

Taking Action to End Violence against Women and Girls Resources for Church Action (prepared by CCOW and revised March 2021)

This resource was originally prepared for the 'Sixteen Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence'. The 16 Days are marked each year between the 25th of November, which is the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and the 10th of December, which is Human Rights Day. The materials in this resource can be used then – but also at any time during the year.

While gender-based violence can affect both men and women, the focus of the sixteen days is on ending violence directed at women – and that is also the focus of this resource.

Why take action?

We know that gender-based violence, especially against women and girls, is a reality here in the UK as well as around the world. Here and in other countries, we have seen women sharing their experiences in response to the #MeToo movement and to some shocking cases of violence. The sharing helps to break the silence that surrounds violence against women and girls, and to challenge attitudes that help to perpetuate it.

As women and men of faith, we seek to prevent and end violence against women and girls and all gender-based violence. Christian theology teaches us that God is a God of love and justice, and that all people are made in the image of God and called to right relationships. Gender-based violence is contrary to this teaching.

Resources for Prayer, Study and Action

- **Prayer resources for a service:**
 - From the Methodists, a [Chilean service for Women against Violence Sunday](#), a [prayer for International Women's Day](#) from Nora Viacava, Nat'l Coordinator of Methodist Women in Argentina;
 - From the Mothers' Union, a 16 Days [Morning Prayer](#) and [Compline](#) (Night Prayer) and a [No More One in Three service](#);
 - From the We Will Speak Out movement a [Pledge Litany](#), [A Litany to Remember Those in Pain and Pray for Healing](#);
 - From the World Council of Churches a short service of [Worship for Overcoming Violence](#);
 - From Catholic Women of Australia, [Prayer for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#)
 - From the Anglican Church of Australia, [Praying for an End to Violence against Women](#)

- **Materials for daily prayer, reflection and action**
 - Common Ground, [16 Days of Prayer against Domestic and Family Violence](#). Sixteen days of Bible study/reflection, with questions for reflection/discussion, prayer points and links to learning more.
 - Girls Friendly Society Worldwide, [Prayers of Hope: For Our Sisters against Gender Based Violence](#). Sixteen days of prayer, gathered from GFS leaders around the world, together with a prayer for each month of the year.

- Mothers' Union (Province of All Ireland), [Prayer Diary: 16 days with 16 prayer requests to end violence against women](#) (created for 2020). Sixteen short suggestions for reflection, prayer and action.
- We Will Speak Out Global Coalition, [A Resource for Prayer, Reflection and Action for 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence](#) (2016): Sixteen stories, with Bible study or prayer points from the agencies that form the coalition.
- **Preaching resources**
 - We Will Speak Out US sermon guide: [One in Three: Preventing Sexual Violence in Our communities](#) (2014) Offers a background briefing for church leaders and three suggestions for sermons on particular themes.
- **Materials for study (in home groups, etc):**

These are difficult topics – and will probably be personal for a number of people in your congregation. These materials offer suggestions for sensitive discussion.

 - Church of Scotland World Mission Council, [Life Abundant for All God's People: A Gender Based Violence Bible Study](#) (2015). Seven studies exploring different elements of women's experience: each has a Bible passage, quote, reflection, questions for discussion and a prayer.
 - Scottish Episcopal Church, Christian Aid, Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil, [Loving one another A biblical discussion toolkit on gender-based violence](#) (2016). A course for churches that want to help end gender-based violence. Looks at what it is, the context, how people are working to end it and what the church can do.
 - Tearfund, [Footsteps – special issue on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence](#) (2018) Contextual Bible study, definitions, discussion of how to create safe space, stories, materials. A good toolkit for churches.
- **Campaigns for men**

Ending violence against women and girls isn't 'a women's thing': it's for women and men together, and several campaigns exist to help men get involved:

 - On the 25th of November, '[White Ribbon Day](#),' men are invited to wear white ribbons as a sign of their commitment not to commit, condone, or remain silent about men's violence against women. If you want to celebrate this in a service, there are [worship materials for White Ribbon Day](#).
 - There's also a distinctly Christian campaign for men who want to help end violence against women: Restored's [First Man Standing](#). Could your church encourage men to take the First Man Standing pledge? Or use their [Bible studies](#)?
 - Videos of men speaking out against Violence against Women: [Anglican Communion, Leaders in Fiji](#)
- **Taking action as a church**
 - Display information. If you have a toilet, put up the [downloadable Restored poster](#) that tells women the signs of an abusive partner and where to get help.
 - Show solidarity with women worldwide – Join the [Thursdays in Black campaign](#).
 - Learn how to support survivors. Restored offers a [church pack](#), [online training](#), and [free COVID-19 domestic violence toolkits](#).
 - Learn from each other - Take a look at the [IAFN/IAWN newsletter](#) on how churches are responding to domestic violence during COVID-19.