What Is Child Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking?

Time required: 1.5 hrs

Learning Objectives:

- Introducing the topic of child sexual exploitation and human trafficking to students
- Identifying risk factors and vulnerable groups
- Discussing warning signs of child sexual exploitation
- Reflecting on social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good through the lens of Catholic social teaching

Notes for Educators:

This lesson plan focuses on child sexual exploitation and human trafficking. For many students this might be their first time discussing this topic. Please take some time to review the resources in our website to prepare.

Discussions on how some groups might be more vulnerable to being Sexually Exploited will be part of this lesson plan. Be ready to challenge any stereotyping or victim-blaming, and rather focus on the importance of questioning the systematic marginalization of certain groups.

It is possible that students may bring up

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Materials:

- Dry erase board or chalkboard
- Journal/paper
- Anticipation Guide Handout: Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking (activity one)
- Anticipation Guide: Big Ideas (for educators only) (activity one)
- 'Stop Sex Trafficking in Ontario': Notes, Questions, and Reactions Handout (activity two)
- Discussion: questions and answers (activity two)

Reflection:

Write or post the following for students to reflect on prior to the lesson. Give students about 5 minutes to jot down ideas.

Pope John XXIII said, in the encyclical "Pacem in Terris," the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, was "a solemn recognition of the personal dignity of every human being." Why do you think that a declaration of rights needed to be created to recognize individual human dignity? (Answer, prove, extend)

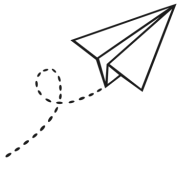
Activity One:

This activity focuses on the *Anticipation Guide: Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking* that accompanies this lesson. The teacher should use the *Anticipation Guide Handout: Big Ideas to* help facilitate discussion. You can find both documents at the end of the lesson plan.

There are many strategies that can be used with the guide– here are three possibilities.

1. Have students complete the Anticipation Guide independently, making a judgment for each statement using the Likert Scale. Ask students to circle words they are unsure of. After, debrief the guide with students by asking questions such as:

- What statement(s) are you uncertain about?. Give students a chance to respond, and perhaps explain why they may be unsure. Clarify when you



can. The goal isn't for students to "get things right" but instead to get them to be clear about what they need more information on.
- What statement most challenges your thinking? Why do you think that is?

2. Have students complete the Anticipation Guide in pairs by making a judgment for each statement using the Likert Scale. They should use the "Ideas, Questions, Notes" column to add words or phrases to describe any statement where there was disagreement between the partners. Ask students to circle words they are unsure of. After, debrief the guide by asking questions such as:

- What statement(s) generated disagreement between you and your partner. What was the basis of the disagreement? Were you able to resolve it through conversation?
- What statement most challenges your thinking? Why?

3. Complete the Anticipation Guide as a class by having the teacher read the statement, and having students move to different points in the room in response. After each statement, debrief the class reaction by asking questions such as:

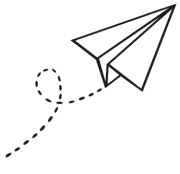
- Does this statement require much thought? Why or why not?
- What do you observe about the class response?
- Does this statement challenge your thinking? Why?

This activity should provide you with a clear understanding of where your students are at in regards to awareness about child sexual exploitation and sex trafficking and create some curiosity to learn more.

Activity Two:

Distribute a copy of the '*Stop Sex Trafficking in Ontario': Notes, questions and reactions* document to all students.

Show the video Stop Sex Trafficking in Ontario by Covenant House (2015) and ask students to complete the handout while they are watching. Once the video is over, give them some time to complete their notes.



Use the *Discussion: Questions and Answers handout* to spark discussions about the video. Allow students to bring up their own questions, comments, and reactions based on their notes.

Mention that although the video represents one of the most common child sexual exploitation scenarios of someone being recruited by a trafficker posing as a romantic partner, sex traffickers can also include close friends and family members of all genders. It's important that students are aware that traffickers are constantly seeking ways to exploit more youth.

Although anyone can be exploited, there are risk factors that make some youth more vulnerable than others, with number one being a girl/woman.

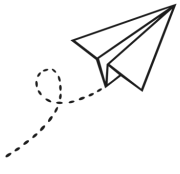
Activity Three

Ask students to work in a small group or with an elbow partner to identify factors that may increase a person's vulnerability to child sexual exploitation and/or human trafficking.

Sensitivity to ensure that students do not feel targeted is important here. Stress that just because you may identify with many of the identities, it does not mean you will be necessarily targeted.

It is likely that the students will identify many of the factors on this list:

- Being a girl/woman
- Runaway, homeless, or low-income youth
- Youth who are in foster care
- Youth who have experienced sexual, physical, or emotional abuse and neglect
- Youth who live with mental health challenges
- Youth who identify as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, or two-spirit
- Youth of colour/cultural minority groups, including Asian, African, Hispanic, etc.
- Youth who have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders or struggle with alcohol and drug addiction
- Youth who have low self-confidence and esteem
- Immigrant youth or newcomers to Canada
- Youth who identify as Indigenous



- Youth who question their security and sense of belonging to community, school or family
- Youth who lack culturally appropriate programming in surrounding communities
- Youth who have learning disabilities or cognitive impairments

Discuss what are things that certain populations might have in common. This could lead to a conversation on disempowerment, lack of networks of support, loneliness, structural disenfranchisement.

This activity should be done from an awareness and allyship perspective rather than to stigmatize certain lived-experiences and identities.

It's important to note in this section that Indigenous women and girls are the most common targets for traffickers. This is a direct impact of colonialism and the legacies of the residential schools which have generated their inter-generational impacts that last to this date.
Based on data collected by the Native Women's Association of Canada, despite Indigenous women and girls being 4% of the overall Canadian population, they roughly make up 50% of trafficked victims. Young women under the age of 18 represent a quarter of victims.

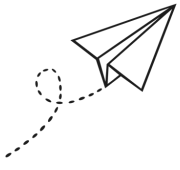
You can learn more about how Indigenous women and girls are affected in some of the resources shared with these lesson plans.

Activity Four

The students will work together to identify "warning signs" of child sexual exploitation and/or human trafficking.

Have the students work in small groups of two or three and assign each group one of the following headings:

-A youth who is being sexually exploited may exhibit the following **attitudes**
-A youth who is being sexually exploited may exhibit the following **behaviours**
-A youth who is being sexually exploited may exhibit the following **physical abuse indicators**



Ask them to brainstorm what the possible warning signs for each category might be of a person who is being sexually exploited.

It may be that the students identify points from the bulleted list -- they may also identify others. There are no "wrong" answers -- the focus should be on open dialogue.

Ask the students how they might have "difficult" conversations with a person based on the warning signs. What are the barriers that may make it difficult to support a friend who is exhibiting the warning signs?

Ask the students to identify who can help, and how they might help.

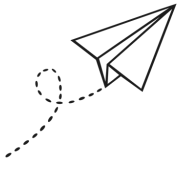
Please also note that the following indicators not necessarily mean someone is being trafficked, but could be signs of other situations or issues in their lives.

A youth who is being sexually exploited may exhibit the following **attitudes** . . .

- Withdraws from family, friends or peer groups, and extracurricular activities
- Maintains a high level of secrecy and is reluctant to share where they have been or with whom
- Responds to conversation as if they are reading from a practiced script
- Angry, confrontational, or abusive
- Fearful, anxious, depressed, tense, submissive, or nervous/paranoid and avoids eye contact, unexplained mood swings
- Secretive about their daily life routines
- Exhibits unusually fearful or anxious behaviour regarding law enforcement
- Protective of new relationships, providing little information when asked
- Appears to be protective of loved ones or fears for their safety

A youth who is being sexually exploited may exhibit the following **behaviours** . . .

- Comes home late or past curfew for unexplained reasons
- Disappears for extended periods of time (days, weeks, months)
- Hangs around with new and different groups of friends including older individuals
- Wears expensive clothing or jewelry that he/she could not normally afford Receives phone calls from blocked or private phone numbers
- Secretive about internet usage including sites and contacts



- Has an online relationship with someone they have never met in person
- Has a significantly older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Receives unexplained gifts from secretive sources
- -Talks about Bitcoin, airBNB or hotel parties
- Frequents hotels or unusual locations to meet friends
- Adopts slang and speech that is 'street' level talk
- Inability to clarify where he/she is staying/address
- Has pre-paid calling cards, credit cards, hotel room keys, business cards
- Has multiple cell phones, changes cell phone number often
- Has pornographic images or videos of themselves openly available or posted online
- Has numerous inconsistencies in his/her story – loss sense of time
- Does not attend school or is working during school hours
- Has numerous taxi numbers programmed into cell phone

A youth who is being sexually exploited may exhibit the following physical abuse indicators . . .

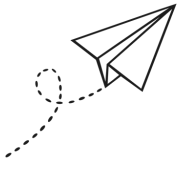
- Unexplained bruises, cuts, and broken bones
- Black eye(s)
- Tattooing or branding symbols such as names on neck, wrists, or lower back
- Cigarette burns on body
- Physical scarring, scrapes, or scratches

Wrap-up:

Remind students that as members of our Catholic Community, we are called to be socially responsible and work for the common good. Ask students to identify how to talk to a friend if you suspect they are being targeted by traffickers. The key idea is that friends should not promise "secrecy" – but instead to talk about how best to involve responsible (a) adult(s) who may be able to help with the situation.

Considerations should include:

- Listening without judgement.
- Not blaming the person for what they are going through.
- Considering our own biases. For instance, it may be hard to understand or empathize with some of the choices others make, or the barriers they

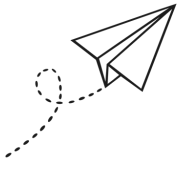


experience. It's important to keep in mind that sexually exploited youth are often manipulated and controlled.
- Be aware of and soften your body language.
- Mirror their language e.g. if they say "boyfriend," use this term.
- Let them take the lead in sharing, avoid leading the conversation (do not probe for their story -this is the cue to connect with support).
- Avoid making promises you aren't able to keep (e.g. no confidentiality).

It's important to emphasize that child sexual exploitation is happening in Canada at alarming rates yet there are resources and services that work to provide support and end human trafficking. Access the Canadian Human Trafficking hotline find local resources and share their information with the class.

Link back to initial reflections on respect for human dignity. As Catholics, one of our fundamental callings is to respect the dignity of all humans. Human trafficking and sexual exploitation clearly undermine this basic right to dignity.

James 5:16 says that "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." Together, close the lesson with a prayer for those who have been enslaved. www.prayerforfreedom.com/prayers-for-those-enslaved/



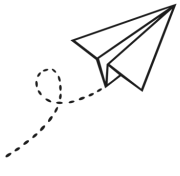
Anticipation Guide Handout: Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking

Read each statement.

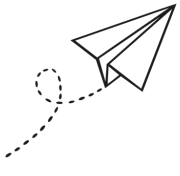
Circle the number that corresponds to your thinking at this time

1: I don't believe this statement
2: I am unsure of what I think about this statement
3: I believe this statement

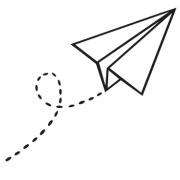
Statements	Number	Ideas/Questions/Notes
There are some cases where people cannot give consent to others, even if they are willing to do so	1 2 3	
The laws about consent change if one of the people involved has a position of trust or authority over the other	1 2 3	
People may be recruited into child sexual exploitation by offering them love and/or social acceptance	1 2 3	
Child sexual exploitation is: a minor who is manipulated into a sexual act in exchange for something	1 2 3	
Child sexual exploitation falls into the category of Human Trafficking	1 2 3	
Some youth are more vulnerable than others to child sexual exploitation	1 2 3	



Human trafficking isn't a problem in Canada	1 2 3	
Many human traffickers will start a relationship with their victims and pose as their romantic partners or friends	1 2 3	
Victims of child sexual exploitation may not be aware that they are being exploited	1 2 3	
I would recognize "grooming" behaviours from a trusted person or authority figure	1 2 3	
Young men may be less likely to disclose they are victims of sexual exploitation due to prejudice, stigma, or other fears	1 2 3	
It is easy to identify behaviour that is sexually exploitative	1 2 3	
Not all sexually exploited youth see themselves as victims	1 2 3	
Victims of child Sexual Exploitation can be "Recruited" and "Lured" through Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and other social media platforms.	1 2 3	
A minor cannot be a sex worker	1 2 3	

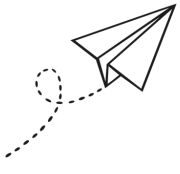


It is easy to jump to conclusions about who becomes a victim of child sexual exploitation and/or human trafficking	1 2 3	

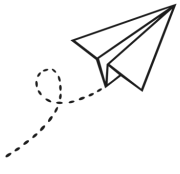


Big Ideas: Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking (For Educators Only)

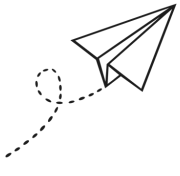
Statement	Big Ideas
There are some cases where people cannot give consent to others, even if they are willing to do so	This is the crux of the issue. Students may not fully understand that power, authority, and trust all make consent impossible.
The laws about consent change if one of the people involved has a position of trust or authority over the other	Ask students to identify who has trust and/or authority over them.
People may be recruited into child sexual exploitation by offering them love and/or social acceptance	Students may understand the idea of "recruitment" around money, drugs, alcohol, or goods. But love and acceptance are a bit more intangible and they may not have considered it.
Child sexual exploitation is: someone under the age of 18 who is manipulated into a sexual act in exchange for something they need	Focus on the word "manipulated". It may be worth asking students what they think that word means to them.
Child sexual Exploitation falls into the category of Human Trafficking	Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, harbouring and/ or exercising control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in order to exploit that person, therefore child sexual exploitation falls within this category.
Some youth are more vulnerable than others to sexual exploitation	All youth are vulnerable. However, some factors may increase vulnerability. Being a girl is the biggest risk factor. Often, they are factors linked to being less privileged, or being a member of a marginalized or oppressed community.



Human trafficking isn't a problem in Canada	Human trafficking exists in Canada. It includes Canadians, Indigenous people, and people who were born outside of Canada, but are here now.
Many human traffickers will start a relationship with their victims and pose as their romantic partners or friends	In most scenarios of sexual exploitation traffickers build an emotional bond with their victims by pretending to be their boyfriends or friends
Victims of child sexual exploitation may not be aware that they are being exploited	Manipulation includes making a person feel as if they are in a valued, loving, and/or committed relationship. The victim may not be aware of that manipulation.
I would recognize "grooming" behaviours from a trusted person or authority figure	Distinguish between grooming behaviour and kind behaviour. Kindness is not about an exchange. Grooming refers to selective tactics used to prepare a youth for exploitation including gaining their trust and developing a relationship with them
Young men may be less likely to disclose they are victims of child sexual exploitation due to prejudice, stigma, or other fears	All youth are vulnerable. Although female-identified individuals are more likely to be trafficked, male-identified individuals can also be targets. Disclosure is equally difficult, but the barriers may not be the same.
It is easy to identify behaviour that is sexually exploitative	It may be easy for some to identify, but not others. It is likely harder to identify if a person is involved personally.
Not all sexually exploited youth see themselves as victims	This is related to the idea of being manipulated. Effective manipulation may make a victim not see themselves as a victim.
Victims of child sexual exploitation can be "Recruited" and "Lured" through Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and other social media platforms	Using these platforms is becoming a lot more common. "Recruitment" refers to The act of selecting and enlisting new victims to be exploited and "Luring" refers to Communicating with a youth for the purpose of committing a sexual offence



A minor cannot be a sex worker	Legally, anyone under the age of 18 in Canada cannot consent to be a sex worker
It is easy to jump to conclusions about who becomes a victim of child sexual exploitation and/or human trafficking	Talk about stigma, stereotypes, and passing judgment. Students, especially those with privilege, may not see how their circumstances impact what they believe.



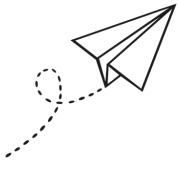
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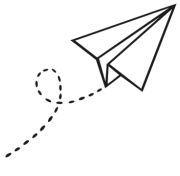
Video 'Stop Sex Trafficking in Ontario': Notes, Questions and Reactions handout

(1) When watching the video, **Stop Sex Trafficking in Ontario**, by Covenant House, take notes in the table below.

Briefly write about your reactions to the events and some questions you have.

Notes on the Video	My Reactions (sad/ happy, surprised, unsure, scared, etc.)	Questions





Discussion: questions and answers

(1) *Was there anything that surprised you about the video?*

Possible answers: Answers may vary. I am shocked to know that sex-trafficking takes place in Canada. I did not think sex-trafficking is common in Canada.

I am surprised to find Amy did not like the way she looks because I think she looks fine and pretty. From her physical appearance, I would not have imagined Amy having problems with self-confidence and falling victim to sex-trafficking.

I cannot believe the sudden change in Ryan's personality and how the story turns out. At the beginning, he seemed to be a nice person, but later on in the relationship, he was very aggressive, rude/ demanding, and violent towards Amy.

I am surprised that no one, such as her family, friends, school staff, noticed the change in Amy and offered her help. If she worked for 12 hours a day in the sex-trafficking activity and got abused by Ryan, she probably skipped schools frequently and was in a bad mental health state.

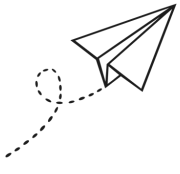
(2) *Before watching this video, have you heard of sex-trafficking (from the media, internet)?*

Possible answers: Before watching this video, I have heard of sex-trafficking in the news, but not in the context of Canada. I woud have thought sex-trafficking takes place in under-developed countries where people have lower economic status and education level.

I have heard of some issues similar to sex-trafficking, like how some people find sugar daddy/ mommy to get financial support, luxurious goods, or to pay their tuition fees.

(3) What ways did the sex-trafficker, Ryan, use to exploit Amy?

Possible answers: At first, Ryan tried to date Amy in order to gain her trust. Afterwards, he told her that he had money/ financial problems that he needed Amy to work for him.



Ryan complimented Amy and showered her with a lot of attention. When spending time with Ryan, Amy felt really good about herself and seemed to think they would have a future together.

(4) What may be some factors/ reasons that the victim, Amy, did not ask others for help?

Possible answers: Due to shame, guilt, and personal safety (the fear of being harmed by Ryan), Amy did not ask others for help.

Amy also thought that her conflicts with Ryan was only temporary and their relationship would return back to normal after she has earned enough money for him.

(5) Who is at higher risk of being targeted by traffickers?

Possible answers: Answers may vary. Based on the video, young girls (about the age of 16 to 24, or even younger) and people with lower self-confidence, negative self-image have a higher risk of being exploited.

(6) Where do sex traffickers recruit other traffickers to exploit youth?

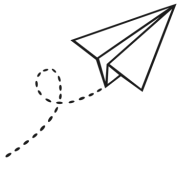
Possible answers: Anywhere, including schools, shopping malls, and online.

People need to protect themselves at all times. Sex-traffickers are constantly looking for ways to recruit new members.

Be careful not to disclose personal information to strangers at all times. At the same time, pay attention to people one knows, including close friends, family members, who may have negative influences and may potentially be sex-trafficking recruiters.

(7) What actions can you do to help raise awareness of and prevent sex-trafficking?

Possible answers: Answers may vary. First of all, learning what sex-trafficking is, symptoms of sex-trafficking, and how it happens helps you to be aware of the issues. Knowing the resources and organizations that are available in the community help you to refer others for support.



Taking care of your mental health, keeping a positive life attitude and self-image, having a healthy social life with friends and family, caring for people around you, all help prevent people falling victims to sex-trafficking.

When you notice people are involved in sex-trafficking, report the situations to adults you trust, including your teachers, parents/ guardians, and the police, and ask them for support.

