



# Sex Trafficking

## SESSION 1

| *An overview of the problem and what is causing it to spread*

### Goal for the Session

Participants will review major facts and statistics about sex trafficking and learn what it is and what it is not.

### Preparing for the Session

- Many denominations have produced resources on this topic, and various groups are working to stop sex trafficking. Please print out the file that was included with the study titled "Resources on Sex Trafficking." These are resources suggested by various denominational offices. Many are quite good. Take some time to look over your denomination's resources and those of other denominations. Perhaps your group will be interested in some activity following this study.
- On a sheet of newsprint, print the definitions of trafficking from the Participant Handout. Post the paper where it can be easily seen.
- Print the litany from exercise 1 on newsprint for all to see.
- On individual index cards, print the statistics about trafficking. Place the index cards face down on a table or chair just inside the door of your learning space.
- Look over the suggested hymn, or choose another about justice or discipleship with which your group is more familiar.
- Obtain writing paper and pens or pencils for participants, as well as newsprint, felt-tipped markers, and tape.

### Teaching Tip

The topic of sex trafficking is one that is particularly distasteful to many people. Learners may resist confronting painful facts about the plight of innocent victims. Others may bring to the discussion ambivalence or fear about discussing sexuality at all. Try to establish a zone of trust and openness in which persons can feel safe sharing opinions or simply holding back and listening until they feel more at ease.

### Opening (5 minutes)

As participants gather, have available on a table the index cards with the facts about trafficking. Invite each person to take a card and read over the statistic shown there. Say that you will look at the facts about trafficking later in the session.

#### 1. Opening Litany

Divide the group into left and right sections. Invite them to read aloud the following responsive reading from Isaiah 1:

**Leader:** Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth;  
for the LORD has spoken.

**Left:** Cease to do evil.

**Right:** Learn to do good.

**Left :** Seek justice.

**Right:** Rescue the oppressed.

**Left:** Defend the orphan.

**Right:** Plead for the widow.

**Leader:** Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth; for the LORD has spoken. **Amen.**

## 2. Sing a Hymn

Sing together “Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples of the Lord” or another hymn of your own choosing.

## Exploring (25 minutes)

### 3. Define Terms

Call participants’ attention to the definitions of trafficking you posted. Discuss the following: In the Participant Handout, trafficking is equated with modern-day slavery.

- Do you agree or disagree that trafficking is slavery? Why?
- What features of this modern-day slavery seem the same as slavery in the past?
- Are there new aspects to this contemporary form?

Take time to clarify any confusion over the differences between trafficking for forced labor and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Also emphasize that the key elements in trafficking are coercion, fraud, and exploitation.

Call the group’s attention to the index cards you prepared with the statistics about trafficking. Invite participants to read, in turn, the fact on their card. Record the facts on newsprint. Ask:

- Which facts are particularly disturbing to you?
- About which would you like more information or to do further exploration?

Place a check mark next to facts about which participants made responses. Set this sheet aside to be used in session 4.

### 4. Explore Case Studies

Divide the group into three smaller groups. Assign to each group one of the case studies in the Participant Handout (Boriana, Susie, or the sisters in Cambodia). Ask each group to read over its case study and be prepared to present to the total group responses to the following:

- In this case study, who was vulnerable? Who benefited?

- What contributing factors do you think came into play in this incidence of trafficking?
- What do you think will be the consequences for the women and girls who experienced sexual exploitation? Where do you see hope? Where do you see hopelessness?

### 5. Look at Contributing Factors

Call the group’s attention to the section in the handout titled “Contributing Factors in the Global Sex Trade.” Say that in the next few sessions, participants will have a chance to examine in depth the impact of the global economy and of issues of power, particularly gender discrimination. Ask them to scan the information about natural disasters and large-scale migrations. The role of technology will also be considered in depth. Encourage them to take time to read over the information about the role of natural disasters and mass migration because of chaos or conflict. Ask:

- What sorts of policies need to be in place to protect women and children in disaster situations? In refugee camps? In areas disrupted by conflict?
- What factors make young children particularly vulnerable in chaotic situations?
- Why do you think relief workers are reluctant to believe that predators may target situations such as disasters and conflict zones?

### 6. Examine the Case for Prostitution

There may not be time for this activity. Check your time and consider skipping the activity if there is not time.

Number off by twos to divide the group into pairs. Refer the group to the material in the Participant Handout about prostitution. Assign to one person in each pair the “pro-prostitution” position and to the other the “anti-prostitution” position. Ask them to discuss the issue in pairs, presenting their assigned position to their partner. After allowing five minutes or so for discussion in pairs, call everyone back to the total group. Ask:

- What factors influence making an informed “choice” about entering into prostitution?
- Did you find the “pro-prostitution” position compelling? Why or why not?

## Responding (10 minutes)

### 7. A New Emancipation Proclamation

Recall for participants that the Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves in the United States. Ask participants to think about how a proclamation might read that would free the victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. To whom would it be addressed? How might it be communicated? Allow the group several minutes to write. Then invite one or two volunteers to read their proclamations.

## Closing (5 minutes)

### 8. Reflect on the Facts

Call participants' attention to the newsprint list of statistics. Say that you will read each fact or statistic, and invite them to reflect in silence on the implications of that fact. After each fact, the whole group will read one of the responses from the opening responsive reading:

(Fact 1)

**All: Cease to do evil.**

(Fact 2)

**All: Learn to do good.**

(Fact 3)

**All: Seek justice.**

(Fact 4)

**All: Rescue the oppressed.**

(Fact 5)

**All: Defend the orphan.**

(Fact 6)

**All: Plead for the widow.**

(Fact 7)

**All: Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth; for the Lord has spoken.**

Ask that participants read the Participant Handout for session 2 before the next meeting.

## Teaching Alternatives

- *Consider the possibilities of an Underground Railroad for trafficking victims.* Obtain information on the Underground Railroad from the Internet. The Public Television Network Web site is a good source (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2944.html>). Also download information on groups devoted to rescuing trafficking victims. Invite participants to read the information, and then discuss the following:

- How did the Underground Railroad operate? What were its strengths? What risks were involved?
- Compare the strategies of trafficking rescue groups. What are the strengths of this approach? What are the drawbacks? What kinds of rescue efforts are the most comprehensive?

Be sure to emphasize that in some cases traffickers take advantage of strategies that "buy back" sex slaves, making money on that transaction and then kidnapping other women and children to profit from.

- *Engage in role-play.* Instead of having small groups read the scenarios, invite volunteers to present first-person enactments of the experiences of the women and girls.