

# human trafficking

PARISH TOOL KIT



Catholic  
Charities  
USA®



# Catholic Charities USA Parish Tool Kit

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## Introduction

“Our belief in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching.”

“Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions”

– Reflections of the U.S. Bishops


An estimated 125,000-300,000 American children are trafficked within the United States for sexual exploitation each year. This shocking statistic brings home the scope of a problem that many of us do not even realize exists. We think of trafficked persons as those brought into the United States from other countries. But our own children are being victimized, too – enslaved, their dignity stripped away, their lives threatened.

The Trafficking Victims’ Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 defined trafficking as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act or forced labor. In doing it so it revised the central concept of trafficking from transportation to exploitation of persons, and redefined sexually exploited child victims as trafficking victims. Sexually trafficked children are used in child pornography and prostitution, as well as sex tourism, in which children are held for the sexual use of foreign tourists and business travelers.

Who are these children? They are from every race, religious and socio-economic background. Some 70 percent are from middle-class backgrounds. Some have been kidnapped or lured away from home. Many have run away from abusive, dysfunctional families. Some are held captive psychologically or physically. Others engage in commercial sex in order to survive on the streets.

The 2005 reauthorization of TVPA extends services for trafficking victims to these sexually exploited children. Nonetheless, lack of resources and training continues to stymie efforts to identify and rescue them. As a result, many child victims go unidentified and, when discovered, are charged with prostitution rather than referred for desperately needed services.

Efforts are underway to rectify this situation. According to the Report from the Mid-Term Review on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in America published by ECPAT-USA and others, the federal government, local law enforcement, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are making progress in this area. Through the Innocence Lost Initiative, the FBI, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Center for Missing and Exploited Children are working together with task forces in 16 cities to share information, provide training, and assist local agencies providing services to victims. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is among the nongovernmental organizations that have received funding from Department of Health and Human Services (DHH) DHH’s Office of Refugee Relocation to provide services to victims, to help strengthen legislation and to develop training programs for state and local law enforcement and service providers.

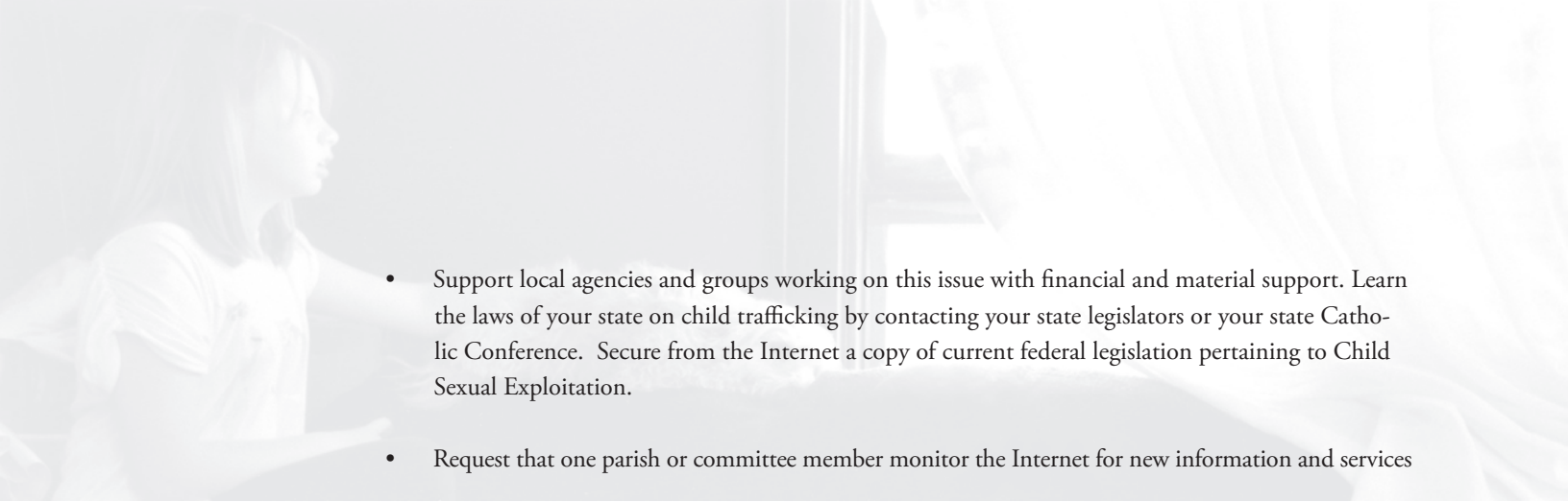


These materials have been prepared to help you learn about the trafficking of children and to provide resources and suggestions for action, so you and your parish can become active partners in combating this tragedy.

## A Plan for Parish Action

Community awareness is one of the most effective weapons against exploitation. These tools will help you learn about child sexual exploitation and how to join with others in your parish to fight it. These materials can be used for education and action.

- Select a special committee of parish members to review this material. Use the Internet sites to secure more information.
- Develop an education and outreach plan for use with the entire parish community.
  - Alert parishioners about how to identify children who may be victimized. Visit <http://www.missing-kids.com/> (click on Sexual Exploitation) for tips on how to work with parents and schools to identify threats to identify victims or potential victims;
  - Publicize the Center for Missing and Exploited Children's Cyber Tipline. Reports can be made at [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com) or by calling 1-800-843-5678.
  - Use the information and bulletin inserts for parish bulletins and display racks.
  - Encourage your parish priests to talk about this issue in their homilies; provide them with a copies of these materials.
  - Duplicate the fact sheets on Child Sexual Exploitation for distribution.
  - Create a plan for information distribution in your parish and community.
  - Keep a supply of information in the vestibule or back of the church.
- Learn what the laws are in your state and how exploitation is being fought in your state and community. Invite a representative of a local or state agency or a Catholic organization active in this issue to speak to a parish group about the local situation and about services available in your community. To locate speakers, contact your state legislators, state Catholic Conference, diocesan Catholic Charities office or other diocesan agency, or a local child welfare agency.
- Learn how to identify victims of sexual exploitation in the community and what to do when you suspect that a child is being sexually exploited.
- Run an article in your parish bulletin using the information sheets. Inform your Catholic newspaper of your efforts and see if they will support you with an article of their own on Child Sexual Exploitation. Supply them with copies of the information in your packet.
- Help build a child's self-esteem through Big Brothers/Big Sisters or another community organization. The children who are most vulnerable to being sexually victimized are often from dysfunctional families, lonely and alienated.

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- Support local agencies and groups working on this issue with financial and material support. Learn the laws of your state on child trafficking by contacting your state legislators or your state Catholic Conference. Secure from the Internet a copy of current federal legislation pertaining to Child Sexual Exploitation.
  - Request that one parish or committee member monitor the Internet for new information and services
  - Encourage parishioners to offer a Prayer for Trafficked Children on the first Saturday of each month. Publish the prayer in newsletters and church bulletins.

## Prayer

### Prayer to End Human Trafficking

O God of every family on earth,  
Loving and compassionate God,  
We come before you in prayer  
Unable to fully comprehend the horror of women and men and children  
Transported to unknown places  
To be exploited and abused  
Because of greed and profit.

We are people of many creeds, united in our sadness and our anger.

We cry out together against the degrading practice of human trafficking.

Our hearts are saddened and our spirits angry that their dignity and rights are being  
Transgressed through threats, deception, and force.

Give us the wisdom and courage to stand up against the evil that makes it possible for People to buy and sell and trade others.

Give us the wisdom and courage to stand in solidarity with the victims  
That together we will find a way  
To the freedom that is your gift to all of us.

We pray for it to end.

AMEN

Taken from School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND), Trafficking Reflection Booklet, Canadian Province, p. 10



## Prayer to End Human Trafficking

O God, our words cannot express  
What our minds can barely comprehend and  
Our hearts feel when we hear of women and girls  
Deceived and transported to unknown places  
For purposes of sexual exploitation and abuse  
Because of human greed and profit at this time in our world.

We cry out against the degrading practice of trafficking and pray for it to end.  
Strengthen the fragile-spirited and broken-hearted.  
Make real your promises to fill these, our sisters and brothers,  
With a love that is tender and good  
And send the exploiters away empty-handed.

Help us to overcome our reluctance, our divisions,  
And our feelings of powerlessness,  
So that we may stand as one in solidarity  
With our brothers and sisters in the human family.

Together, open our hearts and hands and our minds  
To find a way to the freedom that is your gift to  
Every child, every woman, and every man.

We pray for it to end.

AMEN

Taken from School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND), Trafficking Reflection Booklet, Canadian Province, p. 10



Prayer

## Resources & Links

ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children  
For Sexual Purposes – USA)

United States Mid-Term Review on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of  
Children (CSEC) in America

<http://www.ecpatusa.org/reports.asp> (click on “Report from U.S.Midterm Review”)

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information

330 C Street, SW

Washington, DC 20447-0001

1-800-FYI-3366

703-385-7565

Fax: 703-385-3206

<http://www.calib.com/ncanch>

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Charles B. Wang International Children’s Building

699 Prince Street

Alexandria, VA 22314-3175

Phone: 703-274-3900

Fax: 703-274-2200

Hotline: 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-832-5678)

[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com) (click on “Sexual Exploitation”)

Children of the Night

14530 Sylvan Street

Van Nuys, California 91411

Hotline: (800) 551-1300

Main: (818) 908-4474

[www.childrenofthenight.org](http://www.childrenofthenight.org)

Girls Educational & Mentoring Services (GEMS)

(212) 926-8089


[www.gems-girls.org](http://www.gems-girls.org)

The Paul and Lisa Program

1-800-518-2238

<http://www.paulandlisa.org/>

Center to End Adolescent Sexual Exploitation (CEASE)



Juvenile Justice Fund  
395 Pryor Street, Su. 1025  
Atlanta, GA 30312  
404-224-4415  
[http://www.juvenilejusticefund.org/initiatives\\_CEASE.asp](http://www.juvenilejusticefund.org/initiatives_CEASE.asp)

Covenant House  
1-888-373-7888 (Human Trafficking Information And Referral Hotline)  
[www.covenanthouse.org](http://www.covenanthouse.org)

Project Safe Childhood  
United States Department of Justice  
<http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov/>

Parent's Guide to Internet Safety  
Federal Bureau of Investigation, Cyber Div.  
Innocent Images National Initiative  
11700 Beltsville Drive  
Calverton, MD 20705  
<http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm>