

## **How Congregations Can Help When There Are Raids MCC US, Immigration Education Desk**

**Matthew 25:35** “I was a stranger and you welcomed me in.”

Raids are a way that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) enforces immigration laws at the workplace and may even go to people’s homes. It is not unusual for families to be separated, for households to be left without a bread winner and for children to be left behind without parents. Families and friends of those who were taken are often left wondering where and how to contact their loved ones. People of faith who may want to be helpful wonder how to ease the burden on these families during this difficult time.

So, what can you or your church do to support families when there is an ICE raid in your community? Some suggestions:

1. Churches can hold prayer vigils together with other community churches.
2. Churches can assist with food, medicine, heating bills and rent.
3. Create a charity fund where churches, individuals and businesses that serve the immigrant communities may send their contributions to help families. These funds may be used to help with legal fees and other expenses.
4. Organize an “adopt a family” program in which church people are able to help and connect with individual immigrant families.
5. Organize volunteers to become foster parents for children that have been left behind so they have a safe place to stay.
6. Provide an area in your church with phone lines for immigrant family members to make phone calls.
7. Have translators available for immigrants who do not know English and need to find out where family members are being detained.
8. Contact and meet with your congress people to let them know the negative effects that raids are having in your community. Stories are very good to share with them.
9. Ask your congress people to aggressively seek to pass legislation that is fair and humane as it relates to immigration.  
<http://mcc.org/us/washington/110immigrationreform.html>  
<http://mcc.org/us/washington/hotlines/enforcement.html>
10. Work with mental health organizations to provide emergency crisis intervention services to the family members.
11. Provide English classes to the immigrants in your community.
12. Volunteer in community organizations that work with immigrants.
13. Become acquainted with and provide information about immigrant rights in your community.
14. Write a letter to your local newspaper about the negative consequences of the raids and the need to change immigration laws to be more humane and fair.
15. Educate yourself about immigration issues. Ask to receive regular updates from MCC US at [rjy@mcc.org](mailto:rjy@mcc.org)
16. Consider becoming a Sanctuary Movement church. Check out the following website about the new Sanctuary Movement.  
<http://www.cluela.org/newsanctuarymovement.html>