



JOURNEY TO IRAQ

■ CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS

LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

We were made in God's image and likeness. That means that every human being has special value and a purpose. We need to care for each other so we can be the people God calls us to be.

ENCOUNTER MAJD

Eight-year-old Majd thought his family was going on a picnic. His mother, Lamya, said they would be back home in a week. But when ISIS attacked their home in northern Iraq, the family fled for good.

"What worried me the most were the kids," Lamya says. "Our life was stable and we were doing well; we had a very big house. Our children had everything they needed. But when we fled, I was not able to bring anything for them—not even food."

Fortunately, the family found an apartment to rent with other displaced families. It is much smaller than the home they had, but it's safer. The children enrolled in a CRS-sponsored school, where the routine provides hope, stability and a sense of belonging. "Education is very important," says Lamya, especially in Iraqi culture.

Lamya received training from CRS and became a teacher at the school. Now she has hope for the future. "I really love children, so when I go to class I feel like I am with my family," she says.

Her son, Majd, also loves going to school. "Majd is so motivated to go to school. He just wants it to be morning so he can go," Lamya says. "He is relaxed, having fun and more confident." For Majd, school means a normal life—now and in the future.



Photo by Phillip Laubner/CRS

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Safety and security are essential to living a dignified life—what migrant families are seeking.

FACTS TO CONSIDER

Population: 37,056,169

Size: 438,317 square miles; about three times the size of New York state

- Since January 2014, an estimated 3 million Iraqis have been forced from their homes. Many families describe leaving at a moment's notice.
- Besides displaced Iraqis, the country is hosting about 235,000 refugees from Syria. And families in desperate need continue to arrive.
- CRS provides household items and helps people get food, safe shelter, water and sanitation. CRS also provides child support centers that offer education, recreation and counseling.



For downloadable photos, visit crsricebowl.org/photos and watch a video about Majd at crsricebowl.org/stories.