

Sermon Notes for use in Sunday services, church bulletins, noticeboards

Scripture: Revelations 1:5 'Jesus Christ, the ruler of the kings of the earth'.

Isaiah 40:1 'Console my people, console them' says your God.

Isaiah 40:3 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'

Mark 1:3 'Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight'.

Isaiah 61:2 'He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to captives ...'

25th November, 2023 marks the international day for prevention of violence against women and children and marks the beginning of Sixteen Days of Activism ending on 10th December, 2023, Human Rights Day. This year's theme is UNITE!

Queensland Churches Together Commission for Prevention of Domestic and Family abuse has prepared resources to assist churches to raise awareness of the plight of many families who experience abuse behind closed doors. They may well be members of a church community but suffer in silence especially in the festive season of Christmas and New Year. Financial pressures, heat, commercial advertising and school holidays may provide a *Perfect Storm* for domestic abuse to occur. How prepared is your community to respond to the needs of those who might turn to you for help?

In the fast approaching season of Advent, where we hear the cries of John the Baptist, *Prepare the way of the Lord! Make a straight path for our God!*, we might also be more attentive to the cries of the poor and abused amongst us. Daily it seems, on our News feeds and screens, we read of another case of someone (usually a woman) dying at the hands of an intimate partner or estranged partner. Since 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 **over 58,000 DVOs have been made across Queensland.**

What are the statistics on domestic violence in Australia?

In the year 2021/22, **5606 women (average of 15 women/day) were hospitalised due to family and domestic violence.** 1 in 4 women (27%) has experienced violence, emotional abuse, or economic abuse by a cohabitating partner since the age of 15. 1 in 3 women (31%) has experienced physical violence since the age of 15.

We, as followers of Jesus Christ, can be proactive in making space for this subject to be discussed, to provide a safe space for people to disclose abuse, and to speak out against violence of any kind, since we believe that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, is the Messiah of Peace! We can also love the offender whilst condemning the abuse.

There are programs such as *Circuit Breaker* for those people who genuinely want to change their abusive behaviour.

Queensland Churches Together publication *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly, Questions Women ask about Relationships and Christian Beliefs* can be ordered from the QCT website at any time, cost \$5 per copy. Our free leaflets in English, Vietnamese, Simple Chinese, Fijian, Samoan, Tagalog, Tongan can be downloaded from the website. <https://www.qct.org.au/resources-links/domestic-family-violence-resources>

Further resources for Sixteen Days of Activism, such as Be a Better Bystander Prayer, Noticeboard slogans, Bulletin articles are available from this website <https://www.qct.org.au/resources-links/domestic-family-violence-resources>

Activities for children and Youth

- Make a rainbow of peace using paper cut into 7 strips of the colours of the rainbow.
- Make a Peace rose from tissues, green garden twine and rosewater
- Make an acrostic using the word PEACE eg P -prayer, partnerships
- Use dramatic movement/mime to show rejection of violence and accentuate peace making strategies
- Show a video of Peace such as *Dinner for Two*
- Make friendship bracelets out of wool braided and tied at the end