

Sexual exploitation and violence in our communities often goes on unchecked. Too often, no one is willing to speak up about this issue. There are several examples in the Bible where individuals (often women) are not treated with fairness. However, Jesus teaches that all people, both men and women, should be valued as being created in the image of God and treated fairly. As a church, we need to re-examine how Jesus would have us treat women. The church needs to address existing inequalities in gender and encourage men to develop a positive masculinity which shows strength through protecting the vulnerable, demonstrating servant leadership and respect for women.

### Discussion

#### *In biblical times...*

1. What did the men who pounded at the old man's door want? How does the Bible refer to these men?
2. Why do you think the old man was willing to volunteer the women in the house? Was this not an equally 'disgraceful thing'?
3. What do you feel are the attitudes of the Levite and the old man towards women?
4. How does Jesus' attitude to women compare with that of the men in this passage? Can you think of examples? (John 8:1–11, John 4:7–9)
5. Could you retell this story from the concubine's point-of-view? Consider how she might have felt and reacted.

#### *In the context of sexual violence...*

6. Are there ways in which women in our community are valued less than men? Consider cultural practices: for example, early marriage or offering women's sexual services as a sign of good hospitality. How does this contrast to Christ's care and respect for women?
7. How do these practices, and the inequality between men and women, increase women's vulnerability to HIV?
8. How should the church protect women in the community from being abused or treated unfairly?
9. What are our attitudes towards those who have been abused? Do we offer them our support or stigmatise and reject them?

### Key learning points

- The church has a responsibility to protect the vulnerable, to speak up against injustice and provide care and support for those who have been abused (Micah 6:8).
- An individual who has been raped or experienced sexual violence may need different types of support and care, including HIV testing, counselling, prayer support, acceptance, emotional support, reassurance and time to talk confidentially with an understanding person.

<sup>8</sup> See pages 65-66 for the full text.

### Facilitator's notes: *How could this study change us?*

#### We will **KNOW**...

- that sexual violence is more common than we may realise and that children are most vulnerable and easy targets to perpetrators
- that sexual violence can happen within families: perpetrators may be known to the survivors or may be strangers
- that sexual violence is a violation of human dignity and need to be challenged at all levels
- that sexual molestation kills our children inside out and there is a strong need to curb the spread of this kind of sexual and psychological trauma inflicted on our children

#### We will **BE**...

- more aware of how vulnerable children and young people may be to sexual violence
- encouraged to advocate on behalf of survivors of violence
- be more aware of the needs of children searching for healing and support to move on with their lives after experiencing severe trauma
- be of support to families with children who were the victims of sexual violence

#### We will **ACT**...

- by teaching children and young people how to protect themselves
- to ensure violence, particularly sexual violence, is not hidden within families
- to provide care and support for survivors of sexual violence
- to provide family counselling and specialized children's counselling in dealing with sexual violence and other forms of abuse experienced by children in the hands of adults.

### Background information

Children may suffer from different kinds of violence/abuse – physical, emotional or sexual. This may be a secret for the molester could be the sole bread-winner at home and disclosing this may be very difficult or not happen at all. This Bible study looks at how Jesus handles children against cultural bias and practices. He further exerts that it is the children who are closer to the kingdom of God and they too need to be taken seriously. In a context of sexual violence sexual abuse/violence within the family, a big challenge is brought about the text on how Jesus demonstrated on how we need to handle children. Many people assume that most sexual violence takes place outside the family but this is often not the case. The act of rape, deeply troubling in itself, also makes HIV infection more likely because of the violence and damage to the delicate skin of the sexual organs.

- Women are not expendable objects and deserve equal respect and honour (Ephesians 5:25).
- We need to challenge stigma and discrimination against individuals who have been abused, and instead offer them support in meeting their emotional, physical and spiritual needs.
- Discuss how we can work together as a community to prevent abuse/violence and hold those responsible to account.

## Prayer points

- Pray that God will reveal situations of violence against individuals in our communities and help us to speak out openly against sexual violence.
- Pray that the church will take responsibility in addressing issues of sexual violence and will love and support survivors.

## Further passages for reading

- 1 Corinthians 6:19–20. Our body as a temple of the Holy Spirit
- Matthew 1:18–25. Joseph's treatment and respect for Mary
- John 8:1–11. Jesus and the woman caught in adultery
- Genesis 19:1–11. Lot offers his daughters to be raped to protect his guests (who were angels?)



## Tips for the facilitator

- Widen the discussion by considering first the social and economic pressures that force individuals, especially children and young people, to consent to sex against their wishes.
- Divide participants into same-sex groups for the discussion.
- Some participants may have experienced sexual violence themselves. Allow the opportunity for people to share these experiences if they feel able to do so, but do not ask anyone directly about their own background.
- Help people by suggesting they tell their own stories by referring to someone else (for example:
  - o Encourage them to say 'my friend was attacked' rather than 'I was attacked'). This allows them to talk anonymously about themselves. Treat the subject with great sensitivity.
  - o If possible, find someone with counselling experience to provide support if anyone wants to talk afterwards. (This is very important)

## Ideas for practical response

- Can our churches provide more support and offer counselling services for children?
- What training opportunities are there for developing skills for counselling children?
- How can we teach our children and young people to avoid situations that place them at risk?
- Discuss whether any kind of protective network could be established to help protect vulnerable children in our communities.
- Learn step by step procedure of reporting the case and practical support and exposure to court proceedings in camera. This will prepare children what to expect in court for sexual – abuse is a criminal offense and needs to go to a justice system.
- Accompanying the child to attend case hearings in court until the verdict is passed in court.
- Start support groups or children's clubs to deal with psycho-social support of children and advocacy campaigns creating awareness on the abuse of children both at home and in the community.

This Bible story tells of Jesus paying special attention to the needs of children and blessing them in the midst of his busy lifestyle as a preacher and healer. The Bible tells us that he was always surrounded by people presenting various problems but for him this is not an excuse not to give time to little children. This act surprises his disciples who were trying to protect him by chasing the children away. Jesus' response is a challenge to a cultural bias that does not take the needs of children who are often vulnerable very seriously. He even he challenges the way adults were treating children: he treats them with dignity, compassion and love. In doing so, he restores and heals their brokenness, in this way he demonstrates compassion, love and kindness to children.

### Discussion

In biblical times...

1. Who are the main characters, and what are their roles, visible and invisible, in this story?
2. What do you think the story is really about?
3. Verse 14 of this passage states that Jesus got angry and said 'let the children come to me! Do not stop them. People who are like these little children belong to the kingdom of God... I promise you that you cannot get into God's kingdom, unless you accept it the way a child does'. He then turned to the children and blessed them. What is Jesus saying about the importance of children? In what way does this challenge the way we relate and treat children in our context? In the context of sexual violence...?
4. Why did Jesus answer in the way he did?
5. Why did Jesus challenge his disciples in this way?
6. What does Jesus teach us here about how to respond to children who may have encountered various forms of child-abuse including sexual violence in our context?

### Key learning points

- It is important to welcome children without prejudice for they are closer to the Kingdom of God.
- Do not assume that you understand the whole story without listening first to children who are presenting various forms of abuse and pay more special attention to those who have experienced sexual violence. Children who are survivors of sexual violence are not to blame for the violence inflicted on them.
- Referrals are important here to professional help for this area of support is a very specialized field that needs to be dealt with the professionalism it deserves including the legal system, for this is a criminal offense.
- Seek to engage men and boys to speak out against violence. Not all men are perpetrators of sexual violence. Jesus is our role model in being compassionate, willing to expose sexual violence, and showing compassion to those affected by it.

### Facilitator's notes: *How will this study change us?*

#### We will EXPLORE...

- and understand God's intentions for marriage and families
- and understand that building strong, godly families helps to build strong societies and nations
- that emphasising faithfulness, trust, mutual respect and the dignity of both partners ensures families are stable and provides a positive atmosphere for raising children

#### We will BE...

- encouraged in our understanding of the value and depth of the marriage relationship
- reminded that God lives and abides in families, no matter what they are going through

#### We will ACT...

- to mirror the love of God to society in modelling good relationships, repairing broken relationships and mentoring children and youth

### Background information

Marriage is God's idea, not humankind's. The Genesis account of the beginning of marriage (Genesis 2:24–25) ends with a statement that expresses four elements that should be part of every marriage:

- **CUTTING OFF:** 'A man shall leave his father and mother' – a new partnership occurs through marriage
- **BONDING:** 'And be united to his wife' – the idea here is that of gluing or permanent bonding
- **UNITY:** 'And they will become one flesh' – the two becoming one
- **INTIMACY:** 'They were both naked... and felt no shame' – the absence of self-consciousness enabled the first couple to enjoy one another without any sense of embarrassment or rejection

### Tips for the facilitator

Take time to discuss what makes marriages work. Here are some suggested building blocks for good marriages, to encourage discussion: lifelong commitment, shared identity, faithfulness, clear roles, unreserved love, mutual submission, sexual fulfilment, open communication and respect. Parents should learn to be relaxed when talking about their relationship and about sex in the early years of their marriage. This will make it much easier to be open and relaxed when talking with their children about sex, about how girls become pregnant and the risks of HIV.

<sup>9</sup> See pages 65-66 for the full text.



**Prayer points**

- Ask God to help you show love and compassion to all those affected by sexual violence. Pray that he will bring healing and restoration to all who are suffering.
- Pray that you will have unconditional love for those individuals who carry the pain of sexual violence. Pray that you and your church will be Christ's hands and feet in providing care and support amid people's pain.
- Pray for peer support groups that can fully engage with and support those in churches and the community who have experienced sexual violence.

**Further passages for reading**

- Luke 7: 11-17. Jesus heals a widow's son
- Mark 5:21-24. Jesus heals Jairus's daughter



**Ideas for practical response**

Divorce, alcohol and drugs are just some of the ways people try to deal with difficulties in their marriage. However, all of these can make a bad situation worse. There is another way – a better way. It takes three to make a marriage succeed: a husband, a wife and God.

This Bible study helps us to learn from Paul about the importance of a strong and godly marriage and how this is the foundation for a healthy family. Paul uses this passage to remind the Ephesians about what a godly marriage means (at a time when there was considerable sexual immorality). He then discusses the relationship between children and parents, highlighting the importance of family.

### Discussion

#### *In biblical times...*

1. Who instituted marriage? And why was it instituted?
2. What is your understanding of family?
3. What is your experience of family?
4. What does it mean to be a godly man/woman?
5. Why do you think Paul needed to talk to the Ephesians about what a good marriage was?
6. What does it mean to submit to one another within a marriage relationship?
7. Why does Paul compare a good marriage with the church's relationship with Christ?
8. What does Paul highlight as the important qualities of a good marriage?
9. What are the foundations of a strong family?

#### *In the context of sexual violence...*

1. How can we understand headship in the context of gender equality?
2. What are some cultural and current practices that are influencing marriage and family?
3. Mention some of the principles that can enable the couple to remain faithful to each other in all circumstances.
4. How can gender equality between the husband and wife be promoted?
5. What are the consequences of a broken marriage?
6. Do you think husbands and wives today should follow these biblical principles of a strong marriage? And, if so, why?
7. In what ways can we redefine gender roles that were traditionally assigned to women and men in contemporary society?
8. In what ways are these cultural and current practices impacting negatively and positively on marriage and family?
9. What is the impact of sexual violence on families?
10. In what ways is media influencing marriage and family values and perceptions?
11. In what ways can forgiveness and reconciliation be nurtured and promoted in marriage and family in the context of sexual violence?
12. How can the church facilitate in creating a safe space for women and children in the home?
13. What is the role of the family in society? How can the church help families to be strong and health

<sup>10</sup> See pages 65-66 for the full text.

### Facilitator's notes: *How will this study change us?*

#### We will EXPLORE...

- the will of God in the context of sexual violence
- that Jesus revealed new truths about how we should love our neighbour, which surpass our understanding
- how essential it is for us to show God's love to others experiencing illness and suffering
- that fear can make stigma worse

#### We will BE...

- more compassionate towards others, and to survivors of sexual violence
- more compassionate and understanding of ourselves (in order to overcome self-stigma)
- more aware and informed about the causes of violence and the fact that no one deserves to be treated with violence

#### We will ACT....

- by responding with compassionate support rather than judging their personal and sexual lifestyle or the choices they make for their survival
- to challenge self-stigma (the feeling that we are unworthy and shameful and deserve what we get)
- to identify modern and traditional ways for counselling and provide alternative community-based care and support to survivors of sexual violence

### Background information

There is a need for increasing knowledge among church leaders of the need to act to support people who have experienced sexual violence. There is also a need for church leaders to then share that knowledge with their church members and communities. Everyone affected by sexual violence has different, and often very considerable, practical, emotional and spiritual needs – all of which need different resources and responses from within our church. The important thing is to listen to those who have experienced sexual violence – providing an opportunity for them to feel safe and supported.

### Tips for the facilitator

It is important to allow participants who have survived sexual violence to share openly about their feelings and views about their experiences. The facilitator needs to be aware of his/her own bias in relation to perceptions towards sexual violence. This awareness is important because we all have pre-conceived ideas about sexual violence that need to be dealt with; not doing so may jeopardise our work with survivors who need a non-judgmental attitude.

## Key learning points

- Paul teaches that a husband should love his wife as Christ loved the church. Both husband and wife need to submit to each other.
- Parents need a good biblical foundation in their marriage to build a strong and healthy Christian family.
- The purpose of marriage is for companionship and mutual support, and for raising children.
- Marriage requires mutual respect, trust and faithfulness. The dignity of both partners should be upheld.
- Sexual violence can have a detrimental effect on the family. So it is vital for a family to be strong and healthy with its foundations in Christ, in order to face challenges.
- Forgiveness and reconciliation are vital in order to repair broken relationships.

## Prayer points

- Pray that partners will understand and model biblical marriage.
- Pray for families affected by sexual violence.
- Pray for children being raised in unstable family settings.

## Further passages for reading

- Genesis 1:26–28. God created man and woman and blessed them both
- Colossians 3:18–21. Instructions for Christian households
- 1 Peter 3:1–7. Guidance for wives and husbands
- Hebrews 13:4. Faithfulness in marriage



The participants may disclose painful and traumatic experiences of sexual violence that need to be handled with sensitivity. The facilitator needs to be cautious and have a skilled counselling facility available so that cases of trauma that require professional help can be referred, should any arise during the study session.

## Ideas for practical response

Help people to be clear about the consequences of stigma, discrimination and denial in their churches and communities. Discuss ways of dealing with each of these.



This is a story full of pain, about the struggle for healing of a woman who has been suffering with a haemorrhage for 12 years, despite treatment under various doctors. She has spent all her money on trying to find a cure and is no better for it: in fact, she is getting worse. She has heard about Jesus and comes up through the crowd to touch his cloak. Jesus' response is: 'your faith has restored your health: go in peace and be free of your complaint.'

## Discussion

*In biblical times...*

1. Who are the main people in the story?
2. What do you think the story is really about?
3. What is compassion?
4. How do Jesus, Jairus and Joseph show compassion and care to women?
5. How would the woman with the issues of blood and Mary the mother of Jesus be perceived in Jewish culture?

*In the context of sexual violence...*

1. What can men learn from the three men about what it means to be a real man?
2. In what ways are men being challenged to show compassion today?
3. Why might survivors of sexual violence not speak out about their experiences?
4. How could the church become a place of acceptance, where those who have experienced sexual violence can speak openly about their experiences?
5. What is preventing the church from speaking out against sexual violence? If it is lack of understanding, how might the church learn more about sexual violence?

## Key learning points

- Do not rush to judge others, for all of us have fallen short of the glory of God and sinned in many ways (Romans 3:23–24).
- Women are often blamed for sexual violence while little or nothing is mentioned to the males who perpetrate sexual violence. It is NOT the survivor's fault if they experience sexual violence.
- The church has a responsibility to lead efforts to challenge stigma and discrimination.
- If people living with sexual violence suffer from stigma in the community and church, they may not receive the medical attention they need, in particular, medication to prevent HIV infection and sexually transmitted diseases.

## Prayer points

- We live in a bleeding world, full of pain and misery. Pray that we will hold on to God as we



**Facilitator's notes:** *how will this study change the way we think about sexuality?*

## We will listen, EXPLORE....

- The diversity and complexity of sexuality issues
- The experiences of other people
- Our own experiences as we share them with others
- The 2006 Constitutional rights of each individual to express their sexuality
- What the Bible says about sexuality and the different interpretations of the scriptures

## We will Be .....

- Challenged to reconsider our old perceptions on sexuality – heterosexuality and homosexuality.
- Encouraged to know and understand human rights and dignity of each human being.
- Reminded that each person is created in God's image no matter their sexual orientation.

## We will ACT...

- with unconditional love and acceptance
- to challenge self-stigma and discrimination against the LGBTI community
- We will seek to engage in mutual dialogue with homosexuals in order to learn and understand them

<sup>11</sup> See pages 65-66 for the full text.

search for new meaning in life.

- Pray that we will rebuild our families and interpersonal relationships that are torn apart because of greed and unforgiving spirit. We pray for restoration of broken relationships with God's unconditional love.
- We pray for survivors of sexual violence to be filled with God's unconditional love, care and compassion. Pray that they will still know that God is their father in the midst of facing everyday life challenges.
- Pray that the church would be moved with compassion towards the people who are sexually violated.

Further passages for reading

- John 4:1–26. Jesus and the Samaritan woman
- John 5:1–15. Jesus heals a paralysed man
- Matthew 9:35–38. Jesus has compassion for people with all kinds of troubles

### Background information

Homosexual relationships and unions are officially legalized in South Africa. Despite the South African Constitution giving rights to all people to express their sexuality freely, some individuals as well as church leaders in our communities have fundamental objections against homosexuality, and support heterosexuality. They regard homosexuality as unnatural, unbiblical and as threatening the status quo. Many homosexual people conceal their true sexuality because they fear discrimination, exclusion, rejection or attack.





This text and many others have influenced tradition and doctrinal authority of most churches who have rejected homosexuality over the ages. The LGBTI people do not identify with the deeds mentioned in the above verses, and see no connection between what they experience themselves to be and what is described in these verses. In order to understand, dialogue and exposure to scientific facts is needed more than mere controversy.

### Discussion

#### *In biblical...*

1. What are the texts about?
2. When you read a biblical text like this, what prejudices do you carry about homosexuality?
3. What does Lot do to protect them?
4. Look at the text again: what really is the sin of Sodom; is it homosexuality or inhospitality, violence and rape (read also Ezekiel 16)?

#### *In context .....*

1. In our social contexts why are homosexuals being discriminated against, and some experience sexual violence?
2. What does it mean to love unconditionally?
3. In what ways can the church promote unconditional love for homosexuals?
4. How can we make the church space become safe for homosexuals?
5. How can you attain enough knowledge about homosexuality and what it means to be gay?
6. How did you acquire your knowledge about homosexuality (e.g. from socialisation stereotypes, media, or from first-hand knowledge)?
7. How can you contribute to healing, respect and dignity to bring humanness to my reading of the Bible?

### Key learning points

- It is unnecessarily hurtful to speak of homosexuality as a sickness or as sin.
- In order to understand the life of homosexuals there is a need to listen to their stories and experiences rather than passing judgment on the basis on myths and rumours told about them.
- The genesis of human sexuality is complicated. Some believe that sexual orientation is fixed by biology (hormones, genes, etc.) whereas other hold that sexuality is shaped by psychological and social factors that interact in complex ways. Thus, scholars are still divided about whether sexual orientation is a matter of choice or not but this does not given any the right to judge.

### Facilitator's notes: *How will this study change us?*

#### We will EXPLORE...

- the role of the church in demonstrating clear leadership in responding to sexual violence
- how necessary effective advocacy is in mobilising resources for those impacted by sexual violence
- how best to help people understand their potential for leadership and advocacy roles in responding to sexual violence

#### We will BE...

- equipped to reflect on leadership attitudes and how leaders speak out against sexual violence
- mobilised to play a role in advocating for justice for those who have experienced sexual violence

#### We will ACT...

- to encourage individuals, families and those who have experienced sexual violence to consider their potential in taking up leadership or advocacy roles
- to explore opportunities for advocacy within and outside our communities and families
- to create peer support groups for those who have experienced sexual violence, to enable healing and restoration and to enable them to speak out about their experiences and advocate for the rights of survivors of sexual violence

### Background information

Justice is not simply about punishing people – it is about putting things right. To seek justice is to want to see laws being implemented, those who have done wrong to be held accountable for their actions and people who have been victims of a crime to receive care and support as they rebuild their lives after the crime.

Advocacy means speaking with and on behalf of others, to explain their needs and concerns to those who have the power to address their needs and create change. We have a biblical mandate to care for marginalised people in society and to challenge injustice.

### Tips for the facilitator

As a leader, Nehemiah was personally involved as part of the solution, joining in with the physical work. But he couldn't do it alone – he needed all the community to help build the wall.

<sup>12</sup> See pages 65-66 for the full text.

## Prayer points

- Pray for the courage to understand the diversity and complexity of sexuality issues.
- Pray for objective understanding of experiences of other people's sexuality.
- Pray for recognition of grace and law acknowledging the constitutional rights of each individual to express their sexuality
- Pray for the church to heal the hurt and to display God's love for all humans without judging and rejecting other people as sinners or outcasts.

## Further passages for reading

- Judges 19
- Leviticus 18:22,
- Leviticus 20:13
- Romans 1:26-27
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
- 1 Timothy 1:10



Discuss what approaches are needed to promote effective leadership and advocacy. Some suggestions would be: clear understanding, persistence, prayer, passion and effective communication.

## Ideas for practical response

Discuss how we can best encourage people in our churches to act like Nehemiah in the context of preventing and responding to sexual violence.

The Israelites face the problem of a broken wall, which leaves them vulnerable to attack. Consider what 'broken walls' are represented in our community. What are the problems that need to be addressed?

What does the law say about sexual violence in our country? What are the rights of people in our family, church and community?

How can we as leaders stand up for justice, truth and the rights of our family and community members?

Walls are built to protect homes and communities. If a wall is weak or cracked, it can easily fall. If a wall is broken then the house may collapse. We may think of the Nehemiah's wall in terms of various social structures that sustain and protect the wellbeing of the community. Without them, our communities become more vulnerable to attack. Nehemiah saw the need in his community, and he advocated on behalf of his people to those who were powerful and could help. First, he went to God, in prayer. Then he spoke to the people in authority who had the power and resources that were needed, before he took action.

## Discussion

### *In biblical times...*

1. What were the main needs and problems that the Israelites were facing?
2. What leadership qualities did Nehemiah show? Who did he ask to help him?
3. How did other people respond? Why do you think they acted in this way?
4. How did Nehemiah respond to the threats faced in building the wall?
5. What plans did he make to ensure there was good communication during the rebuilding of the broken the wall?
6. What sort of qualities and practices make someone a good or a bad leader?
7. Consider Jesus' model of servant leadership (Matthew 20:26-28). In your understanding, what the meaning of servant leadership according to Jesus?

### *In the context of sexual violence...*

1. Broken walls can be a symbol of broken relationships, families and marriages as a result of sexual violence. Think of some of the ways that these broken family ties can be restored?
2. What do we expect of a leader in our community, in our church or family or country?
3. How do we use our God-given leadership abilities to respond to the issues facing our community?
4. What opportunities are there for us to engage in leadership and advocacy activities in our communities and families?
5. How can we engage and support those who have experienced sexual violence in leadership and advocacy roles?
6. Like Nehemiah, do we need others to support us as we speak out about sexual violence? What kind of support and protection do we need?
7. As individuals, what kind of leadership are we called to show in regard to sexual violence?
8. What attributes do we need as Christians to engage in effective advocacy for those who have experienced sexual violence?
9. List three practical steps you can take in order to be involved in justice, advocacy and restoration in your family, church and society.

<sup>13</sup> See pages 65-66 for the full text.

## Facilitator's notes: *How will this study change us?*

### We will EXPLORE...

- and understand that we are all called to care for and take responsibility for one another
- and know that care and support is a ministry that is underpinned by biblical values and principles
- and affirm that whatever good we do to survivors of sexual violence, we are serving God

### We will BE...

- given a deeper understanding of the practical care and support that others may need in the context of sexual violence
- aware of other people's physical, emotional and spiritual needs

### We will ACT...

- without discrimination on any grounds
- with respect to humanity of any personal regardless of gender, race, social status or circumstances, sexual orientation, beliefs and practice etc.
- to provide support in meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those in our community impacted by sexual violence
- to mobilise our churches to meet the needs of people who have survived sexual **violence**

## Background information

There is a need for increased knowledge among church leaders of the necessity for action to support people in need within their communities. Not just people who have survived sexual violence, but also their children, their families, their husbands or wives. These people have different but practical, emotional and spiritual needs – all of which require different resources and responses from within our churches.

## Tips for the facilitator

Encourage people to see that everyone has the capacity to help each other. Even if we are poor, or weak, or sick we still have something to offer. For example, even if we lack money, we could still give our time to sit and listen to a survivor's experiences. We can accompany an individual when they go to the health clinic, to provide emotional support.



## Key learning points

- We need God's direction to provide both good leadership and identify issues that we may need to advocate for.
- The church is well placed to challenge local government and organisations to take more action to prevent and respond to sexual violence.
- Each of us has a responsibility in accompanying, supporting and standing in the gap for those who need us.
- We all need commitment, discernment and empowerment to provide effective leadership and advocacy about sexual violence in our communities.

## Prayer points

- Pray that God will show us how we can rely on him for strength, understanding and grace to repair every situation where leadership is lacking or weak and where we face 'damaged walls'.
- Pray for all those who are vulnerable to sexual violence because of poverty.
- Pray for those who care for children who have lost parents, or whose parents are sick, and who are likely to be left without protectors and providers.
- As Christians, we are all called to speak up for those in need. Pray for guidance on how we can all follow Nehemiah's example and take the lead in meeting needs in our communities.

## Further passages for reading

- Isaiah 6:8. The prophet Isaiah responds to God's calling
- Micah 6:8. God calls us to act justly and to show mercy
- James 2:14–17. Practical faith revealed in action

## Ideas for practical response

This study encourages us not just to discuss situations and needs, but to take action to directly meet those needs. Discuss who around us is hungry, thirsty, homeless, lacking adequate clothes or in prison – in both physical and spiritual terms. If no one is adequately meeting their needs, what can we do ourselves?

This powerful passage comes just before the Last Supper and before Jesus was arrested. It is almost his final teaching point to his disciples and one that applies just as much to us all today. In this powerful and practical passage, Jesus talks about meeting the needs of people who are often forgotten or shunned by society, for example those in prison. His listeners were surprised by his words.

### Discussion

*In biblical times...*

1. What is this passage saying?
2. Who are the different people involved and what are they doing?
3. What does this passage tell us about how we as Christians should care for those in need?

*In the context of sexual violence ...*

1. In our culture, who carries the greatest burden in caring for the sick?
2. In the passage, whose responsibility is it to look after them?
4. What are the needs of those who have survived sexual violence? Consider their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Do people need care only when they are sick?
5. How can we as Christians, both as individuals and as a church community, meet these needs and provide practical care and support for each other?
6. Do children have different needs from adults? Explain why. How can we provide care and support for vulnerable children in our community, for example those who are orphaned or those who are caring for parents who are sick?
7. What material and economic needs would the survivor have if they would report sexual violence?
8. We may feel we have little to offer to help others, but in this passage, Jesus calls everyone to account for how they have cared for others. Explore the ways in which we could use what little we do have to help others.

### Key learning points

- Are there people in our community who are excluded, or whose needs are ignored – for example, because of their age, gender or life experience?
- What does our society lose because of the way we treat these people?
- How can we transform this situation, and ensure that all people can participate fully in the life of our community?
- Be aware as much as possible of the services in your community.

### Prayer points

- Pray that we can take this message to heart and be mobilised to meet the needs of others, however uncomfortable we may feel about their situation and backgrounds. God's love is unconditional and ours should be too.
- Pray for organisations and NGOs who are responding positively to the needs of the survivors of sexual violence.

### Further passages for reading

- 2 Corinthians 5:1–3. Our longing for heaven
- 2 Corinthians 5:15. We should not live just for ourselves
- 1 John 3:18. Loving with truth and action
- James 2:14–17. Faith without works is dead

<sup>14</sup> See pages 65–66 for the full text.

This Bible story tells of King David and his lust watching Bathsheba bathing one afternoon. He then made a plan to sleep with her in order to fulfil his heart's desire, while knowing very well that she belonged to her husband Uriah. David uses his power to manipulate the situation just because he wanted to fulfil his lustful desires. The text shows dramatic step-by-step execution of the plan that finally saw the death of Bathsheba's husband. In this case David is the perpetrator who needs to know that he does not exist alone in this world but there are serious boundaries that need to be respected for all to live well.

### Discussion

*In biblical times...*

1. Who are the main characters, and what are their roles, visible and invisible, in this story?
2. What do you think the story is really about?
3. What does this story say about perpetrators of sexual violence?
4. What does the David do and say about his sin after realising his guilt?
5. What about justice for Bathsheba and her family? What challenges does sexual violence and its consequences bring and how is it dealt with by the perpetrator?

*In the context of sexual violence...*

1. Does this situation happen in our context? (Meaning at home, in the family, etc.)
2. What are power relations between the victim and the perpetrator in this type of gender-based sexual violence?
3. What are the risks of sexual violence presented by the situation faced by women? Can she fight?
4. What does this text teach us here about how to respond to survivors of sexual violence in our context?
5. 'Sugar Daddies' are the root causes and drivers of sexual violence among teenagers who are often from poor families. What can be done to address challenges brought about by transactional sex?

### Key learning points

- It is important to take seriously boundaries that are often breached when sexual violence occurs
- Do not judge survivors of sexual abuse who are children or label them according to their behaviour. They all need non-judgemental parental support.
- Do not assume that you understand the whole story without listening first to those who have

**Facilitator's notes:** *How could this study change us?*

### We will KNOW...

- That girls are targeted by older men who pose as 'Sugar Daddies', who provide food and exploit them for sexual gains without thinking about their future as young adults.
- that sexual violence is more common than we may realise and that both women and men experience sexual violence.
- that sexual violence can happen within families: perpetrators may be known to the survivors or may be strangers.
- that sexual violence is a violation of human dignity and needs to be challenged at all levels.

### We will BE...

- more aware of the vulnerability of young people who may be faced with gender-based sexual violence.
- encouraged to advocate on behalf of survivors of gender-based sexual violence.
- Empowered to begin opening communication channels and have community dialogues with sexual offenders and perpetrators
- advocating for awareness, activism and change regarding gender-based sexual violence and other forms of violence as they affect my family and community.

### We will ACT...

- by teaching young people how to protect themselves.
- to ensure violence, particularly sexual violence, is not hidden within families,
- to provide support for survivors of sexual violence.

### Background information

Individuals may suffer from different kinds of violence/abuse – physical, emotional or sexual. This Bible Study looks at sexual abuse/violence within the family. Many people assume that most sexual violence takes place outside the family but this is often not the case. The act of rape, deeply troubling in itself, also makes HIV infection more likely because of the violence and damage to the delicate skin of the sexual organs.

### Tips for the facilitator

- Widen the discussion by considering first the social and economic pressures that force individuals, especially young people, to consent to sex against their wishes.
- Divide people into same-sex groups for the discussion.
- Some participants may have experienced sexual violence themselves, or some may be 'Sugar Daddies'. Allow the opportunity for people to share these experiences if they feel able to do so, but do not ask anyone directly about their own background.
- Help people by suggesting they tell their own stories by referring to someone else (for example: encourage them to say 'my friend was attacked' rather than 'I was attacked'). This allows them to talk anonymously about themselves. Treat the subject with great sensitivity.
- If possible, find someone with counselling experience to provide support if anyone wants to talk afterwards.



experienced sexual violence. Survivors of sexual violence are not to blame for the violence.

- Seek to engage men, women, girls and boys to speak out against sexual violence.
- David the perpetrator in the story used his power over Bathsheba. The same happens in our present context where older men manipulate younger girls who are vulnerable and poor. So they end up by being exploited and raped.
- There is a serious need for open dialogue where both men and women engage in these debates, searching for the truth and gender justice.

## Prayer points

- a. Pray for all parents who are faced with challenges of raising children in ever-changing social contexts.
  - b. Ask God to help you show love and compassion to all those affected by sexual violence. Pray that God will bring healing and restoration to all who are suffering.
- Pray that you will have unconditional love for those individuals who carry the pain of sexual violence.
  - Pray that you and your church will be Christ's hands and feet in providing care and support amid people's pain.
  - Pray for peer support groups that can fully engage with and support those in churches and the community who have experienced sexual violence.
  - Pray for engagement of men in showing love, and parental love that young men and women are looking for at this time of desperate need as young people.

Further passages for reading:

1. Matthew 7:1-6
2. James 2:1-13
3. Matthew 22: 34-40

## Ideas for practical response

- Discuss what services/resources there are in the community for survivors of sexual violence.
- How can we challenge the local police to do more?
- Can our churches provide more support and offer counselling services?
- What training opportunities are there for developing counselling skills?
- How can we teach our young people to avoid situations that place them at risk?
- Discuss whether any kind of protective network could be established to help protect vulnerable children in our communities.

## 2 Samuel 11-17: David and Bathsheba

It was now spring, the time when kings go to war. David sent out the whole Israelite army under the command of Joab and his officers. They destroyed the Ammonite army and surrounded the capital city of Rabbah, but David stayed in Jerusalem. Late one afternoon, David got up from a nap and was walking around on the flat roof of his palace. A beautiful young woman was down below in her courtyard, bathing as her religion required. David happened to see her, and he sent one of his servants to find out who she was. The servant came back and told David, 'Her name is Bathsheba. She is the daughter of Eliam, and she is the wife of Uriah the Hittite' David sent some messengers to bring her to the palace. She came to him, and he slept with her. Then she returned home. 5 But later, when she found out that she was going to have a baby, she sent for David with this message; 'I'm pregnant!'

6 David sent a message to Joab. 'Send Uriah the Hittite to me'. Joab sent Uriah 7 to David's palace and David asked him. 'Is Joab well? How is the army doing? And how about the war?' 8 Then David told Uriah 'Go home and clean up'. Uriah left the king's palace and David had dinner sent to Uriah's house. 9 But Uriah didn't go home. Instead, he slept outside the entrance to the royal palace where the king's guards slept.

10 Someone told David that Uriah had not gone home. So the next morning David asked him, 'Why didn't you go home? Haven't you been away for a long-time?' 11 Uriah answered, 'the sacred chest and the armies of Israel and Judas are camping out somewhere in the fields with our commander Joab and his officers and troops. Do you really think I would go home to eat and drink and sleep with my wife? I swear by your life that I would not!'

12 Then David said, 'Stay here in Jerusalem today, and I will send you back tomorrow' Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day. Then the next day, 13 David invited him to dinner. Uriah ate with David and drank so much that they got drunk, but he still did not go home. He went out and slept on his mat near the palace guards. 14 Early the next morning David wrote a letter and told Uriah to deliver it to Joab. 15 The letter said: 'Put Uriah on the front line where the fighting is the worst. Then pull the troops back from him, so that he will be wounded and die'. 16 Joab had been carefully watching the city of Rabbah, and he put Uriah where there were some of the enemy's soldiers. 17 When the men of the city came out, they fought and killed some of David's soldiers – Uriah the Hittite was killed.....

This Bible story tells of a parent with two sons who were very different in behaviour and character. One thing they had in common was the fact that they shared the same father. A well-behaved son stayed at home with the father and was there throughout, and the father had no major challenges from him. The other son wanted all his inheritance and took the money to spend it with friends away from home. Things really went badly for him especially when the money was finished. It was at that stage that he came back to his senses and remembered that at his home he was loved and accepted for who he was. He turned back home and apologized to the father. The way the father reacted to the return of his lost son is a remarkable lesson and a challenge to parenting. This story poses deep questions about parental roles and what needs to be done to face life challenges and the demands of children, as well as how to treat children differently according to their needs at the right time...

### Discussion

*In biblical times...*

1. Who are the main characters, and what are their roles, visible and invisible, in this story?
2. What do you think the story is really about?
3. What does this story say about parenting?
4. What does the 'Prodigal Son' say about our children?
5. What about the 'Good Son' who stayed with the family all the time? What challenges does he bring and how is he dealt with by his father?
6. What parental skills are demonstrated by the father?
7. What parental challenges do the father and the son encounter and how do they deal with them?

*In the context of sexual violence...*

1. It is important to note that sexual violence can be found at home and in some instances one parent may know about it but unable to take action because of socio-economic conditions for reporting the perpetrator who happens to be a breadwinner may prove to be problematic. These needs to be challenged in a very serious and responsible manner
2. Does this situation happen in our context? (Meaning at home, in the family, etc.)
3. Why did Jesus tell this parable?
4. What are the risks of sexual violence presented by the situation faced by the prodigal son
5. What does Jesus teach us here about how to respond with survivors of sexual violence in our context?
6. Right a charter for your children with clear messages from parents.

Start a Bible Study by remembering the games and rhymes you use to play, dance and sing about during your childhood. Can you teach those songs to your children? Would they dance and sing exactly like you did? If not, why not? Let us reflect on how we felt about our parents then and now?

How could this study change us?

### We will KNOW...

- Parenting skills are needed and can be learned to assist the way we raise children.
- Children need appropriate guidance as they grow. They may be more vulnerable to sexual violence because of bad decisions they take which lead them into difficult and complicated situations.
- that sexual violence is more common than we may realise and that children, women and men experience sexual violence.
- that sexual violence can happen within families; perpetrators may be known to the survivors or may be strangers.
- that sexual violence is a violation of human dignity and needs to be challenged at all levels. And parents are needed to support their children at all times.

### We will BE...

- more cautious about the importance of parental roles in the lives of young ones and grown ups
- more aware of how vulnerable young people may be to sexual violence
- encouraged to advocate on behalf of survivors of violence

### We will ACT...

- by encouraging parents to take a leading role in talking to children about violence
- by facilitating parental workshops to encourage and support both survivors and care-givers
- by teaching young people how to protect themselves
- to ensure violence, particularly sexual violence, is not hidden within families
- to provide support for survivors of sexual violence

### Background information

Individuals may suffer from different kinds of violence/abuse – physical, emotional or sexual. At times the decisions that young people resort to are problematic. This Bible study looks at sexual abuse/violence from the outside. In the case of the prodigal son, his running away from home creates a situation of vulnerability. Such actions of children can expose them to sexual violence and more harm emerges from their actions. The act of rape, deeply troubling in itself, also makes HIV infection more likely because of the violence and damage to the delicate skin of the sexual organs.

### Key learning points

- It is important to take parental roles seriously as they pose various demands.
- Do not judge children or label them according to their behaviour - they all need non-judgemental parental support.
- Do not assume that you understand the whole story without listening first to those who have experienced sexual violence. Survivors of sexual violence are not to blame for the violence.
- Seek to engage men, women, girls and boys to speak out against violence. Not all men are perpetrators of sexual violence.
- The father in the story of the prodigal son shows compassionate love and unconditional acceptance of his lost son. In the same way this is a role model for Godly parenting skills that need to be emulated by all parents, as they support and nurture growing children.

### Prayer points:

- Pray for all parents who are faced with challenges of raising children in ever-changing social contexts
- Ask God to help you show love and compassion to all those affected by sexual violence. Pray that God will bring healing and restoration to all who are suffering.
- Pray that you will have unconditional love for those individuals who carry the pain of sexual violence.
- Pray that you and your church will be Christ's hands and feet in providing care and support amid people's pain.
- Pray for peer support groups that can fully engage with and support those in churches and the community who have experienced sexual violence.

### Further passages for reading footnotes:

- Luke 15:15 Greek joined himself to
- Luke 15:21 Some manuscripts add treat me as one of your hired servants
- Luke 15:22 Greek bondservants

### Tips for the facilitator

- Widen the discussion by considering first the social and economic pressures that force individuals, especially young people, to consent to sex against their wishes.
- Divide people into groups for the discussion. It is recommended to separate groups of children and parents to allow more engagement. It also enhances participation.
- Some participants may have experienced sexual violence themselves. Allow the opportunity for people to share these experiences if they feel able to do so, but do not ask anyone directly about their own background.
- Help people by suggesting they tell their own stories by referring to someone else (for example: encourage them to say 'my friend was attacked' rather than 'I was attacked'). This allows them to talk anonymously about themselves. Treat the subject with great sensitivity.
- If possible, find someone with counselling experience to provide support if anyone wants to talk afterwards.

### Ideas for practical response

- Discuss what services/resources there are in the community for survivors of sexual violence.
- Can we challenge the local police to do more?
- How can parents be helped to gain effective parenting skills so as to enhance their roles in families and in community?
- Can our churches provide more support and offer counselling services?
- What training opportunities are there for developing counselling skills?
- How can we teach our young people to avoid situations that place them at risk?
- Discuss whether any kind of protective network could be established to help protect vulnerable children in our communities.

### Luke 15:11-32: The Parable of the Prodigal Son

<sup>11</sup> And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup> Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. <sup>14</sup> And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to<sup>[a]</sup> one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup> "But when he came to himself, he said, 'how many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" <sup>20</sup> And he arose and came to his father. But while he was





still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his servants,<sup>[c]</sup> 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. <sup>23</sup> And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup> "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. <sup>27</sup> And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' <sup>28</sup> But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, <sup>29</sup> but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' <sup>31</sup> And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup> It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.' English Standard Version (ESV)

Cross references:

- A. Luke 15:12 : Deut. 21:17
- B. Luke 15:12 : ver. 30; Mark 12:44
- C. Luke 15:13 : [Eph. 5:18; Titus 1:6; 1 Pet. 4:4]
- D. Luke 15:16 : [Ch. 16:21]
- E. Luke 15:17 : [1 Kgs. 8:47]

This Bible story tells of a plot crafted by the brothers of Joseph to sell him to the merchant and lie to their father, telling him that he was killed by a wild animal. They did this driven by an evil spirit for they were jealous of him and his rare talent of interpreting the dreams. Joseph was the youngest son and was also anointed to be the King but this news was not welcomed positively by his own brothers, who were older than him and were in constant competition with him. To make the situation even more complicated was the fact he was the favourite son of Jacob his father. This was very painful to his brothers who envied the special treatment he enjoyed. They longed to be loved by their father too. Removing him from home was one of the desperate measures taken by the brothers to reclaim affection from the father.

### Discussion

*In biblical times...*

- Who are the main characters, and what are their roles, visible and invisible, in this story?
- Does this happen in our own context? How?
- What do you think the story is really about?
- The caption of the text is 'David is sold by his brothers' what does this refer to in our present context? Can this be associated as another form of slavery? Abduction? Support your answers....

*In the context of sexual violence...*

- Tell of a similar story in your own context.
- What can be done to curb the spread of human trafficking?
- What does this text assist us in doing regarding the crisis of human trafficking and how do we respond to survivors of sexual violence in our context?

### Key learning points

- Human trafficking is an old phenomenon that needs to be tackled with needed skills so as to liberate the victims
- Perpetrators need to be challenged and justice be done through follow up on cases to protect the vulnerable survivors of human trafficking
- It is important not to judge others or label them according to their behaviour and it is important to create safer spaces in dealing with these cases and families involved, unfortunately in some cases the trafficked are no longer alive and cannot be traced back to their families
- Do not assume that you understand the whole story without listening first to those who have experienced sexual violence. Survivors of sexual violence are not to blame for the violence.
- Seek to engage men and boys to speak out against violence. Not all men are perpetrators of sexual violence. There is a serious search for appropriate role models of compassionate behaviour and those willing to expose human trafficking, sexual violence and show

**Facilitator's notes:** *How could this study change us?*

**We will KNOW...**

- That human-trafficking is an old phenomenon that still affects all of us today
- There is a close relationship between human trafficking and Sexual Gender Based Violence and these are more common than we may realise and that both women and men experience sexual violence
- that human trafficking may lead to sexual violence and can happen within families: perpetrators may be known to the survivors or may be strangers
- that sexual violence is a violation of human dignity and need to be challenged at all levels

**We will BE...**

- more aware of how vulnerable young people may be to human trafficking and sexual violence.
- encouraged to advocate on behalf of human trafficking and survivors of violence.

**We will ACT...**

- by teaching young people how to protect themselves
- create awareness on human trafficking and systematic grooming of the vulnerable
- to ensure that reporting systems are in place for communities to take action against human trafficking and sexual gender based violence

### Background information

Individuals may suffer from different kinds of violence/abuse – physical, emotional or sexual. Some participants may not be aware of the subtle nature of Human Trafficking as well as different stages involved in grooming the targeted groups. It is important to create a conducive environment that allows those who know about this better to share and those who are not familiar to ask as many questions as they can to strengthen their knowledge base and open their eyes and see the impact of human trafficking locally. There is a tendency to shift this concept so far away as if it occurs miles away from us. This is an exercise to create awareness that this phenomenon is alive and on our doorstep, and there is a serious need to create awareness to curb its spread. This Bible study looks at human trafficking by the members of the same family. Many people assume that human trafficking takes place outside the family but this is often not the case.

### Tips for the facilitator

- Widen the discussion by considering first the social, economic and personal pressures that



compassion to those affected by it.

## Prayer points

- Pray for families who do not know where their children are because of human trafficking.
- Ask God to help you show love and compassion to all those affected by sexual violence. Pray that God will bring healing and restoration to all who are suffering.
- Pray that you will have unconditional love for those individuals who carry the pain of sexual violence. Pray that you and your church will be Christ's hands and feet in providing care and support amid people's pain.
- Pray for peer support groups that can fully engage with and support those in churches and the community who have experienced human trafficking and Sexual Gender-Based Violence.

## Further passages for reading

- Joshua 2: 1-24 'Rahab and the Spies'
- Psalm 137: 1-9 'By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept....'



force individuals, especially young people, to opt for human trafficking ....this is often referred to as 'Modern day slavery'.

- Divide people into groups for the discussion.
- Some participants may have experienced human trafficking and sexual violence themselves. Allow the opportunity for people to share these experiences if they feel able to do so, but do not ask anyone directly about their own background.
- Help people by suggesting they tell their own stories by referring to someone else (for example: encourage them to say 'my friend was attacked' rather than 'I was attacked'). This allows them to talk anonymously about themselves. Treat the subject with great sensitivity.
- If possible, find someone with counselling experience to provide support if anyone wants to talk afterwards.

## Ideas for practical response

- Discuss what services/resources there are in the community for survivors of sexual violence.
- Can we challenge the local police to do more?
- Can our churches provide more support and offer counselling services?
- What training opportunities are there for developing counselling skills?
- How can we teach our young people to avoid situations that place them at risk?
- Discuss whether any kind of protective network could be established to help protect vulnerable children in our communities.

## Biblical Text: Genesis 37: 12-36

## Joseph is sold and taken to Egypt

<sup>12</sup> One day when Joseph's brothers had taken the sheep to a pasture near Shechem <sup>13</sup> His father Jacob said to him 'I want you to go to your brothers. They are with the sheep near Shechem' 'Yes' Joseph answered.

<sup>14</sup> His father said 'Go and find out how your brothers and the sheep are doing. Then come back and let me know'. So he sent him from Hebron Valley. Joseph was near Shechem <sup>15</sup> and wandering through the fields, when a man asked, 'What are you looking for?'

<sup>16</sup> Joseph answered: 'I'm looking for my brothers who are watching the sheep. Can you tell me where they are?'

<sup>17</sup> They're not here anymore', the man replied 'I overheard them say they were going to Dothan'. Joseph left and found his brothers in Dothan.

<sup>18</sup> But before he got there, they saw him coming and made plans to kill him. <sup>19</sup> They said to one another, 'Look, here comes the hero of those dreams!' <sup>20</sup> Let us kill him and throw him into a pit and say that some





wild animal ate him. Then we will see what happens to those dreams<sup>21</sup> Rueben heard this and tried to protect Joseph from them. 'Let us not kill him' he said. <sup>22</sup> Don't murder him or even harm him. Just throw him into a dry well out there in the desert'. Rueben planned to rescue Joseph later and take him back to his father. <sup>23</sup> When Joseph came to his brothers, they pulled off his fancy coat <sup>24</sup> and threw him into a dry well. <sup>25</sup> As Joseph's brothers sat down to eat, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelite coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with all kinds of spices that they were taking to Egypt. <sup>26</sup> So Judah said, 'What will we gain if we kill our brother and hide his body? <sup>27</sup> 'Let us sell him to the Ishmaelite's and not harm him. After all, he is our brother'. And others agreed.

<sup>28</sup> When the Mediate merchants came by, Joseph's brothers took him out of the well, and for <sup>20</sup> pieces of silver they sold him to the Ishmaelite's who took him to Egypt.

<sup>29</sup> When Rueben returned to the well and did not find Joseph there, he tore his clothes in sorrow. <sup>30</sup> Then he went back to his brothers and said, 'The boy is gone! What am I going to do?

<sup>31</sup> Joseph's brothers killed a goat and dipped Joseph's fancy coat in its blood. <sup>32</sup> After this, they took the coat to their father and said. 'We found this! Look at it carefully and see if it belongs to your son'.

<sup>33</sup> Jacob Knew it was Joseph's coat and said 'It's my son's coat! Joseph has been turn into pieces and eaten by some wild animal'.

<sup>34</sup> Jacob mourned for Joseph a long time and to show his sorrow he tore his clothes and wore sackloth.

<sup>35</sup> All of Jacob's children came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. 'No!' he said 'I will go to my grave, mourning for my son' So Jacob kept on grieving.

<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile, the Mediate had sold Joseph to Egypt to a man named Potiphar, who was the king's official in charge of the palace guard.