



# Sex Trafficking

## Session 4

| *How the Internet is playing a role in sex trafficking*

### Goal for the Session

Examine the role of the Internet in sex trafficking.

### Preparing for the Session

- Go to <http://www.beloit.edu/~pubaff/mindset/> and download "The Beloit College Mindset List" for the Class of 2011. Choose some facts related to technology and make a list on newsprint. Also go to <http://www.wisechoice.net/porn-statistics/> and make another list of some of the statistics about children and Internet porn found at this site.
- Post the newsprint sheet of statistics from session 1.
- Either make copies of the opening litany (appendix) or write it on a board so that all may see.

### Opening (5 minutes)

#### 1. Pray the Opening Litany

Distribute copies of the appendix if you printed it out, and ask for volunteers to read the various parts.

### Exploring (20 minutes)

#### 2. Sample the Mindset of Youth

Invite participants to name aspects of life a generation ago from the first paragraph of the Participant Handout and to add others they think of that represent a contrast with today's technological world. List their responses on newsprint. Call participants' attention to the list you printed on newsprint from "The Beloit College Mindset

List." Say that each August for the past decade, Beloit College has released a list of seventy items that provide a glimpse of cultural touchstones that have shaped the lives of incoming freshmen. Compiled by Beloit's Keefer Professor of Humanities Tom McBride and Public Affairs Director Ron Nief, the list is one attempt to provide a snapshot of a worldview of eighteen-year-olds, identifying experiences of these students.

Invite participants to contrast the two lists. What observations can participants make about today's information technology? Invite them to speculate as to what advances might take place in information technology before the class of 2011 graduates.

### 3. Contrast Visions of Community

Ask participants to comment on the forms of online community that involve sexual exploitation and pornography. Ask:

- What values are implicit in these vehicles of social networking? What and who are considered of high value? What and who are devalued? How does the invisibility and anonymity of online networking contribute to a sense of community? In what ways is it antithetical to real community? What is dangerous about it?

Invite a volunteer to read Ephesians 2:11–22. Ask:

- Is the vision of community expressed here different from the vision implicit in online networking? If so, in what ways?

- If humankind reflects the image of God, what qualities and commitments should be the foundation for community?

#### 4. Explore How the Image of God Is Distorted

Using the information in the Participant Handout, discuss how the image of God is distorted in the following:

- A teenager like Nok, lured into stripping for a minicam
- A man who surfs the Web for pornographic images, gradually becoming addicted to pornography
- A child whose picture has been taken without his or her knowledge and used on pornographic sites, downloaded hundreds of times
- A woman who agrees to pose for pornographic video shots that will be used on a Web site

#### 5. Respond to Protect Children

Point out the list of statistics posted on newsprint about youth and the Internet. Ask participants to read over the facts listed there. Then ask:

- Was there a fact that you found surprising? What was it and why?
- Many people have pushed for more stringent guidelines of what may be put online. Others are concerned about First Amendment rights. How do you respond?

Discuss what might be strategies that parents can use to help protect their children from inappropriate content on the Web, such as using Internet filters, setting guidelines for Internet use, and limiting home computers to public spaces in the home. Then ask:

- How has the increased use of videophones, Black-Berries, and other handheld devices made this kind of supervision more difficult?

Call participants' attention to the guidelines ECPAT has proposed (Participant Handout). Ask:

- In what ways do you think the adoption of these guidelines would help to protect women and children from exploitation on the Internet?

- How might they help protect children and youth from pornographic images they might encounter on the Internet?

### Responding (15 minutes)

#### 6. Wrap Up the Study

Invite participants to reflect on the four sessions in this study using the following prompts:

- To me, the most disturbing thing about sex trafficking is . . .
- One thing I learned is . . .
- When I consider sex trafficking, I feel . . .
- I believe one way the church can make a difference is . . .

Call participants' attention to the newsprint sheet of statistics from session 1. Point out statistics beside which you placed check marks. Ask:

- Have some of our questions about the issue of sex trafficking been answered? What questions remain?

Encourage participants to name one concrete action they might take personally to address the issue of sex trafficking. Emphasize that every distinct action, whether pledging to buy fair-trade coffee, exploring investing in a microcredit organization, becoming a more acute observer of those in your local community who might have been trafficked, or writing a letter in support of antitrafficking legislation, can make a difference. Brainstorm other examples of actions individuals or groups of Christians might make. Ask:

- Which aspects of these issues can best be addressed by compassionate acts on the part of a group?
- Which aspects require sustained public policy efforts?

### Closing (5 minutes)

#### 7. Prayer

Remind participants that prayer is always a powerful response to any issue that touches the lives of God's people. Pray the following prayer attributed to sixteenth-century mystic Teresa of Avila:

Christ has no body now on earth but yours,  
No feet but yours, no hands but yours.  
Yours are the eyes through which the compassion  
Of Christ is to look out on a hurting world.  
Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing  
good.  
Yours are the hands with which he is to bless all  
now.

## Teaching Alternatives

- *Hold a debate.* Hold a debate on the following proposition:

Resolved: To limit access to content on the Internet, whether that content is deemed pornographic by some or not, is to limit the First Amendment rights we hold dear.

Ask for volunteers to make up teams for the debate, and invite them to research this question and prepare speeches. The remaining participants can serve as the audience. Allow two minutes for initial speeches and one minute for rebuttal. Following the debate, debrief with the entire group.

- *Present reports.* Ask participants to divide into two small groups: one to do online research about ECPAT-USA and its aims and the other to research The

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography. Ask each group to present a report of its findings to the total group. To download a PDF of the protocol, go to [http://www.unicef.org/crc/index\\_30204.html](http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30204.html). In the shaded box titled More Information, click on Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.

- *Research denominational statements.* Visit your denomination's Web site to find out what policy statements have been made about trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Present a minilecture outlining the statement and any recommendations, and discuss how your group might be a part of implementing those recommendations.
- *Invite a visitor from law enforcement.* Invite a lawyer, judge, or police officer to talk to your group about how trafficking and the underlying issues of prostitution and pornography are impacting your community.

## For More Information

Parents and others concerned about the issue of children and their access to the Internet may want to use The Thoughtful Christian Study titled "What's My Child Doing on the Internet?"

# Appendix

## Prayer

- All:** We believe God created humankind in God's own image, in the image of the Creator God created them, male and female God created them. Therefore we affirm:
- Reader 1:** God is the source of human dignity. There is equal dignity of men and women as being created in the image of God.
- Reader 2:** Human beings were created with the possibility for the ultimate acts of celebration and joy in sexuality.
- Reader 3:** God calls human beings to positive expressions of mutual affirmation and commitment, especially as typified in the calling to faithful, respectful marital and familial relationships.
- Reader 4:** The historic pattern of dominance and subjugation in human relationships is a distortion of God's intended creation.
- Reader 5:** God's gift of sexual pleasure is fulfilled in acts of human love and mutual respect.
- Reader 6:** God demands sexual responsibility, balancing love for the self and love for the other.
- Reader 7:** God calls us to promote the dignity of all persons and to confront the circumstances in society that negate the integrity of human life.
- All:** Christians are called to model the covenantal, compassionate community. The love of Jesus Christ is the Good News and brings empowerment to a world filled with conflict, alienation, and fear. Thanks be to God!