?</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Wait for responses.</i></p> <p><i>Say:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus understands the feelings people have. He wants to comfort people when they are troubled. We can ask Him to do that.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Look</b> back at your string. Let's <b>untie</b> the simple knot. <b>Notice</b> the journey the end of the string takes. <b>See</b> how some parts come loose easily and others take more effort. As you untie the knot <b>remember</b>, knots are normal. You are not alone. Others have been on this journey before you.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Give time for the group to untie the simple knot.</i></p> <p><i>Then say:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes a knot is more complicated. It can affect the way we think and feel too. Like Lala, some may find it hard to concentrate. Some feel anxious or guilty or sad. Others have trouble sleeping or have pain in their body for no reason. All of these feelings can be a normal result of the painful events.</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lala isn't the only person who has felt this way.</li> <li>• <b>Untie</b> the second of the knots in your string.</li> <li>• <b>What did Lala do with the knot in her jump rope?</b></li> <li>• Let's <b>use</b> our jump ropes with one knot left in it – let's <b>jump</b> and <b>have fun</b>!</li> </ul>	<p><i>Give time for the group to untie the second knot.</i></p> <p><i>Then say:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knots are normal. And sometimes they take time to untangle.</li> <li>• Lala learned she could live with a knot still in her jump rope. It was not enough to stop her from doing what she wanted to do next.</li> </ul> <p><i>Give the group time to jump rope.</i></p>
<p>(OPTIONAL ACTIVITY)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Take</b> one end of string from the ball of knots the leader is holding.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Hand out the bigger tangled pieces of string or jump rope (see "Preparation") making sure each child starts off holding the end of a piece of string. Involve leaders if possible.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Look</b> at the giant ball of knots. With your finger, try to <b>follow</b> the route <i>your</i> string takes through the knot. Sometimes a knot can seem to be just a confusing tangle.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To tie a knot, the string has to go through a journey, and to untie a knot the string has to go through another journey too. Sometimes, when the knot is so tight that we need help untangling it. It's the same way in life, we often need each other!</li> </ul> <p><i>Give time for the group to try to trace the route of their piece of string through the tangle.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maybe it seems like the knot never ends, but let's see if we can figure it out. As a group, <b>work</b> together to <b>untangle</b> and <b>untie</b> the knots in your piece of string.</li> <li>• <b>How many people did it take to untangle that big knot?</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Give the group time to untangle their piece of string.</i></p> <p><i>Say:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can help each other with the knots in our lives!</li> </ul>

#### C4: Reflection

- **Think** back on Lala.
- **What do you think she would need if she came to live in our city?**

*Make a list of ideas on a whiteboard or paper if possible.  
Title: "What would Lala need?"*

*Wait for answers. Then add to the list if missing, including relationships.*

- We heard from Lala and one other refugee today. **Can anyone tell me who that was?**
- **Before we end today, would anyone be willing to share what they learned today?**

*Discuss:*

- There are 79.5 million refugees in the world, and half are children like you and like Lala. This can feel overwhelming and like a problem that is too big for us to do anything to help. But, that is not true!

*Let anyone who wants, answer, then explain:*

- We read the words of Jesus, who was also a refugee. When Jesus was a small boy he and his family were refugees in Egypt when King Herod wanted to kill him.
- Isn't it amazing that Jesus knows what someone like Lala is going through? He experienced it himself. We are loved by a God who sees us and knows us.

*After waiting for responses, say:*

- During our time together we have learned:
  - about refugees
  - how knots can form in their lives as well as ours
  - what we can do to help each other with our knots
- We also remembered that we have a God who knows what is like be a refugee and who knows each of our names and the names of the millions of refugee children around the world. That means we can be confident and pray for Him to give us His ideas and for Him to shine his kindness through us.

<p>Let's <b>pray together</b> now.</p>	<p><i>Sample Prayer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lord Jesus, we praise you today for your love and kindness to us when we are hurting. We are so glad that you care about the refugees in our world. Jesus, you yourself were a refugee so you know what it is like to live with the knots of missing your home, feeling afraid, scared, and wanting to find safety. We ask that you would meeting the needs of refugee children today. Would you show them your love and give them your peace today? Father God, we ask for an end to wars and hunger and for your peace to be on the earth as it is in Heaven. Holy Spirit, show us what we can do to love like you do. Thank you for all that you have done and are doing! We ask all these things in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen.</li> </ul>
<p>OPTIONAL JOURNAL TIME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's <b>write</b> in our journals! <b>Choose</b> something to write in your journal to remember today's lesson.</li> </ul>	<p><i>If using the journaling time: reveal prompts written on whiteboard or paper:</i></p> <p><u>Answer:</u> What difference does it make that Jesus understand the knots or troubles we can have in our lives?</p> <p><u>Draw</u> a picture of you helping someone who needs help with the knots or troubles of life.</p>



Get the rest of the  
five-week curriculum, and learn more about  
Lala's Journey here:

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

**Over five chapters, we follow Lala's story as she learns to explore and thrive in her new home, after a refugee journey. Kids from many backgrounds can learn activities from Lala that help them find balance after challenging situations.**

**"[This] puts trauma training into the hands of people who may never have the time or energy to become professional counselors. And we will never have enough professional trauma counselors...."**

**— Claudia Löwen, trauma counselor**

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# Lala's Journey

## 1: The Skipping Rope

The journey to Lala's new home had been long and difficult. She had visited so many places and heard so many different languages along the way. Some parts of the journey had been frightening. When she left her home, her father had woken her in the middle of the night. They had run and escaped together, but the memories were hard to think about. Even now, she still didn't like to be alone at night.

Lala's uncle was a fisherman. He was a tall, happy man who was always laughing. He had a bushy mustache and the biggest hands she had ever seen. When she last visited, he had shown her how to tie three different knots. They were knots he used on his fishing boat.

Lala opened her suitcase and pulled out her skipping rope. She loved to skip, but today she wanted to practice tying the knots her uncle had taught her.

She started tying the knots. She watched the end of the rope going in and out, up and down, and looping round and round. It reminded her of her own journey, going to one place after another.

Lala wondered if she herself might be a little bit like the skipping rope. Maybe she had some knots in her now because of the journey she had taken. She felt like she had changed in some ways.

Before the journey, Lala was a happy person. But now there were some days when she just felt sad and did not even want to play.

Before the journey, Lala used to love to go to school, but now she found it hard to concentrate.

Using her finger, Lala tried to follow the path the rope took through the knots she had tied. It was confusing because there were so many loops. And it seemed the rope kept returning, over and over, to the same place in the knot. It reminded her of how her mind kept returning to the scariest part of her journey. These were the memories that made it hard to sleep at night.

She looked again at the knots. Maybe people really do become knotted when we go through difficult things, she thought to herself. Maybe knots are just a normal part of the journey.

She decided to untie the three knots. She carefully pulled on the loops. Some parts were easy to untie. And others took a bit more work. Rope tangles easily, but it can also be untied. Maybe it is the same for the knots we have. Maybe some knots will come loose over time like a shoe lace coming undone. Maybe others need a little work to untie. And maybe those knots that are really tight will take longer, but eventually they will come undone too.

Untying the knots made Lala think of her uncle again. She remembered how he would help her untie a knot that was too hard for her to untie alone. Lala thought, maybe it's okay to also ask for help with the knots we find in our lives. And, sometimes we can help others with their knots too!

Finally, there was just one tiny knot left. It was near the end of her rope. Instead of untying it, Lala had another idea. She decided to leave it right where it was. She smiled to herself. Some knots come loose and some need to be untied, but there may be some knots we can learn to live with for a while. She stood up holding the ends of the rope. Even though there was still a small knot in the rope, it was not enough to stop her from doing what she wanted to do next.

Swinging the rope around in a large arc, she started skipping!

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## Appendix B



**OVERHAND KNOT**



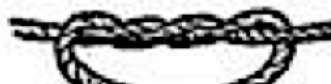
**FIGURE EIGHT KNOT**



**STEVEDORE'S KNOT**



**LARIAT LOOP**



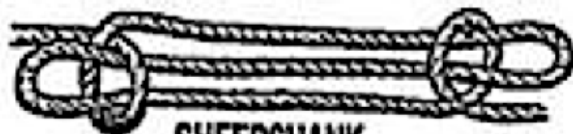
**DOUBLE OVERHAND**



**RUNNING KNOT**



**BOWLINE**



**SHEEPSHANK**



**FISHERMAN'S EYE**



**BOWLINE ON BIGHT**





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