

# **LOVE KNOWS NO BORDERS**

## **A Moral Call for Migrant Justice**

### **Resources to organize an event in your community for the Dec. 10-18 National Week of Action**

Join the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), faith leaders, and communities across the country for a national week of action as we stand in solidarity with the migrant caravan and all who seek refuge in the U.S.

Together, we are calling on the U.S. to end the detention and deportation of immigrants, respect the human right to migrate, and end the militarization of the border.

On Dec. 10, faith leaders from across the country will take part in a nonviolent direct action at the U.S.-Mexico border in San Diego, California. We invite you to organize a solidarity action or event in your community during our national week of action, from Dec. 10 (International Human Rights Day) to Dec. 18 (International Migrants Day).

Make sure to register your event at [migrantjustice.afsc.org](https://migrantjustice.afsc.org).

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## Why now?

Since mid-October, caravans of migrants have been traveling north from Central America through Mexico. The group includes people of all ages, including families and children – many of whom are escaping violence and poverty and seeking asylum in the U.S. and Mexico.

Instead of responding with compassion and humanity, President Trump has deployed thousands of military troops to border communities and blocked migrants from accessing ports of entry where they could safely apply for asylum. Under the administration's punishing tactics, migrants may have to wait months for access to the U.S. through ports of entry.

Now is the time for communities across the U.S. to mobilize and stand with border residents against the militarization of their communities and call for the absolute protection of migrants seeking refuge and asylum.

## Our points of unity

### **We ask that you uphold these values as we join together across the country:**

- Center the voices and leadership of migrants, border communities, and organizations in our actions and work.
- Uphold a commitment to nonviolence in direct actions at the border and with support actions.
- Adhere to core messages and demands offered in our toolkits and central documents.

### **Together, we demand:**

- **The U.S. government respect the human right to migrate and seek asylum.**

People fleeing violence in Central America and elsewhere should be able to present themselves to immigration authorities to express their fears – not illegally turned away or criminalized for entering between ports of entry to seek refuge and asylum.

- **An end to border militarization.**

Deploying additional law enforcement, immigration enforcement agencies, or military personnel to the southern border – or giving additional spending authority to these agencies – endangers the rights of migrants and residents of border communities, wastes taxpayer dollars, and does nothing to make us safer. Listen to border communities; revitalize, not militarize their communities.

- **An immediate end to the immoral detention and deportation**, especially the holding of over 40,000 immigrants in inhumane detention indefinitely.
- **The defunding of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection.**

It is crucial we protect those seeking refuge and provide them with services and direct assistance.

# How to design a powerful action

- 1) Ensure that your action serves as a platform to hear from those who best understand our U.S. immigration system: immigrants. If you can't schedule a speaker from the immigrant community, you can read aloud testimonies from immigrants or broadcast recordings like these "I am an immigrant" clips from AFSC's 67 Sueños ([facebook.com/67suenos](https://facebook.com/67suenos)).
- 2) Inspire and connect participants. Music, chanting, grounding exercises, candle lighting all build a sense of community. If your group isn't faith-based, connect to your shared values. If you are from a faith tradition, ground the event in scripture or prayer. Find some examples here: [afsc.org/welcoming-the-stranger-readings](https://afsc.org/welcoming-the-stranger-readings).
- 3) Include speakers and visuals to communicate clearly our demands and name key decision-makers, including local lawmakers, we want to influence. We want all members of our audience – event attendees, media, elected officials, social media followers, and others – to understand the depth of our conviction and what we're asking them to do.
- 4) Call specifically on your Congressional representatives and senators to respond to our shared demands and concerns, whether your solidarity action is at their office or elsewhere.
- 5) Choose a location that connects with key decision makers directly (a congressperson's local district office, the local Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) field office) or with the people you're trying to reach (a busy street corner, your city council building, or a faith community).

## Here are some forms your action could take:

- Rally and/or march.
- Vigil. (More resources: [afsc.org/vigil-toolkit](https://afsc.org/vigil-toolkit))
- Jericho walk. (More resources: [afsc.org/Jericho-walk-guide](https://afsc.org/Jericho-walk-guide))
- Posada.
- Fast for justice. (More resources: [afsc.org/fast-for-immigrant-justice](https://afsc.org/fast-for-immigrant-justice))
- Organized visits to the office of your lawmaker or other key decision-maker.
- Street theater, art projected onto a building, or other creative acts.
- Blessing or ritual for migrants inside a detention center or at the border.

## Here are some tips and questions to help you start planning your action:

**Clarify the strategy:** What do you want to call attention to with this action? How does this support your campaign or movement goals?

**Know the history:** What has your group (or other groups) done before to address the issue? How can you build on the history to escalate your tactics?

**Identify the opportunity:** Why now? What is the Action Opportunity? Is there a new development on your issue or change in the political climate that you can take advantage of?

**Find allies:** Who are your existing allies in this work? Who should be involved? Who is also impacted by this issue?

**Pick a target:** Who is the decision-maker? Who can help you pressure that decision-maker?

**Develop action demands:** What do you want from your target? What would a “win” look like? Make sure these are realistic, measurable, strategic, and accountable to the impacted community.

**Assess your resources:** What skills does your group have? How many people will participate? How much money and supplies do you have access to?

**Choose a tactic:** Make sure it will move you towards achieving your campaign goal and action demands. What exactly will people do? Why will it put pressure on your target? Why is it perfect for this moment?

**Determine your audience:** Who specifically do you want to mobilize with your action? Is it the public? Consumers? Shareholders? Government Officials?

**Decide the tone:** What will the action feel like? Will the action be jubilant, angry, solemn, or calm? How will the tone impact the target and audience? Do you want to invite or repel them? How will the tone impact your group?

**Focus your message:** How do you make complicated issues understandable? Keep it short and simple. The message should reflect the tone and clearly communicate your demands.

**Create visuals and audio:** What will your action look and sound like? What imagery do you need to create? How will you amplify your voices and sound? How will the visuals and audio support your tone and convey your demands?

**Choose the location:** Where will this action take place? What does that location look and feel like? Is it a community-based location or is it the decision-maker’s territory? Are people familiar with the location?

**Scout the location:** How will your action logistically take place at the location? How will people get there? What goes on there in the course of a day? Is there security on site?

**Make an action plan:** Think through the action from start to finish. Assign action roles, make a time schedule, list supplies and equipment needed, finalize logistics. Make backup plans just in case!

**Practice the action:** Over and over. Then practice some more.

**Perform the action:** Be flexible, stay true to your action goals and demands, and be safe – eliminate unnecessary risk.

**Celebrate!** Acknowledge your successes, even if your action demands were not met. Recognize new leadership and congratulate new members.

**Debrief the action:** What were the action highlights? Where was there room for improvement?

**Follow up:** Reach out to participants and members – keep them updated. Make calls to media – get the story out. Provide jail support if necessary and keep track of ongoing legal issues.

## Spread the word!

Now that you've decided what you're doing and when, it's time to invite others to join you.

Register your event at: [migrantjustice.afsc.org](http://migrantjustice.afsc.org). You can share the event page you create, and people in your community will be able to find your event when they visit the site.

Here's some promotional language you can adapt for your event.

### Sample Invitation/Facebook language

#### **Stand with Border Communities and with those Seeking Refuge**

**On [date and time] we are hosting an event to stand with border communities and all people who seek refuge. Please join us.**

Our event is part of a national week of action coordinated by the American Friends Service Committee. Together, we are calling on the U.S. to end the detention and deportation of immigrants, respect the human right to migrate, and end the militarization of the border.

On Dec. 10, faith leaders from all over the country will lead a direct action and solemn walk to the border in San Diego to offer a ceremonial blessing to migrants on the other side of the border wall. The walk opens a week of action filled with solidarity events and actions in communities nationwide.

**We ask that you join us in solidarity with those seeking refuge in our country by coming to our event on \_\_\_(DATE AND TIME) at \_\_\_(LOCATION).**

Thousands of migrants from around the world have traversed Central America and through Mexico, fleeing untold violence and state-sponsored repression, hunger, and economic instability caused in part by U.S. foreign policy. As a safety precaution, many have traveled in large groups for mutual aid and support along dangerous migration routes.

Instead of responding with compassion, the Trump administration has deployed thousands of military troops to border communities, augmenting the presence of National Guard soldiers

and paramilitary border enforcement agencies. In addition, President Trump signed an executive order limiting how a migrant can petition for asylum (now halted by the courts), demonstrating another example of this administration's policy violence toward migrants.

Join us, AFSC, and people of faith and action, as we embrace the call for prophetic witness and stand for the dignity and respect of border communities and those seeking refuge.

## Contacting the media

One important way to amplify the effect of your action is to get the press to cover it. To get reporters there, you have to let them know in advance.

You can modify the template below to create your own media advisory. The media advisory should be emailed to reporters in your area several days before the event, and then followed up with calls to make sure they got it and encourage them to attend.

### **Tips for contacting reporters:**

1. Email the media advisory (see the template below) to the reporter with a personal note at the top. Paste the advisory in the body of the email. If you don't have a reporter's email you can look up their news desk online.
2. After you have emailed, follow up by phone to make sure they received it.
3. When they answer, you can say something like "Hello, my name is [your name] and I am calling on behalf of [your organization]. I'm calling to follow up on the advisory I sent you about an event on [date]. Did you receive the release?" If they say no, ask if you can resend and confirm a correct email address. If you get a voicemail, you can just leave a message with the event details.
4. If you do get a real person, tell them a little bit about the details of the event and why they should come cover it. Try to get a commitment from them to report on it. If they are not sure, ask them when you can follow up.
5. Reporters get a ton of calls and emails, so they'll be trying to rush you. Make sure you're prepared to re-send the release if they didn't get it. Don't feel bad if it seems like they are blowing you off, just be as polite and persistent as you can be!

# Media advisory template

## For Immediate Release

**Press contact:** Name, Phone, Email

[Rally/vigil/action] in Support of Migrant Caravan

[A subheading further describing event can go here if needed]

**CITY (DATE)** - On [date of action], [short description of your action and who will be there]. This action in [your city/town] is part of the national mobilization called *Love Knows No Borders: A moral call for migrant justice*. This week of action will begin with more than 100 faith leaders from across the country taking part in a nonviolent direct action at the U.S.-Mexico border in San Diego organized by the American Friends Service Committee. Between December 10 and December 18, dozens of solidarity actions will happen across the nation. Participants are calling on the U.S. to end the detention and deportation of immigrants, respect the human right to migrate, and end the militarization of the border.

**What:** Name of the event

**Who:** Speakers/participants and their organizational affiliations /participants and their organizational affiliations

**When:** Date and time and time

**Where:** Address and any specific info folks will need to get there and any specific info folks will need to get there

**Visuals:** [Include a note about the great photo opportunity you're creating for press]

For more information about *Love Knows No Borders: A moral call for migrant justice*, visit <http://lovesknowsnoborders.afsc.org>

###

*A short description of your organization can go here*

*The American Friends Service Committee is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice.*

# Messaging Guide

The American Friends Service Committee is calling for a week of action December 10-18 led by people of faith who believe border communities should be de-militarized, and migrants welcomed when seeking refuge.

This messaging guide is designed to unify our message and impact while avoiding narratives that don't help our cause. It can, of course, be adapted to your local context.

## Talking Points

- We stand with the people of the migrant caravan, who seek a chance to live in safety and peace.
- Everyone deserves to live dignified lives, including members of interdependent and connected border communities, where they can thrive without us militarizing them
- As people of many faiths, we are taking a moral stand together, calling for welcoming strangers with open arms.
- In this season of light, we open our hearts to our shared humanity and meet migrants seeking refuge with generosity and love.
- We call on our communities to join us and respond to the caravan with kindness, and for our elected leaders to join us by refusing to dehumanize our brothers and sisters or use the suffering of thousands of people for political gain.
- We are calling on the United States government to:
  - Respect the human right to migrate.
  - End the militarization of the border.
  - End the detention and deportation of immigrants.
- This action is part of the Love Knows No Borders week of action organized by the American Friends Service Committee in coordination with faith leaders and communities across the country.

## Messages to Avoid

Avoid messages that set up a good immigrant vs. bad immigrant dichotomy. Talking about how migrants are not criminals can suggest that some people are more deserving of rights and protections than others.

### Do say:

- Everyone deserves to live in safety and peace.
- We should be invested in building strong communities by keeping families together, not tearing them apart.
- No one should be deported.

**Never say:**

- Most immigrants are good people, some have done bad things and should be deported, but that doesn't mean the hard workers, mothers, and fathers should be deported.
- Those who have brought drugs or committed crimes should be deported, but there are many innocent and good immigrants who should be able to stay.
- Immigrants are not criminals.
- This person is not a criminal.

**When being interviewed, think of the person at home as who you want to reach. Use interview questions to pivot back to your main point with phrases like:**

"That's an interesting point/question, and/but"

"What's important to remember is"

"Don't forget."

**And then follow with one of the main points from above!**

*This resource was created by the American Friends Service Committee.*

*The "Never say" section is adapted from materials created by Church World Service.*

# Day of Action Checklist

## Materials to have on hand

- \_\_\_ Banners, posters
- \_\_\_ People assigned to carry banner
- \_\_\_ Communicate to members any plans to march together
- \_\_\_ Just in case box ready to go  
*Contents of box: packing or duct tape, scissors, stapler, huge markers, extra paper*
- \_\_\_ Fully charged phone and numbers for important people along march route

## Roles

- **Emcee:** Welcomes attendees, introduces speakers, and facilitates program.
- **Opening prayer, blessing, or meditation:** The person should pray from their own faith tradition, connecting the values of their faith to the situation. It's helpful for the person to start by stating their faith tradition and inviting others to join them and explaining they'll pray from their own tradition and to use words that are inclusive.
- **Security/peacekeepers:** Keep people on the sidewalk or designated areas; isolates provocateurs from the event attendees; liaises with police if they appear.
- **Marshalls:** Keep event participants focused on the event and direct the movement of the group.
- **Press point person:** Greets press, gets their contact information, explains the program to the press, and then directs them to people to be interviewed.
- **Documenting:** Takes pictures/video
- **Song/Chant/Activity Leaders:** A couple of people who can confidently (not necessarily the best singers but have confidence) sing the song or chant the chant first and then lead attendees.