

**Faces of Human Trafficking**  
An AB GIRLS Program  
For "Break the Chains: Slavery in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"  
*By Bonnie Sestito*

**Scriptures:** Isaiah 61:1-3

**Purpose:** To bring awareness of the fastest growing crime in the world, human trafficking, with a focus on the United States.

**Goals:** To raise awareness in the girls of the issues of human trafficking; to educate them about trafficking; to inspire them to take action as modern-day abolitionists.

**Leader's Background**

Child trafficking is the fastest growing crime in the world. UNICEF values the global market of child trafficking at over \$12 billion a year with over 1.2 million child victims. Child trafficking is the third largest crime in the world, for transnational crime, falling just behind drugs and guns. Domestically, it occurs in every community in America. One reporter refers to it as, "Slavery in the Suburbs"<sup>1</sup>. The FBI has determined that the average age for females entering prostitution in the US is 13. Children are becoming the most profitable product for criminals because a drug dealer can sell a little bag of drugs on the street just once. A weapons dealer can sell a little handgun on the street just once. A trafficker can sell a little kid on the street 10, 15, 20 times a day; day after day after day.

According to Wikipedia, human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, harbouring, or receipt of people for the purposes of slavery, forced labor (including bonded labor or debt bondage), and servitude<sup>2</sup>. The total annual revenue for trafficking in persons is estimated to be between \$5 billion and \$9 billion. The Council of Europe states that "people trafficking has reached epidemic proportions over the past decade, with a global annual market of about \$42.5 billion." Trafficking victims typically are recruited using coercion, deception, fraud, the abuse of power, or outright abduction. Threats, violence, and economic leverage such as debt bondage can often make a victim consent to exploitation. Exploitation includes forcing people into prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs. For children, exploitation may also include forced prostitution, illicit international adoption, trafficking for early marriage, or recruitment as child soldiers, beggars, for sports (such as child camel jockeys or football players), or for religious cults. We will only be addressing sexual exploitation in this session.

International sex trafficking is a well-known problem, but it happens here in the U.S. as well. According to the FBI, the average age of a new recruit is just 13; some are

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<sup>1</sup> "Slavery in the Suburbs: Tracy Smith Explores the Business of Human Trafficking," CBS Evening News, available at <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/09/12/eveningnews/main3254966.shtml>, accessed January 28, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> "Human Trafficking", Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human\\_trafficking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_trafficking), accessed January 28, 2009.

as young as 9. And, while the vast majority of teen prostitutes are runaways, illegal immigrants, and children of poor urban areas, experts say a growing number now come from middle-class homes<sup>3</sup>.

Young girls are recruited from shopping malls, arcades, schools, parks, bus stops, and now from chat rooms and social networking sites on the Internet. Teens that hang out at local shopping malls are especially vulnerable. Parents often feel that a local mall is safe to allow their children to go with a friend or even unsupervised, as it is populated and enclosed. But malls are havens for sexual predators. They can hang out, watch, and wait. A food court is the perfect place for a predator to blend in, and sit around watching young teens, waiting for the right moment to make a move. Usually the first move would be to strike up a conversation trying to make the teen feel special. He buys her clothes, treats her like a girlfriend, or whatever it takes to gain her trust. Pimps deliberately pick out girls who appear socially awkward or lonely.

This session is intended to help raise girls' awareness so that they may be more proactive in their own safety, as well as potentially becoming active as abolitionists to help prevent this tragedy from happening to other girls as well.

### **How This Program Plan Works**

As you read through the program plan, you will notice that there are two options for most sections. For example, "Getting Underway," the section which starts things off by introducing the theme and warming girls up for the rest of the session, has an option A and an option B. You will want to choose which options you would like to use in each section ahead of time. The options offer variation to take into account different learning styles, size of the group, trust level of the group, or other factors. As you choose which options you will use, give thought to providing a variety of activities that your group would enjoy and particularly connect with.

### **Steps for Preparation**

Read the Scriptures and pray for God's guidance when preparing the lesson. You may want to do additional research by surfing the web. Gather supplies and props. Make photocopies of handouts. Ask volunteers to help with debriefing. You will want to inform parents of the subject matter ahead of time; let them know what the topic will address and what the activities are. Ask your church staff (pastor/s, Christian education directors), if they would advise having a parental permission form signed ahead of time due to the sensitivity of the topic.

### **Supply/Prop List**

You should have Bibles, writing paper, and writing utensils available.

*Getting Underway Option A:* Blindfolds; A space large enough so that pairs of girls can be led around by their partners

*Going Deeper Option A:* Gather ads from magazines or catalogs (i.e., Abercrombie and Fitch) that have sexual undertones; affix ads to the wall; stationery, envelopes, writing utensils

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<sup>3</sup> "Nationwide Increase in Teen Prostitution," Suzanne Smalley, Newsweek, August 22, 2003.

*Going Deeper Option B:* Copies of Handout A, "Human Trafficking Doesn't Happen in the U.S., Does It?"; Copies of Handout E, "Template for Letters to Congress," for each girl

*Connect Option A:* Copies of Handout B, "How Does Teen Prostitution Happen?" for each girl

*Connect Option B:* Prepare a 3x5 card with the following questions (enough for each breakout group)

1. What was one thing that you learned?
2. What can you do to keep yourself safe?
3. How can you be a part of the solution to end human trafficking?

*Act Option A:* Copies of Handout C, "Test Your Safety Knowledge" for each girl; one copy of Handout D, "Test Your Safety Knowledge Answers" for leader's use

*Act Option B:* A list of ABCUSA missionaries ministering in the area of human trafficking. Check the Break the Chains website at [www.abwmbreakthechains.org](http://www.abwmbreakthechains.org), International Ministries website at [www.internationalministries.org](http://www.internationalministries.org), and National Ministries website at [www.nationalministries.org](http://www.nationalministries.org).

### **Things to Consider**

Know who your audience is. This may be a hard topic for some, but necessary, as the average age for a girl entering prostitution in the U.S. is 13. You may want to have volunteers available to help with debriefing. Consider making this a mom/daughter event. This could also be used for a mixed group. You should definitely distribute Handout F, "Signs that Your Child May Be at Risk Online," to parents and guardians.

Although human trafficking involves several facets the focus here is on sexual exploitation.

This is a huge subject that cannot be covered in one Bible study. You may want to consider honoring Human Trafficking Awareness Day, January 11, every year. There is a book "*Sold*" written by Patricia McCormick, which according to The National Book Awards says, "*Sold* is a harrowing account of sexual slavery. Alternating lyrical imagery with precise detail, McCormick gives voice to the terror and bewilderment of a young girl robbed of her childhood but who finds the strength to triumph." This book could be read and discussed by the girls another time. Young girls are vulnerable, it is important that they are reminded of the issue.

### **Getting Underway**

*Option A (30 minutes)*

Ask the following questions. Use the definitions/responses offered for each question to help spur conversation if it lags. (Definitions are from Wikipedia, American Heritage Dictionary, or WordNet Dictionary.)

**What is a slave?** Slavery is the systematic exploitation of labor. Slavery is a system whereby one person is held captive and is subservient to another—typically called "slaves" and "slave owners" or "masters." Evidence of slavery exists from ancient times, and has existed in some form in almost every culture, in almost every country around the world. Slaves are held captive—they are not free to move about at will, they are usually

not paid any wages (or barely subsistence wages.) Slavery is illegal in nearly all countries today, but continues to exist around the world in a variety of forms regardless.

**What is human trafficking?** Human trafficking is defined as "the recruitment, transportation, harbouring, or receipt of people for the purposes of slavery, forced labor (including bonded labor or debt bondage), and servitude." Victims are usually trafficked using coercion, deception, fraud, the abuse of power, or outright abduction. Victims can be forced to consent to exploitation through the use of threats or debt bondage.

**What is exploitation?** Exploitation includes forcing people into prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, or servitude.

**What is bondage?** 1. The state of being under the control of another person; 2. A state of subjection to a force, power, or influence.

Ask girls to find a partner. Ask the partners to choose one to be blindfolded. Instruct the girl without the blindfold to lead the other girl around the room. Let them do this for a minute or so. Gather the girls together to discuss the following questions.

- How does it feel to have no control and to be lead around by another person?
- How would it feel if you did not know that other person and they didn't care about you?
- How would it feel if this is how you would spend your whole life?

Say, "This is only a little bit of what it is like for those who are enslaved. For victims of trafficking, their experience is much, much worse."

*Option B (20 minutes)*

Have the girls form a circle around several volunteers. (If the group is large divide the girls into smaller circles.) Instruct the girls forming the circle to hold hands, standing as far apart as possible, and say complementary statements to the volunteers in the center about their appearance, such as, "nice dress, "pretty top." The volunteers may move around within the circle.

After a minute or so have the girls forming the outer circle take a couple of steps forward, getting closer to the volunteers. Have the girls in the outer circle smile and say positive things to gain the volunteers confidence and trust, such as, "I understand," "I'll be your friend," "I know how you feel."

After another minute or so have the girls forming the outer circle take a few more steps closer together, drawing them even closer to the volunteers. At this point, the outer circle should definitely be crowding the inner group of volunteers, perhaps only a few inches from their faces. Instruct the girls forming the outer circle to make loud, aggressive statements to the inner volunteers, such as "You're mine," "I'm in charge," "You'll do what I say."

While the girls in the outer circle are shouting out their aggressive statements, instruct the volunteers on the inside to try to exit the circle while the girls forming the outer circle still continue to hold hands tightly so that the volunteers cannot pass.

After a minute or so, stop the activity and invite everyone to be seated. Ask the volunteers from the inner group to explain their experiences. Ask how it felt when they were receiving complements (i.e., good, nice, happy), how it felt when they heard the aggressive comments (i.e., scared, hurt my feelings), and how it felt not to be able to exit the circle (i.e., trapped, helpless).

Say, "What you just experienced is what a pimp, or trafficker, wants to achieve." According to a Minnesota pimp, the goal is to get the girls as dependent upon the pimp as possible. "Mentally you've gotta burn into their brains you're the only one, you're god. Once you've got that down and they're ready to work...then you instill the fear, the wrath of god. If they mess up, there's a price to pay, and they know it's a heavy price."<sup>4</sup>

### **Introduction to the Theme**

*Option A/Option B (5 minutes)*

Say the following in your own words: "Movies like "Pretty Woman" and "Risky Business" glamorize prostitution, but these glossy Hollywood portrayals are far from the truth." (Consider inviting the girls to offer other suggestions of movies or TV shows they have seen that glamorize prostitution.)

Continue by sharing information and statistics from the Leader's Background. Let the girls know that this information comes from a variety of trusted sources, and that the rest of the session will give them the opportunity to understand it better and to know what to do about it.

### **Going Deeper**

*Option A (25 minutes)*

Have the girls look at pictures of ads that were posted around the room before the girls arrived. Discuss: Do you think there is a relationship between the sexualization of young girls in today's culture, and the actual sexual exploitation of children? Do you think it's okay? How does it make you feel?

Have the girls turn to Isaiah 61:1-3. Invite a volunteer to read it aloud. Let the girls know that this is the theme Scripture for AB Women's Ministries national mission project on sex trafficking, "Break the Chains: Slavery in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."

Discuss: Why do you think this Scripture was chosen as the theme Scripture for a mission project on sex trafficking? What would it mean to give victims of trafficking "a garland instead of ashes...a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit"? (etc., or use whatever wording is in the version of the Bible you're using). How do you think this Scripture relates to the ads we looked at just now, and our conversation about them?

Distribute stationary and envelopes (one each per girl). Have girls write a letter from God to themselves as to what God is telling them as individuals through the Scriptures.

*Option B (35 minutes)*

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<sup>4</sup> Star Tribune (Aug. 15, 1999)

Distribute Handout A, "Human Trafficking Doesn't Happen in the U.S. Does It?" Instruct volunteer readers to take turns reading examples in Handout A. Note: There is more impact when examples are used from the area of your audience. You may choose to search the Internet for examples in your area or to update the handout.

Let the girls know that although the problem may seem overwhelming, we all have something we can do about it. Part of being an abolitionist is to advocate for stronger laws and protections for victims with our political representatives. Give each girl a copy of Handout E, paper, and writing utensils. Have each girl write a letter to her congressman using the "Template for Letters to Congress" (Handout E).

### **Connect**

#### *Option A (15 minutes)*

Distribute Handout B, "How Does Teen Prostitution Happen?" Select four volunteers to read the parts on the handout: Reader #1, Reader #2, Reader #3, Reader #4. Offer a brief time of discussion following the reading.

#### *Option B (15 minutes)*

Break the girls into groups. Give each group the list of questions that were prepared ahead of time. Allow them 5 to 10 minutes to share their thoughts. Bring them back together and have a volunteer from each group share what they discussed.

### **Act**

#### *Option A (15 minutes)*

Distribute the "Test Your Safety Knowledge" (Handout C) to each girl. Give them time to complete it. When time is up discuss the answers (Handout D). Close in a time of prayer, asking God for guidance in helping to keep the girls safe, and inspiration and courage to work as abolitionists.

#### *Option B (15 minutes)*

Provide a list of ABCUSA missionaries describing their work in human trafficking. Invite the girls to write a letter of appreciation to a missionary. Close in a time of worship and prayer, especially lifting up the missionaries to God.

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## **Human Trafficking Doesn't Happen in the U.S., Does It?** (Handout A)

**Reader #1:** A couple, both physicians, and their son, who kept a domestic servant in their home under slave-like conditions for close to two decades, were convicted last Friday on human trafficking charges. **(Brookfield, Wisconsin)**

**Reader #2:** We do have a problem ... This has been happening a long time, stated Larry Gilbert Sr., a former U.S. marshal. "It's lurked beneath the surface and we've never gone looking there." Gilbert said police have uncovered massage parlors, spas and similar operations in which women were forced to work in illegal businesses. **(Lisbon, South Portland, Old Orchard Beach, Bangor and Freeport Maine)**

**Reader #3:** According to Rev. Susan Omanson of First Baptist Church, up to 500 women were trafficked into the state for opening day of hunting season, a big tourist day in the area. **(Sioux Falls, South Dakota)**

**Reader #4:** Customers paid \$30 for 15 minutes with a woman, buying tickets from guards at the back door of the house. The tickets were eventually presented to the women, who used tiny bedrooms with bare mattresses and boarded windows. One informant told officials that in May or June of last year, the operation offered a weekend "special," featuring only 18- and 19-year-olds. **(New York and Virginia Coast)**

**Reader #5:** Dozens of Hispanics are trafficked into this area every day. More than 17,000 people are trafficked into the country annually from places like Mexico and Latin America, Southeast Asia, the former Soviet Union, and Africa to work in labor and sex trades. **(Iowa)**

**Reader #6:** One was brought in as a child and the other one was brought in when she was 18. The 13-year-old was actually released by her family to a gentleman with the promise of sending her to school. The 18-year-old came over as a mail-order bride and was held captive in her home. The two girls spent months enduring physical, mental and emotional abuse as sex slaves in unsuspecting neighborhoods. One was tossed on the streets after a new girl arrived. Neighbors heard the cries of the other and called police. "It was just in a neighborhood," the officer stated. "I mean it could go on right down any body's street." **(Indianapolis, Indiana and Toledo, Ohio)**

**Reader #7:** Promising her parents a bright future and education for their daughter, an American minister took a 16-year-old girl from a Tibetan refugee camp to his own home where she lived for 5 years enduring forced labor and sexual abuse. **(Worcester, Massachusetts)**

**Reader #8:** There have also been a number of disasters related to human trafficking. An entire group of Cuban residents were found dead in a cargo container when the mission to bring them into the US went badly. The traffickers did not tell anyone the immigrants were inside the container. There have also been cases where immigrants have been beaten

or killed if they fail to pay the smuggler or threaten to turn the person into the police.  
**(Illinois)**

**Reader #9:** A couple helped smuggle a juvenile relative into Arizona, then on to Cape Coral. The man calling himself her husband, investigators said, raped the girl. But they say his brother also raped her and now he is charged with lewd and lascivious behavior. The girl was used and given to the brother to excuse a gambling debt. **(Florida)**

**Reader #10:** Federal agents Monday arrested a woman who they say specialized in smuggling babies and children into the United States, all part of an extensive human-trafficking ring based in **(Oxnard, CA & Arizona)**

**Reader #11:** Chicago police have come across kids who were trafficked in from other states. But exactly how many children have been forced into prostitution locally or over state lines is not clear. Child prostitutes are as young as 11 and probably were sexually abused as young children. They don't get along with their parents or guardians, who make having a pimp so attractive, said Faye, 17, a former child prostitute who spoke to the Chicago Sun-Times. **(Chicago)**

**Reader #12:** They lured these girls from Asian nations, promised them restaurant jobs, modeling jobs, ... seized their passports, beat them, raped them, moved them from brothel to brothel. This was not happening in some distant Third World nation, however. There it was in civil Seattle. **(Seattle, Washington)**

**Reader #13:** They are women of the world, born in China, Thailand, Korea; Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador. In preparation for their day's work, the women slip into the personas of "Sasha" and "Susie" and "Sweet Blossom," or simple anonymity. **(Allston, Brighton, East Boston and the South End)**

**Reader #14:** People who have studied human trafficking say it's hard to know how many domestic victims are out there. A 2001 University of Pennsylvania study estimated there were as many as 325 thousand children at risk of being caught up in commercial sex trades. **(Anytown, USA)**

**Reader #15:** In October 2007 a mother was charged with inducing a minor to prostitution, maintaining a house of prostitution, and deriving support from prostitution. Police said a 16-year-old runaway from Maine who said the woman recruited her to be a prostitute first contacted them. Drugs were involved, where she would actually give them drugs, antidepressant drugs and so forth to calm them down and almost sedate them as she was sending them out for prostitution. Girls were scheduled for approximately 11 appointments per week, and occasionally up to 5 men per day. **(North Andover, MA)**

**Leader:** Human trafficking doesn't happen in the U.S. Does it?

*Note: The AB Women's Ministries of MA Break the Chains Team prepared this script.*

## **How Does Teen Prostitution Happen?** (Handout B)

### **Reader #1**

She was only 13 when she met him on an Internet chat line. He said they could make some money together. She thought he meant selling drugs. OK, she could do that. It was not until he brought her to Arizona from Utah the day before her 14th birthday and put her on a street corner that she realized what she would be selling was her body. "At first I was real, real scared to do it," she said. But she is 15 now and "used to it." "If I end up dead, I'm supposed to end up dead," she said. "God's with me."

### **Leader**

On-line solicitation of a minor for a sexual purpose, that is, with intent to commit a sexual activity with that minor, is one of the most investigated and targeted activities by both federal and state law enforcement in this day and age. The "on-line solicitation" as it is known as, is usually in the form of contact by electronic mail (e-mail), instant messaging, or other use of the Internet.

The contact with a minor (underage person), often a male contacting an underage female, becomes a violation of state and federal law when the conversation turns to content of a sexual nature to the extent that it appears that the contacting person is communicating in a sexually explicit manner with the contacted person.

### **Reader #2**

Sarah, a 13-year-old girl from Coon Rapids, Minnesota interviewed by Rolling Stone, described meeting her pimp at another friend's birthday party. The older woman quickly gained her trust, listening when Sarah talked about being nervous in school and her father's drinking habits. Soon after, Sarah found herself on a road trip to Texas where the older woman tricked her by saying they had no money to get home and Sarah must pay her way. Thus began her new career, her new drug habit, and her new beatings at the hand of her pimp. Sarah said, "I kept doing drugs so I didn't have to face myself." In her case, selling her body was not a choice she made, but instead a trap she found herself in. Welcome to what Christianity Today calls "21st Century Slavery."

### **Reader #3**

Heidi, interviewed by Christianity Today, went through 10 years of sex slavery. She grew up going to church in Minnesota. Experiments with alcohol in college distanced her from her church-going parents and made her vulnerable to a man who said he would be her "daddy." After taking enough time to pose as a boyfriend, he sent her out to different strip clubs all over the Midwest, beat and raped her numerous times, and forced her to take addictive drugs. She describes having no way out of the nightmare; her pimp told her repeatedly, "If you leave me, I will kill you." The only contact she had with the church

during this time were the Christians standing outside her motel, holding up signs that read "WHORE." Trapped, she remembers searching the TV channels for religious shows. "I remember crying, being high and beat up, but feeling too dirty to go to church. Christians need to understand that the prostitute is not the enemy. She's a victim. She could be your daughter."

### **Leader**

There are a growing number of teens coerced into prostitution while living at home with parents in what appears to be a stable suburban or rural family. These young girls may have low self-esteem or are vulnerable in other ways. A pimp looks for them at malls, nightclubs, and after-school hangouts. The pimp befriends them, establishes control, and eventually forces them into prostitution.

### **Reader #4**

"Potentially good sex is a small price to pay for the freedom to spend money on what I want," says 17-year-old Stacey [not her real name], who liked to hang out after school at the Mall of America, Minnesota's vast shopping megaplex, Newsweek reports. After being approached last summer by a man who told her how pretty she was, and asked if he could buy her some clothes, Stacey agreed and went home that night with a \$250 outfit.

Stacey, who lives with her parents in an upscale neighborhood, began stripping for men in hotel rooms—then went on to more intimate activities. She placed ads on a local telephone personals service, offering "wealthy, generous" men "an evening of fun" for \$400.

### **Leader**

Designer sex is the term given to teen prostitution or teen prostitutes that have sex for thrills or the money to buy designer items they want but not necessarily anything they need to survive. Middle and upper class teenagers are finding that performing simple intimate acts is an easy way to earn money in a short period.

"There is a market out there for young girls," said Clay Sutherlin, a sergeant with the vice squad on the Phoenix Police Department. Sutherlin said pimps will approach young girls at shopping centers and buy them gifts, befriend them and promise them a better life than their home situations. They sometimes are cajoled, but more often are coerced, into prostitution. Some girls stay local, but others end up on a national circuit. Once they enter that world, it is difficult to escape because the pimps threaten violence against them or their families, Sutherlin said. (Phoenix Business Journal 8/17/07.)

### **Test Your Safety Knowledge** (Handout C)

The Internet is a fun way to "meet" new friends, get information, and learn about the world. Going to the mall, arcade, or park can be fun places to visit. It is important that you use caution and avoid potential problems so you can safely enjoy being online or being at your local hangout. Answer the following questions to see how safety knowledgeable you are.

1. True or False: Sometimes it's OK to give out your password.
2. True or False: You should never exchange personal information with someone that you meet on the Internet.
3. True or False: Once you have established a friendship with someone on the Internet it's okay to meet him/her in person.
4. What are the types of youth sexual predators tend to target and prey upon?
  - Youth with lower self-esteem
  - Youth who divulge too much personal information online
  - Youth who frequent chat rooms
  - Youth will to engage in online conversations about sex
  - All of the above
5. What are the warning signs of suspicious behavior of an adult stranger?
  - Asking you to keep a secret
  - Asking you for help
  - Looks at you
  - Asking you to do something without your parents' permission
  - Makes you feel uncomfortable
6. List ways in which you can avoid an uncomfortable situation.

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**Test Your Safety Knowledge Answer Sheet**  
(Handout D)

1. False. Never give anyone else your password. No matter why they say they need it or who they say they are, they don't. If someone asks you for your password, report them to your online service provider or your parents. If you think someone knows your password, change it. The only exception to this rule is your parents.
2. True. Be cautious about revealing any information that could identify you. Avoid giving out your name, address, phone number or any private information (such as the name of your school) to anyone you don't trust or know personally. They might use that information to find out who you are. For example, if you give someone your listed telephone number, they can get your real name and street address. Don't forget that sometimes it's easy to give out information without realizing you are. If you mention being on your school volleyball team, then later say something about "Go Tigers!", and then in another conversation talk about being a sophomore...eventually the person you're chatting with can figure out who you are simply by piecing bits of your extended conversations together.
3. No. Never get together with someone you've met online. Remember, you never really know if people you meet online are who they say they are. You might put yourself in danger by meeting them even if you think you know the person and trust them.
4. All of the above.
5. 1, 2, 4, and 5 are correct. Number three might be correct depending on how comfortable you are with the way the person is looking at you. Find a trusted adult right away to tell what happened.
6. Walk with confidence  
Be aware of your surroundings  
Beware—listen to and trust your instincts  
Be cautious—take no chances  
Walk in a group  
Don't talk to strangers  
(Encourage the girls to offer other suggestions and discuss them)

## **Template for Letters to Congress** (Handout E)

Learning how to contact your congresspeople about issues that are important to you is one of the foundations of being a good citizen. The beauty of living in a democracy is that we all have a voice to be heard.

You may use this template as a guide in writing a letter to your congressperson. It is important, however, to also keep your letter brief—longer letters have less of a chance of being read.

### **Paragraph 1: Identify yourself and the issue to which you are referring**

- Name
- AB GIRLS group, youth group, church
- Tell how you learned about human trafficking (“I learned about human trafficking...”)
- Tell the congressperson what you hope s/he will do. (Vote on a particular bill or resolution, or simply “attend to this issue carefully.” It’s helpful to even let your congressperson know what issues are of importance to their constituency.

### **Paragraph 2: Raise Your Concerns. Here are some ideas...**

- Half of the people in slavery being trafficked from country to country are children.
- Child trafficking is the fastest growing crime in the world.
- People in slavery are forced to work without pay and are sometimes badly hurt by the people who enslave them.
- Or, share something else you have learned about human trafficking.
- If you are aware of a particular bill or resolution, mention it specifically and how you think it might help abolish trafficking or safeguard victims.

### **Paragraph 3: Closing remarks**

- Thank your congressperson for their time.
- Thank your congressperson for their attentiveness to human trafficking.
- Ask to be kept informed on the steps the government decides to pursue.

## **Signs That Your Child May Be at Risk Online** (Handout F)

### **If your child spends large amounts of time online, especially at night, your child may be at risk.**

Many children who fall victim to Internet sex offenders spend large amounts of time online, particularly in chat rooms. They go online to chat with friends, make new friends, pass time, and sometimes look for sexually explicit information. While much of the knowledge and experience gained may be valuable, families should consider monitoring the amount of time their children are online.

### **You find pornography on your child's computer.**

Children curious about sex may seek out information online; however, pornography is often used in the sexual victimization of children. Sex offenders often supply their potential victims with pornography as a means of opening sexual discussions and for lowering the child's inhibitions. Parents, grandparents, and guardians should be conscious of the fact that a child may hide the pornographic files from them on disks, flash drives, or other storage devices. This may be especially true if other family members use the computer.

### **Your child receives telephone calls from men or women you don't know, or is making calls, sometimes long distance, to numbers you do not recognize.**

While communicating to a child victim online is a thrill for an Internet sex offender, it can also be very cumbersome. Most want to talk to the children on the telephone to actually hear the child's voice. They may attempt to engage in "phone sex" with the children and also may seek to set up an actual meeting for a real sexual encounter. While a child may be hesitant to give out his or her home telephone number, Internet sex offenders will usually give out their contact information. Sometimes the offender will provide the child means to contact him or her through avenues that may avoid detection by their caregivers.

### **Your child receives mail, gifts, or packages from someone you don't know.**

It is common for offenders to send letters, photographs, and all manner of gifts to their potential victims to increase the likelihood that the child will respond positively to him or her. Computer-sex offenders have even sent plane tickets in order for the child to travel across the country to meet them.

### **Your child turns the computer monitor off or quickly changes the screen on the monitor when you come into the room.**

A child looking at pornographic images or having sexually explicit conversations does not want you to see it on the screen.

### **Your child becomes withdrawn from the family.**

Internet sex offenders may attempt to drive a wedge between children and their families. They may attempt to accentuate any minor problems at home that the child might have

*"Faces of Human Trafficking" by Bonnie Sestito*  
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and portray themselves as the only one the child can trust. A child may also become withdrawn or explosive after sexual victimization.

**Your child is using an online account belonging to someone else.**

Even if you don't subscribe to an online or Internet service, your child may meet an offender while online at a friend's house or the library. Most computers come preloaded with online and/or Internet software. In addition children may set up "free" E-mail accounts such as those that their parents, grandparents, and guardians may not be able to access without the child's user ID and password.

Adapted from *A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety*. Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1999, visited June 19, 2003,  
<http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm>.