WEEK 3: PROTECTING YOUNG PEOPLE

This week we will reflect on the importance of protecting our children and young people from the influence of those involved in County Lines drug trafficking.

I will contend with those who contend with you, and your children I will save.

Isaiah 49:25

Each section of this course includes a short animation telling the story of an individual who has been impacted by County Lines. These films could be upsetting. Choices should be offered so participants can watch them or take a short break instead. Sources of emotional support should be signposted in case they trigger any distress – more details on this is available in the Introduction of the full course pack.

DANIELLE’S STORY

Watch the animation of Danielle’s story and discuss:

How can we advocate for people like Danielle to people who have power and influence?

THE PASSAGE: PSALM 139: 7-14

Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
   if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
   if I settle on the far side of the sea,
10 even there your hand will guide me,
   your right hand will hold me fast.
11 If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me
   and the light become night around me,”
12 even the darkness will not be dark to you;
   the night will shine like the day,
   for darkness is as light to you.
13 For you created my inmost being;
   you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
WEEK 3: PROTECTING YOUNG PEOPLE

REFLECTION AND PRAYER

In the midst of confusion and struggle, the Lord’s “right-hand will hold me fast”. This faith gives Christians confidence to confront darkness and false dreams. Deep in each person is the light of Christ – the light that lightens every creature.

How can we help young people raise their dreams higher – and so taste better promises than fake friendships and grubby earnings?

What might local churches provide to offer a taste of new life that develops light and banishes darkness, and invites fun and fulfilment by creating gracious fellowship with others?

PRAYER

Heavenly Lord, help us to invite others to taste the wonder of your promises and the beauty of your light, so that together with those most susceptible to lies and deceit, we may better know your ways in our midst, and be made whole together in your mercy.
Amen

PRACTICAL ACTION:

Complete the practical action exercise on the handout sheet.
WEEK 3: PRACTICAL ACTION AND PRAYER

Using the graphic on practical actions for protecting our children, make a list of all the things you know your church and community do to support and protect children.

Then think about where there may be gaps in support and pray about the opportunities for addressing these gaps.
WEEK 3: BACKGROUND READING – PROTECTING YOUNG PEOPLE

CHILDREN AT RISK

HOW CHILDREN ARE DRAWN INTO GANGS

- Gifts or praise, overture of friendship
- Protection of the child from some danger (real or contrived)
- The child is asked to run some errand during which the child is mugged and becomes in debt to the gang
- Exploitation of response of agencies – e.g. if a child is excluded, the child is told by the gang he/she has no chance of further education or getting a job so must carry on being in the gang
- Threat of violence is a recurrent issue for children wanting to extricate themselves from gangs. Often children have these threats alongside fractures in their home life and education resulting from their gang activity. This lack of stability in any part of their lives leads them to choose to stay in the gang.

Source: 'Keeping kids safe' Children's Commissioner report Feb 2019