

MEN'S SESSION



PREPARATION

- Download the True or False Quiz to play with the group: <https://readymadepubquiz.com/tag/true-or-false/>
- Download the Would I Lie To You game to play with the group: <https://indievenue.co.nz/icebreakers-party-games-would-i-lie-to-you/>
- Prepare Bible verse promise cards – a glass jar or box is required for promise cards

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

The promise of a better life is a tempting offer.

For those living in poverty, in even the most beautiful parts of the world, the dream of providing for your family becomes a constant and agonising ache.

In the Philippines – a sun-kissed paradise of more than 7,000 tropical islands – one in five people live in poverty, and the luscious setting shrouds an ugliness which lies beneath the surface.

Preying on the vulnerable, traffickers deceive and exploit, enticing people with the promise of dreams fulfilled. People are desperate to support those they love, and so believe the lies and accept opportunities to journey away from home unaware of the reality which awaits them.

The promises remain unseen and the dreams remain unrealised.

Traffickers see people merely as commodities, ignoring the truth of who they really are – children of God, full of promise and dearly loved by the One who created them.

The Salvation Army is raising awareness of the reality of trafficking, mobilising communities to protect themselves, supporting survivors and helping to improve opportunities at home so the drive to leave is lessened.

Through prevention, protection and partnership, we are supporting people to reclaim the promise that exists within them and rebuild their lives.



BACKGROUND



Every day offers a new promise of a new start, a dream to do better for ourselves, at home, at work, to provide and support our families. We make promises to ourselves and others every day. Promises are not always kept, by us and others – false promises, broken promises which hurt and shatter our dreams!

Unseen Promise, the theme of the Helping-Hand 2020 Appeal, shows the work of The Salvation Army equipping communities to recognise the signs of trafficking and protect themselves, support survivors, and create opportunities so people are less vulnerable to traffickers' false promises.

Jesus has promised us many things, including that we are all loved by God. Jesus keeps every one of his promises.

ACTIVITIES

Read Jerwin's story aloud to the group

Jerwin was keen to travel abroad for work after hearing stories of the success that could be had in other countries. He shared on Facebook that he was keen to travel for work and was approached by a recruiter who said he could get him a job as a welder in Saudi Arabia. Jerwin was told to travel to the recruitment agency offices in Manila where his documentation could be processed before travelling to Saudi Arabia.

Upon arrival, Jerwin was told that it would be a month before he could go, so he should get a construction job locally. He got a construction job, but three months passed and the recruitment agency did not get in touch.

The working conditions at his construction job in Manila were very poor. He became very sick and had to go to hospital. The entire salary from Jerwin's three months of work was used to pay the hospital bill.

The agency then told Jerwin to wait two more months. But nothing happened. He was told to wait a further three months. But nothing happened.

He continued to work in construction but did not have a place to live in Manila, so he lived in the barracks on the site. During all this time, he kept hoping that the recruiter's promise would be realised. But it never was.

Out of money and realising his situation was hopeless, Jerwin contacted home and his mother sent money for his return. He travelled by bus and arrived home five days later.

As a result of support received through The Salvation Army's project, Jerwin now buys and sells pigs which people roast on special occasions. When business is slow, he drives a tricycle (taxi) which he pays for in instalments.



ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)



Watch the SAID UK Helping-Hand videos

- Visit www.salvationarmy.org.uk/unseenpromise to watch one or more of the story videos.
- Discuss in pairs, or as a whole group, how the videos make you feel.

Quiz: True or False

- <https://readymadepubquiz.com/tag/true-or-false/>

Game: Would I Lie To You?

- <https://indievenue.co.nz/icebreakers-party-games-would-i-lie-to-you/>

Group discussion

- What promises do we make? (for example, wedding vows, Christian living, legal, family, work, etc)

Pick a promise

- Prepare by writing/printing Bible verses with God's promises to us on small pieces of card (eg, 1 John 3:1a *NIV* and 2 Corinthians 1:22 *NLT*). Roll them up and place them in a glass jar or box.
- Each person in the group takes a promise and reads it to the group. Spend time discussing the promises and share in prayer together.
- Close your time in prayer: *'Jesus, thank you for loving us and for keeping your promises. Amen.'*

PRAYER TIME

Cut out the prayers* below and ask different people to read them out to the group. They are prayers created for the ending of human trafficking.

*Prayers written by World Vision staff, for the ending of human trafficking

Dear Lord, just as you helped Moses and Aaron as they spoke boldly to Pharaoh on behalf of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt, help us speak up for modern-day slaves around the world.

Dear Lord, most of us will never experience the kind of extreme poverty that millions of people live with every day. Help us to be understanding and compassionate toward their needs. Help us to love them in the way that you love them. Give us the will to make things better.

Dear Lord, you are a strong tower and a mighty fortress. Help your rescued children feel safe and begin to heal. Protect them from those who seek to harm them.

Dear Lord, your word shows that you bring new joy and hope where previously there was only shame and fear. We ask this for our brothers and sisters, who desperately need to accept that they can be made new.

Dear Lord, you demand justice for those who have been wronged. Give strength to those who investigate and prosecute traffickers. Encourage them when they are weary. Give courage to survivors when they are asked to testify against their former captors.

BIBLE READING/THOUGHT



'If it sounds too good to be true...'

It's a familiar saying. But how many times have we been taken in by something which sounded too good to be true? Do we even dare to admit it, for fear of embarrassment? Don't fret – many a wise person has been scammed!

Unfortunately, there are clever yet devious people out there who seek to deceive people for financial gain. There are scams in which people are conned into giving up their hard-earned savings and pension investments, or duped into sharing their private information.

There are also the supposed bargains, which tend to have a catch (be sure always to read the small print!). Often these 'too good to be true' deals end up being an administrative headache as you try to untangle yourself from that two-year contract you don't even remember signing up for! They are irritating and frustrating, but rarely life-threatening.

Human trafficking is fuelled by false promises. It is one of the fastest-growing crimes and, after drug dealing, it is the second largest criminal activity in the world.

The stories in the *Unseen Promise* resources show how people are robbed of their freedom because the promise of work and good wages seemed so real. In desperation, people are looking for the chance of a better life, and traffickers exploit this desperation and desire.

Human trafficking is a crime so awful that some people struggle to admit it exists. So often, society doesn't see, business doesn't listen and governments don't act. Those who are trafficked become invisible.

Thankfully there is increasing awareness about human trafficking (last year a well-known UK television soap featured a storyline on the issue, with support from The Salvation Army for accuracy) and communities are becoming resilient to this horrendous crime.

Those living in exploitative situations and survivors of trafficking do not need to be invisible. This is what the *Unseen Promise* theme is all about: uncovering the truth of trafficking, uncovering the promise that exists within

people and uncovering hope where traffickers once sought to destroy it.

Human traffickers see people as commodities. They ignore their true status as children of God. It can be hard to show love to people who treat others so inhumanely.

Yet this is what Jesus told us to do. Jesus stood for what was right, and he didn't allow injustice to go unchecked; but he also taught us to love our enemies. Through Jesus there is redemption for all.

In the song '*To God be the glory*', Fanny Crosby wrote:

*O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood! To every believer the promise of God;
The vilest offender who truly believes, that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.
(SASB 279)*

And in 1 John 3:1 (*The Message* translation) it says:

What marvellous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it – we're called children of God! That's who we really are. But that's also why the world doesn't recognise us, or take us seriously, because it has no idea who he is or what he's up to.

O what transformation there could be if human traffickers might hear our prayers for their salvation, if they saw themselves and others as children of God!

God's word is full of his unwavering promises:

- God loves you unconditionally.
- You are redeemed and have an eternal home in Heaven.
- God formed you with intention and knows you intimately.
- God's plan for your life is to prosper you, not to harm you.
- You have special strength available to you through faith. The best resource that's available to you is the power of Christ.

May we all know and live each day in the knowledge of God's promises.

CLOSING PRAYER



Father God, you are a God of miracles. You are a healer, restorer and life-giver. We know you can bring life, purpose and joy back to people who have been exploited and had years stolen away by those who would bring them only false hopes and promises. Father, we ask that you would enter into their lives through other people, through your word, through opportunities, and through peace to enable healing. Put a new song in their mouths. Bring forth their unseen promise and potential, let it be revealed and fulfilled with support from The Salvation Army and the Helping-Hand Appeal. Amen.

FUNDRAISING IDEAS

- Use collection/money box provided to save as individuals or group.
- Blind Auction - Prepare different-sized paper bags with gift items, then seal the bag so you can't see what's in the bags, auction the bags off and enjoy your surprise gifts.
- Sell on eBay.
- Indoor Games Night (table tennis, darts, pool etc) – Pay for entrance and refreshments.
- Football tournament - full 90 minutes, five-a-side. Teams pay to play and spectators to donate.
- Dance evening - host a barn dance, tea dance, disco etc.
- Karaoke night.
- Sponsored events - walk, bike ride, car wash etc.
- Quiz night.
- Shave it off – get sponsored to shave off their hair or moustache/ beard.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- SASB 169 'Here is love vast as the ocean'
- SASB 26 'Great is thy faithfulness'
- SASB 32 'How deep the Father's love for us'
- SASB 363 'Give thanks to the Lord'



This session was created by David Wearmouth and Dean Coates.