

**Slaves Among Us**  
**The Reality of Human Trafficking in the US and Internationally**  
**Grades 7-9**

**Goal:** Students will learn about the growing problem of human trafficking, both domestic and international. They will learn what trafficking victims experience, how to recognize the victimization of a modern-day slave, and how to keep themselves safe from predators.

**Lesson:** This discussion about human trafficking and modern-day slavery may be brand new to the students, or it may be something they are familiar with from social justice discussions or watching the news. The lessons provided here cover a great deal of information. If your students do not need the introductory materials, feel free to skip ahead to some of the more specific topics.

**Watch:** [End It Movement](#) 2 minute video introducing modern slavery as an extension of historical slavery. Good conversation starter.

["Turn on the Light"](#) Inspirational video about making the truths of human trafficking known. Catholic Relief Services. 1.5 minutes.

**Discussion:** What is human trafficking?

Can you give an example?

Where does human trafficking take place?

What kinds of people are vulnerable to trafficking?

What are some factors that make them vulnerable?

Who are the traffickers?

How do you think trafficking is being combated?

**Watch:** [Not My Life](#) video produced by UNICEF. 32 minutes. Incredibly moving video depicts the topic of human trafficking on a global scale. [Has an accompanying study guide.](#)

Preview and/or print the study guide provided by UNICEF. You may choose to do all or some of the activities included. The data sheet toward the end is very helpful.

**Discussion:** What struck you most about the film? Did anything surprise you?

What kinds of trafficking did you see in the film?

Who were the victims? Did they match your idea of them before seeing the film?

What were some of the factors that led to people being trafficked?

What were some similarities in the stories of the people who were trafficked?

What were some of the differences in the stories of the people who were trafficked?

Who were the traffickers? Did they match your idea of them before seeing the film?  
How is trafficking being addressed? Who is involved in the fight? What are they doing?  
Do you think there might be trafficking in your city or state? Where might it be happening?

**OPTIONAL:** Persons can be trafficked for a variety of reasons, but overwhelmingly victims are women and girls (at a rate of approximately 80% of all victims). 90% of all trafficking victims are used for sexual exploitation. There is overwhelming evidence connecting pornography to human trafficking. Not only are many of the subjects of porn trafficking victims, the meteoric rise of porn watching and porn addiction in the last decade has dramatically increased the demand for prostitutes and other sex industry workers, roles commonly filled by sex trafficking victims.

This topic may be appropriate to discuss with your class depending on the assessment of students' maturity for this type of conversation. Resources for this can be found in the parents and teachers resources at the bottom of this page.

It is important to make the connection between porn and human trafficking to stress the fact that pornography, often seen as a "victimless crime" and watching porn, which many believe is mere entertainment, has broader ramifications to the over 20 million people currently trafficked worldwide.

**Questions to ask can be:** What damage does watching porn do to a person?

What damage does creating porn do to the actors?

If you knew that most of the actors in porn were trafficking victims, would your views about watching porn change?

Do you believe that persons who watch porn have a responsibility for the fate of sex trafficking victims? Why or why not? To what extent?

**Prayer:**

**Prayer to St. Josephine Bakhita**

St. Josephine Bakhita, you were sold into slavery as a child  
and endured untold hardship and suffering.  
Once liberated from your physical enslavement,  
you found true redemption in your encounter with Christ and his Church.

O St. Bakhita, assist all those who are trapped in a state of slavery;  
Intercede with God on their behalf so that they will be released from their chains of captivity.

Those whom man enslaves, let God set free.

Provide comfort to survivors of slavery and let them look to you  
as an example of hope and faith.

Help all survivors find healing from their wounds.

We ask for your prayers and intercessions for those enslaved among us.

Amen.

Additional classroom resources:

**Material:**

**Stories**

["Jeanita's Story"](#) Jeanita tells her story of being trafficked unknowingly and expresses gratitude towards the people who saved her. 6.5 minutes.

[Kelly](#), [Britt](#), and [Amy](#) share their stories of using their careers to help trafficking victims, and prevent future trafficking. 3-4 minutes each.

**Informational**

["Turn on the Light"](#) Inspirational video about making the truths of human trafficking known. Catholic Relief Services. 1.5 minutes.

**Articles**

["St. Patrick and Slavery"](#) Article and human trafficking resources from Catholic Relief Services.

["St. Josephine Bakhita"](#) Biography of St. Josephine and reflection from Franciscan media. Includes an audio recording.

["7 Things You May Not Know About Human Trafficking, and 3 Ways to Help"](#) Catholic Relief Services.


### ***Prayer Opportunities***

Prayer card with [St. Josephine Bakhita](#), patron saint of slaves and trafficking victims.

[Catholic Relief Services Prayer to End Human Trafficking](#) Brief prayer handout for victims of trafficking.

FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS:

### ***Resources for Teachers and Parents***

FOR TEACHERS:  [Stop-the-Demand.pdf](#) document with background information, statistics, and follow-up resources illuminating the link between pornography and human sex trafficking. Resources are not age appropriate but may be used as background for a teacher-led discussion.

FOR TEACHERS: [End Trafficking: A Middle School Educator's Guide from Teach UNICEF](#). A comprehensive curriculum for teachers who wish to dig deeper into the topic. Offers complete lesson plans with survivor stories, discussion questions, and action suggestions. Beyond the scope of study for Respect Life Week, but may be of interest to teachers later in the year for further study.

FOR TEACHERS: Website with [teaching materials for all grade levels on internet safety](#) and keeping kids safe from traffickers. Includes handouts, exercise suggestions and online resources. From the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS: [Project iGuardian](#) offers practical solutions for teens, parents, and educators for keeping kids safe from online sexual predators. Online resources as well as information on booking school presentations and a local tipline. Created by Department of Homeland Security.

FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS: [Why I Stopped Watching Porn](#) Ted Talk from international educator on the link between porn and human trafficking with eye-opening insights into the destructive effects of porn, particularly on youth. Contains EXPLICIT language. This video does NOT portray Catholic sexual teaching, but it is helpful information for parents and educators.

FOR PARENTS: [Covenant Eyes](#) internet accountability and tracking software for purchase that can help keep kids safe from pornography online.

### *External Resources*

[Polaris Project](#) offers links to local organizations that help survivors of trafficking. [They run a national hotline.](#)

[CAST](#) (Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking) LA runs a local hotline and case management for survivors.