



ENGAGE TOGETHER®

Church Toolkit

Mobilizing the Church to
Protect the Vulnerable and
Prevent and Stop Human Trafficking



WHY THE CHURCH?

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

PROVERBS 31:8-9

Human trafficking is the sale of human beings for the purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, or organ trafficking.

Human trafficking generates an estimated **\$236 billion** in illegal profits each year, exploiting more than **50 million people** worldwide. While the true number of victims in the United States is unknown, **trafficking has been identified in every state** and impacts both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals.

As overwhelming as the statistics may be the Church is *uniquely positioned* to engage to end and prevent human trafficking.

How? The Church is already serving in almost every community. Many times, they are already engaged in efforts connected to combating human trafficking and can be enhanced to serve, identify, and restore those in need.

Each member of your Church has an important role to play in the fight against human trafficking. Congregation members can leverage their individual skills, talents, gifts, and resources to end human trafficking and prevent it from happening in the first place—for the body is not one member, but many.

The Engage Together® Church Toolkit is designed to help you discover how the unique strengths and skills of your congregation are exactly what is needed to prevent and end human trafficking in your community.

EXAMPLE:

Your church may already have a youth ministry. Incorporate age-appropriate education on personal safety, online safety, healthy relationships, and human trafficking prevention into existing programs. Strengthen these efforts through mentorship and family support to help reduce vulnerabilities before exploitation occurs.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit offers practical ideas to guide your church as you explore possibilities and design your strategic Action Plan to engage in preventing and ending human trafficking. It also serves as a supplement to our online courses, the Learn How to End Human Trafficking Series, with Justice U.

If you haven't taken the series yet, start here.



LEARN HOW SERIES

Essential knowledge and skills for everyone to learn how to end human trafficking.

Includes three courses:

1. Human Trafficking Awareness
2. Strategy to End Human Trafficking
3. Your Role to End Human Trafficking

<https://learnwithjusticeu.com/learnhowseries/>



GROUP OPTIONS

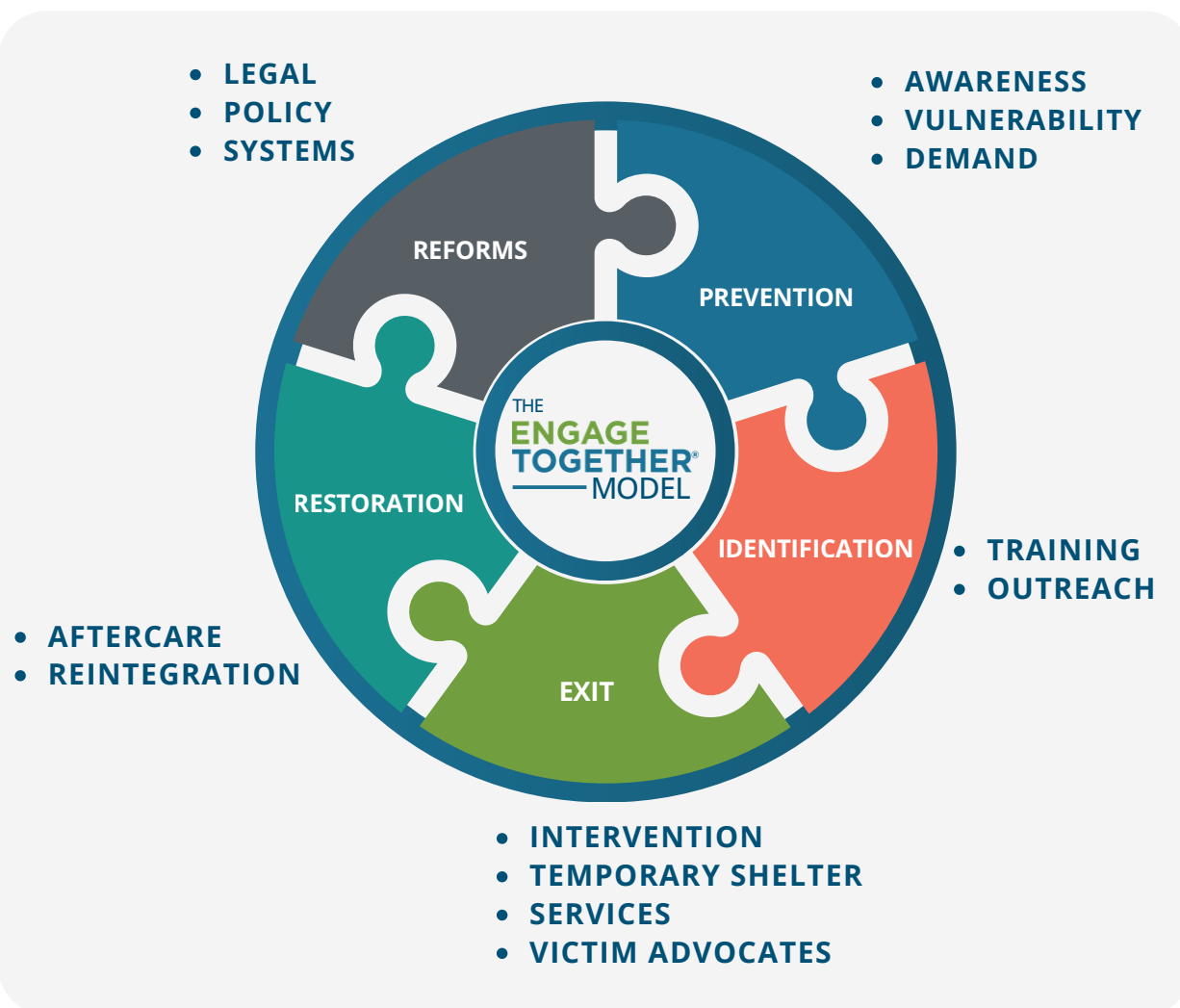
Learn together with your church.

<https://learnwithjusticeu.com/churchleaders/>



STRATEGY

Yes, human trafficking is a very complex social issue. But be encouraged. With the right strategy, your church can play a powerful role in preventing and ending human trafficking.



Our model, the Freedom Strategy, defines ***all areas of focus*** that must be addressed ***simultaneously*** within your community in order to eradicate human trafficking and to protect the vulnerable.

This toolkit is organized around the Freedom Strategy with ideas for how your church might get involved in each area. For each one, consider what ideas fit most naturally in your context.

PREVENTION

► AWARENESS

Prevention starts with Awareness. Awareness builds understanding of human trafficking through education, conversation, and engagement, inspiring individuals and churches to recognize the issue and become part of the solution.

Awareness is the first step toward action. As your congregation learns about human trafficking, they will begin to recognize how God has uniquely equipped them to make a difference.



**NEED HELP FINDING
A RESOURCE?**

CONTACT OUR TEAM
connect@engagetogether.com

HOW TO INCREASE AWARENESS:

- 1 **Share biblical teaching** that highlights God's heart for justice, protecting the vulnerable, and caring for those who are exploited.
- 2 **Distribute prayer guides, Bible studies, and discussion resources** to encourage your congregation to learn, reflect, and pray about human trafficking. [Here is an example.](#)
- 3 **Invite survivors or trusted subject matter experts to share their experiences** and educate your congregation through workshops, seminars, or special events.
- 4 **Highlight and promote trusted books, podcasts, films, documentaries, and other educational resources** that deepen understanding of human trafficking and inspire action.
- 5 **Share human trafficking awareness messages regularly** through sermons, newsletters, social media, bulletin inserts, websites, and church announcements to keep the issue visible throughout the year.
- 6 **Observe [Human Trafficking Prevention Month \(January\)](#), [World Day Against Trafficking in Persons \(July 30\)](#), or other awareness events** to educate and engage your congregation.
- 7 **Encourage conversations within families and small groups** about personal safety, healthy relationships, online safety, and ways everyone can help protect vulnerable individuals.
- 8 **Help your congregation discover how their unique strengths, skills, professions, and resources can play a role** in preventing and ending human trafficking.

► **VIEW OUR LIST OF RECOMMENDED TRAININGS AND RESOURCES**

PREVENTION

► VULNERABILITY

Many churches are already serving populations that face an increased risk of exploitation—they may just not think of it through the lens of human trafficking. Consider the ministries you already have. How might they strengthen protection, support, and hope for the following populations?



VULNERABILITIES THAT INCREASE RISK OF TRAFFICKING

Family & Basic Needs

- Individuals experiencing homelessness, hunger, or poverty
- Families in crisis
- Individuals experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault
- Single-parent families and families with unmet child care needs

Children & Youth

- Children and youth in foster care
- Youth aging out of foster care
- Justice-involved or gang-involved youth
- Chronically absent, disconnected, homeless, runaway, or unaccompanied youth
- Drug-endangered children and youth

Disabilities & Social Isolation

- Children and adults with disabilities
- Individuals experiencing social isolation or lacking supportive relationships
- Individuals experiencing substance use disorders or mental health challenges

Immigrant & Displaced Populations

- Refugees and recent migrants
- Foreign nationals (individuals living, working, studying, or traveling outside their country of citizenship)
- Individuals fleeing violence, conflict, or natural disasters
- Individuals with limited English proficiency

PREVENTION

► VULNERABILITY

No church can do *everything*—but every church can do *something*. Which ideas stand out most to you? Start with the ones that best fit your congregation's strengths, skills, and community.



HOW TO ADDRESS VULNERABILITY:

- 1 Partner with local organizations serving vulnerable populations**—such as domestic violence programs, youth organizations, food pantries, homeless shelters, refugee resettlement agencies, recovery programs, and foster care organizations—to strengthen existing efforts and meet community needs.
- 2 Support and strengthen families** by offering or promoting mentoring, parenting classes, healthy relationship education, fatherhood initiatives, child care support, and other family-centered programs.
- 3 Identify unmet needs within your congregation and community.** Consider how your church can strengthen existing ministries or strategically fill gaps for individuals and families experiencing increased vulnerability.
- 4 Engage your congregation's unique strengths and skills to meet practical needs.** Professionals such as teachers, healthcare providers, counselors, attorneys, business leaders, and tradespeople can all play an important role in reducing vulnerabilities.
- 5 Provide safe, supportive opportunities for children and youth** through mentoring, after-school activities, camps, sports, tutoring, and other positive programs that foster connection and resilience.
- 6 Offer online safety and digital citizenship education** for children, youth, parents, and caregivers, led by trusted experts. [NetSmartz](#) by the **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children** is a great place to start.
- 7 Develop relationships with schools, community organizations, and local service providers** to identify opportunities for collaboration and coordinated support.

PREVENTION

► DEMAND

Prevention includes addressing demand—a driving force behind human trafficking. Churches are uniquely positioned to challenge the attitudes, behaviors, and choices that contribute to exploitation. Consider what drives demand in your community and how your congregation can help promote accountability, healthy relationships, and respect for the dignity of every person.



HOW TO ADDRESS DEMAND:

- 1 **Encourage men and boys in your church to learn about human trafficking, exploitation, healthy relationships, and how to respond when concerns arise.**
- 2 **Provide age-appropriate education from trusted sources for boys and young men** about consent, respect, sexual exploitation, online behavior, and the ways harmful attitudes and choices can contribute to demand.
- 3 **Equip parents and caregivers to have honest, age-appropriate conversations** with children and youth about healthy sexuality, safe relationships, pornography, online exploitation, and respect for others. Check out the resources listed on our website [for parents & caregivers](#) and [youth](#) as a starting point.
- 4 **Encourage men and fathers to become positive leaders and advocates** by promoting healthy fatherhood, mentoring children and youth, protecting the vulnerable, modeling respectful relationships, and engaging other men in prevention.
- 5 **Help your congregation understand the relationship between pornography, sexual exploitation, demand, and personal accountability.** Offer trusted resources that encourage thoughtful discussion without shame or sensationalism. [View some starting points on our website.](#)
- 6 **Equip church members to report suspected online child sexual exploitation** through the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's CyberTipline: report.cybertip.org
- 7 **Share wallet-sized or digital resource cards** with trafficking indicators, reporting information, online safety resources, and trusted contacts for help.
- 8 **Promote responsible consumer choices.** Help members understand how forced labor may be connected to products, food, clothing, and supply chains, and encourage purchasing from companies that demonstrate transparent and responsible labor practices or from survivor-led businesses.

IDENTIFICATION

► TRAINING

► Additional training resources are available through [Justice U](#) and the [Engage Together website](#).

NEED HELP FINDING A TRAINING?

CONTACT OUR TEAM
connect@engagetgether.com

Identification begins with Training. By equipping your congregation to recognize the signs of human trafficking and respond appropriately, your church can play an important role in helping identify victims and connect them with help.

When selecting training, choose programs that are credible, well-researched, trauma-informed, victim-centered, and aligned with the guidance and messaging of your local or state human trafficking task force or coalition.



HOW TO EQUIP YOUR CHURCH:

- 1 Make human trafficking training available** for all church members, staff, and volunteers through both in-person and online learning opportunities.
- 2 Host training events** led by qualified experts for your congregation and the broader community.
- 3 Require** all church staff, ministry leaders, and volunteers working with children and youth to complete **human trafficking awareness and response training**.
- 4 Equip children, youth, parents, and caregivers** with age-appropriate education on personal safety, healthy relationships, online safety, and recognizing concerning behaviors.
- 5 Develop a church response protocol** so staff and ministry leaders know who should be notified internally, how to respond safely to a disclosure, and how to connect individuals with appropriate local resources.
- 6 Understand your state's reporting requirements**, including mandated reporting laws and any reporting obligations for the general public.
- 7 Encourage professionals within your congregation**—including healthcare providers, educators, law enforcement, hospitality professionals, transportation workers, social service providers, and others—to **complete role-specific training and advocate for training** within their workplaces.

IDENTIFICATION

► OUTREACH

The best way to prevent trafficking is to meet the needs of those most vulnerable in your community. While doing that work, you may identify victims. Here are some ways you can be prepared:

HOW TO SUPPORT OUTREACH:

- 1 Encourage those serving in your church's outreach ministries to complete training on [How to Report Suspected Trafficking](#).
- 2 Assign a church staff member to serve as a **point of contact** if others see suspicious activity or are in trouble themselves.
- 3 Enhance your church's outreach to **populations that may face increased vulnerability in your community**. Build trusted relationships, meet tangible needs, and be prepared to recognize and respond when someone needs help.
- 4 Print and distribute **wallet-sized cards with trafficking indicators and reporting information** for members doing outreach.



IDENTIFICATION

► OUTREACH

**Where is your church already serving?
Start there. Strengthen those relationships and look for
opportunities to protect the vulnerable. What ideas below
might enhance your current outreach efforts?**



- **Individuals Experiencing Homelessness**

- Partner with outreach ministries, homeless shelters, and local organizations.
- Provide essential items, resource cards, and information on where to seek help.
- Build trusted relationships through consistent outreach and presence.

- **Children & Youth**

- Support children and youth experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, or family instability, children and youth in or aging out of foster care, or those running away.
- Partner with existing youth programs or develop ministries that provide mentoring, shelter, meals, clothing, tutoring, and other protective supports.

- **Individuals with Disabilities**

- Partner with existing programs or develop ministries that provide mentoring, transportation, tutoring, and other protective supports for adults or children.

- Support individuals and their families by offering transportation, programs, and other needed services for children or adults with disabilities.

- **Individuals Experiencing Domestic Violence**

- Partner with your local domestic violence program or shelter to understand how your congregation can safely support survivors through practical assistance, donations, child care, transportation, or other identified needs.

- **Refugees, Recent Migrants, and Foreign Nationals**

- Partner with refugee resettlement organizations and immigrant-serving agencies.
- Offer hospitality, friendship, English language support, resource information in multiple languages, and connections that reduce isolation.

- **Families Experiencing Crisis**

- Support families by helping meet practical needs such as food, clothing, child care, transportation, housing assistance, mentoring, and community connections that strengthen stability.

EXIT

► INTERVENTION

Exit begins with intervention. By recognizing potential trafficking situations and responding in a safe, trauma-informed, and victim-centered manner, your church can help individuals access support, resources, and opportunities for safety such as shelter, services, and victim advocates **when they are ready**.

HOW CAN YOUR CHURCH BE PREPARED IF SOMEONE NEEDS HELP TOMORROW?



1 Activate emergency alerts on your smartphone to receive **AMBER Alerts** and other emergency notifications in your area.

2 Build relationships with local law enforcement, human trafficking task forces, coalitions, and service providers so your church understands what human trafficking looks like in your community and how to respond appropriately.

3 Make reporting resources easily accessible by displaying the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** number and your state or local reporting resources on your website, in restrooms, bulletins, newsletters, and other visible locations.



DO NOT confront a suspected trafficker. Prioritize your safety and the safety of others. If someone is in **immediate danger, call 911**.

For non-emergency situations, respond in a trauma-informed, victim-centered manner and follow local reporting procedures for children.



4 Encourage church members to save the National Human Trafficking Hotline information in their phones.

- Call: 1-888-373-7888
- Text: 233733
- Online: humantraffickinghotline.org/report-trafficking

5 Develop and implement a church response protocol so staff, ministry leaders, and volunteers know how to respond safely, protect confidentiality, document concerns when appropriate, and connect individuals with the proper authorities and resources.

EXIT

► TEMPORARY SHELTER

HOW TO SUPPORT TEMPORARY SHELTERS:

- 1 Identify the temporary shelter and housing options in your community,** such as trafficking survivor programs, domestic violence shelters, youth shelters, therapeutic foster care homes, and other safe housing programs. **Consider how your church can support these efforts through financial contributions, in-kind donations, volunteer service, or professional expertise.**
- 2 If your community lacks adequate shelter or housing options for trafficking victims, consider partnering with other churches, community organizations, and service providers to develop one.** Before launching a new program, connect with experienced providers to learn promising practices and determine whether expanding an existing program or creating a new one is the best solution.
- 3 Explore whether your church has unused property, facilities, or other resources that could support temporary housing** or partner with an existing provider.



Every community needs safe places. How can your church use its unique strengths to serve survivors?



► **FIND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHURCHES ON THE ENGAGE TOGETHER ADDITIONAL RESOURCES PAGE.**

EXIT

► SERVICES

HOW TO STRENGTHEN SERVICES:

- 1 **Identify the unique strengths, skills, and professions within your congregation and explore how they can support survivors** through existing service providers and community organizations.
- 2 **Connect professionals within your congregation to local service providers, shelters, task forces, and organizations serving survivors and at-risk populations.** They may be able to donate or volunteer specialized services such as:
 - Medical or dental care
 - Mental health counseling
 - Legal representation
 - Translation
 - Transportation
 - Mentoring
 - Employment opportunities
 - Financial coaching
 - Child care
 - And more
- 3 **Designate a church liaison** to coordinate volunteer opportunities, build relationships with community partners, and help connect your congregation's skills and resources to identified needs.

Who is your church uniquely equipped to serve? Consider how your congregation's strengths, skills, and resources could help provide safety, shelter, or essential services.



Always ask local service providers what they need most. Rather than assuming how to help, partner with providers to identify meaningful volunteer opportunities, donated services, and unmet needs.

EXIT

► VICTIM ADVOCATES

Victim advocates walk alongside survivors by providing support, information, and connections to resources while helping them navigate medical, legal, social service, and criminal justice systems.

HOW TO SUPPORT VICTIM ADVOCACY

- 1 **Raise awareness about opportunities to serve as a Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), or other trained victim advocate.**
- 2 **Connect interested members with local organizations** that provide advocacy training and volunteer opportunities.
- 3 **Support local victim advocates** by providing meals, respite, prayer, child care, transportation, or other practical assistance that helps them continue serving survivors.
- 4 **Partner with local advocacy organizations to identify volunteer opportunities** where church members can provide meaningful support while respecting professional roles, confidentiality, and survivor choice.



Every survivor deserves someone to walk alongside them. How can your church help meet that need?



RESTORATION

► AFTERCARE

Restoration happens through relationships. How can your church help create a community where survivors are supported, encouraged, and valued?



Restoration efforts support survivors as they rebuild their lives.

It includes **aftercare services**—such as medical, mental health, family, spiritual, legal, and residential support—as well as **reintegration opportunities**. Churches can **walk alongside survivors by meeting them where they are, building trusted relationships, and creating opportunities for connection, belonging, and hope**. When appropriate, welcome survivors into the life of your church as part of a supportive community.



HOW TO SUPPORT AFTERCARE:

- 1 Ask local restoration programs what they need most.** Partner with program leaders to identify meaningful volunteer opportunities, donated services, and the most-needed items before collecting donations.
- 2 Provide direct services through qualified members of your congregation or encourage them to volunteer through existing programs.** This may include counseling, mentoring, medical or dental care, legal assistance, transportation, pet therapy, equine therapy, culinary programs, art, music, movement, gardening, financial coaching, tattoo removal, or other specialized skills.
- 3 Mobilize your congregation to meet practical needs** by donating requested items or organizing drives for essentials such as baby supplies, professional clothing, hygiene products, gift cards, household items, and other requested resources.
- 4 Educate your staff, ministry leaders, and congregation on trauma-informed, victim-centered approaches** to serving survivors with dignity, compassion, and respect.
- 5 Support survivors' daily needs** by providing transportation, child care, meals, or other practical assistance that helps them participate in work, school, counseling, and restoration programs.
- 6 Create opportunities for connection and belonging** by sponsoring recreational activities, camps, field trips, tutoring, fitness opportunities, or other experiences that promote healing, confidence, healthy relationships, and community.

RESTORATION

► REINTEGRATION

Reintegration helps survivors establish safe, stable, and independent lives within their communities. Churches can play an important role by fostering relationships, creating opportunities, and providing a supportive community where survivors can thrive. This could look like education, employment, and other opportunities that promote long-term healing, stability, independence.



What opportunities can your church create to help survivors build a safe, stable, and independent future?



HOW TO SUPPORT REINTEGRATION:

- 1 Walk alongside survivors by building trusted, long-term relationships** through mentoring, friendship, encouragement, and community in partnership with local restoration programs.
- 2 Create opportunities for education and career success** by sponsoring scholarships, providing tutoring, helping with college or vocational training, offering résumé workshops, interview preparation, professional clothing, and technology skills.
- 3 Encourage business owners and professionals within your congregation to offer apprenticeships**, internships, mentorship, job shadowing, or employment opportunities that lead to living-wage careers.
- 4 Support independent living by helping survivors identify affordable housing**, transportation, child care, financial literacy resources, and other practical supports that promote long-term stability.
- 5 Equip survivors with life skills** such as budgeting, tax preparation, healthy relationships, cooking, car maintenance, home management, technology, and other skills that foster confidence and independence.
- 6 Welcome survivors into community by creating opportunities for belonging**, service, healthy relationships, and spiritual growth—meeting them where they are and inviting them into the life of your church when they are ready.

REFORMS

► LEGAL, POLICY, SYSTEMS

Reforms strengthen the laws, policies, and systems that protect vulnerable populations, support survivors, and hold traffickers and buyers accountable. Churches can play an important role by **staying informed, building relationships** with community leaders, and **advocating** for meaningful change.

It is important for efforts aimed at reform to take place at both the state and national levels.



How can your church help shape a safer future for your community? Consider where your voice, relationships, and influence can make the greatest impact.



HOW TO SUPPORT REFORMS:

- 1 **Build relationships with your local or state human trafficking task force** to stay informed about legislative priorities, community needs, and opportunities to support meaningful reforms.
- 2 **Learn how current laws, policies, and systems impact vulnerable populations and survivors** in your community.
- 3 **Build relationships with your local, state, and federal elected officials** and encourage them to support policies that protect vulnerable populations, strengthen services, and hold traffickers and buyers accountable.
- 4 **Participate in advocacy efforts** by attending legislative briefings, community forums, awareness events, or advocacy days when appropriate.
- 5 **Provide testimony or share your expertise when invited** to support legislation, policy improvements, or community initiatives.
- 6 **Keep your congregation informed** by sharing trusted information about local, state, and national anti-trafficking efforts and opportunities to become involved.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

The **Freedom Strategy** demonstrates the many ways churches can help prevent and end human trafficking. Use what you have learned to shape a focused and sustainable plan for your church.

THE FREEDOM STRATEGY FOR CHURCHES

Churches are *critical* partners in preventing and stopping human trafficking.



PREVENTION

Awareness | Vulnerability
Demand

Build **awareness** and **reduce vulnerabilities & demand** before exploitation occurs.



IDENTIFICATION

Training | Outreach

Equip your church to **recognize trafficking and reach vulnerable populations.**



EXIT

Intervention | Temporary
Shelter | Services |
Victim Advocates

Help connect individuals with **safety, support, and a path forward.**



RESTORATION

Aftercare | Reintegration

Walk alongside survivors as they rebuild safe, stable, and independent lives.



REFORM

Legal | Policy | Systems

Use your voice and relationships to shape lasting change.

STRATEGIC RESPONSE

- USE THE QUESTIONS BELOW TO PLAN YOUR STRATEGIC RESPONSE.



FIND ANOTHER VERSION OF THIS EXERCISE IN THE LEARN HOW COURSE SERIES.

<https://learnwithjusticeu.com/learnhowseries/>

1. WHAT IS MY CHURCH ALREADY DOING?

What ministries, programs, outreach efforts, partnerships, or resources already support vulnerable populations or survivors?

2. WHAT STRENGTHS, SKILLS, AND RESOURCES HAS GOD ENTRUSTED TO OUR CONGREGATION?

Think about professions, ministries, facilities, volunteers, finances, businesses, relationships, and spiritual gifts.

3. WHAT DOES OUR COMMUNITY NEED MOST?

What gaps exist? Which populations are underserved? What did we learn from local organizations, task forces, or service providers?

4. WHERE IS GOD CALLING US TO SERVE?

Which ideas from this toolkit best align with our church's strengths, passions, and community needs?

5. WHO SHOULD WE PARTNER WITH?

List local organizations, churches, task forces, schools, businesses, ministries, and government agencies we should connect with.

6. WHAT IS GOD CALLING US TO DO?

- Next 90 Days
- Next 6 Months
- Next Year

7. WHAT IS OUR LONG-TERM VISION?

Where do we hope our church will be two to five years from now?

8. WHO WILL LEAD THIS EFFORT?

Who will champion this work? What team do we need to build?



For more resources to help
your church engage, visit:
engagetogether.com/resources/#Faith

ADDITIONAL SOLUTIONS:

JUSTICE U™

Looking for more training? Justice U is a learning platform that quickly delivers knowledge from experts in the anti-trafficking movement straight to you. Take courses that equip you with essential knowledge about human trafficking, child exploitation, how to report suspected trafficking, and more.

Learn more: learnwithjusticeu.com

THE CONSULTANCY

Do you want to learn from other church leaders who have taken action to address human trafficking? The Consultancy exists to bridge experts to efforts in communities working to fight human trafficking and protect the vulnerable.

Learn more: theconsultancyhq.com



Follow us on social media!

@engagetogether



Have questions?

Contact us at connect@engagetogether.com

ENGAGETOGETHER.COM
CONNECT@ENGAGETOGETHER.COM

* Engage Together is created by the AFRJ® and powered by Altus Solutions, Inc. The Engage Together® Toolkit Series and supplemental materials are copyrighted by the AFRJ®. All Rights Reserved. © 2026.

Permissible Uses are limited to: sharing this Toolkit with your group members electronically or copying the materials for distribution among your members. **Impermissible Uses** include: resale; removing or altering trademarks or logos; and altering or making any changes to the content, except for those sections of the supplemental materials that are expressly created for your input and edits.