

# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING 2023

INTERNATIONAL  
SOCIAL JUSTICE  
COMMISSION



## I HAVE HEARD THEIR CRIES

### CHILDREN'S RESOURCE

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#### INTRODUCTION

##### CARPET OF DREAMS:

##### Ravi's Story

This is a true story. My name is Ravi\*. I think I am between 12 and 13 years old. When I was younger, a man came to my village. He was looking for boys to work for him - to make handmade carpets. He approached my parents telling them that I would earn a good salary. I did not want to leave my home and, at first, my parents agreed with me. But this man wouldn't take no for an answer. In the end, my parents gave in to his demands. The man gave them \$10 to take me away. But he had lied. I earned nothing. I still remember the train journey to this man's home. Throughout the entire journey he refused to feed me. It was only when we finally arrived at our destination that he gave me just a small amount to eat. The next day I woke up and again, I was given nothing to eat. Then the man took me to the place where the sewing looms and machinery were kept.

That was the very first time I saw a loom. From my very first day, I was forced to work. I was made to sit at the loom and if I couldn't finish it during the day, I had to work under candlelight. I was forced to work very long hours, so I was never able to get enough sleep, and because I was always exhausted, I would make mistakes. I didn't get any money but I got a bed. We all slept and worked in one room and we were forced to work there for 12 hours a day. Once a day we were allowed to use the bathroom but even the number of bathroom breaks were controlled. We were given very little food - usually just a little rice.

Finally, I was recovered in a raid operation carried out by the police. I was terrified. I thought I was going to get beaten up again and they were going to throw me away. Luckily, I was taken to

\*Name changed to protect identity

a place where children are looked after. I love it here. I have friends, I am happy and I go to school. They are helping make sense of what happened to me - that I was a slave. Now I'm trying to learn how to be an electrician. I like the electricity idea. My dream is to teach my brothers, my sisters and everyone in my village.



## BIG IDEA

### **What does it mean to be a slave or to be in slavery?**

Slavery is not a new idea. It is something that has been around for thousands of years and we even read about it in the Bible and when we study the history of the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians and how they all kept slaves. Today there are still many people who are kept in slavery. In fact, they think there could be more than 49.6 million slaves around the world right now. That is a lot, isn't it?



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **How do you think it would feel for someone to be a slave?**
- **How do you think Ravi (in the story at the beginning) felt being a slave and being separated from his family and village?**
- **Do you think God cares about slaves and those in slavery? Why or why not?**
- **Do you think we should care about slaves and those in slavery? Why or why not?**

Slaves are often put in situations that make them feel scared and unsafe and they are frequently

made to feel like they don't matter and they are unimportant. They are made to do things that are unfair and hard and that hurt them. They may also feel like nobody hears their cries or understands what they are going through. They may feel very alone and sad.

Thankfully we know that God cares about them and that they matter to him. He loves them deeply and hears their cries of sadness. We can read in the book of Exodus in the Bible that God does care and he does hear. In Exodus 2:23-25 it says: 'Many years later the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned under their slavery and cried out. Their cries for relief from their hard labor ascended to God: God listened to their groanings. God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw what was going on with Israel. God understood' (MSG).



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**What do these verses say about God? What do they say he does?**

All those thousands of years ago when the Israelites were being treated badly as slaves, God cared deeply about their situations. In our world today he cares just as much about the millions of

people who are slaves, adults and children like Ravi who are being mistreated and who wonder if anyone cares about them. These verses that we read in the book of Exodus let us know that they are not alone, and that God hears, God sees and he understands.

God also wants us to care about those who are slaves and are trapped in slavery. He wants us to know there are ways we can help people who are treated badly.



### DISCUSSION QUESTION

**What are some ideas that you have about what we can do?**

Some things you can do are:

1. Know the signs - learn what indicators to look for that might show someone is being exploited. There are many things to look out for, including people's living conditions, work conditions and noticing how other adults around them treat them.
2. Learn how to be safe on the Internet - how can you and your friends keep each other safe?
3. Share what you learned today and the signs of slavery with your family and friends.
4. Learn more about slavery, human trafficking and exploitation. Share with your family, friends and church family. Do a presentation at your school or Sunday school.

5. Pray! Pray for people who are experiencing slavery and for God to protect them and hear their prayers. Pray for our leaders and for organisations that support survivors.
6. Treat people with kindness, respect and love.
7. Encourage your friends and family members to treat people with respect, kindness and love.
8. Ask the leaders at your school and church and even in the government to better protect and help people who are unsafe.

**Know the signs** – learn what indicators to look for that might show someone is being exploited

Let's pray together for all those in the world who are being enslaved and treated as slaves.



*Dear Jesus*

*Please help all the slaves and those in slavery all around the world. Protect their hearts and their minds. Let them find freedom and help them to find safety. Protect their families and help families that have been separated to come together again. Help them to know that you love them and care for them and that you are with them even when life is hard and sad. Let them know that they are important and loved.*

*Amen.*

Prayer from Alina, age 9 - provided with permission within the framework of ethical storytelling.

### ACTIVITY FROZEN TAG

In an area when children can move/run around, pick one person to be 'it'. Give the other children 20 seconds to run away. After 20 seconds, the child who is 'it' can run to tag the other children. These children do not want to be tagged. If they are tagged, they need to 'freeze' (stop) where they are and put their hands out. They can call out to the other children who are not tagged to run under their arms to unfreeze and free them. We can share that in life, we want to hear the cries of those enslaved and work with them and other adults to see them freed just like how we

### ACTIVITY OPTION CRAFT

are doing in the game of frozen tag. Using different colour paper strips, have each child take one and write 'END IT'. Using glue, tape or staples, connect each of the paper strips to make a paper chain symbolising theirs and the Church's commitment to stand together to end slavery. You can even have a contest to see who can build the longest chain. Hang it in your space to remind everyone in the weeks to come that we are committed to ending slavery in the world

