

Disciples Women

Mini WAW

Human Trafficking Focus



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Georgia



A “Mini” Women’s Action Web: Human Trafficking

Introduction

This “Mini” Woman’s Action Web on Human Trafficking was originally designed for the January 2012 Church Women’s Staff Fellowship (CWSF) meeting in Atlanta, GA. Modeled after the Women’s Action Web journeys sponsored by Disciples Women’s Ministries, the purpose in this much shorter event (a half day instead of a week or more) remained the same: to create a participatory event related to service and justice issues.



The afternoon included a choice of a prayer walk, a visit to a local mission station, and a presentation by two Georgia Bureau of Investigation agents involved with combating human trafficking.

Responses to the event were very positive and included the realization that a day of focus on human trafficking could be designed for nearly any community. A half-day event could include a choice of:

- Prayer walk (in the community, or inside the church building)
- Local law enforcement officers reporting on human trafficking in your community
- A visit to an organization whose mission relates to human trafficking or work with at-risk children and youth

If a full day is planned, participants could participate in all of the above events, as well as begin the day with an introductory power point presentation “Slaves Among Us,” found at <http://www.discipleshomemissions.org/pages/DW-SocialActionBreakChains>. A closing worship could include the closing prayer found at the end of this document.

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Special thanks to my colleagues in Disciples Women's Ministry, Rev. Betty Brewer-Calvert, Rev. Mary Jacobs, LaVerne Thorpe, and Claretta Witherspoon, for their contributions to this resource. It is our prayer that you may be blessed with an increased awareness of the tragic scope of human trafficking throughout the world, and a desire to bring about change.

~Rev. Kathy McDowell

A Prayer Walk

The Prayer Walk, which was part of the "Mini" Women's Action Web, originally took place in downtown and midtown Atlanta. However, it has been redesigned in a format that is adaptable to a variety of settings, whether that is a walk in a city or town, or a walk through your church. Although suggestions for station locations (for prayer walks) or materials for displays (inside a church) have been given, you are encouraged to use your creativity in developing displays and/or station locations. If the prayer walk takes place inside a church, each table or display may include signs with:

- 1) station # and name,
- 2) facts,
- 3) scripture, and
- 4) short written prayer, or invitation to offer silent prayer.

The information is provided in an easily edited format for your church or Disciples Women's group; please feel free to adapt it for your use.

Station #1– The Scope of Human Trafficking

Location: A fence or gate symbolizing a boundary that cannot be crossed

Alternate Display: Signs (see Introduction for recommendations), length of chain and bolt cutter



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Facts:

- It is estimated that 27 million people can be found in modern-day slavery across the world today, including in all 50 states in the U.S.
- 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders every year.
- 1.3 million children are exploited by the global sex trade every year.
- 300,000 children and youth in the U.S. are estimated to be at risk of sexual exploitation.

Scripture: Jeremiah 6:16

This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'"

Prayer:

(Invite a participant to lead the group in prayer. For display, include sign with short written prayer, or invitation to offer silent prayer.)

Station #2– Fair Trade Coffee and Chocolate

Location: Local coffee shop, coffee aisle of grocery store

Alternate Display: Signs (see Introduction for recommendations), Fair Trade coffee, Fair Trade chocolate giveaways

Facts:

- According to the U.S. State Department, 70 percent of the world's cocoa beans come from West African nations including Ivory Coast, Nigeria, and Cameroon, where child slave trafficking has been well-documented.



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- Coffee is another agricultural product that may be harvested by slave labor. One way to be sure your chocolate or coffee is slave-free is to purchase Fair Trade products.
- Disciples of Christ are partners with Equal Exchange in the Disciples Coffee Project where you can buy coffee, tea, and chocolate online. <http://www.equalexchange.coop/doc/>

Scripture: Exodus 3:7

I have heard the cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers.

Prayer:

(Invite a participant to lead the group in prayer. For display, include sign with short written prayer, or invitation to offer silent prayer.)

Station #3 – Poverty & Vulnerability

Location: Park, bench, or other location in impoverished area

Alternate Display: Signs (see Introduction for recommendations), photos of homeless persons, brochures or posters from local organizations and ministries serving the poor

Facts:



Human trafficking is a complex problem, but poverty is a factor which makes persons more vulnerable to exploitation.

Human trafficking is taking place all around the world; migrants, women, and children are particularly at risk; but boys and men are also exploited.

Human trafficking victims can be found working in every one of our 50 states in agriculture, manufacturing, service industries, and the sex industry.

Scripture: Psalms 82: 3-4

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Give justice to the poor and the orphans; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute. Rescue the poor and helpless; deliver them from the grasp of evil people.

Prayer:

(Invite a participant to lead the group in prayer. For display, include sign with short written prayer, or invitation to offer silent prayer.)

Station #4 – Sports Events

Location: Baseball or soccer field, or bus or transit station/stop

Alternate Display: Signs (see Introduction for recommendations), sports equipment such as soccer ball, baseball glove, football, posters for major events such as Super Bowl

Facts:

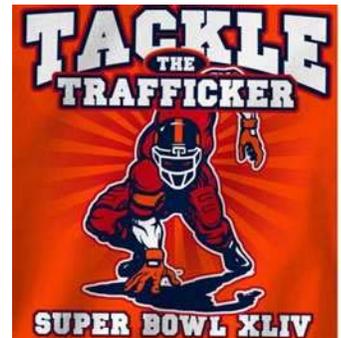
- Because major cities have mass transportation systems and large sports complexes, they often host sporting events, including the Olympics, World Cup Soccer, and Super Bowl. Tens of thousands of people pour into cities for these events.
- But these events are also associated with an increase in human trafficking as women and girls are brought to these cities to meet a higher demand for prostitutes.

Scripture: Isaiah 1:17

Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows.

Prayer:

(Invite a participant to lead the group in prayer. For display, include sign with short written prayer, or invitation to offer silent prayer.)





Station #5– Churches Working to End Human Trafficking

Location: Local church building

Alternate Display: Candle, posters or other anti-trafficking materials provided free by the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-3737-888

Facts:

- Churches and other organizations CAN work together to help bring light to the darkness of human trafficking.
- Research organizations in your community which are working to end human trafficking through advocacy, education, or restoration of victims. Create a sign listing contact information for organizations and ways churches can help.
- For more information or to report suspected human trafficking, contact 1-888-3737-888. In Canada, call 1-800-222-8477.

Scripture: James 3: 14-17

What good is it dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say "good bye and have a good day, stay warm and eat well". But then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? So you see faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

Prayer:

(Invite a participant to lead the group in prayer. For display, include sign with short written prayer, or invitation to offer silent prayer.)

Station #6 –Human Trafficking a Billion Dollar Industry

Location: Bank building or ATM machine

Alternate Display: Signs (see Introduction for recommendations), play money, piggy bank, dollar signs

Facts:

- Greed is a main factor driving human trafficking
- \$32 billion is generated in total yearly profits by the human trafficking industry
- Of the top illegal activities, human trafficking is second only to drug trafficking



Scripture: Ezekiel 18:21-22

But if wicked people turn away from all their sins and begin to obey my decrees and do what is just and right, they will surely live and not die. All their past sins will be forgotten, and they will live because of the righteous things they have done.

Prayer:

(Invite a participant to lead the group in prayer. For display, include sign with short written prayer, or invitation to offer silent prayer.)

Station #7– Food and Agricultural Industries

Location: Front of restaurant

Alternate Display:

Facts:

- Restaurants rely on America’s farming industries to supply them with the abundance of foods that we enjoy.

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- But human trafficking taints our food too. Migrant workers are particularly susceptible to working conditions in which they are forced to work long hours, prevented from returning home, and paid little or nothing.
- Download an app called “Free2Work.” When you shop, scan barcodes to check whether the products you buy come from corporations that use child slaves.



Scripture: Ecclesiastes 4:1

Again, I observed all the oppression that takes place under the sun. I saw the tears of the oppressed, with no one to comfort them. The oppressors have great power, and their victims are helpless.

Prayer:

(Invite a participant to lead the group in prayer. For display, include sign with short written prayer, or invitation to offer silent prayer.)

Station #8 – Children are Vulnerable

Location: Playground or schoolyard

Alternate Display: Children’s toys, or other objects symbolizing childhood

Facts



- Children are at special risk for being trafficked.
- As many as 2.8 million children run away each year in the U.S. Within 48 hours, one-third of these children are lured or recruited into prostitution and pornography.
- The average age of entry into prostitution in the U.S. is 12-14 years of age.

Scripture: Isaiah 49:25

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But the Lord says, the captives of warriors will be released, and the plunder of tyrants will be retrieved. For I will fight those who fight you and I will save your children.

Prayer:

(Invite a participant to lead the group in prayer. For display, include sign with short written prayer, or invitation to offer silent prayer.)

Station #9 – God Makes All Things New

Location: Water fountain, pond, lake, or other water source

Alternate Display: Signs (see Introduction for recommendations), pottery bowl full of water, small pebbles scattered around bowl

Facts:

- Human trafficking may seem like an overwhelming problem, but small groups – even your women’s group – can have a ripple effect in bringing about change.
- There are countless numbers of organizations which have started whose purpose is awareness and advocacy; prevention; and restoration. These include the U.S. State Department, www.notforsalecampaign.org, www.polarisproject.org. National hotline number to call for information in your state is 1-888-3737-888; in Canada call 1-800-222-8477.
- The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) adopted a General Assembly resolution in 2011 to encourage churches to engage in education and advocacy efforts to end human trafficking.
- The Disciples Women have adopted the issue of human trafficking as their social action project from 2009-2014. For resources and information go to <http://www.discipleshomemissions.org/pages/DW-SocialActionBreakChainsResources>. We can make a difference and bring new life to the victims of human trafficking.



Scripture: Luke 4:18-19

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that the captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come.

Prayer:

(Invite a participant to lead the group in prayer. For display, include sign with short written prayer, or invitation to offer silent prayer.)

A Closing Prayer: To a God Who Cherishes Freedom

(This prayer, written by Stephanie Paulsell, is suitable for a closing worship or reflection period following the Prayer Walk and/or other learning events related to human trafficking.)

- L:** O God, who cherishes freedom, God of freedom and mercy and hope,
We know that you desire all people to be free.
- P:** **We remember Joseph, sold into slavery by his own brothers. We remember the people of Israel, forced to labor in the land of Egypt.**
- L:** We remember the men, women, and children of Africa, kidnapped and sold, forced from their homeland.
We remember the cruelty of their journey to this country.
We remember the shattering of their families,
- P:** **But slavery, O God, does not exist only in the realm of memory. Today human beings are bought and sold, trafficked within and across the boundaries of nations, including our own.**

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L: We know You hear the cries of enslaved people. We know You see them clearly.

“I know their sufferings”, You said to Moses, “and I have come down to deliver them”.

P: **We remember Moses’ reluctance to act, and we struggle against our own reluctance.**

L: For we do not want to think of children taken from their homes, forced into labor or war-making or sexual slavery.

We do not want to think of families shattered, the lives of men and women destroyed.

P: **We do not want to think of the unventilated rooms where slaves work fourteen, sixteen, eighteen hour days. We do not want to think about such things happening in our country and around the world.**

L: “O my Lord, please send someone else,” Moses begged you.

P: **But You sent Moses.**

L: “O my Lord, please send someone else,” we also beg.

P: **But You are calling us.**

L: You are calling us to remember that every person, every single person, is made in Your shining image

P: **You are calling us to remember that bodies are not commodities to be bought and sold, but holy mysteries, reflecting Your own glory, deserving of protection and care.**

L: You are calling us to remember that if even one member of the human family is enslaved then none of us is free.

P: **You are calling us to remember that all creation longs for the freedom of the glory of the children of God.**

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- L:** You are calling us to remember. You are calling us to refuse to turn our eyes away. You are calling us to see what You see, to hear what You hear.
- P:** **You are calling us to act.**
- All:** **Amen.**

STEPHANIE PAULSELL is a minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Houghton Professor of the Practice of Ministry Studies at Harvard Divinity School. She is the author of *Honoring the Body: Meditations on a Christian Practice (2002)*. This prayer of memory and hope is also a protest against slavery. From *Prayers for The New Social Awakening: Inspired By The New Social Creed*, edited by Christian Iosco & Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty (2008).