

A YOUTH GROUP EVENT KIT

VOL. 01 • 60 MIN

FREEDOM DAY.

*ONE GATHERING. REAL AWARENESS. REAL
ACTION.*

Learn the truth about human trafficking, what God says about how precious human lives are, be equipped to spot the red flags of exploitation, and take action for a more free world.

PRESENTED BY



The Exodus Road®

WHAT THIS NIGHT IS

One gathering — a Wednesday night, a Sunday morning, a small-group session — built around three moves: **LEARN. AVOID. ADVOCATE.** No training needed. Everything a leader needs is in this guide.

1 • LEARN

What human trafficking is, plus what our faith means for a world groaning for justice.

2 • AVOID

Get equipped to spot the real red flags of exploitation and trafficking, so you can keep yourself and your friends safe.

3 • ADVOCATE

Learn to use your voice to drive awareness and support in the fight for a more free world.

WHO IT'S FOR

Middle school, high school, and college groups, led by a youth pastor or youth leader.

WHAT YOU NEED

Screen + speakers ✓ Wi-Fi ✓ printed handouts ✓ pens ✓ snacks (obviously) ✓ and, if your group fundraises, a fundraiser link (page 10).

LEADER, READ THIS FIRST →

This is a heavy topic, and this night is built to be honest **and** age-appropriate. We're focused on awareness and hope. Give students permission to step out, and have a leader available afterward. **Two things to do before you host:** (1) tell parents — there's a ready-to-send letter at the back (page 13); (2) read the disclosure + reporting protocol at the back (page 12), because for some students in the room, this may be triggering, or even give them the language to name something they've witnessed or experienced.

RUN OF SHOW

60 MINUTES TOTAL • EACH MARKER = MINUTES TO RUN THAT SEGMENT

5 min

WELCOME + OPEN

Set the tone. Today, one question: *what does freedom mean — and who doesn't have it?*

5 min

WATCH

LEARN

Play *I Have A Name*, a short primer, right after your intro. (*Kat's Story* comes later, during the message.) (Page 04)

5 min

THE DATA

LEARN

Hit the numbers so students leave informed, not just moved. (Page 05)

20 min

THE MESSAGE

LEARN

"Set Them Free" — the groan we all feel, and the day Jesus named freedom for the captive as a virtue of God's goal for the world (Luke 4). Includes *Kat's Story*. An outline to build from. (Pages 06–07)

12 min

THE ACTIVITY

AVOID

Myth or Fact — small groups bust the myths and learn what trafficking really is. (Page 08)

8 min

TAKE ACTION

ADVOCATE

Each student picks one real way to respond, plus how the group can go further. (Page 09)

5 min

CLOSE + PRAY

Land it and pray together.

↑ **PRO TIP: LET STUDENTS RUN THE WELCOME AND THE VIDEOS. OWNERSHIP > AUDIENCE.**

Running long? The Activity and Take Action can flex to ~15 min combined — run a few of the myths instead of all six, and have students choose their action step during the closing prayer time.

THE VIDEO BLOCK

Two films carry the gathering — and they play at different moments. Preview both first and make sure they fit your students' age.



VID 01 • OPENER

I HAVE A NAME

A short primer on what trafficking is and why it matters. Play it right after your intro, before you dive in.

► [CLICK TO PLAY](https://youtu.be/I1Q0B7SK9DW) • [YOUTU.BE/I1Q0B7SK9DW](https://youtu.be/I1Q0B7SK9DW)



VID 02 • DURING THE MESSAGE

KAT'S STORY

CNN's coverage of Kat — trafficked in Thailand, cared for at The Exodus Road's Freedom Home. Play during the message (cue on page 07).

► [CLICK TO PLAY](https://youtu.be/GNSBEBTNTNU) • [YOUTU.BE/GNSBEBTNTNU](https://youtu.be/GNSBEBTNTNU)

TEST YOUR WIFI + SOUND BEFORE STUDENTS SHOW UP. TRUST US.

NUMBERS YOU CAN'T UNKNOW

Say it simply first: trafficking is when someone is **forced, tricked, or coerced** into labor or exploitation they can't walk away from. It's happening worldwide — and right here. Read these slowly.

50M

children, women, and men are trapped in modern slavery worldwide today.

ILO • WALK FREE • IOM, 2021

1 in 150

people on earth are now living in modern slavery.

ILO • WALK FREE • IOM, 2021

\$236B

in illegal profit is made off forced labor every year.

ILO, 2024

~12M

of the people trapped in trafficking are children.

ILO • WALK FREE, 2021

1.1M

people are living in modern slavery right here in the United States.

GLOBAL SLAVERY INDEX 2023 (WALK FREE)

50

U.S. states have reported human trafficking — every single one.

NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

Stats reflect the most recent global estimates available: the 50M and 12M figures are from the 2021 ILO/Walk Free/IOM joint report (the latest published); the \$236B figure is ILO 2024.

The takeaway: this isn't only "somewhere far away." Here it can look like forced farm labor, domestic servitude, or a teen pulled in by an older "romance." It's a global crime worth hundreds of billions — and it happens in every U.S. state, including yours. **Knowing it's real is where the fight starts.**

PREPARE IT IN YOUR OWN VOICE —

SET THEM FREE.

LUKE 4:16-30 • ~20 MIN • AN OUTLINE TO BUILD FROM, NOT A SCRIPT TO READ

This is the shape of the message — what to read, the points to land, and where it's headed. Fill it in with your own words and stories.

THE BIG IDEA

The world groans because it isn't as it should be. Into that groan, Jesus stands up and says freedom for the captive is exactly what he came to do — and he makes it a mark of his kingdom. Trafficking is part of the groan. His people are part of the response.

01 • OPEN

NAME THE GROAN

Goal: get students to admit — out loud or inwardly — that the world isn't right. **Draw on what's true for your group:** the things they see while scrolling at night; a friend carrying something they can't fix; the feeling that cruelty gets rewarded and kindness gets used.

Read: Romans 8:22 — Paul calls this ache the groaning of all creation. **Connect:** human trafficking — people bought, sold, and controlled, here and around the world — is part of that groan. Pull a number or two from the Data page.

02 • THE SCENE

READ LUKE 4:16-21

Read it aloud — the whole passage. **Context worth giving:** it's the Sabbath in Jesus' hometown; back then people stood to read Scripture and sat down to teach; he's handed the scroll of Isaiah.

What he reads is **Isaiah 61** — written centuries earlier to people in exile, a promise that God would set things right: good news to the poor, freedom for prisoners, sight for the blind, freedom for the oppressed, "the year of the Lord's favor." That last line points back to **Jubilee** (Leviticus 25) — the year debts were canceled and enslaved people went free.

Point to land: of everything he could read, Jesus chooses the freedom passage, sits down, and says, "*Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.*" Freedom for the captive isn't a side project — it's a virtue of God's goal for the world.

03 • DON'T STOP THERE

READ LUKE 4:22-30

Read or summarize. The hometown crowd loves him — at first. Then he reminds them God once sent Elijah to help a foreign widow, and healed Naaman, a commander from an enemy army — outsiders, not insiders. The crowd turns on him and tries to throw him off a cliff.

Point to land: the freedom Jesus brings is for everyone who's trapped — overseas and here, people like us and people we'd never choose. The moment we decide some people matter less, we're standing with the mob, not with Jesus.

04 • BRING IT HOME

ORDINARY PEOPLE

If Jesus announced freedom 2,000 years ago, why does the world still groan? The work isn't finished — and God keeps it moving through **ordinary people**. Not superheroes; people who notice the overlooked, learn the signs, and refuse to treat anyone as worth less. **Freedom is possible through ordinary people.** Jesus made freedom for the captive a virtue of God's goal for the world — the everyday shape of life for his people.

► [PLAY KAT'S STORY HERE — youtu.be/gnsBEBtntNU. CNN's coverage of a young woman trafficked in Thailand who found care and freedom through The Exodus Road's Freedom Home. This is what "ordinary hands" looks like in real life.]

05 • LAND IT

THE CHALLENGE

Send them out with one ask: this week, find **one** place where the world isn't as it should be that's close enough to actually touch — and step into it. They won't fix the whole groaning world by Friday; that's not the job. The work is already underway — and it needs hands. Then move into the activity.

READ IN ADVANCE: Luke 4:16–30 • Isaiah 61:1–2 • Leviticus 25 (Jubilee) • Romans 8:18–23 • Proverbs 31:8–9. **TONE:** honest and hopeful — not heavy or preachy. **DISCUSSION OPTION:** "Jesus said freedom was for outsiders too, and it nearly got him killed. Where do we quietly decide some people matter less?"

MYTH OR FACT?

Most of what people think they know about trafficking is wrong — and that’s part of how it stays hidden. This gets your group talking and clears up what’s real.

SETUP → Groups of 3–5. Read a statement aloud (or print and cut them into cards). Each group votes **FACT** or **MYTH** and explains why — then read the answer. Run them all, or pick the ones that fit your group. **Pacing tip: after each reveal, give groups 10–15 seconds to react before moving on — the conversations between rounds are where the learning happens.**

STATEMENT BANK

1. "Trafficking and smuggling are basically the same thing."
2. "If someone could leave and didn't, they must not have really been trapped."
3. "You can't be trafficked by someone you love or chose to be with."
4. "Worldwide, forced labor is a bigger share of trafficking than most people expect."
5. "Most people trafficked in the U.S. were brought here from another country."
6. "A big, trusted brand means the product wasn't made with forced labor."

ANSWER KEY

Only #4 is FACT. Everything else is a MYTH. Read each answer one at a time — don't rush the whole list.

1 Smuggling is moving someone across a border, usually by choice; trafficking is controlling and exploiting a person — no border or movement required. **2** Control is usually psychological: threats, debt, fear, manipulation, even love; many can't leave or don't see themselves as victims. **3** A romantic partner is one of the most common traffickers; love or choice doesn't make their control okay. **4 (fact)** Globally, forced labor — farms, factories, fishing, domestic work, scam centers — is the larger share of trafficking. **5** A huge share of people trafficked in the U.S. are U.S. citizens and residents, exploited here at home. **6** Forced labor hides in big, well-known brands' supply chains too; a trusted logo doesn't mean a clean one.

Land it: trafficking survives on the myths. Knowing what's real is what lets you **notice it and protect the people around you**. If anything here felt close to home, see page 11.

ALT ACTIVITY → **Hidden in Plain Sight.** Put a phone, a chocolate bar, a t-shirt, and a coffee cup on a table; groups guess which could involve forced labor in their supply chain. Realistically, all of them — it connects a global crime to the stuff in their backpacks.

WHERE YOU COME IN

This isn't about leaving you feeling bad — it's about giving you something real to do. None of this takes money or makes you an expert. Pick **one** to start this week.

1

LEARN. Follow **@TheExodusRoad** on **YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok** so real stories and clear facts fill your feed instead of myths. No socials? (Honestly, that's great.) Read about trafficking and real stories of survivors The Exodus Road has helped free at **theexodusroad.com**. You can't fight what you don't understand.

2

BECOME AN ADVOCATE. Share what you're learning and amplify the fight against trafficking. Learn the signs of trafficking and help protect your own friends from the dangers. And be a **safe person**: if a friend tells you something scary, don't promise secrecy — help them get to a trusted adult (help line is on page 11).

Leader — give the room 60 seconds of quiet. Have everyone pick just one and write it where they'll see it this week (phone note, sticky note, back of the hand), then ask 2–3 students to say theirs out loud. **Go further together:** as a whole group you can fundraise for the work of freedom — that's the next page.

GOING DEEPER • OPTIONAL QUESTIONS

If you have more time, or for small groups after the message — pick the one that fits: **1)** Where do you see the "groan" most in your world right now? **2)** Jesus said freedom was for outsiders too — where do we quietly decide some people matter less? **3)** Which myth surprised you most, and why does it persist? **4)** What's one thing you learned today you want someone else to know? *Silence after a question isn't a problem — it means they're thinking.*

FUNDRAISE FOR FREEDOM

Want to do something bigger as a group? Set a goal and raise real support for The Exodus Road's work — the investigations that free people, and the aftercare that helps survivors heal. Everyone shares one link.

1

DECIDE TOGETHER + SET A GOAL. Make it a real group "yes," then pick a number and put it where everyone sees it.

2

PICK YOUR PLAY. Give-it-up challenge (skip eating out for 2 weeks, give what you'd have spent) • sponsored silence or fast • Freedom Friday car wash or bake sale • everyone shares the same link.

3

SET IT UP + RUN IT ~2 WEEKS. Create your group's page, share the link, then celebrate what you did together.

WHAT IT CAN DO • EXAMPLE GIVING LEVELS

- \$40 funds a night of investigation — so \$200 = 5 nights.
- \$150 provides medical care for a survivor — \$750 = care for 5.
- \$1,325 can fully fund one operation that frees people.

Current giving levels are on the fundraiser page; confirm before you present.



SET UP YOUR FUNDRAISER

Scan the code to start your group's page in seconds — or go to:

THEEXODUSRoad.COM/FREEDOM-DAY-FUNDRAISER

Keep it honest: nobody should feel pressured to give, and every gift counts the same — dollars, time, or voice. Every gift fuels real anti-trafficking work: investigations, survivor aftercare, and prevention.

A PRAYER FOR FREEDOM

PUT IT ON SCREEN • READ IT TOGETHER • OPEN HANDS IF YOU WANT

Leader, before you read: say — *"Take 10 seconds. Think about one person — someone you know, or someone you'll never meet — who isn't free right now."* Let the room sit in the quiet. Then read.

*God, you say every person is made in your image —
even the ones the world treats like they're worth nothing.
Help us believe that, and help us live like it's true.*

*Open our eyes to the people we usually look past.
Give us the courage to **speak up** for those who have no voice,
and to care about freedom for people we will never meet.*

*Use us in the small, ordinary ways that are actually ours to do,
to be part of how you set people free.
Make the world a little more free — starting with us.*

AMEN.

IF THIS IS YOU — OR A FRIEND

If something here hit close to home: **you are not in trouble, and you are not alone.** Talk to a trusted adult — a parent, a leader here today, a teacher, or a counselor. You can also reach trained help, free, any time:

National Human Trafficking Hotline — call 1-888-373-7888, or text "BeFree" to 233733

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call or text 988

Report something online — [CyberTipline.org](https://www.cybertipline.org) • **In immediate danger** — call 911

KEEP GOING →

Free training: [TraffickWatch Academy at theexodusroad.com](https://theexodusroad.com) • **Fundraise:** theexodusroad.com/freedom-day-fundraiser • **Follow + share:** [@theexodusroad](https://twitter.com/theexodusroad)

SAFETY & DISCLOSURE

64% of students have encountered at least one form of potential online predation targeted at them. So plan for this: in a normal-size room, this gathering may surface something real for someone. Here's how to be ready instead of caught off guard.

IF A STUDENT DISCLOSES

DO

- Stay calm. Listen more than you talk.
- Thank them for trusting you.
- Keep them safe right now; if anyone is in immediate danger, call **911**.
- Write down what they said in their words, afterward.
- Report it per your church policy + state law (see below).

DON'T

- Don't promise to keep it secret — you may not be able to.
- Don't interrogate, investigate, or confront an alleged abuser.
- Don't react with shock or blame.
- Don't post about it or share beyond who needs to know.
- Don't wait — delayed reporting can endanger a child.

YOU ARE PROBABLY A MANDATORY REPORTER

In most states, youth workers, volunteers, teachers, and clergy are **legally required** to report suspected abuse or trafficking of a minor — and rules vary by state and by your church's child-protection policy. Know both **before** you host, and know who your designated reporter is. When in doubt, the hotlines below will walk you through it. Note: hotline staff are mandated reporters too, so don't promise students total anonymity.

KEEP THESE NUMBERS ON HAND

Immediate danger → 911

National Human Trafficking Hotline → call 1-888-373-7888 • text "BeFree" to 233733 • 24/7, free

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline → call or text 988 • 24/7, free

Report online exploitation (NCMEC) → CyberTipline.org • 1-800-843-5678

THE PARENT HEADS-UP

Tell families before the event — it builds trust and turns parents into allies. Copy the template below, fill the blanks, and send it a week ahead.

✂ - - - - - COPY / SEND - - - - - ✂

Hi families,

On date, our youth group is hosting **Freedom Day**, a 60-minute event about human trafficking **awareness**, created with The Exodus Road, an anti-trafficking nonprofit.

Together, we'll watch a few short videos, hear a sermon message about the worth of every person, and talk about real ways to respond.

Why this matters: trafficking is one of the largest crimes in the world — happening globally and here in the U.S. — and awareness is genuinely protective. **What we won't do:** show graphic content or sensationalize. The gathering is built to be age-appropriate and hopeful.

How you can help: ask your student afterward what stuck with them, and use it as a doorway to talk about human trafficking and safety at home.

Questions, or want to talk through anything first? Reach me at leader name / email / phone. We'd love to have your student there.

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