

LET'S TALK MODERN SLAVERY: CHILDREN'S RESOURCE

Prepared by The Clewer Initiative to use in Sunday School or children's work around Anti-Slavery Day on 18th October.

LEARNING AIMS

Children know that modern slavery is happening today in many places around the world and understand what this could look like. They understand that the cause of this is greed, and our desire for cheap goods.

MATERIALS

- Paper and glue to make paper chains (You may need a stapler for the group leader to use just in case the chains don't stick properly. Make sure an adult keeps hold of that at all times.)
- Pencils, pens and crayons
- Printed pictures of examples of child labour (Resource 1)
- Letter of invitation in an envelope (Resource 2)

PREPARATION

If you are working with older children, in the 'Letter' section, you may want to ask one of the children in advance if they could read the letter and act as if they really want the job it is offering. If this isn't an option, then one of the leaders should play this role.

INTRODUCTION

Explain to the children what modern slavery is:

When greedy people want money, they sometimes commit crimes or do bad things to get it. One bad thing they might do is not paying people properly for their work. Sometimes they might force people into working in really horrible jobs, for no pay at all, just so they can make more money.

This happens to men, women and children in the UK and around the world.

Show the pictures of child labour to the children and ask them:

What are the children doing in these pictures?

(Harvesting cocoa, making footballs, working in a clothes factory).

They are working very hard, probably for very little money. How old do we think they are?

Child labour is used in producing chocolate, footballs and sewing clothes for shops in Europe.

Ask the children "If you were working in a factory like the boy in this cotton factory, what would it be like?" (Stuffy, noisy, long hours, no play time)

Ask if you were working all day, what would you not be able to do? (Not allowed to go to school, and to learn new skills and knowledge. Not able to play with friends. Maybe just one meal a day. Sharing bed with others, no nice clothes or toys. No play time.)

Why does this happen? Why do they make children do the work? (Child labour is cheap (or free). This keeps the prices down and bosses can make a bigger profit. People in the UK will buy the clothes and food because it is cheaper, and we are all greedy for lots of shopping at the lowest price. This happens all over the world.)

ACTIVITIES

PAPER CHAIN ACTIVITY

Tell the children "We are going to make a strong chain of prayer for these children. Let's write our Christian names on a paperchain and see how long we can make it!"

Give each child a piece of the paper chain and ask them to write their Christian name on it. Then ask one or two of the children to stick the chain together (or the group leader can staple it together). If you have a small group then ask them to write the names of their brothers and sisters and friends at school too so you have a bigger chain. When the chain is ready, arrange it so it encircles the group. If you have a particularly big group, you may wish to make several chain circles.

LETTER ACTIVITY

Now get the letter and either ask a child who you have prepped to come and open the envelope and read it out or read out the letter yourself.

Ask the children if the person reading the letter should accept this invitation? Why or why not?

A little debate can take place, with the invited person insisting they know others who are ok, they see great opportunities, if they don't like it they can come home using the wages the letter promises them. Paint an appealing picture of what a person accepting this job will enjoy – better money in a good job, the ability to send money home for their family, their own room, regular food.

Ask the children to put their hand up if they think it sounds like a good idea? Have we got all the information we need to make a decision?

Talk about how sometimes it's not the adult or child who makes the decision, sometimes parents or other family members choose for them. Think of reasons why they might do this.

Read one or two of the stories to help the children understand how this might happen. You may wish to adapt the language in the stories for younger children.

STORIES

MARY'S STORY

It's Christmas Eve and Mary is rushing through the town centre with her kids to get those final last bits of shopping done. She notices a young woman begging outside the supermarket and hesitates, before resolving to keep going, they have a lot to do. Her youngest son, Freddie, stops her and says 'Mum, shouldn't we talk to her, can we help her?'

Sighing Mary says 'of course' and they walk over. The woman looks thin and tired. She has a half eaten sandwich next to her and a bottle of water. But, Mary notices, she doesn't have any bedding or bags, none of the usual bits of paraphernalia you would associate with someone who was homeless.

Mary starts talking to her, asking her name, where she's from, could they do anything to help? The woman starts to open up. Her name is Rosa. She lives in London, a good few hours away from where she is now, in a small flat with a lot of people in it. The man who runs her accommodation drove her and four others to this town to beg today. She came to the UK to work but she has only been begging so far. She has to give all the money she makes to the man, and he checks on her periodically throughout the day.

Mary has a dawning realisation that this woman, and the others who have been bussed here today, are being exploited. She explains to Rosa that she can find her help if she wants it. She doesn't have to sit here, alone and cold on Christmas Eve.

BRENDA FROM UGANDA

Brenda is from Uganda. She was not happy there, her family had thrown her out of home and she couldn't find a job.

A friend put her in contact with Imelda, an agent who said she could get her a well-paid job abroad. Brenda was told she could work in the UK as a cleaner and make enough money to even save some so she could make a better life.

On arrival in the UK, Brenda was told she would be working for 'Missus', the female owner of a house. The 'Missus' informed her that she now owed her money for bringing her to the UK and had to work to repay her debt. Brenda had to clean the entire house every day, with no breaks and no pay. She was locked in the basement at night with nothing to sleep on.

The Missus would sometimes hit her and never gave her enough to eat so Brenda became ill. After a few months, a girl who was visiting the house unlocked the door, discovered Brenda and helped her to escape. Brenda was able to get help, support and medical treatment so she could get well again.

MANIKANDAN FROM INDIA

When Manikandan was 11 years old, a man came to his village and told his parents that he would give them a small loan of 2,000 rupees (about £24). In return Manikandan would come and work for him. He told Manikandan's parents that he would have a good job with lots of opportunities to make money to send home.

It wasn't true. Instead Manikandan worked 13-hour days in a factory making Indian snacks. If he made a mistake then he would get hit by the owner. Sometimes he was allowed to call his mum on the phone, but he was never able to visit his parents.

He worked in the factory for nine years, before one day, Manikandan noticed that the owner and his wife were distracted by a local festival. He took the brief window to sneak away. It took him nine months to get home again, but he finally arrived back into his mother's arms. "I am so happy!" his mother had said as she hugged and kissed him. "All that I ate in the past nine years did not satisfy me. Today we will have a feast as my son has returned in good health."

Story via International Justice Mission

REFLECTION

Have a time of quiet with the children, and lead them into praying for the people in the stories, for the names they have written on the chains, and for victims of modern slavery around the world.

Do they know any ways we can help people in modern slavery? (Focus on choices we can make like buying FairTrade products, including chocolate and fruit and thinking about where the products we buy have been made. Could we pray for the person who made our clothes next time we get a piece of clothing?)

Get the paper chain the children made earlier and break it together, to symbolise wanting to break the chains of modern slavery across the world.

Finish with a joyful song like 'The Spirit Lives to Set Us Free' or 'My Lighthouse'.

MEMORY VERSE

If you do a memory verse in your children's group, we would suggest Luke 4:18:

"The Spirit of the Lord is in me. This is because God chose me to tell the Good News to the poor. God sent me to tell the prisoners of sin that they are free, and to tell the blind that they can see again. God sent me to free those who have been treated unfairly."

(International Children's Bible)

"God's Spirit is on me; he's chosen me to preach the Message of good news to the poor, Sent me to announce pardon to prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, To set the burdened and battered free, to announce, "This is God's year to act!"

(The Message)

RESOURCE 1: PICTURES TO PRINT OUT





RESOURCE 2: LETTER TO READ OUT

Dear Mary

I am very pleased to tell you that we have found a perfect job for you. It is in a different country, so you can travel and see the world. Because you have experience babysitting we have found a family who need help with their four children, aged 7, 5, 3 and 18 months old. They will provide you a room of your own, with a bed and regular food. You will be able to send money home, and to help pay for your little brother go to school, so he can get a good job and support your mother when she is old and not able to work.

Please meet us at the bus station next Sunday at 8am, and just bring one small case. We will provide travel papers for you using the photograph you gave us last month.

The cost of the air fare and other travel can be paid back to us month by month from your excellent wages. Do not be late, this is the one chance for you. Don't worry about being homesick, the family will be so kind you won't miss home at all.

Bob, your friendly cousin.