

'I See You'

It's the greeting used by people in some parts of Africa to say 'hello' – and it speaks volumes. It's really a way of saying 'You matter', 'I recognise your value as a person'. And it's what we all need. You know the feeling when others seem to ignore your feelings, as if you don't matter. That's really downgrading you as a person.

That's also what it's like for people held in slavery, but much worse. Their feelings and humanity are ignored because they are 'owned' by someone who abuses them, using violence to control them and make them work. People who are enslaved are denied the basic freedom which everyone should have as a human right.

God knows this because He made people to be like Him. 'God created man in his own likeness...He created them as male and female' Genesis 1:27. Yet a slave is someone who is not being recognised in their true humanity. People who are slaves are treated cruelly, held by force like a piece of property.

Today on every continent there are people held in slavery whose human rights are being abused. Globally 12 million men, women and children are forced to work in horrific ways.

God cares about every person whom He created in His own image. Each of us needs to be free to become the person we're meant to be. That is why He sent Jesus 'to announce freedom for those who have been captured' Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18. Jesus wants us to care for other people too and said, 'In everything, do to others what you would want them to do to you' Matthew 7:12.

Over to You...

It's awesome! You really can make a difference and help to free slaves worldwide.

- **Get ethical.** What is the price of your chocolates and your T shirts? Is it costing someone their freedom?
- **Make a good impression.** Every email, letter or 'phone call you make to speak out for justice can help to free people from cruel slavery.



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'I see you' Start-up ideas:

- **Identify root problems and tackle them.** Although all slavery is due to evil, causes pre-dating the trans-Atlantic slave trade include racism and financial greed. Both the legacy and the root problems continue with us today and need to be redressed. You can link up with others who are taking action against poverty, racial and religious discrimination.
- **Write letters.** When sent to politicians and other public figures, they get results. Public opinion shapes policy so use your right to combat slavery. Find out the facts and sum up issues for which you want action. Anti-slavery websites show sample letters.
- **Draft and circulate petitions.** As with letters, sum up how issues should be acted upon and get others to sign. Some anti-slavery organisations circulate petitions which you can use.
- **Buy ethical.** Financial pressure works. Buy Fairtrade items. Phone managers of local food outlets, etc. to ask about their stock, explaining that you as a consumer want to purchase Fairtrade goods.
- **Organise events.** Take a pro-active, positive approach. Put on a Fairtrade fair. Use drama, music and visual arts to interest others and get across your message of setting all free. Show them options for becoming involved, such as writing letters to government leaders.
- **Sponsor someone at risk.** Globally children and teenagers, as well as adults, are at risk of slavery. Individuals, families or groups can sponsor young people for as little as £10 a month.
- **Carry on.** Use your conviction about freeing all enslaved people as a vehicle. You can undertake school projects if they fit in with the curriculum, hold forums in public venues and raise funds to combat slavery. ♦



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