

TRAIL OF TEARS, TRAIL OF TRIUMPH

A prayer experience

"Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Exodus 3:5b

Written by Lauren Walder for ReachGlobal Justice Initiatives' Gathering4Justice. Please use this prayer experience with your church, small group or home gathering to engage individuals' hearts with the reality of the evil of modern day slavery and the powerful hope of Christ in fighting injustice. The Trail of Tears had four high tables with trafficking items and each station's prayer prompts and questions displayed. The Trail of Torture and Triumph had similar high tables and props set up on the opposite side of the sanctuary.

Remember the Cross

Jesus, You willingly stepped down out of the glory of heaven because You were compelled by love. You made a way for our redemption by sacrificing Your very life.
Read and reflect on these Scriptures: Philippians 2:6-8; Romans 5:1-11

Respond to the Cross

We are called to step out of our comfort zones and follow God's heart for the oppressed.

(Ask participants to take off their shoes and set them aside).

Read and reflect on these Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Isaiah 58:1-11

Reflect on His Compassion (Luke 4:16-21; 10:30-37)

Today Jesus invites us to join Him on a Trail of Tears where we step into the brokenness and horror of a victim of sex trafficking.

Jesus, we follow You as You show us Your heart for the enslaved.

(Station 1 Loss of Freedom—handcuffs, zip ties and duct tape) You show us handcuffs and zip ties because these are used to force victims into a life of torture. You feel the pain over their loss of freedom. They may be tricked, betrayed, coerced, sold by a loved one or kidnapped. Their lives are no longer their own. They are separated from loved ones, stripped of their possessions and their dignity, utterly devalued and degraded. A girl can be bought for \$150 and bring in \$10,000 a month for her trafficker (servicing 10+ johns per night).

God of Justice, we want to turn away from this horror. The reality of such evil is overwhelming! We would never want someone close to us being held captive by a trafficker! Our hearts cry out for the millions of voiceless ones held in bondage! Hear our cries, O LORD, for an end to this horrific injustice!

(Ask individually or group in pairs to answer) Have you ever been held against your will or treated unjustly? Did anyone step in to fight for you or rescue you?

(Station 2 Loss of Innocence—size 6x girl's pajama's) Jesus, we can hardly bear the thought that her tiny, fragile body and soul have been ruthlessly violated, repeatedly! You feel the pain over her loss of innocence. Ones as young as six years old are being captured, sold and forced to serve clients. You see the repeated violent rapes, the beating with things like sticks, clubs, electrical cords, lit cigarettes, and metal rods as well as the verbal and mental abuse and starvation these victims endure. While the majority of children trafficked for sex is girls, boys are also not immune to such abuse and commercial exploitation.

Compassionate Father, You heard the Israelites crying out in their misery over their

cruel bondage to the Egyptians and You prepared and sent a deliverer, Moses. Lead us in courageous dependence on You to be part of Your answer of deliverance for the millions suffering on this trail of torture and tears! We need You to show us how to join You in this battle for justice!

Have you ever had something precious stolen from you or had someone hurt you deeply?
How did you deal with the pain?

(Station 3 Loss of Control—assortment of drugs and paraphernalia) Jesus, You show us the drugs that are used to control and further enslave trafficked victims. You feel the pain over their loss of control. They have no control over decisions, dress, diet, daily routines or their destinies. Drugs are often introduced by traffickers to make it easier to enslave their captives and keep them from being able to escape.

Almighty God, You made our bodies to be temples of the Holy Spirit, to be under His control and influence for good not evil. We step into Your deep suffering to share Your pain over the insidious way traffickers cruelly control their slaves. Oh Lord, we pray for increasing numbers of victims to be rescued, redeemed and restored by Your mighty hand! Convince us that prayer isn't the least we can do, but the most!

Where do you tend to run in order to dull or escape your pain?
Does that prove to be helpful or hurtful?

(Station 4 Loss of Hope—sexy outfit and high-heeled shoes) Jesus, what stirs in You as You see young girls dressed in stilettos and skimpy outfits? How great is Your pain over their loss of hope! You want us to recognize the endless nightmare and danger these ones face, often being moved from place to place, threatened with death to themselves or their loved ones if they try to escape. Despair sets in and many of them try to end their torture by taking their own lives. Disease and violence too often cut their lives short.

God of Hope, You say You are our hiding place and refuge from the enemy. We long for the horror sex slaves endure to end and for them to find You to be their hiding place and healer. Please raise up more abolitionists with hearts like Yours, emboldened by the message of hope and grace found in Your glorious gospel. Here I am, Lord, use me!

What feels hopeless in your life? What lies of the enemy undermine your identity as God's beloved child? How does God's grace motivate you to serve the oppressed?

Jesus' Trail of Torture... Trail of Triumph

Jesus, our hearts are raw as we realize the enormity of the evil of human trafficking!
Take us to the place we need to view this evil from to remind us of our hope!

Now step back in time to Jesus' Trail of Torture that led to His Trail of Triumph.

Revel in the Cross and Repent (have Bibles available)

Prayerfully meditate on Isaiah 53.

(Station 1 His Suffering—3 bloody, large nails and a wooden cross)

Jesus, You chose the nails and willingly surrendered to the torture of crucifixion and the excruciating pain of being separated from Your Father as you bore His wrath for the sin of all people!

~Read and reflect on Mark 14:35-36; John 19:16-30; Hebrews 12:2

(Station 2 His Victory—small chalkboard with words “Oh, the blood of Jesus covers me” written on it, basket with little slips of blank paper for people to write on and small pencils)

Jesus, love won at the cross and You triumphed over evil and Satan! Amazing love, how can it be, that You, my God, should die for me? Thank You for Your sacrifice! We rejoice that You defeated sin, death and the devil!

~Read and reflect on 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; Colossians 2:13-15; 1 John 3:8

Search your heart to see if there is any rebellion, pride, indifference, indulgence, selfishness, prayerlessness...use a piece of paper and pencil provided to write any sin(s) you need to confess. Read Psalm 51:1-6, 17. Fold and take this paper with you to the next station.

(Station 3 Celebration of Communion—communion elements, basket for folded papers, Kari Jobe's “Oh, the Blood of Jesus” or Charles Wesley's hymn “And Can it Be?” playing in background w/ lyrics on screen)

Acknowledge the cleansing, healing power of God's forgiveness and joyfully and gratefully

receive communion from Your Savior! Enjoy this time of refreshment.

~Read and rejoice over Acts 3:19; 1 John 1:9; Isaiah 1:16-18!

(Station 4 Respond in Community—pray in small groups)

Gather with a few others to pray together, pouring out your love for Christ and your desire to live not for yourselves, but for the One who died for you and rose again,

and by His enabling power in you, to make a difference for good!

Renewed Commitment & Closing

Sing a closing song together (“God of Justice” by Tim Hughes or “Our God Reigns” by Leonard E. Smith). Step into your own shoes now with a renewed commitment to Christ, following Him in Spirit-led steps of obedience, love, justice, and intercession.

IF YOU THINK YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO COULD BE SUFFERING FROM TRAFFICKING
UNITED STATES: CALL 1-888-373-7888, THE NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE. IT IS
AVAILABLE 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK FOR ANYONE TO CALL TO REPORT TIPS, SEEK
SERVICES OR ASK FOR HELP. YOU MAY ALSO CALL 9-1-1 TO CONTACT LOCAL LAW
ENFORCEMENT IMMEDIATELY, OR TEXT BEFREE (233733) FROM 3:00-11:00 P.M. EST TO GET
HELP OR CONNECT WITH ANTI-TRAFFICKING SERVICES IN YOUR AREA.