



Episcopal
Relief & Development
Working Together for Lasting Change



Grace, Justice & Hope

for Women & Girls Everywhere

A TOOLKIT TO WORK TOGETHER FOR LASTING CHANGE



Viviana is a member of the Blessed Families saving group in Chinautla, Guatemala. She was able to start a tortilla business to help support her family. Episcopal Relief & Development trains volunteers from the Episcopal Diocese of Guatemala to assist local savings groups.

Thank you to our partners for the photos in this toolkit:

Tanzania: *Diocese of Central Tanganyika Development Services Coordination*

Honduras: *The Episcopal Diocese of Honduras*

Angola: *Anglican Church of Angola*

Kenya: *Anglican Church of Kenya, ADS-Nyanza*

Sri Lanka: *National Christian Council of Sri Lanka*

Ghana: *Anglican Diocesan Development and Relief Organization (ADDRO)*

Guatemala: *Episcopal Diocese of Guatemala*

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Welcome to Grace, Justice & Hope – for Women & Girls Everywhere

This is one of four toolkits centered on the priorities of Episcopal Relief & Development. These toolkits are designed to assist Faith Leaders across a variety of communities: in congregations, campus ministries, dinner churches, retreat centers and more.

You are a part of our extensive faith network and are invited to partner with us directly, sharing the work and the blessing of making lasting change.

The goals of these toolkits are:

1. To expand awareness of the expert and lifesaving work of Episcopal Relief & Development
2. To invite Faith Communities and individuals to financially support this work
3. To relieve faith leaders and their communities of issue-fatigue with practical tools; transforming their concerns into empowered action

Based on our four priorities, the toolkits are:

- **Joy & Wonder – Faithfully Engaging Early Childhood Development**
Partner with Episcopal Relief & Development to equip parents and caregivers so young children can reach their full potential
- **Grace, Justice & Hope – For Women & Girls Everywhere**
Partner with Episcopal Relief & Development to forge partnerships to reduce violence and advance equality
- **Nurture & Sustain – Action-Based Climate Resilience**
Partner with Episcopal Relief & Development to invest in communities to strengthen resilience to climate change
- **Restore & Renew – Responding & Rebuilding when Disaster Strikes**
Partner with Episcopal Relief & Development to provide emergency relief and long-term support in disasters

Using the resources in these toolkits, Faith Leaders will be guided by straightforward and accessible programs of campaign planning, prayer and worship and local community engagement and outreach. All four toolkits are available on our website [here](#).

You are a part of our extensive faith network and are invited to partner with us directly, sharing the work and the blessing of making lasting change.

Thank you.

An Invitation to Faith Community Leaders

Dear Faith Community Leader,

When women and girls thrive, our entire world flourishes.

Yet across communities near and far, women and girls still face barriers, discrimination and violence that diminish their inherent dignity and potential.

Our new toolkit, ***Grace, Justice & Hope ~ for Women & Girls Everywhere***, brings together practical wisdom and proven approaches for creating meaningful change.

What makes this toolkit special is how it honors the unique structure of faith communities while providing adaptable resources for diverse contexts. Whether you lead worship services, educational programs or community outreach, you'll find materials designed to meet you where you are and help you take next steps.

The stories and strategies within these pages have already helped reduce intimate partner violence in communities globally. Faith leaders like you have been instrumental in shifting attitudes, creating safe spaces and amplifying women's voices.

Your influence matters profoundly. You understand your community's specific needs and dynamics better than anyone.

This toolkit isn't prescriptive — it's collaborative. Use what resonates, adapt what needs customization and build on the wisdom you already hold.

As we work together across traditions and geographies, we're creating ripples of transformation that extend far beyond any single community. From changing harmful attitudes to building economic opportunity to fostering women's leadership, each step contributes to a larger vision of justice.

I invite you to explore these resources with curiosity and commitment.

Share them widely. Start conversations. Build partnerships. Together, we can create communities where all women and girls live with safety, dignity and opportunity.

With appreciation for your leadership,

Nicole Hosein

Director, Violence Prevention, Protection & Resilience
Episcopal Relief & Development

Introduction

Despite much effort to advance women's empowerment, women all over the world remain vulnerable to inequality, insecurity and violence and are unable to experience enjoyment of their fundamental human rights.

Episcopal Relief & Development's strategic plan to address these problems for Women & Girls focuses on partnering with local leaders and supporting churches and other faith communities to strengthen and improve their efforts by:

- Promoting Women's Empowerment
- Creating Economic Stability
- Cultivating Women Leaders
- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

Every woman should live a life free from violence and be treated with grace, dignity and respect. Only then can communities truly heal and thrive.

We have found that these goals are closely interrelated and that while each has distinct opportunities and challenges, development in one area promotes improvement in all of them. Strategic initiatives need to be undertaken within a framework of cultural competence and consideration of the health and well-being of women and girls throughout their lives.

We are involved in standing up for women and girls because of a strong imperative to promote peace and justice and to value the dignity and worth of all individuals. By doing so, we provide support to victims, educate our community about healthy relationships and challenge harmful societal norms that perpetuate violence against women within their communities and wider society.

As such, faith leaders are uniquely positioned to confront harmful social norms and behaviors and advance social changes and practices that improve the lives of women. This includes focusing on financial equality, social and emotional safety and the prevention of violence against women and girls everywhere.

As a faith-based organization, we understand that faith leaders are among the most trusted members of society and their words and actions carry significant influence.

This toolkit will help you find your way into this work. It includes resources to help you pray for those working to end violence against women and to amplify the leaders of all those working toward the empowerment of vulnerable women in their communities.

Thank you for joining us in this important work.

Overview of the Toolkit

How to Begin: Discerning Local Leadership and Setting Goals

How to introduce the campaign to your community, set goals and survey your community.

In Worship: Prayers & Liturgies for Women & Girls

Prayers and plans for use year round, as well as resources for specific observances that focus on Women & Girls on Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday. A devotional for daily use during the [16 Days of Activism](#) and a Living Stories Sermon with reflections on violence against women.

Formation: Study and Grow

A Bible study exploring the significance of women and girls in God's plan for us all. A study guide exploring the barriers to women's growth and development as well as offering proven paths for improvement. Insight into how Episcopal Relief & Development's work and research supports women around the world through advancing women's empowerment, promoting economic stability, cultivating women leaders and reducing violence.

Outreach & Creative Community Engagement

Learn how Episcopal Relief & Development uses Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) to build partnerships with community agencies and how your faith group can do the same. Make signs and brochures and learn about other actions you can take to show support. Take part in the [16 Days of Activism](#) initiative.

Fun & Fundraising with Episcopal Relief & Development

Learn how to have a successful campaign for Episcopal Relief & Development. Get creative with our *Gifts for Life* program and explore tips for building community through the campaign.

Visit Episcopal Relief & Development's website to view the [complete toolkit](#) of prayer, study and outreach, ideas to explore on your own and links to helpful resources from around the church.

*She rises while it is still night
and provides food for her household
and tasks for her servant-girls.
She considers a field and buys it;
with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
She girds herself with strength,
and makes her arms strong.
She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.
Her lamp does not go out at night.*

*She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her hands hold the spindle.
She opens her hand to the poor,
and reaches out her hands to the needy.*

— Proverbs 31:15-20



How to Begin: Discerning Local Leadership and Setting Goals

Episcopal Relief & Development uses a groundbreaking inter-faith approach to improve equity and social inclusion for women and girls. With Muslim, Christian and traditional faith leaders, we facilitate workshops and discussions about women and men's rights.

By 2030, Episcopal Relief & Development will strengthen the linkages between community, faith and state actors, equipping 100,000 change agents around the world to effectively speak out against, prevent and respond to violence against women and girls (VAWG). Half a million women, girls and other at-risk groups will experience decreased intimate-partner and non-partner violence (i.e., non-partner sexual violence) as a result.

Preventing violence against women and girls requires more than responding to its effects. It demands shifting mindsets and cultural norms to stop violence before it happens.

This toolkit invites you to partner with us in this life-saving work through creative and engaging awareness resources and fundraising activities. It will also help you discern, through prayer, study, reflection and action, the capacity of your faith community to partner with local agencies towards the prevention of VAWG in your neighborhoods and towns.

The Episcopal Diocese of New York cites research that seven out of ten people seek help for intimate partner violence issues at their place of worship first. How might you signal your neighbors about your increased knowledge, willingness and ability to improve the lives of women and girls in your community and beyond?

In this section, you will find:

- » *Introducing the Campaign to Your Community – Why This Matters*
- » *It's Our Time: Applying Proven Approaches for Faith-Based Change in the US*
- » *Conversations and Goal Setting: Starting a Ministry in Your Community of Faith*
- » *Measuring Your Faith Community's Interest and Setting Goals*

Other ideas for introducing the campaign:

- Invite your local or regional Episcopal Relief & Development Ministry Partner to speak to a group or preach on a Sunday.
- Reach out to local organizations like the YMCA www.ymca.org or the National Organization for Women www.now.org to inquire about local chapters or other groups affiliated with empowering women and girls in your community.

“The deep work of justice and reconciliation in which we are invited to participate is God’s work. We are called to yield ourselves to whole-hearted, intelligent and costly participation in this work, but without anxiety or frenzy. We are to be prophetic but not reactive, our fierce love growing in the soil of prayer, listening and discernment.

Our faith teaches us that we become agents of authentic new life insofar as we entrust our own lives and work to God’s larger truth, confident even in the midst of suffering and chaos that love is indeed stronger than death and that in Christ all things are already being made new. May it be so.”

— The Rev. Dr. Sarah Bachelard, Benedictus Church, Australia



Introducing the Campaign to Your Community – Why This Matters

Violence has a devastating impact on family and community structures. By reinforcing existing inequality, violence undermines the health, dignity, security and independence of those affected. It also greatly contributes to the cycle of poverty. Survivors, spouses and their communities work together to address trauma and promote healing, which leads them to become more resilient.

When your community decides to spend time learning about women's rights and empowerment and ending violence against women and girls, everyone benefits.

Using this toolkit, you and your team can learn how Episcopal Relief & Development collaborates with local leaders to help prevent violence and respond to those impacted. We are contributing to research that highlights the ways faith leaders can galvanize social and cultural change. Our programs play a pivotal role in creating interfaith networks that provide tools, skills and support for leaders to challenge the attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate injustice and discrimination.

Training leaders and heightening awareness around these issues changes lives. Here are three simple steps to help you discern how this ministry might take shape in your community:

1. Host a small group discussion (sample following) with persons you believe will be interested in forming a small leadership team. At that meeting, take notice of which areas they have the most energy and passion.
2. Following that meeting, distribute the survey, also included in this section on [page 9](#), to your faith community, in order to gauge their interest around this important ministry. Using the [“Conversations and Goal Setting: Starting a Ministry in Your Community of Faith”](#) resource also in this section, begin planning your course of action and engagement.

The Small Group Discussion

Select a group of people from your community, including men, women, parents, elders and others you believe might engage this ministry.

Hand out the resource [“It's Our Time: Applying Proven Approaches for Faith-Based Change in the US”](#) found in this section of the toolkit. Begin by reviewing the section called “The Challenge in the US” and talk about how this group believes their community might already be impacted by violence against women.

Then discuss the four priorities Episcopal Relief & Development focuses on, Promoting Women's Rights & Empowerment, Creating Economic Stability, Cultivating Women Leaders and Ending Violence Against Women & Girls and consider which of those areas need the most attention in your community.

After you have had these important conversations with your leadership group and discerned their passion and capacity, it's time to survey your community, identify their interests and set goals around the work of education, awareness and action. Use the survey in this section.

Once you have combined your leadership team goals with the survey responses of your community, Day 2, page 15 of our [16 Days of Activism Toolkit](#), provides a pledge your team can make as they begin their work in taking action to eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls.

Charm is deceptive and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her a share in the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the city gates.

— Proverbs 31:30-31



Mary, an apprentice seamstress, will soon have her own small business in Northern Ghana. She has been part of a Savings with Education group in her community.

It's Our Time: Applying Proven Approaches for Faith-Based Change in the US

"The Proverbs 31 woman is a star not because of what she does but how she does it — with valor. So do your thing. If it's refurbishing old furniture — do it with valor. If it's keeping up with your two-year-old — do it with valor. If it's fighting against human trafficking . . . leading a company . . . or getting other people to do your work for you — do it with valor. Take risks. Work hard. Make mistakes. Get up the next morning. And surround yourself with people who will cheer you on."

— Rachel Held Evans, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*

Episcopal Relief & Development is the compassionate response of The Episcopal Church to human suffering in the world. Hearing God's call to seek and serve Christ in all persons and to respect the dignity of every human being, Episcopal Relief & Development serves to bring together the generosity of Episcopalians and others with the needs of the world.

The statistics on the status of women and girls around the world can be overwhelming. Episcopal Relief & Development is making a difference, creating proven, lasting changes in communities near and far. We invest in expertise-inspired programs as a priority, co-creating long-term, highly scalable initiatives based on differentiated capabilities. Here is a summary of the research driven impact in each of our goal areas and how we are making a difference:

Promoting Women's Rights and Empowerment

Our training and education programs demonstrate increased food security, a reduction in poverty levels, increased self-confidence and social capital and increased knowledge and practice in health, business and/or money management. We also help pinpoint and illuminate social norms that create unsafe environments for women and children and alleviate some of the factors that can lead to abuse and resentment, like poverty and hunger.

Creating Economic Stability

Our Savings with Education (SwE) program supports the creation of locally led, partner-facilitated savings and loan groups that provide participants with financial training and small, low-interest loans. Participants use the loans in a variety of ways, such as starting or growing a small business, paying for school fees and covering emergency expenses, which promotes empowerment and equity in their families.

Cultivating Women Leaders

Trusted in the communities we serve, we train local faith leaders to change harmful mindsets and behaviors in their congregations, families, communities and beyond. They learn to model and promote

human dignity, community well-being and inclusive perspectives that honor diverse experiences. We foster learning platforms for collaboration, peer engagement, dialogue and learning.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

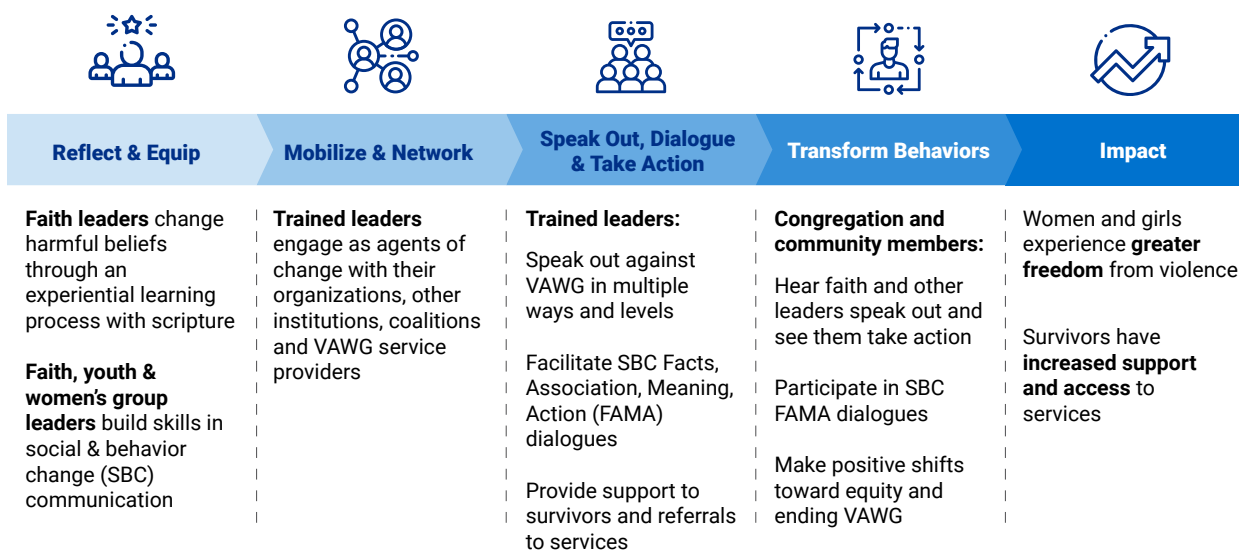
Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is pervasive globally. Working in partnership with the Episcopal Church of Liberia Relief & Development, our programs have measurably decreased intimate partner violence and adolescent boys’ perpetration and improved respectful relationship values for men, women, adolescent boys and girls. We have also increased the knowledge of resources and services for survivors of violence against women. VAWG is a key barrier to achieving equality, women’s empowerment and even food security. Investing in whole community healing methods and eliminating VAW is vital to human thriving.

Ways of Working

We use behavior change science to support these leaders in reflecting on themselves and their faith and belief systems, engaging any cognitive dissonance they see with reality and making choices to speak out and improve support services for survivors. We invest in improved access to services and economic and financial inclusion for specific populations.

In Liberia, we successfully mobilized and equipped faith leaders and youth with social and behavior change strategies and tailored tools. Despite some resistance, we succeeded in reducing violence against women and girls and expanded survivors’ support in their communities.

Below is a graph of the program theory of change that explains how and why the program activities lead to the changes we want to see:



VAWG – Violence Against Women & Girls; FAMA – Fact, Association, Meaning and Action. (There are sample FAMA cards in this toolkit in the [Formation](#) section)

A Challenge in the US

Misdirected shame keeps the victims mostly invisible to faith communities, which can adopt the position that they are somehow exempt from the epidemic. But statistics in the US on violence against women prove otherwise:

Nearly 1 in 2 women in the United States will face physical violence from an intimate partner at some point in their lives.



Almost 1 in 5 women in the United States report any contact sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.



Slightly more than 2 in 5 women in the United States reported experiencing any physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.



1 in 4 men in the United States has endured severe physical violence from an intimate partner.



Right now, women are being denied equality and safety and men are creating situations that are insecure and even violent in our pews and our neighborhoods. Establishing safety and care requires intentional leadership trained on protection policies who understand trauma-informed care and know local resources for referrals. Faith leaders must continue to educate themselves on the causes and effects of intimate partner violence to teach about it from a theological lens.

There is growing evidence that appropriately engaging faith leaders, scripture and faith-based activities in social and behavior change interventions can reduce VAWG.

The [independent study](#) of our Ending Violence Against Women Liberia program corroborates this connection and determined significant associations between violence reduction and congregants' exposure to faith-based activities.

The study found that the prevalence of all forms of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence was significantly lower among female congregants who heard their faith leader speak out against violence (in sermons, marriage preparation, retreats, counseling and community dialogues) compared to those who had not.

Our work continues to support church leaders in being a voice in this important epidemic in their communities and to raise support for our efforts to transform the lives of women and girls. By using this toolkit you can join us in working together for lasting change.

Conversations and Goal Setting: Starting a Ministry in Your Community of Faith

Now you are ready and your impact can begin immediately. Add prayers provided in this toolkit to your gatherings. Schedule observances supporting the work to reduce harm to women and girls; ideas can be found in our [planning calendar](#). Announce a campaign and distribute [free materials](#) to support the work of Episcopal Relief & Development globally.

As your leadership team continues to meet and to expand, you are invited to continue to deploy this toolkit where it fits your goals and consider broadening your impact by asking the following questions:

1. How has our leadership team expanded and how broadly do they feel called to respond?
2. What is the experience of intimate partner violence in our faith community?
3. Are we interested in providing equity assistance and resources to persons in and around our community?
4. What area partners can we find among local faith communities and agencies doing this work?
5. What policies and practices are currently in place in our community, implicit and explicit?
6. What happens when intimate partner violence is brought to the attention of our faith leader?
7. How will we deal with abusers who are also part of the faith community?

Consider viewing [these videos](#) with your team and see if they can help you determine a focus for setting goals and a timeframe. Produced by the Episcopal Diocese of New York, they address the issue of intimate partner violence for clergy and churches.

An example of a faith community committing to this work can be seen on [the website](#) of St. John's Episcopal Church in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where they have made a clear commitment to addressing issues of women's rights and empowerment.

Consider inviting an Episcopal Relief & Development Ministry Partner ([find yours here](#)) to help you:

- Walk with you through this toolkit
- Help you create an information display
- Help you plan an Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday event
- Secure a speaker

Measuring Your Faith Community's Interest and Setting Goals

A Simple Survey for Your Community Regarding the Wellness of Women & Girls

A group of leaders from _____ (*your church/faith community*) have decided to spend the next _____ (*timeframe for this project*) raising awareness of violence against women and girls. We will be partnering with Episcopal Relief & Development, leaning on their research and proven methods and deploying their resources for study, prayer and action.

Please take a moment to answer a few questions so we can identify your interests and invite you into this work.

1. **Connection:** How connected do you feel to statistics about women and girls suffering from inequity and violence? Do you think this is an issue within our community?
2. **Needs:** What needs do you feel our church or faith community is equipped to address in this area? Are you interested in our work to increase engagement in this important issue?
3. **Interests:** What do you need to know about regarding the wellness of women and girls near and far?
4. **Engagement:** Would you attend an event to learn more about the current situation of women and girls locally and globally? Please circle an event that would interest you:

A guest speaker

A worship service

A Bible study

Other: _____

5. **Serving:** Are you interested in helping our leadership team with any of the following?

Check all those that apply:

___ **Communications:** Help us get the word out about this ministry.

___ **Events:** Help plan and implement special events.

___ **Teach:** Lead a class or workshop on Women's Rights and Empowerment & Violence Against Women and Girls.

___ **Worship Leader:** Help leaders secure prayers for year-round use and for special observations around the protection of women and girls throughout the year.

___ **Campaign Organizer:** Help our community engage in a campaign to raise funds for and awareness of the work of Episcopal Relief & Development for women and girls.

___ Other: _____

Please return this survey (*in the offering plate, hand to an usher, bring/mail to the church office to the attention of ...*) by _____ (*date*).

Thank you.



In Worship: Prayers & Liturgies for Women & Girls

*“Our religious activities are worthless if they aren’t causing us to live and act justly.
God does not divide between justice and worship.”*

— Kaitlyn Schiess, *The Liturgy of Politics: Spiritual Formation for the Sake of Our Neighbor*

The Latin motto *lex orandi, lex credendi* means “the law of what is prayed [is] the law of what is believed.” This phrase articulates the Christian view that prayer and belief are connected.

How a person or faith community prays can also reveal something about how they live. It shows what they believe about God and God’s connection to their lives.

Prayer, while essential, is only the first step because prayer requires action. Prayer creates an opening. Through deep listening and supplication, a pathway clears and we can see how God’s dream for all can guide our way forward. We believe God can give us the strength we need so that we may be healers of the world. This is one way we are expected to be partners with God for all in need.

*Through deep listening and
supplication, a pathway clears and
we can see how God’s dream for
all can guide our way forward.*

At Episcopal Relief & Development, we understand how religion and culture shape social norms and can drive norm change in both positive and negative ways. Our theory of change ensures we work together with local faith and community leaders as potential and positive change agents from the outset of the initiative. We co-design together. We accompany faith, community and youth leaders to mine their context and traditions, understand and challenge barriers and promote norms of equity and social inclusion.

You are invited to join us in offering to God our hopes for healing for all who suffer from violence against women and girls and for those who are making a difference for so many and we pray that we all may find the courage to join them in making lasting change in the world.

In this section, you will find:

- » *Prayers for Women & Girls for Use Year-Round*
- » *Worship & Prayers for Designated Sundays and Special Observances*
- » *Living Stories Sermon for Grace, Justice & Hope*
- » *How to Observe Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday*

Another resource for prayer and worship:

Here's a link to a powerful [collection](#) of litanies, readings, confessions and prayers from the Anglican Church of Australia to help individuals and groups pray for an end to violence against women and girls.

Prayers for Women & Girls for Use Year-Round

PRAYER FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

God, we cry to you for justice for women and girls.
 Help us to dig out the roots of violence and discrimination against women.
 Inspire us to break down the structures that silence and disempower women.
 Make us united in condemning abuse in all its forms.
 God, we cry to you for refuge for the survivors of violence.
 May those in power recognize their responsibilities to support survivors.
 Show us how to amplify the voices of women and girls speaking up for change.
 Give us the courage to act against inequality.
 God, we cry to you for change, for transformation.
 Send us the strength to persist in activism when we face barriers.
 Fill us with determination as we seek to renew our world.
 May we see a day when every girl will be free to flourish and know life in all its fullness. *Amen.*

(Christian Aid)

A COLLECT

Gracious God, like a mother hen, you shelter us under your wings: Bring your truth and love into homes where intimate partner violence has shattered the peace. Provide sustenance for the victims and accountability for the abusers. Send wise and courageous friends who can offer alternatives and bring your healing power into broken relationships. May your church provide a haven of safety and peace for the abused and reach out to support all who serve the needs of the abused in our communities, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

(Anne O. Weatherholt, *Breaking the Silence: The Church Responds to Domestic Violence*)

A PRAYER FOR RESOLVE

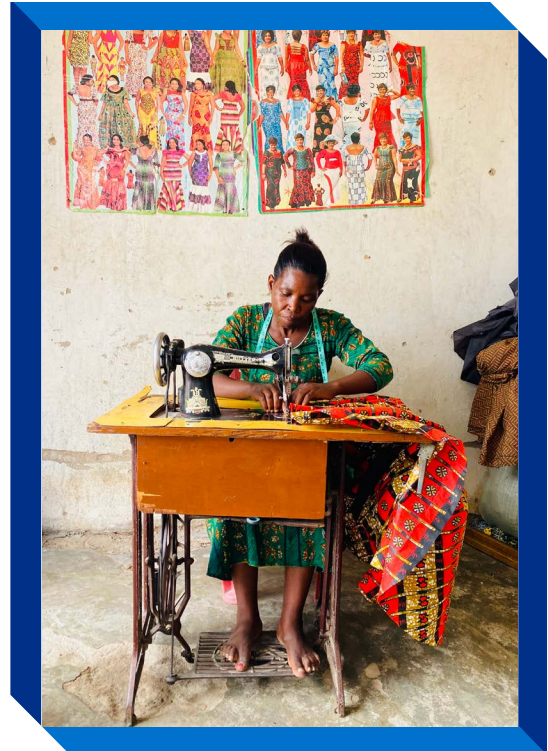
Stir us with a resolve not to be silent.
To speak out against the abuse of power,
especially in our homes.
To speak up
for those who have been pushed down
in any way.
To speak to
the needs of those who are suffering
at the hands of another.
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ,
who extended his forgiving hands to all. *Amen.*

(The Anglican Diocese of St. Andrews)

A CONFESSION

Loving Lord,
who came to proclaim justice,
make us bold to speak out truth
and break the power of silence.
Loving Lord,
who came to minister mercy,
make us agents of compassion
to release the oppressed from fear.
Merciful and loving God,
forgive us when we have closed our eyes
to the sufferings of others;
when we have stayed silent
in the face of abuse and oppression;
when we have declined to challenge
unacceptable actions and attitudes.
Take away our selfishness
and fill us with new resolve
to proclaim justice and mercy
in the name of Christ. *Amen.*

(Mothers' Union Prayer Resource)



Veronica, a savings group member and business woman in Tanganyika, Tanzania, was able to expand her business with training and a loan. Episcopal Relief & Development's partner, The Anglican Diocese of Central Tanganyika, is able to provide training to small business owners. Veronica was interested in training sessions to help her feel like she could do something that will bring a positive changes like decision-making processes, e-saving, revolving loan fund and marketing.

A PRAYER FOR GOD'S LOVE, PEACE & POWER

Compassionate God, we pray for women who are victims of violence and abuse all over the world.

Hold all women who feel trapped, unsafe and live in fear in your loving arms.

We pray for a world where every person can feel safe, secure, loved and cherished.

Caring God, we pray for those who have escaped violence and abuse.

Be with them as they rebuild their lives and make your love and presence known.

Lord, give them the courage and strength to take the next steps.

Creator God, we pray for projects that are changing women's lives.

While the work is hard, we pray that these project leaders feel your encouragement and empowerment in everything they do.

We pray for their success, expansion and creativity in meeting the needs of women where they are.

Passionate God, we pray for female leaders around the world, for the trailblazers and freedom fighters – fearless women who are paving the way for the next generation.

We pray that you sustain their passion for change and give them the energy to keep going, no matter what gets in their way.

Encouraging God, we pray for those coming alongside women, supporting them, encouraging them, speaking out for them and giving them space.

Lord, give more people the strength to stand up for what is right and speak truth to power.

Enabling God, we pray for all church leaders and members as they continue to engage in creative spirituality, fundraising, challenging injustice and supporting women around the world.

Gracious God, in this time of quiet, we bring before you all the women we have spoken about today, all those who have touched our lives and all those who have made a change in the world.

(Silence)

Lord, remind them that they are loved and admired in all that they do. In a time of silent prayer, we pray for others on our hearts today.

(Silence)

May they know your love, peace and power.

Loving God, who knows all our prayers, hold all those who inspire and care for us now and always. These prayers we ask in Jesus's name. *Amen*.

(Haverhill Methodist Church, Suffolk, UK)

A PRAYER FOR THOSE SUFFERING ABUSE

God, our redeemer and sustainer, we pray for survivors of violence, abuse and neglect.

Give your power to the powerless, your fullness to the empty of spirit.

Heal their wounds, free them from fear and restore them to true health.

Grant this through Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Savior who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. *Amen*.

([A Prayer for those Suffering Abuse](#), The Anglican Communion)

A PRAYER FOR MOTHERS AND MATERNAL FIGURES

God of our Mothers, whose almighty hand called forth matriarchs to lead, liberate and love your people. You inspired mothers and sisters, daughters and aunts, to be your divine messengers throughout time. Surround, we pray, the fierce, fearless and faithful women of our day with grace and courage to boldly contend with injustice and oppression. That, following the example of those who have gone before, they may cast the mighty from their seats and lift up the lowly and downtrodden. God of our Mothers, hear us! *Amen.*

(Adapted from [A Prayer for Matriarchs](#), The Rt. Rev. Deon Johnson, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri)

A PRAYER FOR HESITANT CLERGY

Divine Companion, you have encouraged and comforted me
at so many times, in so many places, with so many persons.
One more time, I ask, though afraid even in my asking,
be with me.
Strengthen my trembling knees
that I may stand with those who have too often and too long stood alone.
Call to me in the tumult of my self-focused anxiety
that I may bring your Presence, your Peace, to those whose terror is real.
Deliver me from my silencing fears
that I may speak your Word.
Holy Shepherd, I am yours. Send me to those you love. *Amen.*

(The Rev. Don Niederfrank, UCC Pastor and Author)

A NON-TRADITIONAL BLESSING

May God bless you with **discontent** with easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships,
so that you will live from deep within your heart.
May God bless you with **anger** at injustice, oppression, abuse and exploitation of people,
so that you will work for justice, equality and peace.
May God bless you with **tears** to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war,
so that you will reach out your hand to comfort them and to change their pain to joy.
May God bless you with the **foolishness** to think you can make a difference in this world,
so that you will do the things that others tell you cannot be done.
If you have the courage to accept these blessings, then God will also bless you with:
happiness — because you will know that you have made life better for others
inner peace — because you will have worked to secure an outer peace for others
laughter — because your heart will be light
faithful friends — because they will recognize your worth as a person.
These blessings are yours — not for the asking, but for the giving — from One who wants to be your
companion, our God, who lives and reigns, forever and ever. *Amen.*

(A Benedictine Blessing by Sister Ruth Marlene Fox, OSB)

Worship & Prayers for Designated Sundays and Special Observances

Because in Jesus Christ our LORD you knit us together in love to strengthen communities, empower those who are poor, nourish those who are hungry, heal those who are sick and renew victims of disaster.

LORD in your Mercy, hear our prayer.

— Proper Preface, Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday

Break the Silence Sunday

In 2022, the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church [adopted a resolution](#) designating the Sunday closest to November 25, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, as “Break the Silence Sunday” across The Episcopal Church. More details on this and other resolutions and policy conversations nationally can be found [here](#).

Many churches throughout the Anglican Communion take part in the [16 Days of Activism](#), which runs annually from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to December 10 (International Human Rights Day). The 16 Days period includes other significant dates, including International Human Rights Defenders Day (November 29) and World Aids Day (December 1). Activists started the 16 Days of Activism campaign at the inauguration of the Women’s Global Leadership Institute in 1991. It is used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

By observing Break the Silence Sunday, we join with other people of faith around the world to take action to end the incessant violence against women and girls.

The goal of observing Break the Silence Sunday is three-fold:

- Help congregations learn about the reality and scope of the problem of sexual violence.
- Establish congregations as communities where survivors can share their stories and be received with hope and love.
- Provide congregations with ways to advocate for change in their communities and around the world.

A toolkit from the Episcopal Diocese of New York’s 2024 observance, including an entire worship service, can be found [here](#).

Resources from previous years, including payers, litanies and entire liturgies, can be found at the Break the Silence [website](https://breakthesilencesunday.org) (breakthesilencesunday.org).

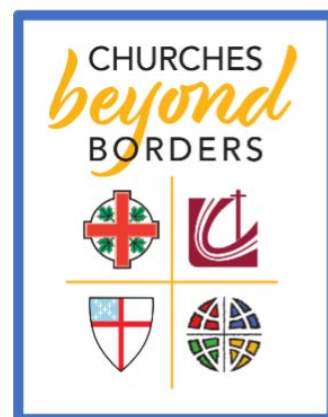
Information about Episcopal Relief & Development's Toolkit for this observance can be found in the "[Outreach & Creative Community Engagement](#)" section of *Grace, Justice & Hope* (this toolkit) and online [here](#).

Daily Meditations for the 16 Days of Activism

[This booklet](#) contains 16 devotions, timed with and inspired by the annual United Nations campaign, 16 Days of Activism, which runs from November 25 to December 10. We invite you to use these devotions not only for the 16 days in November and December but also throughout the year.

Worship and Prayer Resources for the 16 Days of Activism from the Mothers' Union in the Anglican Diocese of St. Andrews can be found [here](#). Here is a [sample sermon](#) for use on the first Sunday from their [Rise Up Campaign](#).

[Here](#) is a liturgy with prayers and biblical reflection from the Lutheran World Federation designed to "unite our hearts and minds as together, we prayerfully seek to overcome violence against women."



Living Stories Sermon for Grace, Justice & Hope

LUKE 1:39-55: THE VISITATION AND THE SONG OF MARY

First, view the original telling of this story on Advent 4, Year C (December 22, 2024), at [this link](#). Then, follow the instructions below to share this Living Stories sermon in your local faith community.

Instructions

1. Gather & print materials (details below).
 - a. Both script & images can be printed two per page.
2. Practice the story script.
 - a. [Brackets indicate the exegetical introduction].
 - b. *Italics indicate stage directions*.
 - c. Normal text indicates the scripture reading according to the CEB translation.
3. Choose your prepared wonderings (around 6 is good, ending with wondering about the Good News).
4. If you can, reach out for the most up-to-date Living Stories training materials and more free Living Stories Sermons scripts: peterlevenstrong@saintgregorys.org.
5. You're good to go! May the Holy Spirit surprise you with bountiful grace during the co-creation of your communal sermon.

Materials (Digital materials, including scripts, images, and coloring pages, are copyright St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church, and are free for you to use. Links to physical materials are suggestions, should you need to purchase additional materials.)

- [Underlay](#)
- [House](#)
- [3 adult figures](#)
- [Digital content](#) (Coloring pages, LSS Preacher Notes, and 3 story graphics to print on cardstock) Put the coloring pages with crayons on clipboards for whoever wants one, and have holders or easels ready for the printed images for your use during the sermon.

Story

Place the underlay. Place the home on top and Elizabeth and Zechariah in the center of the home. Place Mary on the bottom left.

Today, we are jumping back in time from Luke 3, where we were last week, to the first chapter of Luke's Gospel. Today's story takes us back to before John the Baptist was proclaiming his ministry of repentance and baptism in the wilderness to a time when he was still an unborn child in the womb of his mother, Elizabeth. Zechariah, Elizabeth's husband, was unable to speak from the time the Angel Gabriel appeared to him and told him he and his wife Elizabeth would conceive and bear a son in their old age until the circumcision and naming of their son John eight days after his birth.

Mary moves to Elizabeth's house.

Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. *Zechariah opens the door and greets Mary outside. Mary enters and goes to Elizabeth.* She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. *Elizabeth reels from the baby's jump.* When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. With a loud voice, she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women and he has blessed the child you carry. Why do I have this honor that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

Mary said, "With all my heart, I glorify the Lord! In the depths of who I am, I rejoice in God, my savior. He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant. *Place the first easel and image.* Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored because the mighty one has done great things for me. Holy is his name. He shows mercy to everyone, from one generation to the next, who honors him as God. He has shown strength with his arm. *Place the second easel and image.* He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations. He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed. *Place the third easel and image.* He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy, just as he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever."

Wonderings

- Elizabeth calls Mary "blessed among women" and celebrates her faith and courage. I wonder what it would look like for us to celebrate and affirm the courage of women in our own communities.
- Mary sings of God pulling the powerful from their thrones and lifting up the lowly. I wonder what this might mean for those experiencing injustice or oppression today.
- Mary's *Magnificat* speaks of God filling the hungry with good things and sending the rich away empty. I wonder how this vision of justice and abundance could guide our work for the safety and dignity of all people.
- Zechariah is silent in this story, while Mary and Elizabeth are full of prophetic words and actions. I wonder what this says about the unique ways women bear witness to God's justice and hope.
- Mary's journey to Elizabeth's home is one of seeking connection and support in a time of uncertainty. I wonder how we can create spaces of sanctuary and solidarity for those in need of safety and care.
- The *Magnificat* declares God's faithfulness to the promises made to Abraham and his descendants. I wonder how we see God's faithfulness in the stories of women who have resisted injustice and worked for change.

How to Observe Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday

Praying together as a community of faith amplifies the power of our prayers, reinforces our desire to be healing agents of God's world and reminds us to give thanks for opportunities to do so.

The Episcopal Church [designated](#) the first Sunday in Lent as "Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday." Every year, faith communities are encouraged to celebrate and partner with our lifesaving work on this or another convenient Sunday.

If you or your faith community have made the theme of this toolkit a part of your expressed priorities for a season, feel free to adapt the prayers and readings for this observance. Doing so will raise awareness of your partnership with Episcopal Relief & Development and invite others into the ongoing work of your team.

Consider setting up a display or informational table during fellowship, scheduling a presentation at a forum or study group or holding a special event to heighten this ministry.

Resources to help you with this observation, including prayers, petitions, proper prefaces and more, can be found on our website under Church Resources and at [this link](#). Sample sermons are available on Vimeo [here](#).

You can also visit [Forward Movement](#), where you can order complimentary resources for your observance, including beautiful informational bulletin inserts and fliers, pew envelopes, *Gifts for Life* catalogs, beautiful bookmarks and brochures and Hope Chest boxes.

"When we are privileged to experience the genuine love of God, we are compelled to enthusiastically and freely give it to others. And when we do, we can overcome every manner of evil. We experience God's love through daily choosing to see Christ in the other, loving our neighbor as ourselves. It is an intentional practice. It is not easy, but it is my hope for each of us that we can pass God's love on to all."

— An Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday sermon by Chad Brinkman,
Director, Faith Fundraising, Episcopal Relief & Development



Formation: Study and Grow

“Those who seek to glorify biblical womanhood have forgotten the dark stories. They have forgotten that the concubine of Bethlehem, the raped princess of David’s house, the daughter of Jephthah and the countless unnamed women who lived and died between the lines of Scripture exploited, neglected, ravaged and crushed at the hand of patriarchy are as much a part of our shared narrative as Deborah, Esther, Rebekah and Ruth. We may not have a ceremony through which to grieve them, but it is our responsibility as women of faith to guard the dark stories for our own daughters and when they are old enough, to hold their faces between our hands and make them promise to remember.”

— Rachel Held Evans, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*

Episcopal Relief & Development’s work in intentional Christian formation, including training faith leaders, increases awareness and advances collective activism. Through various initiatives, such as sermons, Bible studies, counseling, community events and small group discussions, community members and congregants gain a more in-depth understanding of the impact of violence on women’s lives.

This highlights how VAWG can limit women’s and girls’ potential, undermine their self-esteem and prevent them from achieving their goals. Done in community, these projects provide a platform for people to voice their concerns and lead to the establishment of structures in the communities that work toward promoting equality and combating violence against women. Following these efforts, more and more people take a stand against discrimination. These conversations support faith leaders and congregants to create equal opportunities and treatment for women and girls and also provide an opportunity for faith leaders and congregants to speak out against harmful norms and promote women’s rights and empowerment in their communities.

In this section you will find:

- » *How Can Studying the Bible Be a Part of Making Change for Abused Women?*
- » *Bible Study: What Does the Bible Say about Intimate Partner Abuse?*
- » *Let's Talk: Family Conversation Starters*
- » *Coercive Control: An Overview with Guidelines for Discussion*
- » *The Power of Storytelling: Exploring the Transformative Power of Listening in Community*
- » *FAMA cards in Community Engagement and Education*

Other ideas for Formation and Growth:

- Run a series of public service announcements in your publications/social media on causes and consequences of VAWG to heighten awareness and share resources
- Click [here](#) for the United Nation's succinct and informative summary report on unequal access to resources around the world

How Can Studying the Bible Be a Part of Making Change for Abused Women?

Most faith communities make knowing their inherited stories a central part of building their identity. How they read and understand the tenets of their faith directs their beliefs, practices and actions. Episcopal Relief & Development helps faith leaders make essential connections between a community's faith story and its intellectual, environmental and spiritual wellness.

Faith communities and leaders resist prioritizing biblical mandates to care for outcasts, widows, orphans and the poor and to avoid engaging in war, debt, violence and vengeance.

Introducing a Bible study relative to the civil rights of women and girls in the context of relationships is an important step in introducing this issue to your community. It can, at first, feel a bit redundant. This is not because everyone knows what the Bible says about the fair treatment of women and girls but rather because many communities in the Western world have at least made the intellectual ascension to beliefs in women's rights and empowerment and how we treat one another. We like to believe that everything is just fine and people mostly choose what is right for them. Universal and generally agreed-upon laws in communities around things that are forbidden, such as murder, stealing, cheating and lying, work hard to hold everyone accountable. We have faith in people behaving civilly to one another, especially in our own communities of faith.

Applying Scriptural references emboldens adherence to these agreed-upon rules. Scripture encourages us to practice humility, service, caring for others, second chances and grace. Even so, faith communities and leaders resist prioritizing biblical mandates to care for outcasts, widows, orphans and the poor. This may be due to a community's reluctance to engage in difficult topics of war, debt, violence and vengeance.

Statistically, women and girls in our pews are living in situations with violence and coercive control that are abusive, but they are explained away as behavioral flaws or consequences everyone should just accept because of the people's private and individual choices. Because the vast majority of victims do not consider their relationships abusive until things become unbearable or someone else suggests it might be, they are often reluctant to report abuse because they don't believe they're in an abusive relationship. Intimate partner violence does not always involve the use of physical force and many victims who have not been beaten don't consider the intimidation and threats they live with as abusive.

This is why education is important.

For many women of faith, the breaking of a family or a marriage can feel like a profoundly personal and intimate failure. It can feel like a failure of one's faith. Why didn't God or the faithful community of God protect them? Even if women separate themselves from abuse, that same sense of duty, obligation or guilt prevents them from seeking justice against their abuser. They also often still love and feel empathy toward their oppressors and make excuses for their behaviors.

Learning the stories of the mothers and fathers, daughters and sons of our faith tradition, reminds us that abuse is never okay. God longs for freedom from violence and abuse for everyone.

Bible Study: What Does the Bible Say about Intimate Partner Violence?

O taste and see that the LORD is good; happy are those who trust in him.

— Psalm 34:8

The Bible consistently identifies abuse as a misuse of power and condemns abuse of all kinds as unjust. Sometimes, abusers use the Bible's teaching on topics such as marriage, submission, love and forgiveness to persuade victims of intimate partner violence to tolerate abuse and to remain in a relationship that is abusive.

You may have been told that the Bible's teaching on the lifelong commitment of marriage is a reason to overlook abuse, but the Bible is clear that God never condones abuse. If a relationship ends over violence, it is the person who abused that caused the relationship to break down, not the person seeking safety.

Let's look more closely at what the Bible teaches about violence.

Violence entered the world as a result of sin.

In Genesis 3, we read that human rebellion against God resulted in conflict between people. Almost immediately after this, we read the narrative of Cain murdering his brother Abel (Genesis 4:8). Violence, motivated by anger, revenge and general moral degeneration, is found throughout the pages of Scripture. This includes violence against women, such as Jephthah's daughter (Judges 11:29–40) and Levi's concubine (Judges 19), as well as the rapes of Diana (Genesis 34), the woman of Bethlehem (Judges 19-20) and Tamar (2 Samuel 13).

The Bible uses a few different words for violence.

The Hebrew word *hamas* means violence or wrongdoing and is used about 60 times in the Bible, usually referring to physical violence but also to general wickedness, sin, injustice and verbal violence. The words *gazzal* and *asaq* mean to rob and oppress and are used to refer to violence that may be physical, verbal or immoral. Other words have the meaning of attack, destroy and annihilate. The Hebrew verb *anah* means to rape and violate sexually and can also mean to oppress or weaken. Other words are also used to indicate oppression. As in our own time, a variety of words are used and context determines meaning. The behaviors we associate today with domestic abuse, such as physical violence, rape, intimidation, threats, isolation and emotional abuse, fit within the Bible's description of violence.

The presence of violent narratives in the Bible is not a prescription for violence or an approval of violence but rather is consistent with the Bible's realistic portrayal of human civilization.

In Genesis 6:11, we read that the earth became corrupt in God's sight and full of violence. The chapters depicting violence in the Old Testament are a "warts and all" historical account of the extent of evil and the fallen nature of humanity, including historical cultural attitudes to various forms of violence. This record of history should not lead us to think violence is condoned by God. These passages are not there to normalize violence.

Violence is condemned as sinful in the Bible.

The extent of human violence in the days of Noah was so destructive that God despaired of creation. The Ten Commandments condemn violence and the Old Testament laws of Deuteronomy prescribe punishments for violence against others, including sexual violence against women (Deuteronomy 22:25-29). Psalms and Proverbs counsel people to shun evil (Proverbs 3:7), malicious behavior, concealed hatred and lying lips, slander and the stirring up of conflict (Proverbs 10). The book of Judges recounts the rape of the woman of Bethlehem and condemns it as a lewd and outrageous act. The rapists are described as wicked men and the rape and murder of the woman bring about a violent uprising against the tribe of those who committed the crime.

In Old Testament law, rape was considered equivalent to murder, with punishment up to death (Deuteronomy 22:25-30). Other narratives of family violence, such as that done to Tamar, show the impact of such trauma on the victim and God's condemnation of it.

There are patterns of behavior that often accompany and contribute to domestic abuse. We see these condemned in the Bible, and guilt is as assigned to the abuser:

- Using power to oppress others is condemned in Ecclesiastes 4:1
- Hitting another is condemned in Exodus 21:26-27
- Causing trouble in the household and bringing ruin to a family is condemned in Proverbs 11:29
- Stirring up conflict is condemned in Proverbs 10
- The man who hates his wife is described as doing violence to the very person he should protect in Malachi 2:16
- Verbal abuse, hurtful words, damaging gossip, insults and hateful slander are condemned in Matthew 5:22, Proverbs 18:21 and James 3:9)
- Twisting words is condemned in Psalm 56:5
- Calling wrong “right” and right “wrong” — a common domestic abuse behavior that we refer to today as gaslighting — is condemned in Malachi 2:17
- Threatening others is condemned in Psalm 73-8
- Cursing, lying and threatening are called out as evil in Psalm 10:7
- Secret and shameful ways are condemned by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:2

Instead of abuse and violence, the Bible promotes peace (*shalom*) between people.

Shalom is a kind of peace that means that each person experiences well-being, positive relationships, security and safety from harm. God wants peace to permeate all of creation. It is what we see when we read the first pages of the Bible and encounter the Garden of Eden — where there is perfect harmony and peace between Adam and Eve, with God and with creation. It is where we see a gracious mutual submission between Adam and Eve.

Jesus came into the world in order that, through his work on the cross, we might access peace with God and a renewed peace with one another and creation. He came that we might stop battling against one another (Isaiah 2:4). The ultimate fulfillment of Jesus’s work is described in Revelation 21, where we read of the end of all that is shameful and deceitful and of the healing of the nations and the restoration of the kind of peace between people and God that was enjoyed before sin entered the world.

God loves justice and establishes equity (Psalm 99:4).

Amos 5:24 says: *But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.*

As intimate partner violence is an unjust misuse of a person's power, it stands to reason that God wants justice for the one who is subject to intimate partner violence. Church leaders and all Christians should stand up and defend those who are subject to it. In Ezekiel 34, we read of the judgment of God on leaders who do not take care of the weak and tend to the injured.

Proverbs 22:24-25 counsels us not to be friends with angry or hot-tempered men.

Jesus recognized violence as a denial of justice. He taught about God's compassion for victims of violence. The story of the Good Samaritan emphasizes Jesus's teaching that victims of violence ought to be shown care and helped to heal. The position held by some people that a victim should tolerate abuse for the sake of their marriage, to honor their spouse or for the sake of not drawing attention to their spouse is a subversion of the Bible's expansive condemnation of all the behaviors associated with what we today call intimate partner violence.

Adapted from [Renew](#): *An Australian Guide for Christian Women Survivors of Domestic Abuse* 2023. Written by the Rev. Tracy Lauersen. Used with permission.

Let's Talk: Family Conversation Starters

Legend:



Adults ask Children/Youth



Children/Youth ask Adults



For Everyone

Let's Talk cards were created in response to requests from teens who wanted a framework to talk to their parents about important topics. Not just about relationships and school, but about what's going on in the world around them.

Let's Talk cards are composed to be open-ended, without a simple yes or no answer, to create a time of storytelling. Sometimes parents and grandparents feel they must always have answers for children, but that's not true. A story that includes your feelings will connect you to your children much more than having a concrete answer. Talking about ways we've been treated unfairly and even treated others unfairly can be emotionally challenging. Spend time thinking about stories you want your children and youth to hear about your experiences and what you have learned from them as your awareness of the human family has evolved. Focus on ways to use these stories to support your children to promote equality and security for themselves and the youth in their communities and to lift their voices from a young age.

All of these questions are designed to bring families together. Be prepared for answers that surprise, delight and even startle you. For instance, if your teen says they don't think you ever listen to them, take a breath and ask how they think you could be better at talking and listening to each other. If your youth is playing music with references to violence, don't just make them turn it off. Ask open-ended questions about what they like about that music, how it makes them feel and share why it concerns you, without judgment.

Instructions:

For durability, print the document on cardstock if possible. Cut the cards on the horizontal dotted lines and place them in a jar or basket on a table. There are specific questions for adults to ask children/youth, children/youth to ask adults and questions for everyone to ask and answer. Share the bible verse or psalm for each category to begin the conversation.

Let's Talk Cards can be used over several weeks at mealtime, as a family road trip resource, table talk cards for intergenerational formation sessions or printed and mailed to families in your congregation. There are also blank cards for you to add a conversation starter that is meaningful to your family or community. The possibilities are endless!

We hope you enjoy the conversations!
Episcopal Relief & Development

Women are Created in the Image of God



Adults ask Children/Youth

What are you good at? Do you know any boys/girls who are good at that, too? Should girls be allowed to try all the same things as boys? Should boys be allowed to try all the same things as girls?



Children/Youth ask Adults

When you were growing up, how were girls and boys treated the same? How were they treated differently? Did you feel like you had to act a certain way because of your [assigned] gender?



For Everyone

Being a boy or a girl isn't just one thing or another. How do we each describe ourselves, without using gendered terms (like boy, girl, man, woman)?

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
(Genesis 1:27)

Women and Motherhood



Adults ask Children/Youth

What do mothers need to help their children grow strong and healthy? What do we have that mothers in other parts of the world might not have?

(Consider watching chapters from the film [Girl Rising](#), which is free on YouTube. Parents should screen each chapter first for age appropriateness.)

<https://youtu.be/2tT8dUPKO-0?si=9wm92vla-WFVChYT>



Children/Youth ask Adults

What do you love about being a parent? What is hard about parenting because you are a woman, a man or a non-binary person?



For Everyone

How do we think mothers' lives might be different from each other, depending on society and culture, on education and access to resources like good jobs and medical care? Let's spend some time exploring the stories of [mothers around the world](#).

<https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2017/05/world/portrait-of-motherhood/>

*My child, give me your heart,
and let your eyes observe my ways.*
(Proverbs 23:26)

Equal Opportunity for Women and Girls



Adults ask Children/Youth

Who do you think makes the best decisions in our family about rules? What about decisions about how we spend our time? What about decisions about how we spend our money?



Children/Youth ask Adults

How do you decide on the rules for our family? How do you make other big decisions, like where we live and go to school? How do you decide how to spend money in our family?



For Everyone

What kinds of decisions should we all make together as a family? What kinds of decisions should parents make? What kind of decisions should kids make?

*My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.*
(Luke 1:46-48)

Creating Economic Stability for Women and Communities



Adults ask Children/Youth

Did you know that in America men usually get paid more than women to do the same work? Why do you think that might be?



Children/Youth ask Adults

Have you ever felt like you were treated differently than you would if you were a man, woman or non-binary person? Tell us about it.



For Everyone

Why do we think it's important for everyone to earn fair payment for their work? How would our community be different if everyone earned enough to take care of themselves and their families?

What woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she has found it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost."
(Luke 15:8-9)



Creating Women Leaders



Adults ask Children/Youth

What adults have meant the most to your life so far? What leaders in your school, our community, our nation and the world do you admire?



Children/Youth ask Adults

Tell us about women from our family, from your childhood or current life, in history or even in fiction who have had an impact on you.



For Everyone

Who are the women leaders our family admires? Why does it matter to hold up women in leadership positions, around the world, if we're all made in God's image?

At that time Deborah, a prophet...was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. (Judges 4:4-5)



Lifting Women's Voices



Adults ask Children/Youth

What are the words that you think describe you the best? What are the most important ways you want to be seen and treated? How are they related, or not related, to your gender identity?



Children/Youth ask Adults

What do you think your gender identity brings to your roles in life? How does being a woman/man/non-binary help you do what you do? Where are the challenges?



For Everyone

Let's imagine together, what would our home/your school/our community/our nation be like if only men could be leaders? What about if only women were in charge?

Wisdom cries out in the street, in the squares she raises her voice.
(Proverbs 1:20)



Ending Violence Against Women



Adults ask Children/Youth

Are there jobs, sports or activities that you think are just for boys or just for girls? Let's explore why we think that, or, if we don't, let's explore why anyone would think that and how we can help.



Children/Youth ask Adults

Have you ever experienced a man talking over a woman or claiming her idea as his own? What did you do, and would you handle it differently if you could go back?



For Everyone

How can our family work to support women and girls in our home, our community and in the world?

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church...help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.
(Romans 16:1-2)

My Family—Conversation Starter



Adults ask Children/Youth



Children/Youth ask Adults



For Everyone

My Family—Conversation Starter



Adults ask Children/Youth



Children/Youth ask Adults



For Everyone

Coercive Control: An Overview with Guidelines for Discussion

What we learned by listening to survivors of intimate partner violence

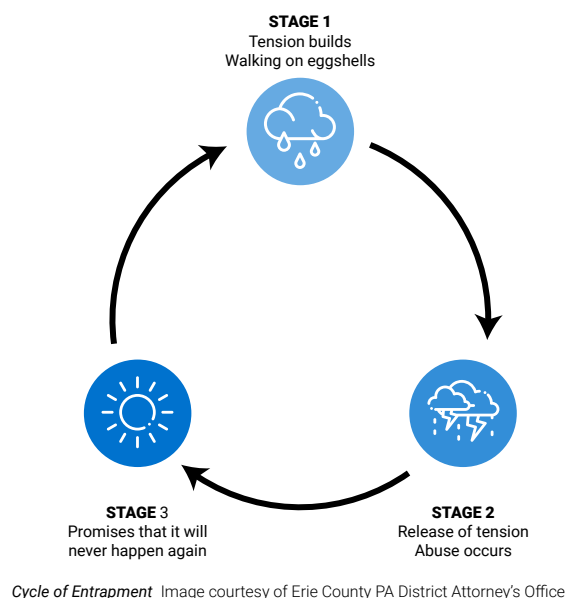
By the Rev. Tracy Lauersen

Coercive control describes a pattern of behavior by someone who wants to have power over their intimate partner and uses a range of tactics to achieve and maintain that power. They may manipulate, threaten, pressure and use intimidation to control their partner. They may use physical or sexual violence, but they may also control their partners' behavior through psychological, emotional, financial, spiritual and social forms of control.

In the past, most of our laws and consequently our understanding of intimate partner violence, focused on a single physical act or incidence of violence between partners in an intimate relationship – an occasion where a partner did something that left physical damage: a broken limb, a concussion, a cut, a bruise, a scar. What we didn't understand until we started listening to survivors of intimate partner violence was that these acts of violence were usually preceded and held together by patterns of long-term controlling behavior. Control was exerted through a range of ultimately demeaning tactics like initial love-bombing, emotional manipulation, stalking, tracking, social isolation, financial control and insults and actions that wore down their partner's confidence and autonomy.

As those who worked with victims started to develop their understanding of these patterns of control in intimate relationships, they grappled with describing this ongoing pattern of abuse with names like *intimate terrorism*, *patriarchal abuse* and *psychological and emotional abuse*. We now recognize that these ongoing patterns, campaigns or regimes of controlling behavior in an intimate relationship themselves constitute intimate partner violence. We recognize these acts of subjugation almost always precede physical and sexual violence. We now call this pattern of controlling behavior "coercive control."

Sadly, when we break down coercive control patterns into the data that we have on specific forms of violence like emotional abuse, financial abuse, stalking and sexual and physical abuse, we know that these are widespread problems with women far more likely to be victims and men more likely to be perpetrators. Coercive control is a pattern of behavior that is upheld by unhealthy stereotypes and social expectations of women and girls. (Statistics from the author's country of Australia [can be found here.](#))



"They isolated me, gaslit me; they monitored my phone calls, my emails. They'd 'borrow' my laptop. They'd control when I watched TV, went to sleep, went to church, saw my family...For all our married life, they controlled the money. I had no autonomy or independence. They'd humiliate me at church, joke about my 'infantile' faith."

(excerpts from the [National Anglican Family Violence Research Project](#))

The long-term impact of coercive control on victims can be profound and may endure long after the relationship ends. Even for the most resilient, such chronic forms of violence can leave lifelong scars.

Coercive control is different from other forms of abuse in the following ways:

- It's an ongoing pattern rather than a one-off incident.
- Its primary methods of control often exclude physical or sexual violence and focus on tactics such as emotional manipulation, surveillance, gaslighting, financial control and social isolation.
- The context for these tactics is everyday life and is often associated with women's roles as mothers, homemakers and sexual partners.
- It is subtle and indirect rather than overt and direct and sometimes victims may not recognize the dangerous situation being created in their relationship.
- It targets the victim's autonomy, agency and identity.

Healthy relationships are very different from ones that are characterized by coercive control. Healthy relationships are built on mutual trust and honest communication; in healthy relationships, people handle conflict with respect for the other partner. Healthy relationships are characterized by emotional support and empathy, equality and fairness. They respect each individual's boundaries. Physical intimacy is mutually satisfying. There is support for personal growth. Healthy relationships balance togetherness and independence.

All of us want to control things in our lives to some extent, but controlling another person through coercion and threats is not right. We are not created to dominate, control and manage the daily lives of our partners.

Discuss

1. Where have you experienced or witnessed coercive control in a job, school or institution? Was it ever addressed? Why or why not?
2. Where have you experienced or witnessed coercive control in a relationship? Was it ever addressed? Why or why not?
3. Do you believe our faith community is called to respond to this crisis in the same way we respond to other needs in our community, such as hunger, housing and other justice issues? Why or why not?

Pray

Creator God, as Christians, we know how far human relationships and intimate relationships fall short of the ideal for which we were created. We are all created in your image. The disrespect of one's partner through coercive control and its power tactics is a tragic and sinful rejection of ones whom you love. It is a denial of their inherent value as your image bearers. It is a self-gratifying power play. Jesus showed us a better way. He pushed back against unhealthy societal norms that saw women disrespected. He felt under no obligation to insist on his power in any relationship. We resolve to follow his lead to recognize and embrace our own worth as those created in your image and to acknowledge our responsibility to see the worth in others and to treat them with respect, especially those with whom we share our lives. We pray especially for victims of coercive control. *Amen.*

The Rev. Tracy Lauersen is an Anglican Minister and the National Program Manager of [Families and Culture for the Anglican Church of Australia's General Synod](#). She has led a national project to understand and address violence against women and men in faith communities.



The Power of Storytelling: Exploring the Transformative Power of Listening in Community

A storytelling event often reveals hidden insights by helping individuals take a deeper, richer look at their lives. Benefitting from a workshop offered by [StoryCenter](#), staff and members of the Episcopal Relief & Development leadership teams have learned how to effectively teach storytelling methods to communities that wish to reduce violence against women and girls (VAWG). In these workshops and circles of trust, women can creatively construct their personal narratives of strength and resilience and are equipped to train others, particularly women within Savings with Education (SwE) groups. The ethical storytelling process gives voice to women and a platform to share their personal stories, enabling the project to effectively capture qualitative information and subjective experiences on VAWG in a way that honors the dignity of the individual. Storytelling also allows the growing number of women Faith Leaders to hear and give voice to the lives and experiences of other women and to tell their stories as only they can.

Savings With Education (SwE)

Our micro-finance programs emphasize involving both women and men, which can be very effective in promoting awareness and women's empowerment. When women become breadwinners, they increase their role in household decision-making, which often enhances the whole family's well-being. When men and women together contribute to their community's economic growth, mutual respect and understanding flourish. Read stories of women involved in these programs and find out more on our website [here](#).

We also support the establishment of group businesses where manufacturing or processing equipment is collectively owned and operated. This arrangement allows many people to earn income without the risk or burden of a large individual investment.

"Telling the truth is an act of love, an act of resistance, an act of courage. Its end is liberation, freedom and if possible, reconciliation. But there can be no reconciliation without truth."

— The Rev. Jacqui Lewis, *Fierce Love: A Bold Path to Ferocious Courage and Rule-Breaking Kindness That Can Heal the World*

Watch [this video](#) and hear the inspiring story of one woman's experience with our work in Guatemala.

Your support of our work enables communities to journey from poverty to prosperity by:

- Providing loans and other micro-finance opportunities that enable families to generate more income
- Working with people to learn skills and develop small businesses in a variety of fields
- Promoting cooperatives to help individuals pool their resources and maximize their purchasing power
- Assisting communities in gaining access to local markets, increasing their ability to sell products for profit
- Helping farming communities increase their crop yields so the surplus can be sold for income



Newly elected officers of a savings group in Kulaadabogo, Ghana. The group named itself "Asongtaaba," which means, "We help each other." Episcopal Relief & Development partners with ADDRO in Ghana to train volunteers to lead and organize savings groups.

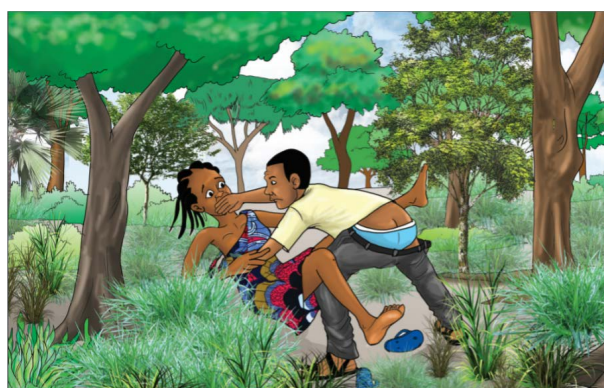
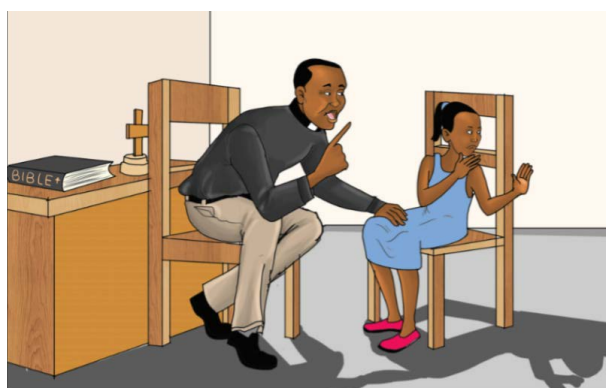
FAMA Cards in Community Engagement and Education

Fact, Association, Meaning and Action

A crucial tool for facilitating thoughtful and challenging reflections is the Fact, Association, Meaning and Action (FAMA) tool.

FAMA is a behavior-change communication tool presented as a set of visual cards used to assist faith leaders, women, girls, boys and men in identifying and understanding various social phenomena that affect women's and girls' freedoms.

Most cards depict discrimination against girls to emphasize links between early socialization and subsequent abuses such as intimate partner violence. Two images from those cards are below.



*"This journey toward justice will not be easy, but we are not alone.
She who is the Spirit is already on the move, making all things new even
in the direst circumstances."*

— Elaina Ramsey, *"The World as it Should Be,"* sojo.net

The reverse of every card contains reflections that explore the:

Facts — What do you see?

Associations — Where do you see this happening in your world?

Meaning — How and why do these things happen and how do they impact our community?

Action — What can be done about this by you and with others?

These cards work for a number of reasons, including that all persons in the circle can participate even if they cannot read and the images themselves reflect the surroundings, fashion and other situations directly related to those being engaged.

This fosters a deepening and authentic engagement of these issues, including the socio-economic factors that inhibit the education of girls, factors such as early pregnancy, sexual abuse and harassment by teachers and peers. Seeing these situations in familiar settings encourages engagement and raises the level of scrutiny, challenging long-held sentiments such as: “If you invest in a girl’s education, she will simply be married off and your investment will be wasted.”

For this toolkit, we have provided images for the fronts of the cards that might more authentically reflect the settings of your experiences instead of those used by our partners. We have kept the reverse questions for reflection the same as those in the FAMA cards used in the field.

For this activity, you will need to print the next two pages out, front to back, if possible. Introduce the FAMA cards using the information in this resource. Then, the leader holds up the image toward the circle of participants. Give them time to review the images on the FAMA cards, passing them around if the group is too large to see them well. Then, engage your community in a dialogue, using the questions on the reverse of the FAMA cards.



Rape of a woman by a man



FACTS

To help people reflect on and discuss what they have just seen.

- What do you see in the picture?
- What kind of violence?
- What is happening?
- Can you tell a story of what you think is going on?
- Is there violence?



ASSOCIATION

To help people connect the experience in the picture to their own feelings and their own lives.

- Have you ever seen anything like this before?
- Can you share an example from your own life or community?



MEANING

To help people identify and discuss the deeper meaning of the experience, the lessons to be learned, the story's importance to them, to others, and their community in general.

- How does the story of this picture and your own experiences make you feel?
- What effect does this kind of violence have on you? How does affect the community?
- How often does something like this happen?
- What can we learn from this story or from your own story?
- Why does this happen? How does it affect the woman? The man?

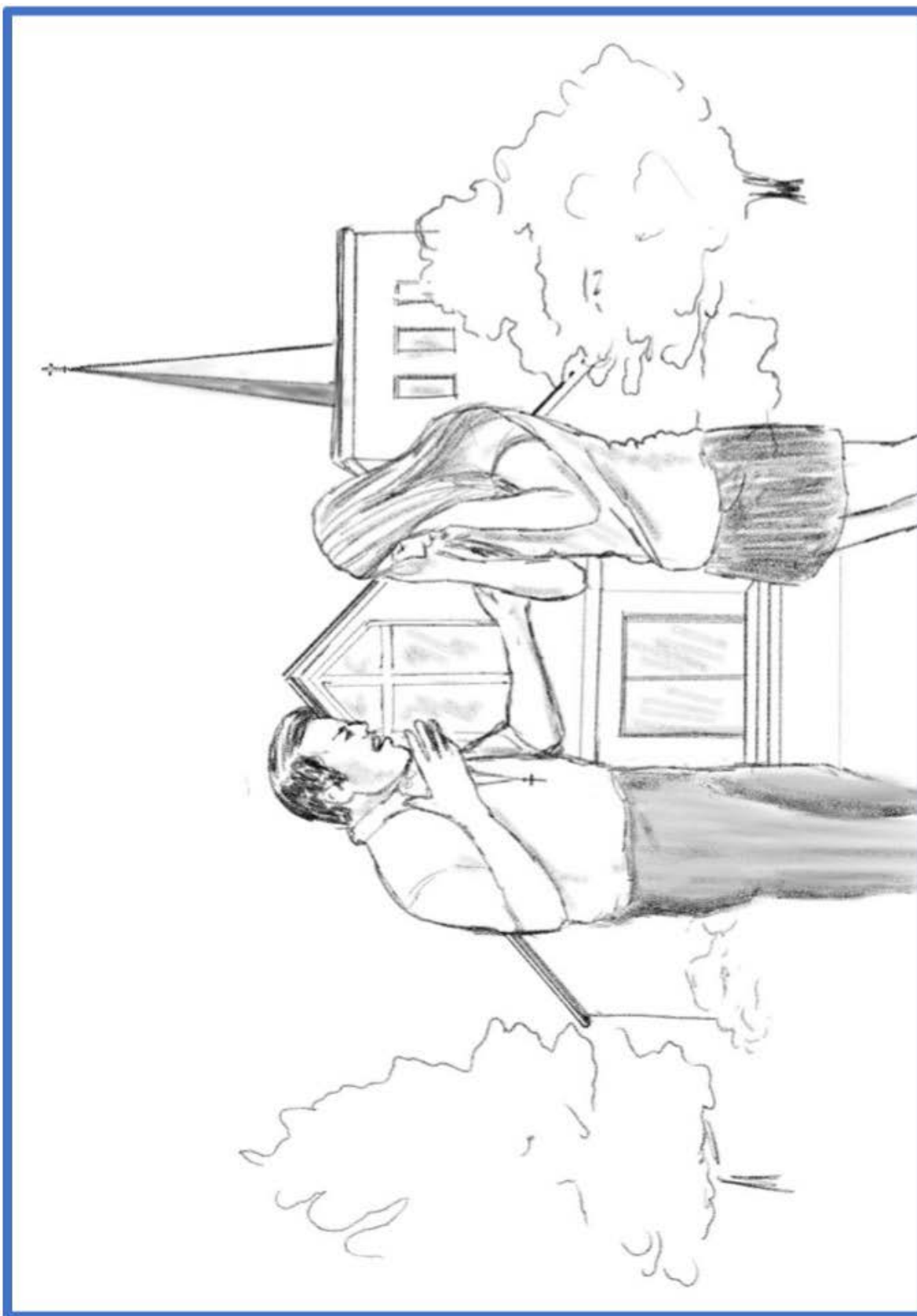


ACTION

To incite people to take action.

- What can you do about this?
- Should you work alone or with others?
- How?
- Why?
- What can you do with others?
- Beginning when?





Sexual abuse of a female child by a pastor



FACTS

To help people reflect on and discuss what they have just seen.

- What do you see in the picture?
- What kind of violence?
- What is happening?
- Can you tell a story of what you think is going on?
- Is there violence?



ASSOCIATION

To help people connect the experience in the picture to their own feelings and their own lives.

- Have you ever seen anything like this before?
- Can you share an example from your own life or community?



MEANING

To help people identify and discuss the deeper meaning of the experience, the lessons to be learned, the story's importance to them, to others, and their community in general.

- How does the story of this picture and your own experiences make you feel?
- How does this affect you or others? How does it affect the community?
- How often does something like this happen?
- What can we learn from this story and/or from your own story?
- What happens to the pastor? To the girl?



ACTION

To incite people to take action.

- What can you do to change this kind of situation?
- How?
- Should you work alone or with others?
- Why?
- What can you do with others?
- Beginning when?





Outreach & Creative Community Engagement

“What I love about the ministry of Jesus is that he identified the poor as blessed and the rich as needy . . . and then he went and ministered to them both. This, I think, is the difference between charity and justice. Justice means moving beyond the dichotomy between those who need and those who supply and confronting the frightening and beautiful reality that we desperately need one another. That’s what I love about the Kingdom: For the poor, there is food. For the rich, there is joy. For all of us, there is grace.”

— Rachel Held Evans, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*

When your community chooses to make seeking justice for women and girls a priority, partnering with Episcopal Relief & Development helps you do so in a way that creates lasting change for all.

In this section, you will find:

- » *Ideas to Collaborate with Local Faith Leaders and Agencies*
- » *Building Community with Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Engagement*
- » *Information about 16 Days of Activism*
- » *“Signs of Support:” Signs, Brochures and Actions*
- » *Becoming a Ministry Partner with Episcopal Relief & Development*

Other ideas for engaging your community:

- Start a partnership with a local women’s shelter, safehouse or other non-profit supporting and protecting women and girls
- Invite and host a local men’s group to talk about violence prevention
- Use your connections with local scouting and athletic teams to open doors for speakers to engage young men and women about issues of imbalances of power and equality for women and girls
- Invite social services and vocational skills agencies to host a job and training fair for women in your space
- Invite a community politician to explain current legislation affecting the health and welfare of women and girls, including housing, healthcare and financing

Expanding Engagement

Invite an Episcopal Relief & Development Ministry Partner to host a mock Savings with Education gathering for groups on your campus or in homes and learn about the powerful way this process changes the lives of women.

The Episcopal Asset Map

Let seekers and others in the community know what you are doing to build up disaster resilience and recovery. Find faith communities with whom to share resources and ministry outreach initiatives.

The Episcopal Asset Map is located [here](#). Check your listing. If you notice something is missing or needs updated, simply click on the survey in the right-hand column and make your suggested changes. The edits will be forwarded to your Diocesan Map Administrator for approval and updating.

Ideas to Collaborate with Local Faith Leaders & Agencies

“This, I think, is the difference between charity and justice. Justice means moving beyond the dichotomy between those who need and those who supply and confronting the frightening and beautiful reality that we desperately need one another.”

— Rachel Held Evans, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*

As respected members of society, especially in rural communities, faith leaders are key to preventing and responding to violence against women and girls. The deep roots and influence of these faith leaders in their communities mean they are uniquely positioned to champion the empowerment of women and drive social change.

We recognize, however, that fostering change in attitudes and behavior starts with the faith leaders themselves. This project provides space for these leaders to reflect on their role and moral responsibility in preventing and responding to violence against women and girls and confront their own — sometimes harmful — views on cultural norms for women and men regarding relationships and power.

“Faith leaders are now creating safe spaces and facilitating meaningful dialogue amongst their congregants about violence. Women faith leaders, in particular, are increasingly taking a leading role in supporting women and girls by sharing their own experiences and reflecting on the underlying causes of violence against women and girls.” ~ Ernest Cajuste, Senior Program Officer at Episcopal Relief & Development.

Using This Toolkit to Make a Plan

1. Use a supported process of experiential learning and self-reflection to examine your community's beliefs and actions around human dignity, community and well-being.
2. Build skills in contextualizing holy Scripture, counseling and communications for speaking out against VAWG.
3. Create local coalitions with whom you can participate in dialogue, strengthening their engagement with one another and their institutions, improving links to national, county and district-level services and accountabilities.
4. Act and speak out against VAWG at churches, mosques, synagogues, radio programs, schools, local and national task force, meetings and conferences and provide/improve support to survivors.

Communities that hear and see faith, youth and community leaders acting and speaking out against VAWG experience positive shifts and supportive behaviors toward women's rights and empowerment and against VAWG.

Your actions have the opportunity to:

- Strengthen self-awareness at individual and interpersonal levels
- Strengthen, influence and impact the community
- Strengthen influence and impact at organizational and institutional levels
- Use public platforms to speak out against VAWG
- Transform behaviors

Building Community with Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Engagement

ABCD is an approach that catalyzes change and development based on utilizing the existing gifts and capacities of people and their communities.

The ABCD model discourages development brought in from an outside source but rather energizes change and development from within. For truly sustainable development, it's important to focus on a community's strengths rather than solely its needs. The important factor is finding the area where local assets meet local needs.

How We Use ABCD

Our programmatic philosophy recognizes that genuine, sustainable change happens only when it comes from within an individual and a community. This recognition motivates us to strategize in a way that promotes healing, empowerment and a thriving community.

Through a more intentional application of asset-focused principles, Episcopal Relief & Development seeks to transform how we view ourselves and, in turn, connect with colleagues, partners, communities and constituencies. In order to easily identify assets — or gifts — we've categorized them into seven groups (with a few examples of each):

For truly sustainable development, it's important to focus on a community's strengths versus solely its needs. The important factor is finding the area where local assets meet local needs.

Human: people and their skills, knowledge, experiences, personalities, ideas

Natural: land, water, forests, wildlife, sun

Physical: fixed, structural or man-made buildings, homes, churches

Social: relationships, friendships, networks, traditions, cultures

Economic: cash, capital, savings, wages, pensions

Temporal: time, daylight, seasons, age

Spiritual: faith, hope and love, prayer, worship

Building Community with ABCD Engagement: Worksheet

Episcopal Relief & Development implements ABCD engagement successfully across all priorities. This includes being intentional about cultivating not just the people doing the work but also the essential work of connecting groups and agencies and building strong and long-lasting networks for change.

Individually or with your team, use this worksheet to brainstorm the many assets in and around your faith community. Prepare to be surprised, to need to add lots more space in each column and to be inspired to start making connections right away.

Here are questions to consider as you fill this out:

- Who are the people in our faith community? How are they connected to each other and our neighborhood?
- What are they passionate about?
- Are there artists, teachers, workers, listeners, dreamers?
- Do they represent a variety of cultures?
- What is the ecology of our space? Do we have a field? Meeting rooms? Gathering spaces? A rain or vegetable garden? A scary/cool bell tower or undercroft for exploring during a fellowship event?
- How frequent and welcoming are our community prayer and worship observances and do we directly invite neighbors to participate?

Human – people and their skills, knowledge, experiences, personalities, ideas	Natural – land, water, forests, wildlife, sun	Physical – fixed, structural or man-made, buildings, homes, churches	Social – relationships, friendships, networks, traditions, cultures
Economic – cash, capital, savings, wages, pensions	Temporal – time, daylight, seasons, age	Spiritual – faith, hope and love, prayer, worship	

Information about 16 Days of Activism

During General Convention In 2024, The Episcopal Church [resolved](#) that Episcopal institutions and individuals participate in opportunities for activism and advocacy, including but not limited to:

- Engaging with the [Office of Government Relations \(OGR\)](#) on issues of gender justice and gender-based violence and taking action on action alerts through OGR's Episcopal Public Policy Network as well as through The Episcopal Church's work at the United Nations and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
- Participating in the 16 Days of Activism sponsored by United Nations Women
- Using Episcopal Relief and Development's 16 Days of Activism Toolkit

The [16 Days toolkit](#) is a part of Episcopal Relief & Development's work to engage community and faith leaders to act and speak out against violence against women and girls in our communities around the world.

Our programs create interfaith networks and provide tools, skills and support for faith leaders to challenge the attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate injustice and discrimination against women and girls.

Drawing heavily from the learnings and successes of our work around the world, the toolkit provides a framework, divided into 16 Actions, for engagement that includes praying, learning and acting together.

While these actions parallel the 16 Days of Activism, individual and community users are encouraged to see the toolkit as a living document that can be referred to and utilized for all 365 days of the year.

"As our societies have been forced into fresh recognition that women in all walks of life have suffered unspoken trauma at the hands of male aggressors and harassers, we have become convinced that The Episcopal Church must work even harder to create a church that is not simply safe, but holy, humane and decent. e must commit to treating every person as a child of God, deserving of dignity and respect."

— The Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry, Former Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church and the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, Former President of the House of Deputies

“Signs of Support:” Signs, Brochures & Actions

Episcopal Relief & Development recognizes that the global epidemic of violence against women and girls impedes the transformation of just societies, erodes the human assets and strengths of a community, causes severe health problems for women and children and stunts health and economic activity. Learn more about how we are taking action [here](#).

The Episcopal Diocese of New York’s Task Force on Intimate Partner Violence created bathroom signs, shown below on the right, which you can find [here](#). Available in both English and Spanish, they are available for faith communities to display not only in their bathrooms but also in area businesses and restaurants, reminding women that they are beloved by God and that if they are in danger, help is available. The image on the left is an example of the many bathroom signs available from other intimate partner violence response agencies. You can also create a brochure [like this one](#), updated for your community.

We encourage you to modify these ideas to suit your own community’s needs and local resources.



Additional Ways Your Team Can Show Support for Women & Girls

Before you create signs and brochures guiding people toward help from your team, it's important to be ready to respond. Seek guidance from experts in your community.

Here are things to consider as your team prepares your community to lead:

- Have a list of resources available, including brochures like the one listed above. Survivors, faith leaders and key members of the community should also have these resources on hand. A local brochure should include agencies, counselors, support groups, batterers' intervention programs, attorneys, shelters, information about courts, etc.
- Display information: where can people go for help? Make sure there is information, phone numbers, lists of resources, support groups, agencies, hotlines, legal advocacy, etc. Information should be put in the weekly bulletin or on the website. You can share the city's hotline number and have a section that defines intimate partner violence, etc.
- Include survivor testimonies in your teaching moments. This includes adults who were exposed to intimate partner violence as children and men who have transformed their lives. This is a powerful way to illuminate the issue and to lessen the taboos around talking about domestic violence.



Ghanaian Health Service sponsored by Episcopal Relief & Development's program partner, ADDRO, held a workshop on health that covered prevention of diseases such as malaria, diarrhea, and pneumonia. Pre-natal care was also discussed along with breastfeeding and diet.

- Remember: this is not just a women's issue. It is a community issue and if your faith community is going to take intimate partner violence seriously, the men of the community must partner with the women and work with other men to address it. Men's retreats, women's retreats, conferences, etc., are excellent places to address family violence.
- Include discussions about intimate partner violence in any premarital counseling and marriage seminars.
- Exploring these worship, formation ABCD and engagement resources will expand your awareness of how VAWG impacts members both inside, and outside of your community. It is important to take seriously the capacity you have to support those struggling with intimate partner violence. Even when interest is strong, we encourage you to partner directly with local organizations already engaged in this complicated work. Leaning on your assets, this partnership and offering of resources can come in many forms:
 - * **Practical needs:** Housing, food, transportation, clothing, etc., for survivors and their children. Will you create a fund?
 - * **Shelter:** Do members of the community have space to offer temporary shelter?
 - * **Court accompaniment:** Will members of the support team be available to accompany the survivor to court?
 - * **Ongoing spiritual and emotional support:** Will members of the support team check in with survivor regularly, pray with her, offer to spend time with children, listen compassionately or host a support group?
 - * **Accountability:** Will someone be a mentor/ sponsor/accountability partner to an abusive partner? Will you be willing to host a support group for those who have been abused?

Becoming a Ministry Partner with Episcopal Relief & Development

Maybe you are called to be a Ministry Partner. Ask yourself:

- Are you moved to connect your community to the wider world, showing how your community can be a beacon of God's love in neighborhoods near and far?
- Do you want to help ensure that women around the world live lives free from violence and are treated with dignity and respect?
- Are you interested in breaking cycles of poverty and dependence by partnering with people worldwide as they transform their own lives and communities in sustainable and life-giving ways?
- Do you want to promote healthy development for children under age six so that they can reach their full potential?
- Are you moved to support the most vulnerable communities that are disproportionately impacted by disasters?

If you answered "Yes" to these questions, then you have the makings of a Ministry Partner!

What Do Ministry Partners Do?

Ministry Partners answer the call to minister to their congregations, dioceses, provinces, seminaries and other faith communities, helping them be part of working together for lasting change.

They do this through:

- Learning about Episcopal Relief & Development's programs
- Raising awareness about Episcopal Relief & Development in their congregations, dioceses and across The Episcopal Church
- Encouraging and supporting fundraising and awareness campaigns
- Receiving support from Episcopal Relief & Development's staff and network of volunteers

Congregational, Diocesan, Provincial and Seminary Ministry Partner roles are available.

How Do I Become a Ministry Partner?

Send an email to engagement@episcopalrelief.org. Include your name, congregation, congregation city and diocese. The Engagement team is ready to answer your questions and help you start your ministry!



Fun & Fundraising with Episcopal Relief & Development

*“Fundraising is proclaiming what we believe in such a way
that we offer other people an opportunity to participate with us
in our vision and mission.”*

– Henri Nouwen, Dutch priest and theologian

Thanks to leaders like you and faith communities across the church, awareness about violence against women and girls (VAWG) near and far is growing. VAWG violates the human rights and dignity of individuals, communities and whole societies. Episcopal Relief & Development works with local faith leaders and community groups to apply social and behavior change strategies to foster attitudes, beliefs and norms that advance human dignity and community well-being and prevent and condemn VAWG.

We are contributing to research that highlights ways faith leaders can galvanize real, social and cultural change. Our work engages community and faith leaders to take action and speak out against violence. Our programs play a pivotal role in creating interfaith networks that provide tools, skills and support for leaders to challenge the attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate injustice and discrimination.

With your financial support, we can expand our capacity to make lasting changes in how we care for women, girls and families and reach our goal of reducing violence against women and girls.

We’ve gathered everything you need to plan and carry out meaningful fundraising experiences: ideas for events and outreach; tips for engaging individuals, your congregation or community; and ways to share powerful stories of hope and transformation. Using these materials, you will:

LEARN

Learn about how the work and methodology of Episcopal Relief & Development helps to strengthen communities around the world.

SHARE

Share about the work of Episcopal Relief & Development with congregations and communities.

GIVE

Give a gift of your time, talent, or treasure to help nurture communities to their full potential.

Your generosity expands the reach of our collective impact and brings us one step closer to a more just and resilient world.

Let's get started — working together for lasting change!

In this section you will find:

- » *Get Creative with Gifts for Life*
- » *How to Plan a Churchwide or Diocesan Campaign*
- » *Helpful Tips for a Successful Campaign*
- » *How to Plan an Individual or Team Fundraising Online Campaign*
- » *Fundraising with Special Fellowship & Worship Activities*
 - » *Hosting an Alternative Gift Market*
 - » *Dedicated Special Offerings*
- » *Opportunities for Local & Diocesan Grants and Individual Support*
- » *Individual Giving Opportunities*

Our Pledge to Donors

Episcopal Relief & Development is committed to using all donations appropriately and effectively to serve and support people in need worldwide. In addition to maintaining the highest standards for internal accountability, we are involved in multi-agency efforts to improve practices and reporting within the relief and development community. We are committed to accountability and making sure your gifts are used effectively.

Episcopal Relief & Development is grateful to receive support from many congregations and individuals across The Episcopal Church and other faith groups. We can only carry out our transformative programs thanks to everyone's compassionate and sustained giving.

Get Creative with *Gifts for Life*

Here are some fun ideas for fellowship, and other ways the communities you serve as a Ministry Partner can support our [Gifts for Life](#) program:

- Organize a **read-a-thon**, **dance-a-thon** or **walk-a-thon**. Collect pledges from family and friends for each mile or hour of your activity.
- Organize a weekend **car wash** and use the proceeds to purchase *Gifts for Life*.
- Arrange a **silent auction** for your church and community members. Ask members of your congregation to donate items for the auction.
- Have your adult or children's Sunday school class host and make an inexpensive **dinner** with an admission charge. Decide together what *Gifts for Life* selections to purchase with the proceeds.
- Encourage your children to **write letters** to family members, friends, classmates and club or team members to raise money to purchase a special gift. Have them mention that the gift will make a difference for children in need.
- Sponsor a church or neighborhood **garage sale**. Gather gently used books, crafts, clothes and household goods to sell, and use the money you raise to purchase items from the *Gifts for Life* catalog.
- Hold a **wine-tasting** event and use the proceeds to purchase clean water or other basic needs for a family or community.
- Instead of going out to dinner with friends, hold a **potluck** and put the money saved into a basket. Then, go through the *Gifts for Life* catalog as a group and choose items based on the amount collected.
- Hold a **game night** and ask people to donate to participate. The group can then decide together what gifts to purchase with the collected funds.
- **"Get the Warden's Goat"**: Raise enough money to buy a goat in honor of your church's warden. In the same way, you can "get the priest's goat," the treasurer's, the auditor's or whomever you choose.
- **Another fun idea**: The next time you visit with your partners in the communities you serve, spend a little time telling them about additional and varied ways they can engage our *Gifts for Life* opportunity for gift giving. Instead of holding a regular family, office or group gift exchange, ask them to consider pooling funds that would have been spent and choose [Gifts for Life](#) as a group, or give gifts to everyone based on their various interests. For example:
 - * For your child's teacher: [Nurture & Nourish the Earliest Learners](#) or [Educate Children Orphaned by AIDS](#)
 - * For new parents or grandparents: [Care for Moms & Newborns](#)
 - * For an avid gardener: [Seeds, Tools & Training](#), [Fruit Trees](#) or a [Family Garden](#)
 - * For a farmer: a [Cow](#), [Pig](#) or a [Flock of Chickens](#)
 - * For someone in health care: [Emergency Food Relief](#) or [Disaster Relief Kit](#)
 - * In honor of a baptism: [Clean Water](#)

- * For campers: [Mosquito Nets](#)
- * For a banker, accountant or church treasurer: [Micro-credit Loans for Women](#)

Adapted from a resource created by Barb Hagan, former Ministry Partner of the Episcopal Diocese of Montana. Find out how you can become a Ministry Partner by emailing us at engagement@episcopalrelief.org.



FAMA cards being used in Ghana to teach Early Childhood Development best practices.

How to Plan a Churchwide or Diocesan Campaign

Here are some simple steps to get you started on a successful fundraising campaign for Episcopal Relief & Development.

STEP 1: Assess Interest and Capacity in a Campaign

- Begin conversations about a fundraising campaign.
- Discover if there is energy and excitement for one of Episcopal Relief & Development's priority areas: Early Childhood Development, Women & Girls, Climate Resilience and Disaster Response.
- Talk to members of your congregation, your rector and your deacons.

STEP 2: Develop and Discuss a Plan

- Goal: Will there be a total fundraising goal?
- Timing: Set the duration for one day, one month or a timeline that works for your team.
- Launch: Discuss when to launch and announce the campaign to your community.

STEP 3: Pre-Launch Preparation or Campaign Planning

- Prepare for the launch.
- Ensure the rector will share announcements about the campaign.
- Determine who will speak for the group.
- Develop a presentation on your effort.
- Utilize the resources and toolkits on our [website](#) to generate ideas for your campaign.

STEP 4: Announce the Campaign

- Present an overview of Episcopal Relief & Development
- Share your local campaign fundraising goal (if you have one), proposed timeline and ways people can get involved.
- Ask the church leadership to reinforce this message as well.
- Organize a campaign booth to provide resources to members and collect donations.

Step 5: Send Updates on Campaign

- Keep members informed on campaign progress to maintain momentum.
- Use weekly announcement times to share your progress.
- Schedule emails or website updates for your community.
- Share stories and photos of your efforts on the website or weekly e-newsletters.

Step 6: Celebrate Success!

- Announce the completion of the campaign, recognize leadership and thank everyone!
- Publish an article in your church bulletin and/or newsletter and the community newspaper.
- Inform us of your activities so we can share and celebrate your success!

Helpful Tips for a Successful Campaign

Your Role

- Re-introduce yourself to leadership where you serve as a Ministry Partner, including any updated contact information, especially if you are new to this role.
Email us at engagement@episcopalrelief.org with any questions.
- Spread the word with your local bishop, clergy and church leadership to raise awareness about the Episcopal Relief & Development fundraising campaign.
- Share stories about the benefits of the campaign for your communities.
- Be a resource for information and material; see the website for toolkits and additional resources.
- Your successes, large and small, can build awareness and encourage creative and exciting fundraisers that engage and inspire your diocese, parish and community.

Examples of Awareness-Building

- Share stories about how Episcopal Relief & Development's programs nurture early childhood development, reduce violence against women and girls, strengthen communities' climate resilience and provide support in the wake of disasters.
- Offer prayers in support of the work of Episcopal Relief & Development.
- Invite a speaker from Episcopal Relief & Development to join an adult forum or other meeting and speak about our work. Reach out to engagement@episcopalrelief.org.

Examples of Fundraising

- Organize bake sales, movie nights, Super Bowl parties or other activities to support the campaign — your imagination is the limit!
- Share the donation link via email and social media to suggest donations for birthdays and other occasions "in lieu of gifts."

For More Information

- Explore our [Faith Formation and Educational Resources](#).
- Print resources, including Hope Chest, pew envelopes and brochures, can be ordered through Forward Movement. The resources are free at forwardmovement.org/episcopalrelief.org.

Be sure to share your stories with Episcopal Relief & Development. We will be highlighting the work of communities across the country. You can send updates to engagement@episcopalrelief.org.

Questions? Send an email to: engagement@episcopalrelief.org

Coming Soon: Individual or Team Fundraising Online Campaign

Online fundraising is an easy and effective way to raise money. Soon you will be able to raise money as an individual or create a team and ask others to join you. Our online fundraising platform is GoFundMe Pro (formerly called Classy). GoFundMe is the leader in online fundraising and has been in the business for many years. Their platform is easy to use, secure, and will launch on our website soon! Check back for updates.

It will include a step-by-step instruction guide to create your fundraising page on GoFundMe Pro.

You will also be able to create an online fundraiser specifically for one of our priority areas.

- Early Childhood Development
- Women and Girls
- Climate Resilience
- Disaster Response

Suggestions for successful online fundraising:

Personalize your page. Make your page as personal as possible. Add pictures, customize your bio and talk about your experience with Episcopal Relief & Development. Tell your family and friends why they should help us work together for lasting change!

Target goal. Give yourself a target goal to hit that is realistic but also aggressive! There are impact donation levels for each campaign so your supporters can see the impact of their donations.

Activate your network. Use the tools available on your fundraising page to contact your network and ask for donations. Social media, email and phone calls are great ways to engage people you know. Let them know what you're doing and ask them for support. Make it clear that you need their help!

Draft potential donor list. Think of people that you can count on for their support – friends, family, neighbors and co-workers.

Sharing. Share your link on Facebook and Instagram or your other social media accounts. You can even create a video to summarize what you're doing.

Ask, then follow up. People want to support you, but everyone is busy and forgets. Follow up with your supporters and send updates to help remind them of your efforts. Personalize your requests.

Thank them. Be sure to personally thank your supporters, either by email, phone, eCards or in person. Your supporters want to know you appreciate them.

Share your success! Reach out to your family and friends when you reach campaign milestones. Halfway to your goal is a great time to share your campaign again.

Birthdays and more. Instead of asking for birthday and holiday gifts, ask for donations! Ask your family and friends to share your page with their networks. You will need help so the more people you connect with, the better.



Caregiver training in Okatana, Namibia using FAMA cards (Fact-Association-Meaning-Action). Episcopal Relief & Development created the FAMA cards as a tool used to help communities discuss and understand issues related to Early Childhood Development and other development topics.

Fundraising with Fellowship & Worship Activities

Fundraising within a faith community goes beyond simply raising money; it is an opportunity to embody our values, come together with a shared purpose and create a meaningful impact in the world.

When we give, we put our faith into action, demonstrating compassion, generosity and love for our neighbors.

Supporting Episcopal Relief & Development through a special event such as an Alternative Gift Market, Dedicated Offering or Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday is a great way to bring your faith community together and provide people with an opportunity to connect more deeply with our mission.

All ages can participate in praying, “shopping” and giving for friends near and far. The more creative your team can be with these opportunities, the more engaging the learning and fellowship can be.

Alternative Gift Market

An [Alternative Gift Market](#) is a meaningful way to give a gift that inspires transformation.

It’s a festive event where members of your community can “shop” for goats, bees and all kinds of gifts that help people in need around the world. Purchasing gifts in honor of friends, family, colleagues and community helpers becomes a welcome alternative for gift exchanges.

Consider hosting the Market on its own or combined with a church picnic, outreach fair, holiday bazaar, at the end of a Vacation Bible School celebration or even at your annual meeting.

What better way to celebrate loved ones than with gifts that reflect our faith, compassion and hope for a better world?

Here are a few creative ideas and resources to get you started:

- [How to Hold an Alternative Gift Market](#)
- [Materials and Resources for the Alternative Gift Market](#)

Dedicated Offering

Ask them to consider dedicating special community offerings to support the mission and ministry of Episcopal Relief & Development.

When disaster strikes, make certain your congregation knows about our prayers for inclusion in their worship leaflets and our bulletin [inserts](#) and encourage them to use these resources. You might also suggest they host a special outreach service or designate Pentecost Sunday as a way to celebrate the church's birthday with a gift to Episcopal Relief & Development. Other ideas include a special collection honoring a member of your community, thanking their teachers or staff or identifying parishioners who may choose to observe milestones like baptism, anniversaries or memorials with gifts to Episcopal Relief & Development.

Share with them the beautiful bulletin inserts, informational pamphlets and donation envelopes we provide, which help them share the good work of Episcopal Relief & Development and the opportunity to give. They are available for free from Forward Movement on their [website](#).

These resources are another easy way for them to educate and inspire generosity by highlighting the powerful, life-changing work their gifts make possible.

Honor and Memorial Gifts – Gifts That Save Lives and Transform Communities

Looking for ways to celebrate or remember loved ones? Our Honor and Memorial Gift Program is another wonderful and easy way for individuals to commemorate significant milestones such as birthdays, holidays and anniversaries.

At your request, Episcopal Relief & Development will send a printed card to your honoree or the family of the memorial gift recipient indicating that a gift has been made in the individual's honor or memory. Attractive eCards are offered on our website as another option when you make your donation. More information can be found on our website [here](#).



Delia Vasques, a PDM woman entrepreneur from Uniles, Somoto, shares, "I have learned that women can manage a business just as well as men. The importance of knowing how to value yourself and sharing it with other women is very important." She joined CEPAD's PDM women entrepreneurs back in 2021, and she's been selling honey and soap back ever since. She's the only one selling honey in this community so she doesn't face any competition at the moment. She sells an average of 3-4 bottles of honey per day.

Opportunities for Local & Diocesan Grants and Individual Support

Whether you're interested in a seasonal focus, a year-long effort or a special initiative, our team is here to support you every step of the way.

Episcopal Relief & Development staff can provide planning guidance, promotional resources and fundraising tools to help you build a campaign that fits your community and inspires meaningful engagement. Email us with your questions at engagement@episcopalrelief.org.

Does Your Faith Community Offer Grants?

If your faith community has a grant program or mission-giving fund, we invite you to consider Episcopal Relief & Development as a potential recipient.

Our programs can align with your mission as we work with local partners to nurture early childhood development, reduce violence against women and girls, strengthen communities' climate resilience, and provide support in the wake of disasters.

Simply email engagement@episcopalrelief.org to let us know how to access and submit an application and supporting materials. We would be honored to be part of your community's outreach and impact.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to working with you.

Plan a Diocesan Campaign with Us

Looking to make a broader impact?

Invite your diocese to partner with Episcopal Relief & Development by contributing from their funds and grants, or by launching a diocesan-wide campaign that brings people together in faith, generosity, and service.

As an Episcopal Relief & Development Ministry Partner, you have the tools you need to share our work's success stories and invite an entire diocesan community to join us. Together, we can strengthen connections across congregations and create lasting change in communities worldwide.

Ready to get started? Reach out to us at engagement@episcopalrelief.org to learn more.

Individual Giving Opportunities

Your generosity enables us to unlock community transformation and support people affected by poverty, hunger, disaster injustice, poverty, disaster and climate change. We invite you to consider our giving opportunities and find out how you can play a part in our work worldwide.

All of the links below, with information about electronically contributing, can be found on our website [here](#).

Our donation process is easy to use, quick and secure:

- **Donate Now:** [Give](#) a gift that will help transform a community.
- **Sustainers Circle:** Become a sustainer of Episcopal Relief & Development's work and learn how you can [give monthly](#) to support our programs.
- **Planned Giving:** Your planned gifts can leave a lasting impact on people and communities around the world. [Learn more.](#)
- **Other Giving Opportunities:** Episcopal Relief & Development has several giving opportunities so supporters can contribute in a way that suits their individual needs. [Find the best option for you.](#)
- **Coming Soon: Individual Online Fundraising Campaigns:** Share the opportunity to make an act of love. Start an individual fundraising campaign and inspire others to LEARN, SHARE and GIVE to support the work of Episcopal Relief & Development.

Donations can also be made by mail.

Please mail checks and money order donations to our updated mailing address below. You may also indicate preferences for designated *Gifts for Life* or honorariums simply by printing out the forms and including them with your gift.

Episcopal Relief & Development
PO Box 5121
Boone, IA 50950 – 0121

WE BELIEVE our life-giving, loving, liberating God gives all, gathers all and draws all towards shared wholeness with one another and the concerns of those struggling with poverty, disaster and disease.

WE BELIEVE in faith's power to guide us in honoring the dignity of every human being and in building bridges between and beyond ourselves to the world.

WE BELIEVE bridges built with local presence and assets can transform individuals, communities and systems for better.

WE BELIEVE systemic change requires collaborative, just and reconciling leadership.

WE BELIEVE we are called to right the wrongs and sins of the past, even as we strive to repent of those sins and any we continue to commit.

WE BELIEVE the present state of the world does not fulfill the dream God intends for us.

WE BELIEVE in urgent, bold and inclusive humanitarian action that reaches the most vulnerable, builds toward tomorrow and fosters and spreads hope and healing.

WE BELIEVE in Working Together for Lasting Change.

We ask God to bless this work.



Thank you for using this *Grace, Justice & Hope — for Women & Girls Everywhere* toolkit.

We hope that it has raised your awareness of the status of women and girls in your community, around the world and our shared responsibility to guide, guard and protect them.

Please visit our website for additional toolkits from Episcopal Relief & Development that will guide your community to join us in making lasting change around our other priorities:

- *Joy & Wonder* — Faithfully Engaging Early Childhood Development
- *Nurture & Sustain* — Action-Based Climate Resilience
- *Restore & Renew* — Responding & Rebuilding when Disaster Strikes

For over 80 years, Episcopal Relief & Development has worked with an extensive network of faith and community partners to advance lasting change in communities affected by injustice, poverty, disaster and climate change. Inspired by our faith, we reach over three million people each year by focusing on four interconnected priorities: nurturing the potential of caregivers and young children, reducing violence against women and girls, strengthening communities' resilience to climate change and facilitating humanitarian response to disasters. Together with our partners, we leverage what's working well to drive impact, learning and sustainability. Together, we create lasting change.

www.episcopalrelief.org