

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

March 10, 2011 at 9:21am

New book on immigration and children

by Pat Marrin

Immigration and the Church



The human dimensions of the immigrant experience can easily get lost in the big-picture news reports about the demographic impact of the waves of economic refugees seeking entry into the United States. Behind the statistics are stories about real people; desperate fathers heading north to find work, wives left behind or heading north themselves, entrusting small children to relatives until the family can be reunited; children struggling to adjust to absent parents or, once relocated, to new cities, schools, languages and people.

Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, author and dean of Esperanza College, a division of Eastern University in Pennsylvania, has written a compact, bi-lingual book that goes a long way toward addressing the human face of immigration and the nuts and bolts challenges families face in trying to adjust before, during and after the often traumatic journey that over a half million economic refugees make each year to find work and hope in the United States.

Conde-Frazier is a religious educator with an eye for the social and spiritual issues children face in the immigrant experience. The book serves as a kind of manual for both families and those who help them,

providing realistic scenarios and stories that model openness, good communication and the effective processing of emotions.

How and when should a parent tell their children that they are going to be absent? What are some of the common problems when the family is reunited? Children must make major adjustments in new cities, schools, a new culture, or because of issues of legal status, or in the case of workplace raids and deportation. What resources can immigrant families turn to in their new setting? How will parents adjust to a reversal of roles when their children learn the language and culture more quickly than their parents?

The book does not directly address the complex legal and cultural arguments for and against undocumented entry into the United States. It addresses the needs of families who, for whatever reason, are in transition and need basic human support while the larger question of legal status is dealt with at the national policy level.

The book is a useful tool for families, for church communities that are absorbing and ministering to immigrant populations, for educators, administrators and social service providers who work with them.

The profound human experience of today's immigrants is not unlike the passages endured by previous generations displaced from their homeland by poverty and violence who sought refuge in a new land. Children bear the same grief and loss, have the same dreams and expectations their parents hold, but without the adult perspective and skills to process these emotions. "Listen to the Children" effectively explores their special needs.

Go to http://www.judsonpress.com/product.cfm?product_id=14941 for more information about the book and about Judson Press.

Listen to the Children: Conversations with Immigrant Families

by Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier

Judson Press

\$13.99 softcover, 140 pages (English/Spanish split format)



To see all of NCR's coverage of immigration, see our new blog: **Immigration and the Church**. To receive a weekly e-mail update with highlights from the blog, **follow this link** to the sign-up page. If you already receive e-mail alerts from NCR, add **Immigration and the Church** to your profile.

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