

the Heart of the Matter



COURSE MODULES

Keeping our Children Safe from Harm

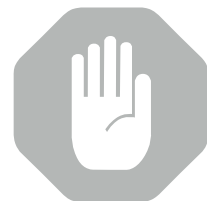
Course for keeping children safe from harm in church and community.

an initiative of the SCWA Coalition

developed in collaboration
with CAAES in the D.R.Congo

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Module 1

CHILDREN AS GIFTS FROM GOD

Overall aim: To provide a meaningful response to the phenomenon of accusations of witchcraft made against children with a view to bringing about changes in culture and behaviour in local communities.

Objective of this module: By the end of this module the participants will recognise that children are a **GIFT** from God, created in His image and for whom God has a clear plan and purpose.

Before the Workshop

- Materials — flip-chart, marker pens, paper, scotch tape
 - Copies of the questionnaire, one per participant
 - Copies of Bible extracts, written on sheets of paper
 - Copies of questions for group discussions (to be given to each group before the relevant activity).
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Opening (30 minutes)

Prayer and Worship

Introductions

The participants introduce themselves.

Activity 1 (15 minutes)

Goal — To discover attitudes and beliefs prior to the training workshop.

Questionnaire

The facilitator gives the questionnaire (in Appendix 1) to each participant and asks them to complete it. He explains that the answers are anonymous. This activity should take a maximum of ten minutes, including handing out and collecting in the questionnaires.

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This activity will be repeated at the end of the final module and those running the course should analyse the results to note any changes in thinking and attitudes.

Activity 2 (25 minutes)

Goal — To establish that all adults were once children, and that children are not a ‘different species’ despite the frequently negative attitudes towards them.

Imagine

a) The facilitator asks the participants to sit on chairs (placed in a semi-circle). He asks the question: **“What comes to your mind when you hear the word ‘child’?”** He writes the answers on a flip-chart. Then he asks the second question: **“Are these ideas positive or negative?”** entering the replies in two sections (maybe underlining them in green for the positive, and red for the negative).

b) The facilitator asks the participants to close their eyes and to remember their life when they were 5 years old. **“Does that bring back memories? What made you happy when you were 5 years old? And what made you sad?”** He asks the question: **“Do you remember these things clearly from your own childhood?”**

c) The facilitator writes on the flip-chart some of the ideas provided by the group to describe: **“What is it like to be a child?”** *emphasising that we all have memories of that period of our lives. We were all children once.*

Activity 3 (60 minutes)

Goal — To look at the attitude of Jesus Christ towards children.

Story

The parents bring their children to Jesus, but the disciples drive them away.

The facilitator explains that we are going to listen to the Bible story, then enact it. He reads the story:

Luke 18:15–17 — Jesus blesses the small children

“People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked those who brought them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Sketch

The participants take the roles of the parents, the disciples, the children, and of Jesus. "Jesus" sits on a chair, surrounded by the "disciples". "Jesus" is resting, talking quietly with his "disciples". The "parents" and the "children" are in the wings on the right and the left.

The facilitator explains that he will reread the text, pausing after each sentence, and giving time for the participants to use words and actions to act out the story. For example, when the Bible says that the disciples rebuked the children, what will this have looked like? It will probably have meant the disciples speaking harshly to the children and sending them away. Encourage the participants to play their roles creatively, improvising dialogue, etc.

Questions

After the sketch, the facilitator asks the following questions of the participants (who are in groups according to their roles), noting their answers on the flip-chart.

To each group, one after the other (first the disciples, then the parents, then Jesus and then the children):

- 1. In the role you are playing, what did you feel when the children were driven away?**

The facilitator should stress the answers and feelings of the children, emphasising the feeling of rejection.

To everybody together:

- 2. As a spectator, what has struck you in this story? What are you feeling as a consequence?**

The facilitator could ask the question: "do you recognise the negative attitudes towards the children?" to draw out further responses.

- 3. In the light of this story, what do we know about Jesus' attitude towards the children?**

(Write down the answers on a new sheet as a preparation for Activity 4 below.)

The facilitator should stress replies which acknowledge that he respected them; he listened to them, he loved them, and he prioritised them, etc. He reminds the participants of Luke 9:48 to reinforce the message: '[Jesus] said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest."

- 4. How did the disciples view the children?**

The facilitator mentions that the same attitudes still exist today.

- 5. How do we behave and what are our attitudes towards children today?**

(Write the answers on a different sheet to prepare for Activity 4 below.)

The facilitator emphasises the following ideas: In the Bible, the child is seen as a model example in the Kingdom of God (Matthew 18:3). Do we find this idea in our families, our churches, our communities (that is, our villages, neighbourhoods)? The facilitator should encourage the participants to answer frankly and to mention negative behaviours and attitudes.

Activity 4 (30 minutes)

Goal – To strengthen the focus on the Bible’s teaching about God’s heart for children.

Study in Groups

The participants divide into groups of 6 to 8 people to discuss other Bible verses which show God’s heart for children. The facilitator gives each group one of the following Bible extracts: Genesis 21:8–19, Jeremiah 1:5–9, Psalm 139:13–16, Psalm 127:3–5, and Matthew 18:1–6. Each group needs one or two sheets of paper to note down their responses.

The participants should consider the verses and answer these questions:

- **In the light of these verses, what is God’s view of children?**
- **Having read these passages what value should we place on children?**

A representative of each group shares their answers with all present. The answers to the first question should be added to those given for question 3 of Activity 3 above (regarding the attitude of Jesus towards the children), the answers to the second question should be noted on a new sheet of paper, pinned beside the answers to question 5 of Activity 3 above (regarding our behaviour and attitudes towards children nowadays).

The facilitator talks through the two sets of answers and stresses the attitudes of God and of Jesus Christ, and the contrast between our behaviour and attitudes, and the value that the Bible places on children.

Activity 5 (30 minutes)

Goal – To introduce the topic of the abuse of children in our communities and the part played by accusations of witchcraft made against children.

The facilitator explains that by ‘communities’ we mean both our churches and the wider community (village, neighbourhood etc.).

Study in Groups

The participants divide into small groups. Each group needs a sheet of paper to note down responses.

The facilitator states that children today are not all treated in the way that Jesus treated them. He asks the question: **“What types of problems do children face which put them at risk in our communities?”** The participants discuss this question and the representative of each group shares their answers with all present. There will probably be several ideas (poverty, lack of schooling, water pollution, etc.). The facilitator stresses the problem of abuse.

He asks the question to the small groups:

- **What sorts of abuse are experienced by children living in your communities?**
- **Why?**

The participants discuss and the representative of each group shares their answers with all present.

The facilitator asks the question to all present: **“The children in the Bible story in our sketch were driven away. Why are children in our communities being driven away nowadays?”** Answers are noted on the flip-chart. Witchcraft will no doubt be among the answers that are given — the facilitator must note it down as “(the phenomenon of) accusations of witchcraft against children” (NOT “child witches, or “witchcraft”, etc.).

Closing (20 minutes)

Goal — Conclusion: to capture what we have learned today.

The facilitator asks each participant to write on a post-it note what they have learned throughout the day, regarding God’s heart for children. And any other things that they might have learned? Place the post-its on the sheets on the wall. The facilitator reads them to the participants as a summary.

(Note: After the participants have gone, a volunteer collects the notes and the facilitator reads them so as to check that the participants have understood the teaching and to find out whether there have been any misunderstandings which need to be addressed during the next workshop.)

The facilitator makes a brief summary of what has been learned during each activity (apart from the first one), emphasising that the Bible clearly shows us God’s heart for children, and that often our behaviour and attitudes towards children do not reflect His example. He explains that tomorrow or during the next training workshop, we will examine more closely some of these attitudes and behaviours.

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The following verses are written onto papers which are folded in half and placed in the four corners of the room (before the workshop or during it by a helper, while other activities are going on):

- Psalm 127:3-5
- Psalm 139:13
- Genesis 1:27
- Psalm 139:16

Four volunteers from among the participants go to the four corners and, in turn, read out the verses.

The facilitator writes in large letters on one or two sheets of the flip-chart displayed on the wall, (leaving room to add verses) the following sentences:

⋮
⋮ *"Children are a gift of God, created in His image and for whom He has a clear plan*
⋮ *and purpose."*
⋮

He asks the participants: **"How do we know this?"**

The facilitator refers to the four volunteers in the corners and asks them to re-read their verses in turn. He then adds the references to the relevant part of the sentence, again asking the four volunteers to read them out loud.

- Psalm 127:3-5: written with an arrow to... 'a gift of God'...
- Psalm 139:13: written with an arrow to ... 'created'...
- Genesis 1:27: written with an arrow to ... 'in His image'...
- Psalm 139:16: written with an arrow to ... 'a clear plan and purpose.'

Then he asks the participants to read the sentence aloud together and to stand up if they agree with this statement. Amen!

He explains that tomorrow or in the next workshop, we will be looking at personal responsibility.

Prayers

Departure

Questionnaire – Module 1

Please look at the images below and respond to the questions at the side.



1. A child wets the bed.

a. What are the possible explanations, in your view?

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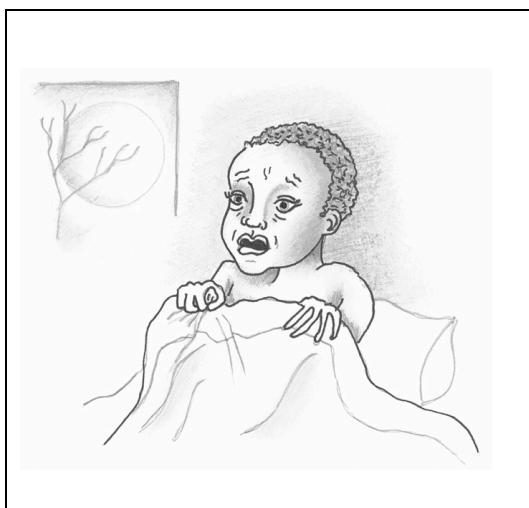
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b. What do you think should happen to the child?

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2. A child has a nightmare.

a. What are the possible explanations, in your view?

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b. What do you think should happen to the child?

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3. A parent who is very ill , and a child with a swollen stomach.

a. What are the possible explanations, in your view?

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b. What do you think should happen to the child?

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.....

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Module 2

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE TENDENCY TO BLAME OTHERS FOR MISFORTUNE

Overall aim: To provide a meaningful response to the phenomenon of accusations of witchcraft made against children with a view to bringing about changes in culture and behaviour in local communities.

Objective of this module: By the end of this module, the participants will have a better understanding of the root causes of accusations of witchcraft made against children and particularly of the need to take personal responsibility for our decisions and actions.

Before the Workshop

- Materials – flip-chart, marker pens, paper, scotch tape
 - Copies of Bible verses, written onto sheets of paper
 - Copies of questions for group discussions (to be given to each group before the relevant activity).
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Opening (10 minutes)

Prayer and Worship

Review (20 minutes)

Goal – Revision of the first module.

The facilitator asks the participants: **“What did we do together during our first training workshop?”** He notes the answers on the flip-chart. After each answer he asks: **“What did we learn through this activity?”** If there has been a gap in time between the first workshop and the second, the facilitator asks this additional question: **“What have you put into practice since the first workshop?”**

He emphasises the main conclusion by putting up the appropriate sheets from the **first module** with these words (and the associated verses).

The Bible clearly shows us that:

Children are a gift from God (Psalm 127:3-5), created (Psalm 139:13) in His image (Genesis 1:27) and for whom He has a clear plan and purpose (Psalm 139:15).

Then he emphasises that we also understood that the Bible clearly shows us God's heart for children, especially through the sketch based on verses 15-17 from Luke 18. We noted that Jesus respected them, he listened to them, he loved them, he prioritised them, but the disciples wanted to drive them away. Often our behaviour and our attitudes towards children do not reflect the example of Jesus but rather that of the disciples.

The facilitator writes "Jesus respected children, he listened to them, he loved them, he prioritised them, but the disciples wanted to drive them away" on a sheet in large letters, and puts it on the wall.

Then he explains that today (in this **second module**) we will examine more closely some of these attitudes and behaviours.

Activity 1 (60 minutes)

Goal — To introduce some root causes of the phenomenon of accusations of witchcraft made against children, particularly the need to accept personal responsibility for our own actions and decisions.

Story

The facilitator explains that we are going to listen to a story, then act it out. (If there is not enough time, the sketch may be omitted, but if it is possible to include it, it will be easier for the participants to absorb the details of the story).

The facilitator reads the story:

A contemporary story of a family. The name of the father is MARTIN and the mother is called MONIQUE and into this family were born four children called CHARLES (10 years old), who has a club-foot, but who is intelligent and full of life, JEAN and MARC (twins 8 years old), and NOEL (6 years old).

MARTIN worked for the Marsavco company as an accountant. He used to have a happy family life with good mutual understanding between parents and children, sharing together and living in peace. In short, a flourishing life. The children were all growing up normally and were doing well in their studies. MARTIN was considered a fortunate and happy man.

12 years after his first marriage, he entered into a second (polygamous) marriage with MARIE (24 years old) and into this family were born two children, PHILIPPE (2 years old) and MARCIA (1 year old). Martin was sharing his salary between these two households. After some time he ended up helping himself from the funds of the company he worked for, in order to meet the needs of his two

households. As a result MARTIN lost his job after an audit showed that he had taken a significant amount of money from Marsavco. Afterwards, the socio-economic situation of MARTIN's family became very difficult and the following events took place: the children had to leave school, there was not enough to eat and their health deteriorated, as they lost weight and suffered other illnesses which affected their school results. NOEL, a sensitive child, was traumatised by their difficult situation, by the frequent and violent fights between his parents, and the constant and aggressive jibes from his former friends, and he started to wet his bed.

MARIE started to think that the children of the first marriage were responsible for all this misfortune. She succeeded in convincing MARTIN to suspect that his children were witches.

Unable to find a solution to the problems that had happened in his family, MARTIN went to see Pastor JOSEPH hoping to find a solution from God. Pastor JOSEPH invited all the members of MARTIN's family to a prayer evening held in the church especially for the occasion. As a result of this prayer meeting, the pastor confirmed that three of his children, NOEL (6 years old), JEAN (8 years old) and CHARLES (10 years old), were behind all the misfortunes that had affected the family. A few months later, the situation had worsened at home and in the community in the following ways: constant suspicions of the parents and of members of the community, threats, torture and other abuses directed towards the three accused children. Unable to bear the abuse they were suffering, and feeling effectively driven from their home, the children ran away and chose to live on the streets.

Sketch

The facilitator asks the participants to form two circles with chairs (one on the right, and one on the left of the stage) to represent MARTIN's two households, and to place a chair and a table between the two circles to represent his office. He explains to the participants that they will play the role of the characters in the sketch. Those who do not have a specific role will represent the congregation in the church of Pastor JOSEPH.

Participants play the roles of MARTIN, MONIQUE, CHARLES, JEAN, MARC, NOEL, MARIE, PHILIPPE, MARCIA, the employer and Pastor JOSEPH. The facilitator assumes the role of the narrator. The narrator pauses regularly when re-reading the sketch, and the participants improvise actions and activities to represent what is being spoken by the narrator.

The members of the first household enter from the right hand side one after the other when the narrator mentions their name. They go to their house, which is represented by the circle of chairs on the left. The company (Marsavco) is represented by the chair and the table in the middle. When the narrator describes it, MARTIN goes there to "work". The members of the second family enter one after the other from the right hand side when

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the narrator says their name. They go to their household which is represented by the circle of chairs on the right. MARTIN goes back and forth between the two households and his work.

After the embezzlement of the money at work, the employer sacks MARTIN. Then the circles which represent the two households become smaller and smaller as life becomes more and more difficult.

The Pastor's Church is represented by the other participants. The Pastor stands up amid his congregation for this part of the story, and MARTIN comes up to him with the other members of his family. The Pastor proclaims loudly that three of the children are witches and the congregation also start to accuse the children by pointing at them and shouting. After their return home, the narrator tells of the abuses perpetrated against the children, and we see them being driven onto the street.

Some Questions

At the end of the sketch, the participants are divided into small groups of five or six, and the facilitator asks them to reflect for a few minutes on the following questions:

1. **What has struck you about how the children are treated in this story?**
2. **Why have the children been accused of witchcraft? Note down all the reasons for these accusations that you have noticed.**

After five to ten minutes the facilitator invites a representative from each group to share their answers and he (or a volunteer) notes them on the flip-chart.

The following ideas will probably be among the answers given:

- Charles is accused because he has a disability.
- Noel is accused because he wets his bed.
- Jean is accused because he is a twin.
- Nobody protects the children or defends the children.
- Nobody listens to the children.

The facilitator can emphasise this aspect by pointing to the sheet on the wall with the words *"Jesus respected the children, he listened to them, he loved them, he prioritised them etc. but the disciples wanted to drive them away"*. He asks: **"Have the adults in our story today respected the children?"** (He emphasises the "No"). **"Did they listen to the children?"** (He emphasises the "No"). **"Did they love the children?"** (He emphasises the "No"). **"Have they given priority to the children?"** (He emphasises the "No"). Short pause: **"Did they want to drive the children away?"** (He emphasises the "Yes").

- The step-mother was behind the accusations.
- The Pastor confirmed that the children were witches.
- The father believed that his children were witches
- The family experienced problems for which someone was responsible.

If a participant or a group gives this response, it must be noted then used to introduce the next question. The facilitator should write “someone” instead of “the children” or “a witch”.

More Questions

The facilitator re-reads the story, if needed, then he asks the following questions to the small groups of participants. After ten minutes the facilitator invites a representative from each group to share their answers and he (or a volunteer) notes them on the flip-chart:

3. What are the real causes of the difficulties encountered by MARTIN’s family, and who is responsible for them?

The facilitator should stress Martin’s own behaviour in entering into a second, polygamous marriage and in stealing money from his employer. He comes back to the accusations against the children asking the question: “Is Charles responsible for the decision of his father to enter into a second marriage?” “Has Jean stolen money from the company?” “or Noel?” He then stresses that our actions and our decisions have consequences, and we are responsible for them. “Did Martin accept responsibility for his own actions?” (No, and instead of accepting the consequences of his actions, he looked for someone else to blame).

The facilitator should stress the fact that (as we will see in a few minutes) the children did NOT cause the misfortune in the family but that the blame was wrongly put on them. And that we often hear similar justifications for such accusations. As in the first module, it is essential to avoid using sentences such as “child witches”. The children are (falsely) accused of witchcraft. They are not witches. It is also necessary to avoid the suggestion that the misfortune is caused by witchcraft.

4. What have been the consequences of the second marriage?

The facilitator should highlight the economic aspects (Martin does not earn enough money to support two households, so both households experience financial difficulties), physical aspects (lack of food etc., abuse of the children), social aspects (the fragmentation of the families, the crime or the theft, the loss of the job), emotional aspects (jealousy between the two women, suspicions, blame, accusations, rejection and the abuse of the children) and spiritual aspects (temptation to steal, disobedience to God’s Word, and abuse of the children).

5. What were the consequences to the visit to Pastor JOSEPH?

The facilitator should explain that it is the pastor who has confirmed the accusations and who has stigmatised the three children. As a consequence, the children have suffered rejection, “the suspicions of the parents, threats, tortures and other abuses” within the family and the community. They were driven onto the street, where children are endangered and the victims of abuse on an everyday basis.

All Together

All the participants answer the following questions together.

6. **Does the response of the pastor to MARTIN obey the Word and example of Christ? Why not? In what way is it not consistent with Jesus' attitude?**

The facilitator stresses this by pointing to the sheet "Jesus respected the children, he listened to them, he loved them, he prioritised them etc., but the disciples wanted to drive them away". He refers also to Matthew 18.10, Mark 9.42, Matthew 10.40-42, Luke 9.47-48, Matthew 18.2-6 asking volunteers from among the participants to read these verses for the group, and to compare them with the actions of the pastor.

7. **What harm have these children caused to this family?**

If someone answers that it was indeed the children who have caused the problems, the facilitator asks the question "How do you know?" and uses Activity 2 below.

8. **Give examples of situations similar to that of this family, which you know about within your communities. What have been the consequences for the children? What happened to them?**

The facilitator should place the emphasis on the bad consequences for the children of the failure of the adults to accept responsibility for their own actions and their decisions. This is not a theoretical problem but a reality with terrible consequences for the children. He should stress that God finds this unacceptable: "If anyone causes one of these little ones – those who believe in me – to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matthew 18.6).

Activity 2 (50 minutes)

[Source: John Rowse, of The Uhakika Christian Education Trust, access online at < graceclinics.weebly.com >. Technique adapted and used with permission.]

Principle: "How do you know?"

(To be used if it becomes clear that the participants believe that the children in the story are guilty and to use with the participants as a tool for responding to accusations.)

Goal – To plant doubts about the reliability of an accusation of witchcraft. How do you know (*for certain*, given the consequences of accusations) that this person is guilty?

The facilitator asks the participants to ask the question "How do you know? / How does he or she know?" (raising the right hand high and pointing upwards into the air), every time a person is accused of witchcraft.

Dialogue

The facilitator presents both sides of a dialogue:

Accuser: MARIE has accused NOEL (indicating an imaginary child beside him) of witchcraft.

Response: How does she know? (raising the right hand and pointing upwards).

Repeat, but inviting the participants to take part in the response.

Proceed:

Accuser: The Pastor has confirmed it.

Response (everybody, raising the right hand and pointing upwards): How does he know?

Accuser: It was revealed to him.

Facilitator: There are now three possibilities under consideration:

- First: the pastor could be a fraud;
- Second: the pastor could be deluded;
- Third: the pastor has had a revelation.

Let's look at each possibility one by one.

- The pastor could be a fraud.

Does the pastor profit from accusations, maybe financially? Are these accusations a means to promote himself? Are there testimonies of his being mistaken or of him deceiving others? If the answer to any of these is 'yes', we cannot have confidence in his accusation made against NOEL.

- The pastor could be deluded.

This depends on the context – does he take drugs or go into trances, for example? If so, we cannot place any confidence in his accusation made against NOEL.

- The pastor has had a revelation.

But (everybody, raising the right hand and pointing upwards) how do you know that it is a revelation from God?

It must be tested, using the example of God's Word. Does this revelation come from God, or from the Accuser, the father of lies?

In God's Word

The facilitator gives each of the following verses to a small group of participants and asks them to consider the pastor's assertion in the light of these verses.

- 1 John 4:1

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

But test everything; hold fast to what is good, abstain from every form of evil.

- Zechariah 3:1

Then he showed me the high priest Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.

- John 8:44

You are from your father the devil, and you chose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- 1 Peter 5.8

"Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.

The participants share their answers with the whole group.

The facilitator emphasises the following points:

- in the Bible there are NO examples of such accusations made against a child;
- we read clearly in the Bible that Satan is the Accuser and the father of lies;
- it is Satan who threatens us and who accuses anyone, even the innocents.

So, even if the pastor has received a revelation, as this revelation is not in line the Word of God, since there is no example of such an accusation in the Bible, it could come from the father of lies and we cannot place our confidence in what the Accuser says regarding NOEL.

Therefore, how do we know that NOEL is a witch? **The fact is, we don't.**

Activity 3 (50 minutes)

Goal — To examine more closely human action and personal responsibility as seen in the Bible.

Study in Groups

The participants are placed into three groups to answer the questions which are given to them. After 10 minutes, the facilitator asks a representative from each group to read the verses that were given to them, and to share their answers.

Group A

Genesis 2:15–17, 3:1–19

- **What was the behaviour of Adam and Eve? What did they do?**
- **Did they accept responsibility for their choices?**
- **What were the consequences of their choices?**

After the group has shared its answers, the facilitator summarises what we learn from this story:

The first story in the Bible reveals to us the true nature of human beings, when it comes to assuming, or to attributing responsibility for bad decisions or actions. God gave Adam and Eve free will. They were free to choose between obeying God or not in eating or not eating the forbidden fruit. Unfortunately, they made the wrong choice: they ate the fruit. In consequence, they were expelled from the garden and were from that day on facing death.

Instead of accepting responsibility for their actions, each one started accusing the other: Adam accused Eve, saying: "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." (Genesis 3:12) The man puts the blame on the woman, and attributes the responsibility for his fallenness to her for having given him the fruit from the tree. Eve accuses the serpent of having deceived her: "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." (Genesis 3:13).

The judgement of God established the responsibility of each person. So, each was punished for what he or she had done. The story of Adam and Eve can be read as a historical event. But, we can equally learn from it as an explanation of the behaviour of all human beings. In this second sense, it explains the way we seek to put the blame on others for our sins or bad choices, as happens in our relationships today.

The facilitator stresses that we act this way in our relationships today. In our contemporary story, MARTIN and MARIE refuse to accept responsibility for their wrong actions and their bad choices but instead they put the blame on the children, with no justification.

Group B

Genesis 16:1–6

- **What caused the quarrel between Abram and Sarah?**

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- **What were the consequences?**
- **What do we learn from this story?**

After the group has shared their answers, the facilitator summarises what we learn from this story:

As Sarah was unable to conceive, she decided to give her servant Hagar to Abraham. Culturally speaking, a child born as the fruit of a union between a servant and the husband of the mistress of the house, belonged to her mistress. Sarah had the choice not to give Hagar to Abraham, even if this was “culturally tolerated”. This choice brought more problems into their family life. Ishmael was born and Hagar “looked with contempt on her mistress” (Genesis 16.4). A conflict was triggered between the two women.

By looking on her mistress with contempt, Hagar caused Sarah to be jealous and to chase her away with her child. The child was innocent and the angel came to save him. But Hagar was guilty of looking upon her mistress with contempt. So the angels told her: “Return to your mistress and submit to her.” (Genesis 16.9).

Even if in African societies, we do not necessarily have servants, there are customs which encourage a husband to take a second wife. Numerous conflicts are generated from this kind of humiliation of the first wife. Relations are rarely harmonious between co-wives.

In our contemporary story, we see that, in the same way, MARTIN’s decision to take a second wife created serious problems for the family. But instead of taking responsibility for these actions and admitting to his guilt, he puts the blame on the children. This happens today, here in our country.

Group C

Acts 5:1–10, Galatians 6:7–9

- **What was the behaviour of Ananias and his wife Sapphira like? What did they do?**
- **Did they accept responsibility for their actions?**
- **What were the consequences of their actions? How do the verses in Galatians 6 help us to better understand these consequences?**

After the group have shared their answers, the facilitator summarises what we learn from this story:

This is a story in which “human action” is clearly established. Ananias and his wife Sapphira died because of their sin of lying. They lied deliberately. They had the choice to tell the truth about what they had done but they chose to lie because they wanted to keep the money. It was as if they had stolen from God himself. Martin did something similar. Like Ananias and Sapphira, he “falsified the accounts” and he also, suffered the consequences.

The verses in Galatians 6 explain clearly that our actions have consequences and that God holds us responsible for our choices. "For we are each responsible for our own conduct... Do not be misled – you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant."(Galatians 6:5, 7)

Summary

Today we have looked into some situations where suffering is the consequence of human action, where someone refuses to accept the responsibility for their actions or their decisions, but rather looks for someone to blame. But we must also remember that there are also many examples where we do not know why people suffer. Generally, we see in the Bible that it was not Jesus' priority to look for the reason for an illness or a misfortune. In some cases, the cause of the suffering or misfortune is not the sin of the person who is suffering, but simply because God allows it to happen, for the glory of God, as for example in the story of Job, or that of Lazarus. God sometimes allows us to suffer so that we can grow, or so we can suffer like Christ for His cause, like the apostle Paul, for example.

What conclusions do we draw from God's Word?

- We are personally responsible for the consequences of our actions.
- We must not seek to hold someone else responsible for our sufferings, nor look for someone to blame.
- There are NO cases in the Bible where a child accused of witchcraft causes another person to suffer.
- There are NO cases in the Bible where a child is accused of witchcraft.

Closing (20 minutes)

Goal – Conclusion: what have we learned today?

The facilitator asks the participants to write on a post-it what they have learned during the day's workshop regarding the root causes of accusations of witchcraft made against children and regarding human action and personal responsibility. And what other things have they learned? Stick the post-its on the sheets on the wall. The facilitator reads them to the participants as a summary. (After the departure of the participants, a volunteer collects them and the facilitator reads them to check whether the teaching has been well understood and whether there are any misunderstandings that need to be corrected during the next workshop).

The facilitator gives a brief summary of what has been learned through each activity, stressing that the Bible clearly shows us that we are responsible for the consequences of our own actions, and that we must not seek to put the blame on others, especially not on innocent people.

He writes in large letters (on one or two sheets of the flip-chart posted on the wall, leaving room to add explanations) the following sentence:

The Heart of the Matter

..... *Accusations of witchcraft made against the children are not in line with the Word of God.*

He asks the question from the participants: **“How do we know this?”**

He adds the answers around the sentence

- Children are a gift from God (Psalm 127)
- We are responsible for our own actions (Galatians 6)
- We must not look for someone to blame for the consequences of our choices (Genesis 3)
- We must protect children (Matthew 18)

Then he asks the participants to stand up if they agree with this statement.

Coming Up

The facilitator explains that tomorrow or in the next workshop, we will look at some supposed signs of witchcraft which give rise to accusations made against children, such as physical handicaps and difficult behaviour, and we will ask the question: “are these so-called ‘signs’ reliable indicators, or not?”

Prayers

Departure



Module 3

NORMAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA

Overall aim: To provide a meaningful response to the phenomenon of accusations of witchcraft made against children with a view to bringing about changes in culture and behaviour in local communities.

Objective of this module: In this module, we consider some of the supposed 'signs' of witchcraft, which lead to accusations of witchcraft made against the children. By the end of this module, the participants will have a better understanding of normal child development, and the effects of trauma on development.

Before the Workshop

- Materials — flip-chart, marker pens, sheets of paper both white and in different colours, scotch tape.
 - Copies of Bible verses written out on sheets of paper.
 - 'Bricks' for Activity 3 — made of pieces of paper (A4), if possible of different colours for each age group (see Appendix 1). If you do not have coloured paper, draw a line between each age group when building the 'wall'.
 - Copies of the questions for group discussion (to be given to each group before the appropriate activity).
-

Opening (10 minutes)

Prayer and Worship

Review (20 minutes)

Goal — Revision of the first two modules.

The facilitator asks the participants to summarise the main conclusion reached from the **first module**, then he reinforces it by putting up the appropriate sheets from module 1 with these words (and the related verses):

The Heart of the Matter

The Bible shows us clearly that:

Children are a gift from God (Psalm 127:3-5), created (Psalm 139:13) in His image (Genesis 1:27) and for whom He has a clear plan and purpose (Psalm 139:15).

He then reminds the participants that we looked at God's heart for children, especially through our sketch based on verses 15-17 of Luke 18. We noted that Jesus respected them, listened to them, loved them, prioritised them etc. but the disciples wanted to drive them away. Often, our own behaviour and attitudes towards children do not reflect the example of Jesus but rather that of the disciples.

He then asks them to reflect on what was covered during the **second module**. After they have given their answers, he summarises by reminding them that we started to examine a few root causes of accusations of witchcraft against children, especially the need to accept responsibility for our own actions and decisions. The Bible shows that we are responsible for the consequences of our own actions, and that we are not to seek to put the blame on others, who would suffer as a result.

He pins up the relevant sheets from the second module:

Accusations of witchcraft made against the children are not in line with the Word of God.

- Children are a gift from God (Psalm 127)
- We are responsible for our own actions (Galatians 6)
- We must not seek to put the blame on others for the consequences of our choices (Genesis 3)
- We must protect children (Matthew 18)

The facilitator explains that today (in this **third module**) we will discuss some of the supposed signs of witchcraft which provoke accusations of witchcraft made against children; normal child development and the effect of trauma on this development.

Activity 1 (45 minutes)

Goal — To identify some supposed signs which lead to accusations of witchcraft made against children.

Story

The facilitator asks a volunteer to re-read MARTIN's story.

A contemporary story of a family. The name of the father is MARTIN and the mother is called MONIQUE and into this family were born four children called CHARLES (10 years old), who has a club-foot, but who is intelligent and full of life, JEAN and MARC (twins 8 years old), and NOEL (6 years old).

MARTIN worked for the Marsavco company as an accountant. He used to have a happy family life with good mutual understanding between parents and children, sharing together and living in peace. In short, a flourishing life. The children were all growing up normally and were doing well in their studies. MARTIN was considered a fortunate and happy man.

12 years after his first marriage, he entered into a second (polygamous) marriage with MARIE (24 years old) and into this family were born two children, PHILIPPE (2 years old) and MARCIA (1 year old). Martin was sharing his salary between these two households. After some time he ended up helping himself from the funds of the company he worked for, in order to meet the needs of his two households. As a result MARTIN lost his job after an audit showed that he had taken a significant amount of money from Marsavco. Afterwards, the socio-economic situation of MARTIN's family became very difficult and the following events took place: the children had to leave school, there was not enough to eat and their health deteriorated, as they lost weight and suffered other illnesses which affected their school results. NOEL, a sensitive child, was traumatised by their difficult situation, by the frequent and violent fights between his parents, and the constant and aggressive jibes from his former friends, and he started to wet his bed.

MARIE started to think that the children of the first marriage were responsible for all this misfortune. She succeeded in convincing MARTIN to suspect that his children were witches.

Unable to find a solution to the problems that had happened in his family, MARTIN went to see Pastor JOSEPH hoping to find a solution from God. Pastor JOSEPH invited all the members of MARTIN's family to a prayer evening held in the church especially for the occasion. As a result of this prayer meeting, the pastor confirmed that three of his children, NOEL (6 years old), JEAN (8 years old) and CHARLES (10 years old), were behind all the misfortunes that had affected the family. A few months later, the situation had worsened at home and in the community in the following ways: constant suspicions of the parents and of members of the community, threats, torture and other abuses directed towards the three accused children. Unable to stand up to the abuse they were suffering, and feeling effectively driven from their home, the children ran away and chose to live on the streets.

Questions

The facilitator asks the participants the following question:

- **What reasons do you think could have been cited (albeit falsely) by Martin and Marie to justify accusations of witchcraft against Charles, Jean and Noel?**

Note the answers on sheets pinned on the wall. They might include the following answers:

The Heart of the Matter

- Jean is a twin,
- Noel wets his bed,
- Charles has a physical disability,
- Charles is sometimes disobedient and cheeky.

The facilitator asks the question from the participants: **“What other supposed signs have you heard of which are used to justify an accusation of witchcraft made against a child?”**

Have a brainstorming session and make a list of the ideas of the participants. This will help to give you a good understanding of the situation locally, so that you will then be able to talk about and tackle the attitudes, beliefs and practices which are widely found in the community where the participants live and work.

The facilitator then explains that we will look at whether these so-called “signs” (which arouse suspicions of witchcraft and prompt accusations against children) are trustworthy, and whether we can rely on these “signs”.

Activity 2 (30 minutes)

Goal – To explain the behaviours mentioned below in the context of the normal development of a child.

All Together

The facilitator asks the participants to think of the normal development of a child. He asks the following questions, noting the answers on a sheet of the flip-chart:

- **At what age approximately does a child start to talk / ...to walk / ...to make friends / ...to have tantrums / ...to have their own opinions?**
- **What physical changes do we notice between childhood and adolescence?**

The facilitator explains that experts in the field of child psychology have identified needs and stages in the normal development of the child which apply to children the world over. The stages are not precisely defined by the child’s age, and not all children develop in exactly the same way.

The facilitator stresses that behaviours which are often treated as ‘signs’ of “witchcraft” are in fact normal behaviours, especially when a child has been traumatised, for example wetting the bed, dreams and nightmares, stubbornness, or outbursts of temper.

Then the facilitator explains that if the child lives through traumatic events which interrupt the normal stages of development, or if the child is deprived of his / her fundamental needs, there will be consequences in behaviour which are also well recognised by the psychologists.

Explain

The facilitator makes a list on the flip-chart of behaviours linked to trauma:

- increased aggression, fear and mistrust;
- withdrawal, loss of confidence;
- physical problems like headaches, loss of appetite and loss of energy;
- trouble sleeping;
- outbursts of temper;
- other signs of anxiety;
- regression (for example, a child will go back to bed wetting, or will have nightmares);
- loss of the ability and the desire to form relationships.

Imagine

The facilitator asks the participants to close their eyes and think back to a time when something bad happened to them. **How did they feel? What were the mental, physical and emotional effects on them?** After a few moments the facilitator says that it is the same for children. When something bad happens to them, they show the signs and symptoms of stress and trauma.

He explains that if a child is traumatised by conflict, abuse and rejection, or if he suffers severe deprivation (especially of love, and of physical and emotional care), he will sometimes develop negative coping strategies, and troubling behaviours.

He emphasises (by repeating two or three times) this key point:

It is very important to understand that far from being indications of witchcraft, many physical and psychological reactions to traumatic experiences should be understood as perfectly normal reactions to abnormal situations.

Activity 3 (40 minutes)

Goal — To better understand the physical, mental, spiritual, emotional and social needs of the child.

On the Wall

The facilitator explains that we are going to examine some fundamental needs which children have in order to ensure their full development. This includes their physical development, of course, but also mental, emotional, social and spiritual aspects. He reads the following verse:

Luke 2:52

The Heart of the Matter

... *Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and all the people.*

Children need our help to grow up physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually. This verse shows us the importance of these different elements in the overall development of Jesus Christ Himself. **He grew in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and all the people:** in other words, in every area mentioned above. His development involved far more than the physical element. Human beings have certain needs which remain stable during the whole of life and others which change as we grow up.

The participants are divided into 4 groups. Each group is given the paper 'bricks' which represent the things a child needs at a particular age (0-2, 3-6, 7-11, 12-18 years).

The facilitator asks the members of each group to read the words on each 'brick' representing the child's needs at that age for healthy, complete development. Start with the group which represents 0-2 year olds, then the group for 3-6, then 7-11 and finally 12-18.

Then the facilitator asks the groups to build a 'wall' by sticking up each paper 'brick' next to the age range indicated. Start with the group representing the age group 0-2, then the group for 3-6, then 7-11, then 12-18.

See Appendix 1 for an example of how the 'wall' should look.

The facilitator encourages the participants to spend a few minutes looking at the 'wall' and points out some of the needs mentioned. He explains that the 'wall' represents the life of a stable child who feels secure, and whose life and personality are built on solid ground.

Imagine

Then the facilitator asks the participants to imagine that the child lives in poverty, in a household with parents who are negligent and violent. Which of the fundamental needs of the child that we see on our wall would not be met?

He asks for volunteers from the participants to remove some bricks, explaining why they have chosen these particular bricks. Progressively, more and more holes will appear on the wall. The underlying structure of the life of the child is becoming less secure. What will be the consequences of the absence of these bricks? The wall would eventually fall. The life of the child will be destroyed.

The facilitator asks that the participants imagine the consequences for a child who is neglected, mistreated, or traumatised in this way. Make a list together:

Physical consequences:

- malnutrition
- retarded growth
- retarded development
- neglected appearance

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- tendency to wet the bed
- headaches
- troubles sleeping
- loss of appetite and energy

Mental consequences:

- lack of schooling
- late intellectual development

Emotional consequences:

- increased aggression, fear and mistrust
- temper tantrums
- loss of confidence
- other signs of anxiety
- fear of being abandoned, isolated and rejected

Spiritual consequences:

- being deprived of his / her identity in Christ as a child who is precious and beloved of God.
- being crushed by the lie that he / she is not lovable, nor accepted nor important.

Social consequences:

- withdrawal
- loss of the ability and the desire to form relationships
- mistrust of others, especially of adults

How should the parents and other adults around the child react to such a situation?

The facilitator explains that often parents and other adults interpret the signs of negligence and abuse as signs that the child is 'witch'. Because of this lack of understanding, they accuse him of witchcraft and drive him away, which aggravates the trauma, and so the consequences of the trauma for the child are magnified.

The facilitator asks the question: **"Is this an appropriate response?"** and emphasises the reply "No!" On the contrary, we should help the child, protect him, value him. The 'wall' of his life must be rebuilt by meeting his fundamental needs. (The facilitator repeats these sentences, then asks the participants to affirm them.)

Activity 4 (45 minutes)

Goal — To examine in greater depth CHARLES's situation compared with the biblical example of how child living with disability should be treated.

The Heart of the Matter

The facilitator recalls that CHARLES (in the story read previously) has a club foot, meaning that he has a physical disability. It might be the reason why Martin and Marie decided to accuse him of witchcraft.

Study in Groups

The participants are divided into two groups. The first group discusses the verses for Group A and the second discusses the verses for Group B below, examining the question:

- **What does the Bible says regarding the value of people with disabilities, and how we are to treat them?**

Group A

Genesis 1:26

Then God said: 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.'

1 Corinthians 12:12, 22

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ... On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.

John 9:1–3

As he walked along, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him.'

Job 1:1 and 29:11–17

There was once a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.

When the ear heard, it commended me, and when the eye saw, it approved, because I delivered the poor who cried, and the orphan who had no helper. The blessing of the wretched came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban. I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy, and I championed the cause of the stranger; I broke the fangs of the unrighteous, and made them drop their prey from their teeth.

Group B

2 Samuel 4:4 and 9:1–13

Saul's son Jonathan had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan's death came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, and in her haste to flee, it happened that he fell and became disabled. His name was Mephibosheth.

David asked, 'Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?' Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They summoned him to appear before David, and the king said to him, 'Are you Ziba?' 'At your service!' he replied. The king asked, 'Is there no one still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?' Ziba answered the king 'There is still a son of Jonathan; he is lame in both feet.' The king said to him, 'Where is he?' Ziba answered, 'He is at the house of Machir son of Ammiel in Lo-debar.' So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Machir son of Ammiel.

When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honour. David said, 'Mephibosheth!' He answered, 'I am your servant.' David said to him, 'Do not be afraid, for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.' Mephibosheth bowed down and said, 'What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?'

Then the king summoned Saul's steward Ziba, and said to him, 'I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him, and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, will always eat at my table.' Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

Then Ziba said to the king, 'Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do.' So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.

Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. And all who lived in Ziba's house became Mephibosheth's servants. Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king's table; he was lame in both feet.

All Together

After 10–15 minutes the facilitator asks a representative from each group to share the answers from their group with all present.

The facilitator emphasises the following points:

- As we are all created in God's image, including people with disabilities, our value has nothing to do with our abilities and talents, but stems from who we are.

The Heart of the Matter

- The people who are less valued by other people are none the less indispensable in the body of Christ.
- God uses disabilities, and people with disabilities for his glory (See also the example of Moses who stuttered – Exodus 4:10)
- Job is described as a righteous man and one of the examples given to support this is that he met the practical needs of people with disabilities, with the heart of a servant.
- David also was chosen by God because he was “... a man after His own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22) “who will fulfil all my will.” David welcomed Mephibosheth into his own home, and “... he ate at David’s table, like one of the king’s sons.”
- Far from being driven away, or accused, or abandoned, he was sought out, accepted, and honoured, as if he were a member of David’s family.

The facilitator asks the question:

- **So, according to the examples given in the Bible, how should we behave towards people, and particularly towards children who have disabilities?**

The facilitator could mention here that twins like JEAN and MARC in our story, are also created by God – we see, for example, in Genesis 25:21 that God has answered Isaac’s prayers by giving twins to Rebekah: *“Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.”* We read about these twins in Romans 9:11-12: *“Yet before the children were born or had done anything good or bad she received a message from God. (This message shows that God chooses people according to His own purposes; He calls people, but not according to their good or bad works). She was told: ‘Your older son will serve your younger son.’* Therefore, as for any other children, twins are also...

⋮ A **GIFT** of God, created in his image and for whom He has a clear plan and
 ⋮ purpose.
 ⋮

Closing (20 minutes)

Goal – Conclusion: what have we learned today?

The facilitator asks each participant to write on a post-it what they have learned during the day regarding the so-called “signs” which result in accusations of witchcraft against children.

Are there other explanations for these ‘signs’ in the context of normal child development and normal reactions to trauma? Pin the post-its on the sheets on the wall. The facilitator reads them to the participants as a summary. (When the participants have left, a volunteer collects them and the facilitator reads them to check whether the teaching has been well

The Heart of the Matter

understood and whether there are any misunderstandings that need to be corrected during the next workshop).

Revision

The facilitator briefly recaps what has been learned through each activity. We have touched upon some supposed 'signs' of witchcraft which cause accusations to be made against children, like physical disabilities and difficult behaviour, or the tendency to wet the bed, have temper tantrums, or be stubborn. We have learned that these so-called 'signs' are not reliable and have many other possible explanations, so we cannot be confident that we can use them to justify accusations of witchcraft made against children.

We have built a paper "wall". Each brick represented a basic need of the child for his healthy, complete development. We agreed that we need to meet the fundamental needs of a child, be they physical, spiritual, social, mental or emotional, in order to ensure the healthy development of the child and to enable him / her to flourish and fulfil his / her potential. Conversely, failure to do so prevents the growth and development of children. Their wall is at risk of falling down.

Then we considered the effects of trauma on a child. When a child is traumatised by conflict, abuse, rejection, or severe deprivation (especially of love and physical and emotional care), he will sometimes develop negative coping strategies. Increased aggression, withdrawal, and physical problems like headaches, loss of appetite and of energy, problems with sleep, temper tantrums and other signs of anxiety are all symptoms. The child might regress by losing some stages of his development. He could start wetting the bed again or have nightmares, for example. We have learned that these behaviours are often misinterpreted as 'signs' that the child is a so-called 'witch' when in fact, these behaviours are normal responses to abuse, lack of care, and trauma or difficult family situations.

Finally, the facilitator stresses that we have understood that the Bible clearly shows us that all children are a gift from God, including children with disabilities, and that it is our responsibility to meet their basic needs to enable them to flourish.

He explains that tomorrow or during the next training workshop, we will examine fear, the power of God and how the perfect love of God Almighty "drives out fear".

Prayers

Departure

Appendix 1

12 – 18 yrs adolescence	friends	education	private life	spiritual help and prayer	love	direction, guidance
	acceptance, affirmation	food and clean water	independence, responsibility	shelter	limits and boundaries	discipline
7 – 11 yrs childhood	prayer	affirmation, acceptance	protection, security	spiritual nurture	love and care	education
	discipline, boundaries	shelter	food and clean water	fun and play	friends	teaching, guidance
3 – 6 years young childhood	food and clean water	fun and play	discipline, boundaries	hugs and loving care	spiritual nurture	security, safety
	friends	exploration	protection	shelter	acceptance, affirmation	stimulation
0 – 2 years infancy	exercise	stimulation	protection and care	upholding child in prayer	play	company
	love	hugs	safety	milk, clean water	hygiene needs	food

Note — this is simply one example of what the wall could look like.



Module 4

SPIRITUAL POWERS

Overall aim: To provide a meaningful response to the phenomenon of accusations of witchcraft made against children with a view to bringing about changes in culture and behaviour in local communities.

Objective of this module: In this module we will look at:

- fear, with reference to the sovereignty of God and the spiritual consequences of what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross; and
- the Bible's teaching concerning 'witchcraft'.

By the end of this module, the participants will have a fuller understanding of victory in Christ and the fact that as Christians, we are not called to be fearful. They will also know that witchcraft and witchcraft accusations as understood here are not found in the Bible.

Before the Workshop

- Materials — flip-chart, markers, paper, pencils or pens, and balloons for Activity 2, scotch tape.
 - Prepare the verses for Activity 1, writing them on small pieces of paper or sheets of paper, (in accordance with the instructions below).
 - Prepare all the verses for Activity 2, which should be numbered and wrapped around pens or pencils or sticks or lollipops, or placed inside inflated balloons.
 - Write up Romans 8:15–16 on flip chart in advance ready for the end of Activity 2.
 - Write up the three definitions for Activity 3 on large sheets of paper.
 - Copies of the questions for group discussion (to be given to each group before the appropriate activity).
-

Opening (10 minutes)

Prayer and worship

Review (30 minutes)

Goal — Revision of the first three modules.

The Heart of the Matter

The facilitator asks the participants to summarise the main conclusion reached from the **first module**, then he reinforces it by indicating the appropriate sheets from module 1 with these words (and the related verses):

The Bible shows us clearly that:

Children are a gift from God (Psalm 127:3-5), created (Psalm 139:13) in His image (Genesis 1:27) and for whom He has a clear plan and purpose (Psalm 139:15).

Then we looked at God's heart for children, especially through our sketch based on verses 15-17 of Luke 18. We noted that Jesus respected them, listened to them, loved them, prioritised them etc. but the disciples wanted to drive them away. Often, our own behaviour and attitudes towards children do not reflect the example of Jesus but rather that of the disciples.

He then asks them to reflect on what was covered during the **second module**. After they have given their answers, he summarises by reminding them that we started to examine a few roots of accusations of witchcraft against children, especially the need to accept responsibility for our own actions and decisions. The Bible shows that we are responsible for the consequences of our own actions, and that we are not to seek to put the blame on others, who would suffer as a result.

He indicates the relevant sheets from the second module:

Accusations of witchcraft made against the children are not in line with the Word of God.

- Children are a gift from God (Psalm 127)
- We are responsible for our own actions (Galatians 6)
- We must not look to put the blame on others for the consequences of our choices (Genesis 3)
- We must protect children (Matthew 18)

Continuing, the facilitator asks further questions, seeking to emphasise the following...

In the **third module** we considered some of the so-called 'signs' which are supposed to indicate that a person is a 'witch' and which provoke accusations against children. These include the presence of a physical disability and difficult behaviours like the tendency to wet the bed, temper tantrums, or stubbornness. We learned that these so-called "signs" are not reliable and that there are many other possible explanations for them, therefore we cannot trust them, nor cite them to justify accusations of witchcraft made against children.

We built a "paper wall". Each brick represented a basic and fundamental need of the child for their healthy, complete development. We agreed that we must meet children's fundamental needs, be they physical, spiritual, social, mental or emotional, to ensure their healthy development and enable them to flourish and fulfil their potential. Conversely,

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failing to meet these needs inhibits the growth and development of children. The 'wall' is at risk of collapsing.

Then we considered the effects that trauma has on a child. If a child is traumatised by conflict, abuse, rejection, or severe deprivations (especially of love and physical and emotional care), he / she is likely to develop negative coping strategies. Increased aggression, withdrawal, and physical problems like headaches, loss of appetite and of energy, difficulty sleeping, temper tantrums and other signs of anxiety are among the symptoms. He / she might regress by losing some aspects of his development. He / she may start wetting the bed again or have nightmares, for example. We learned that these behaviours are often falsely interpreted to be "signs" that the child is a witch when in fact these behaviours are normal responses to abuse, lack of care, to trauma or to a difficult family situation.

We also examined Bible verses regarding appropriate attitudes and behaviours towards people with disabilities, looking at the examples of Job and David. The Bible teaches us that **every** child is a gift and creation of God, including children who have disabilities or who are twins.

Today (in this **fourth module**), we will talk about spiritual powers, about the omnipotence of God, and the victory of Jesus Christ on the cross, in other words the victory of good over evil. We will examine the role of fear in witchcraft accusations. Then we will look at what the Word of God teaches us regarding "witchcraft".

Activity 1 (50 minutes)

Goal – To look at fear, in the light of God's sovereignty and of what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross.

Study in Groups

The participants are divided into three groups.

The facilitator asks them to have a brainstorming session regarding the things that people in their communities (churches, village, neighbourhood) are afraid of. Then the facilitator asks each group to classify their list so that what is most feared is at number 1, and the thing that is least feared is in last place. A spokesperson for each group shares the list from his group with all present.

It is probable that witchcraft or demons or evil spirits will be on the lists, but if not, the facilitator should add them. He explains that many people in our communities and even in our churches live in fear, and especially in fear of the forces of evil and of witchcraft. He adds that this is one of the principal root causes of the present epidemic of accusations of witchcraft made against our children. This is one of the reasons for the indefensible number of children who are living on the streets of our towns and cities.

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In God's Word

The facilitator explains that we are now going to explore the following question:

- **What does the Bible say on this subject?**

The facilitator writes these scrambled words on the flip-chart:

- HETIF
- RAUSCEC
- ARIL, and RAFETH FO SILE

He explains that these are descriptions that are used in God's Word to describe Satan's nature, but that the letters of each word are mixed up. He asks the participants in the three groups to unscramble the letters and to suggest Bible verses where these words are used as descriptions of the enemy.

After five minutes he highlights the following:

HETIF = THIEF

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

The facilitator asks the participants to give some examples of Satan as a thief.

Afterwards he explains that Satan robs us of joy and peace. He robs children of security, love, their identity as God's precious children, even life itself, by provoking accusations of witchcraft against them. It is not only the children who suffer, but families and society in general, because people mistrust one another. The consequence of these mutual suspicions, this wariness, is that entire nations are unable to realise their full potential because of broken relationships. By provoking fear the enemy destroys people's lives. Jesus, on the other hand, brings abundant life, characterised by love, without fear, without accusations.

RAUSCEC = ACCUSER

Revelation 12:10

For the Accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night has been hurled down.

Satan is the Accuser who is the source of accusations. Jesus did not accuse anyone of witchcraft. There are no examples of a person accusing someone else of witchcraft in the Bible. When we accuse others of witchcraft, or when we listen to those who are accusing them, we are doing the dirty work of the Accuser. How does he make us do his dirty work? — through fear.

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ARIL = LIAR

RAFETH FO SILE = FATHER OF LIES

John 8:44

...*(the devil) does not hold to the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

It is the father of lies who whispers to us that we have to fear him, who causes terror and who steals our peace of mind. During Module 2, we understood that, faced with an accusation of witchcraft we must always ask the question: "How do you know?" (*raising the right hand and pointing upwards to reinforce the question*). (Recap in more detail if necessary.) We understood that the enemy is a liar and that he uses lies and deceit to destroy the lives of children and of adults.

He is the liar, the father of lies, the accuser, the thief (the above scrambled words) whose aim is that people, and especially the people of God, should live in fear. Fear neutralises us and disarms us. Fear renders us ineffective: instead of celebrating God's glory, we give too much power to the enemy, and we risk finding ourselves doing his work.

The facilitator explains that we will check what the Bible says regarding the power of Satan, by asking the question:

- **Who is at the top of the hierarchy of spiritual powers?**

The following verse (1 Chronicle 29:11) is written (before the workshop) on a piece of paper and the facilitator asks a participant to read it:

*Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and on earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; **you are exalted as head over all.** 1 Chronicles 29:11*

The facilitator explains that the verse describes the nature and the essence of God. He asks the participants to repeat aloud the characteristics from this verse that describe our God and he writes them on the flip-chart (greatness, power, glory, splendour, majesty, reigning, exalted, head, Lord). He asks the question:

- **What do these characteristics tell us about God?"**

1 Chronicles 29:11 is written in full (before the workshop) on a large sheet of paper and is stuck on the wall. The facilitator invites the participants to read it aloud together.

On the Wall

The facilitator explains that the power and the sovereignty of God are found everywhere in the Bible, it is not hidden from our eyes! He asks the participants to cite some verses (of which there are many in the Bible) by reciting them loudly in everyone's presence.

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(There is no need to write the answers down. It is better to listen to several of them being quoted or read out for a few minutes).

The facilitator starts the process with...

1 Timothy 6:15

He is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The facilitator re-reads the verse on the wall (1 Chronicles 29:11) and asks the participants if our God is...

- King of kings: "Yes!"
- Lord of lords: "Yes!"
- all-powerful: "Yes!"
- formidable: "Yes!"
- sovereign: "Yes!"
- supreme: "Yes!"
- above all things: "Yes!"
- (more loudly) Above ALL things?: "Yes!"
- including the powers of evil: "Yes!"

Then the facilitator pins to the wall the three following verses (written before the workshop):

Colossians 2:15

[On the cross, Christ] disarmed ____ principalities and ____ powers and made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them through the cross.

Ephesians 1:21

Christ is placed far above ____ rule and ____ authority, ____ power, ____ dominion, and ____ sovereignty; above ____ name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.

Matthew 28:18

And Jesus came and said to them, " ____ authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of ____ nation."

He asks the participants to fill in the blanks ("all" or "every", in each case). The Bible tells us emphatically that NO power is more powerful than the Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In fact, there is no possible comparison between the Almighty God and the enemy. It is God who has all the power, and the authority, and the enemy has none in comparison.

The facilitator repeats that Jesus Christ has won the victory on the cross:

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Hebrews 1:3

The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. And when he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honour at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven.

Now the facilitator asks the question:

- **What are the consequences of this omnipotence and this victory over darkness and death for us, the people of God?**

He invites the participants to give their answers, which are noted on a sheet of the flip-chart, showing on the wall. Then, he emphasises the fact that because of the victory of Jesus on the cross and God's sovereignty, we have nothing to fear.

Activity 2 (25 minutes)

Goal – To reaffirm the victory we have over fear, in Christ.

In God's Word

The facilitator has the following verses written on pieces of paper, numbered and placed around 10 pens or pencils or sticks, or lollipops or placed inside inflated balloons. He throws the pens, pencils, sticks, lollipops or balloons to the participants, asking them to catch them. Then he asks them to unfold the papers or burst the balloons and to read the verses aloud in the order of the numbers.

1) 1 John 4:4

Little children, you are from God, and have the victory; for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

The facilitator says: "So? The children of God have nothing to fear."

2) Ephesians 2:6

And he has raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

The facilitator says: "So? The children of God have nothing to fear."

3) John 14:27

Peace I leave with you: my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid.

The facilitator says: "So?" And encourages the participants to answer: "The children of God have nothing to fear."

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4) 2 Timothy 1:7

God did not give us a spirit of fear and timidity, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind.

The facilitator says: "So?" And encourages the participants to answer: "The children of God have nothing to fear."

5) Isaiah 41:10

Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you. I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

The facilitator says: "So?" And encourages the participants to answer: "The children of God have nothing to fear."

6) Psalm 23:4

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.

The facilitator says: "So?" And encourages the participants to answer: "The children of God have nothing to fear."

7) Psalm 46:7

The Lord of heaven's armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

The facilitator says: "So?" And encourages the participants to answer: "The children of God have nothing to fear."

8) Colossians 1:13

He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son.

The facilitator says: "So?" (Participants should reply as above).

9) Colossians 2:14-15

He cancelled the record of the charges that stood against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual powers and authorities and made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

The facilitator says: "So?" (Participants should reply as above).

10) Ephesians 1:19-21

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honour at God's right hand in the heavenly realms,

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far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.

The facilitator says: "So?" (Participants should reply as above).

Explain

The facilitator explains that the work of the enemy and of the powers of evil is to oppose God. Satan tries to provoke Christians to live in a way that is contrary to the Word of God. Fear is a tool of the enemy which pushes us to turn our eyes away from Christ and to fix them on the trials and difficulties of life. The enemy whispers suspicions: "Who did that to me?", "Who is hurting me?", "Who is the witch?" He steals joy and peace from us. He lies. He accuses. He destroys families, and the very lives of those who are accused. The development of entire nations is affected and nations do not reach their potential because of broken relationships and the paralysis and damage caused by fear. That is why Jesus has said more than any other instruction: "Do not be afraid!" We must choose faith and confidence in Christ instead of fear; love instead of suspicion; life instead of ruining a life.

The facilitator writes Romans 8:15–16 (before the workshop) on the flip-chart and invites the participants to read these verses aloud together.

Romans 8.15–16

So you did not receive a spirit that makes you slaves to fear. Instead you have received God's spirit of adoption. When we cry "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

The facilitator stresses that because of the Holy Spirit who lives in us, we are freed from fear. We are no longer slaves of fear; we are children of God. Alleluia!

Activity 3 (55 minutes)

[Source: Dr Steven Rasmussen, article on Witches and Diviners, in the Africa Study Bible (pages 662–664), Oasis International Ltd (2017). Article adapted and used with permission.]

Goal — To examine what the Bible teaches on the subject of witchcraft.

Explain

Context

The facilitator explains that everyone tries to understand and to control the problems of life, like sickness, death, unemployment, infertility, financial difficulties, and misfortune. In our African context, we often look for a person who is responsible for them. We look for signs of a bad relationship to explain bad outcomes. Many people consult a diviner, or a self-proclaimed prophet to find out who caused the problem and, as we discovered in Module 2, we often try to blame others for our own bad decisions. Diviners may blame an

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invisible spirit (for example a demon, or an ancestor, or a genie) or a so-called 'witch' who is often a member of the family, a neighbour or a colleague.

The facilitator displays the three definitions (written up in advance), and explains them.

Definitions

- So a **diviner** is someone (male or female) who is *publicly recognised* as such, and who *openly advertises* that he or she can diagnose and heal illnesses and other problems, identify who caused them, or help others to succeed in their work, in politics, in their love lives, etc., by using *learned skills* to harness the powers of ancestors or spirits, as well as traditional medicines.
- A **witch** is the person accused by the diviner (or by someone who is playing the role of diviner) of having caused the misfortune or problem by using *innate evil powers*. A witch intentionally harms others, *in secret* and often during the night. Witchcraft is this *innate, secret evil power to harm*.
- A **demon** is an evil spirit and a servant of Satan. Demons do evil and seek to bring fear, death, and destruction, that is to say, to do the work of Satan.

Principles

What does the Bible say about these things?

1. Witchcraft and witches as described above are NOT found in the Bible. There is NO example of an evil PERSON who harms others by invisible means or with the help of a demon.
2. There is NO example in the Bible where a person is accused of being a witch. Jesus never accused ANYONE of witchcraft.
3. There are diviners and magicians in the Bible. It is important to note that the Bible never talks of people who do harm to others in secret by using innate evil powers. The Bible talks of diviners or magicians who practice their art in public, including those who seek to manipulate nature or to know the future (for example by consulting the dead, like the woman in 1 Samuel 28:7). These are people who earn their living by using magic or occult practices or divination. Such practices exist in every culture.
4. ***The Bible is very clear that the people of God are forbidden to engage in such practices.*** Christians are forbidden to consult diviners or mediums, or to seek to make contact with the spirits of the dead, or to put their faith in the stars and horoscopes, or even in amulets that bring luck (Deuteronomy 18:10–12; 2 Chronicles 33:6; Jeremiah 14:14). These practices seek to bypass or deny the wisdom and omniscience of God and to give glory to Satan. They come from the Thief, the Accuser, the Liar. Christians must not play the role of diviner, for example by accusing others of being witches — it is the work of the devil. God abhors and condemns such practices.

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5. God alone is the omnipotent, all-powerful One. We must put our trust in Him. We have nothing to fear (see Activity 1 above). (1 John 4:4).

In God's Word

What do the words mean?

The facilitator explains that Exodus 22:18 (*"You shall not permit a sorceress to live"*) is often used to justify accusations of witchcraft and the torture and murder of people who are accused of witchcraft. In African languages, the word 'sorceress' is often translated with a term that is the equivalent to the word 'witch'. But in the original language of the Bible, the word 'kashaph' is used, which is closer to the idea of 'diviner' or 'magician'. In every example of this word in the Bible, it is referring to people with a public (and well-paid) role whose job was to help the king, to reveal secrets, or to imitate miracles (for example, the Pharaoh's 'kashaph' in Exodus chapters 7 to 9, or Nebuchadnezzar's 'kashaph' in Daniel chapter 2).

The facilitator asks two volunteers to read the following extracts:

Exodus 7:8-12

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Perform a miracle', then say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh,' and it will become a snake. So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded; Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh, and his officials, and it became a snake. Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers; and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same things by their secret arts. Each one threw down his staff, and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs."

The facilitator explains that in this extract (and the following ones, Exodus 7:22, 8:3, 8:14-15, 9:11) the Hebrew word 'kashaph' is translated as 'magician'. And he emphasises that their powers are vastly inferior to God's, which were at work through Aaron: *'But Aaron's staff **swallowed up** their staffs.'*

Daniel 2:1-3

In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed such dreams that his spirit was troubled and he could not sleep. So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell the king what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, he said to them, 'I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means.'

The facilitator explains that in Hebrew, these verses also use the word 'kashaph'. As before, this means people who publicly practise their learned art. They are known by the king, and he can easily summon them. They are not 'witches' who act in secret to harm others. So this verse in no way justifies the action that is taken against people who are accused of 'witchcraft'.

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What is the context?

The facilitator then explains that it is essential to read the verse from Exodus 22 in context. He reads Exodus 22:18–24:

Exodus 22:18–24

*You shall not permit a sorceress to live... Whoever sacrifices to any god, other than the Lord alone, shall be devoted to destruction. You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. **You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.***

We have already seen that God forbids His people to consult diviners or to do the work of a diviner (by making or affirming witchcraft accusations, for example), because diviners seek to usurp God's place. But look how angry God is with people who mistreat the most vulnerable: widows and orphans. God Himself will punish them severely. And yet it is orphans and widows who are most often subjected to accusations of witchcraft and the awful consequences which follow from them.

What about our personal experience?

The facilitator highlights that the Bible does contain examples of people who are oppressed by demons. The Bible teaches us that these malevolent powers exist and seek to destroy human beings and to push them away from God. They bring death and destruction. But we see that people who are oppressed by demons are victims. The demons harm them, and the people who are oppressed suffer because of it. In the Bible, we see problems caused by Satan and his demons but NEVER because a person has sent them. The Bible does not teach that demons need or serve people to do their work. They do not need to be encouraged or pushed to kill, steal, lie, accuse, or tempt.

The facilitator invites a volunteer to read the following extract:

Ephesians 6:11–13

Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

Ephesians 6:12 states “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood (so, not against people, including people accused of witchcraft), *but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*” **And it is possible** to defeat them. How? “Put on

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the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil". (verse 11) and "that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm." (verse 13).

We must follow Christ's example. He cared for people who were vulnerable, marginalised, sick, and oppressed in society. When he met people who were oppressed by demons, He did not fear them or the demons which oppressed them. He healed the person with compassion and gentleness, and drove out the demons with authority, but never with violence, torture or rituals. We will look more closely at his example in Module 5.

Activity 4 (20 minutes)

Goal — To create an opportunity to reflect on this learning.

Summary

The facilitator reminds the participants of the activity 'How do you know?' from Module 2. He asks the participants to describe and explain the purpose of that exercise.

Response: To test the reliability of an affirmation or an accusation of witchcraft. The fundamental question is: 'How do you know for certain that this person is guilty?'

He asks the following question:

- **Are witchcraft accusations found in the Bible?**

Response to emphasise: NO. In the Bible, there is NO example of such an accusation made against a child (or an adult). But we do clearly see that Satan is the Accuser and the father of lies. (For example: Zechariah 3:1 — *"Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him."*; John 8:44 — *"You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."*)

So accusations are the work of the Accuser (the devil, Satan).

The facilitator says that we have already seen that divination is abhorrent to God and that He strongly forbids it. (Deuteronomy 18:10 — *"There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer (kashaph)"*.) If we, God's Church, have begun to play the role of diviner, as well as that of accuser, like the self-proclaimed 'prophets' do, we must get on our knees before God, repent of these practices and renounce these activities.

Reflect

The facilitator invites the participants to spend a few minutes in silence reflecting on what we have learned and examining ourselves. Have we done the work of the devil, of the

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accuser, of the diviner? Have we mistreated widows or orphans or other marginalised people? If so, we must get on our knees and repent, whether we have done these things intentionally or not. We must invite the Holy Spirit to be at work in our hearts. Let us pray together that God will forgive us and that the Holy Spirit will transform us by the renewing of our hearts and minds. Read together Romans 12: 2.

Romans 12: 2

Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Do not move on too quickly to the Closing section. It may be necessary to spend time on repentance and prayer.

Closing (20 minutes)

Goal – Conclusion: what have we learned today?

The facilitator asks each participant to write on a post-it sticker two things that they have learned during the day regarding spiritual powers and fear, and about what the Bible teaches about witchcraft. (When the participants have left, a volunteer collects them and the facilitator reads them to check whether the teaching has been well understood and whether there are any misunderstandings that need to be corrected during the next workshop.)

During the fourth module, we have discussed spiritual powers, the omnipotence of God, and the victory of Jesus Christ on the cross, which is the victory of good over evil. The people of God have nothing to fear! We have learned that accusations of witchcraft made against children often have their roots in fear whereas Christians are supposed to live a life anchored in faith in Jesus Christ and in **all that he achieved on the cross**. We should have faith in Christ and in His love, the source of salvation, instead of taking things into our own hands.

1 John 4:4

[Little children of God,] the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

We have examined what the Word of God teaches us regarding ‘witchcraft’ and we have understood that accusations of witchcraft are not in line with Scripture.

In the next workshop, we will consider the role of pastors as ‘good shepherds’ and explore practical advice on how to respond to an accusation of witchcraft made against a child.

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Prayers

Departure



Module 5

THE ROLE OF PASTORS

Overall aim: To provide a meaningful response to the phenomenon of accusations of witchcraft made against children with a view to bringing about changes in culture and behaviour in local communities.

Objective of this module: In this module we will look at:

- the Bible's teaching concerning the spiritual responsibilities of church leaders as "shepherds of the flock"; and
- practical recommendations on how to respond to an accusation of witchcraft made against a child.

By the end of the module, the participants will have clear guidance on how to respond to accusations and will know that these guidelines are consistent with Jesus' example.

Before the Workshop

- Materials — flip-chart, markers, paper, scotch tape.
 - Draw the table in Appendix 1 in advance on a large sheet of flip-chart paper so that it is neat and clear.
 - Make photocopies of Appendices 2 and 3 for each participant.
 - Prepare Bible verses in advance for Activity 2.
 - Prepare the role play in Activity 3.
 - Make copies of questions for group discussion (to be handed to each group prior to the relevant activity).
-

Opening (10 minutes)

Prayer and Worship

Review (30 minutes)

Goal — Revision of the first four modules.

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The facilitator asks the participants to summarise the key learning points from the **earlier modules**. These notes will help guide the dialogue and the facilitator can indicate the diagrams and key points on the wall at each stage.

In the **first module**, we learnt that children are a gift from God, created in his image and for whom he has a clear plan and purpose.

We also looked at God's heart for children. We noted that Jesus respected them, listened to them, loved them, prioritised them, but the disciples wanted to drive them away. Often, our own behaviour and attitudes towards children do not reflect the example of Jesus but rather that of the disciples.

In the **second module** we learned that accusations of witchcraft against children are not in line with the Word of God. The so-called 'signs' of witchcraft are unreliable and have several other possible explanations. So, we cannot trust these 'signs' or cite them to justify accusations of witchcraft against children.

The Bible shows clearly that we need to accept responsibility for the consequences of our own actions, and that we are not to seek to put the blame on others, who would suffer as a result.

In the **third module** we learnt that the presence of a physical handicap, or of difficult behaviours are also false 'signs', and not an indication of witchcraft.

We explored further (by building a 'paper wall') the basic needs of the child, be they physical, spiritual, social, mental or emotional, to ensure their healthy development and enable them to flourish and fulfil their potential. Failure to meet these needs inhibits children's growth and development.

And we considered the effects of trauma on the child. If a child is traumatised by conflict, abuse, rejection, or severe deprivations (especially of love and physical and emotional care), he is likely to develop negative coping strategies. These may be emotional (such as increased aggression or withdrawal), or physical problems (like headaches, loss of appetite and of energy, difficulty sleeping, and other signs of anxiety). Or a child may regress (for example, start wetting the bed again or have nightmares).

We learned that these behaviours are often falsely interpreted to be 'signs' that the child is a 'witch' when in fact these behaviours are normal responses to abuse, lack of care, to trauma or to a difficult family situation.

We also examined Bible verses regarding appropriate attitudes and behaviours towards people with disabilities, looking at the examples of Job and David. The Bible teaches us that **every** child is a gift and creation of God, including children who have disabilities or who are twins.

In the **fourth module**, we talked about spiritual powers, the omnipotent all-powerful nature of God, and the victory of Jesus Christ on the cross, meaning his victory of good over evil. The people of God have nothing to fear! We have learned that accusations of

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witchcraft against children often have their roots in fear while Christians should live a life rooted in faith in Jesus Christ and in all that he accomplished on the cross. Finally we looked at what the Bible teaches concerning 'witchcraft'.

In today's workshop (the **fifth module**), we will consider the role of pastors as 'good shepherds of the flock'. Then we will look at some practical recommendations as to how to respond to an accusation of witchcraft made against a child.

Activity 1 (40 minutes)

Goal – to examine what the Bible says regarding the role of pastors as shepherds.

In God's Word

The facilitator asks the participants to find Ezekiel 34:4–6, and he asks for a volunteer to read these verses aloud.

Ezekiel 34:4–6

(To the pastors of Israel) You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally.

So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and when they were scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.

The facilitator explains that because of the accusations and violent acts of some church leaders, countless children are driven from their homes, and are forced to live on the streets. Like the sheep described in these verses, these children are scattered, abandoned and in danger and no one protects them.

The facilitator displays the table in Appendix 1 on a sheet of the flip-chart.

Then he asks the participants to fill the two columns all together, referring to these verses.

At the end, he stresses that pastors are shepherds and that they are responsible before God for their actions towards vulnerable people in their charge, especially children. They should follow the example of the good shepherd and avoid imitating the violence, the tyranny and the lack of care which are characteristics of the bad shepherd. Jesus called himself "the Good Shepherd" and He is the one that must be imitated. As His disciples, people who occupy positions of authority in the churches must mirror His character and His behaviour. Our Shepherd-King never accused a child of witchcraft, He never raised his voice to a child and He never lifted his hand against a child (or an adult) to beat him.

Reflect

The facilitator invites the participants to spend a few minutes reflecting in silence and to examine themselves. Have we done the work of the enemy, the accuser, the diviner, the bad shepherd? If so, we must humble ourselves before God, repent of these practices, and turn away from these activities. We do this in full confidence, because the Bible tells us in 1 John 1:9 that *"If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Do not hurry on from this activity. It may be necessary to spend some time on it, in prayer and repentance together.

Activity 2 (50 minutes)

Goal — Practical advice: how Jesus treated people who were under demonic influence.

Explain

Explain that we are going to explore the question: **how did Jesus treat people who were under demonic influence?**

The facilitator recalls that witchcraft as we understand it here in our country is not found in the Bible, that is to say, the innate, secret, malevolent power of a person to cause bad luck or problems to others. But the Word of God shows clearly that the enemy and powers of evil do exist and that their goal is to oppose God. Their greatest pleasure is to destroy the lives of human beings. The Bible teaches us too that Jesus has already won the victory over all these powers of evil and that he has made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them after his victory on the cross (Colossians 2:15). During his ministry on earth, Jesus on many occasions met the needs of people who were under demonic influence. But we need to understand that in the Bible, those who were under demonic influence are never accused of witchcraft. They are never treated with violence, but rather with love, compassion and care. We must act in the same way when faced with this situation.

Let us examine how Jesus has acted in this situation.

Study in Groups

The participants divide into two groups, to examine the following verses (written on sheets of paper in advance and distributed to the groups) and answer the questions below (which are written on a sheet of the flip-chart).

Group A

Mark 9:14-27 — the healing of a child.

When they returned to the other disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and some teachers of religious law arguing with them. When the crowd saw him, they were immediately overcome with awe, and they ran forward to greet him. He asked them, 'What are you arguing about with them?'

Someone from the crowd answered him, 'Teacher, I brought my son so you could heal him. He is oppressed by a spirit that makes him unable to speak; and whenever it seizes him, it throws him violently to the ground. Then he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so.'

Jesus said 'You faithless people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me.' And they brought the boy to him. When the evil spirit saw him, immediately it threw the boy into convulsions, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.

Jesus asked the father 'How long has this been happening to him?' And he said, 'From childhood. It has often cast him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and help us, if you can.'

Jesus said to him, 'What do you mean, "If you can"? Anything is possible if a person believes.'

Immediately the father of the child cried out, 'I do believe; but help me overcome my unbelief!'

When Jesus saw that the crowd was growing, he rebuked the evil spirit; saying to it, 'Listen, you spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing. I command you to come out of this child, and never enter him again!'

Then the spirit screamed and threw the boy into another violent convulsion and left him. The boy appeared to be dead. A murmur ran through the crowd as people said, 'He is dead.' But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him to his feet, and he was able to stand.

Group B

Luke 4:31-37 — Exorcisms and healings in Capernaum.

Then Jesus went to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and taught there in the synagogue every Sabbath day. There, too, the people were amazed at his teaching, for he spoke with authority.

Once when he was in the synagogue, a man possessed by a demon — an evil spirit — cried out, shouting, "Go away! Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God!"

The Heart of the Matter

But Jesus reprimanded him. "Be quiet! Come out of the man," he ordered. At that, the demon threw the man to the floor as the crowd watched; then it came out of him without hurting him further.

Amazed, the people exclaimed, "What authority and power this man's words possess! Even evil spirits obey him, and they flee at his command!"

The news about Jesus spread through every village in the entire region.

Questions

- Describe this person who is possessed by a demon in this story. Has this person done harm to others?
- Is the person accused of witchcraft?
- What is the attitude of this person's family and the community (village, neighbourhood)? Is the person abandoned?
- What does Jesus do to cast out the demon? What is his attitude towards the afflicted person?
- What is the consequence for the afflicted person? Is he stigmatised? Is he driven out of his community (village, neighbourhood) or his family? Or is he restored?

A few minutes into this exercise, the facilitator asks the participants to re-read the passage and to answer the following question:

- Describe a typical ceremony of deliverance (especially of children accused of witchcraft) in...
 - (a) our churches
 - (b) our community (village, neighbourhood)
- What are the differences between these ceremonies and the example of Christ?

All Together

A spokesperson from each group gives the answers to the whole assembly and a volunteer notes them on the flip-chart.

The facilitator gives a brief summary underlining these key points:

- We understand by reading the story of these encounters that, far from being powerful and to be feared, the people affected in this way are tormented victims. They do not harm others – they are suffering.
- Far from driving them away, the members of their family and community (neighbourhood) approach Jesus and ask for His mercy and His help.
- Jesus is kind and full of pity. He does not punish the afflicted person. He speaks directly to the spirit, commanding it to leave the person, and casting it out simply

The Heart of the Matter

with a word. The victim is healed. *'Jesus took (the child) by the hand and helped him to his feet, and he was able to stand.'* What tenderness!

On the Wall

The table in Appendix 2 is put on the wall with the first column filled in, but with space below to add other ideas from the participants if necessary. In a plenary session, the facilitator invites the participants to add "yes" or "no" in columns 2 and 3.

The facilitator stresses that Jesus used only His authoritative word **during his daily ministry**, when He met the needs of the crowd for deliverance and fullness of life, **never in special exorcism ceremonies**: John 10.10 *'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'*

We should follow his example in these situations. He taught his disciples to use prayer and sometimes fasting to bring about deliverance. But it is **very** important to note that it is the disciples who must fast, NOT the children!

Activity 3 (40 minutes)

Goal – Practical advice: how to pray (and how not to pray) with the children.

Role Play

The facilitator needs three volunteers (informed and prepared beforehand) and another participant chosen on the spot. He explains that the participant plays the role of a child. The 'child' stands before the participants. The three volunteers form a circle around him.

They start to 'pray' loudly and without a pause over the 'child' (including shouting in the face of the child), they grab his arms, leaning against him as if they want to make him fall to the floor, all the while shouting. They mime hitting the 'child' and try to rock him until he falls over (if it is physically impossible to make the participant fall, the volunteers indicate that they seek to rock him until he falls over!).

After two or three minutes, the facilitator asks them to stop. The volunteers step back. The facilitator asks the participant how he felt during the activity. (It is probable that he will say that he was frightened, that he felt intimidated, powerless, disoriented, even dominated, harassed or traumatised). If not, the facilitator asks him how the 'child' (whose role he was playing) might have felt. The facilitator adds the following adjectives or descriptions if they are missing: terrified, intimidated, powerless, disoriented, dominated, harassed, traumatised.

Then the game of role playing is repeated, but this time, the three volunteers pray gently, with respect, without touching the child, smiling and blessing him.

The Heart of the Matter

The facilitator asks the participant who was playing the role of the child to describe how he felt during the activity. Then he asks the other participants: **“Which approach was more like that of Jesus Christ?”**

So, how should we pray for the children? What must we do, and what must we avoid doing?

The facilitator encourages the participants to suggest how to pray in an appropriate manner, in a biblical way that reflects the behaviour of Jesus towards children. He notes the answers on the flip-chart and adds the following recommendations if they are missing:

We should always:

- be gentle, calm and attentive to the child
- encourage and support the child
- leave the door open, and avoid blocking the space between the child and the door
- invite the child to sit down where he / she wants to
- make sure that an adult of the same sex as the child attends (a woman if the child is a girl; a man if the child is a boy)
- refrain from touching the child
- affirm God’s blessing and goodness in the life of the child
- affirm that God loves him / her and that he / she is cherished
- ask the permission of the child to pray for him / her and the permission of the parent or guardian if possible
- invite (gently and quietly) the Holy Spirit to be at work in the life of the child
- thank God for having freed the child from everything that was troubling him / her

We should never:

- shout loudly
- trap the child
- rock or push or hit the child
- kick or place feet on the child
- affirm an accusation of witchcraft or use this label when praying for the child (labelling the child in this way itself causes trauma)
- aggravate a trauma if the child has already been affected by difficult circumstances

Activity 4 (20 minutes)

Goal — Practical advice: how to respond to a parent who brings to you a child who is suspected of witchcraft.

Role Play

Explain that we are going to explore the question: **How do you respond to a parent who brings you a child accused of being a witch?**

The facilitator explains that this situation is a daily reality so it is important to know in advance how to respond.

The facilitator gives each participant a copy of Appendix 3 (photocopies should be made before the workshop). Read through the sheets together and ensure that the participants clearly understand the recommended approach.

Role play the two interviews (with the parent and with the child) to reinforce the message. Choose four volunteers who play the roles of the pastor, the child, the parent (mother or father) and of the second adult of the same gender as the child. All the other participants can offer their suggestions to ensure that the interviews conform to the approach in Appendix 3.

Closing (20 minutes)

Goal – Conclusion: what have we learned today?

The facilitator asks each participant to write on a post-it two things that they have learned during the day regarding the responsibilities of the “shepherds of the flock” and two things they will put into practice when responding to accusations of witchcraft. (After the departure of the participants, a volunteer collects them and the facilitator reads them to check whether the teaching has been well understood and whether there are any misunderstandings that need to be corrected during the next workshop).

The facilitator reminds the participants that we have noted that people who suffer because they are oppressed by demons are not witches. Jesus treated such people with gentleness and respect and never conducted any violent ceremonies or deliverance rituals.

He explains that tomorrow or during the next training workshop, we will consider the place of the child within the community (the church and the village or neighbourhood), and the role of the community in child protection and the prevention of accusations of witchcraft.

Prayers

Departure

Appendix 1

Actions and qualities of a GOOD shepherd	Actions and qualities of a BAD shepherd
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• helps vulnerable sheep• gentle• kind• etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• does not help vulnerable sheep• violent• tyrannical• etc.

Appendix 2

Description	deliverance in our communities	the example of Jesus
specific rituals		
beat the child		
burn the child		
use of cutting objects on the child		
force the child to fast		
keep the child as a prisoner		
force the child to vomit		
put oil in the ears and other bodily orifices of the child		
demand money		
stigmatisation		
expulsion from family or the community		
(... other suggestions from the participants)		

Appendix 3

Good Practice — How to respond when a parent brings to you a child that he / she suspects of witchcraft.

Talk separately with the parent and with the child.

It is essential that the child should not hear the accusations made by the parent. Even just the label “witch” stigmatises the child and can traumatise him / her. For this reason, you should talk separately with the parent and with the child.

A: The conversation with the parent.

If possible, other people that are trusted by the child should play with him / her in another room while the pastor talks separately with the parent.

- Listen to the parent.
- Try to find out the context of the accusation (what is the problem? What are the family circumstances? Understand the family in as much detail as possible).
- Try to find out why this child is suspected.
- Find out if the child is being blamed for other's bad decisions, or family problems. Is it a distress signal, a call for help?
- Never affirm an accusation of witchcraft.
- Affirm the value of the child in the eyes of God, and the responsibility of the parents towards him / her.

B: The conversation with the child.

All the rules regarding how to pray with a child apply here, namely:

Always:

- be gentle, calm and attentive to the child
- support the child
- leave the door open, and avoid blocking the space between the child and the door
- invite the child to sit down where he / she wants to
- make sure that an adult of the same sex as the child attends (a woman if the child is a girl; a man if the child is a boy)
- avoid touching the child
- affirm God's blessing and goodness in the life of the child
- affirm that God loves him / her and that he / she is cherished
- ask the permission of the child to pray for him / her and the permission of the parent/guardian if possible

The Heart of the Matter

- invite (gently and quietly) the Holy Spirit to be at work in the life of the child
- thank God for having freed the child from everything that was troubling him / her

Never:

- shout loudly
- trap the child
- rock or push or hit the child
- kick or place feet on the child
- affirm an accusation of witchcraft or use this label when praying for the child (labelling the child in this way itself causes trauma)
- aggravate a trauma if the child has already been affected by difficult circumstances

The pastor (or another leader of the church or an adult trusted by the child) talks with the child while the parent waits in another room (another adult could chat with the parent during the time of waiting). The child may not be able to talk freely in the presence of the parent, so he / she must be given the opportunity to talk without the presence of the parent. If the child asks for the presence of a trusted adult, this choice should be respected.

Listen to the child and give him / her the opportunity to speak frankly. The pastor introduces himself to the child and asks the child what his / her name is and, perhaps, what is his / her favourite game. They could play a simple game to start and to put the child at ease.

Ask the child what makes him / her happy. Then ask if there are things that make him / her sad. Are there things that he / she would like to discuss?

- It is sometimes useful to encourage the child to draw to express his / her thoughts and what has happened to him / her.
- Assure the child that you are there to listen to him / her.
- Never affirm the accusation of witchcraft.
- Do not touch the child.
- Ask the child's permission to pray for him / her.
- Invite (gently) the Holy Spirit to be at work in the life of the child.
- Thank God for setting the child free from those things that troubled him / her.
- Assure the child throughout the meeting of the love, goodness and blessing of God.

Pray with the child as described above.

Organise a follow up meeting and ongoing practical support for the family in order to address the real roots of their problems.



Module 6

THE PLACE OF THE CHILD WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Overall aim: To provide a meaningful response to the phenomenon of accusations of witchcraft made against children with a view to bringing about changes in culture and behaviour in local communities.

Objective of this module: By the end of this module the participants will have a better understanding of the role of the community (both the church and the wider community: village, neighbourhood) in child protection and in preventing accusations of witchcraft made against children.

Before the Workshop

- Materials — flip-chart, marker pens, paper, scotch tape.
 - Prepare the Bible verses for Activity 3, written onto pieces of paper.
 - Copies of questions for group discussions (to be given to groups before the appropriate activity).
-

Opening (10 minutes)

Prayer and Worship

Review (20 minutes)

Goal — Revision of the first five modules.

The facilitator asks the participants to summarise the key learning points from the **earlier modules**. These notes will help guide the dialogue and the facilitator can indicate the diagrams and key points on the wall at each stage.

In the **first module**, we learnt that children are a gift from God, created in his image and for whom he has a clear plan and purpose.

We also looked at God's heart for children. We noted that Jesus respected them, listened to them, loved them, prioritised them, but the disciples wanted to drive them away. Often, our own behaviour and attitudes towards children do not reflect the example of Jesus but rather that of the disciples.

The Heart of the Matter

In the **second module** we have learned that accusations of witchcraft against children are not in conformity with the Word of God. The so-called 'signs' of witchcraft are unreliable and have several other possible explanations. So, we cannot trust these 'signs' or cite them to justify accusations of witchcraft against children.

The Bible shows clearly that we need to accept responsibility for the consequences of our own actions, and that we are not to seek to put the blame others, who would suffer as a result.

In the **third module** we learnt that the presence of a physical handicap, or of difficult behaviours are also false 'signs', and not an indication of witchcraft.

We explored further the basic needs of the child, be they physical, spiritual, social, mental or emotional, to ensure their healthy development and enable them to flourish and fulfil their potential. Failure to meet these needs inhibits children's growth and development.

And we considered the effects of trauma on the child due to conflict, abuse, rejection, or severe deprivations. We have seen the negative coping strategies that the child may develop, emotional or physical problems, or regressive behaviour.

We learned that these behaviours are often falsely interpreted to be 'signs' that the child is a 'witch' when in fact these behaviours are normal responses to abuse, lack of care, to trauma or to a difficult family situation.

We also examined Bible verses regarding appropriate attitudes and behaviours towards people with disabilities, looking at the examples of Job and David. The Bible teaches us that every child is a gift and creation of God, including children who have disabilities or who are twins.

In the **fourth module**, we talked about spiritual powers, the omnipotent power of God, and the victory of Jesus Christ on the cross, meaning his victory of good over evil. Accusations of witchcraft against children often have their roots in fear while Christians should live a life rooted in faith in Jesus Christ and in all that he has accomplished on the cross. And we looked at what the Bible teaches concerning 'witchcraft'.

In the **fifth module**, we considered the role of pastors as 'good shepherds'. And also we looked at some practical recommendations as to how to respond to an accusation of witchcraft made against a child.

Today (in this **sixth module**) we will look at the role of the community, and particularly the church, in child protection and in the prevention of accusations of witchcraft.

Activity 1 (45 minutes)

Goal — To examine the role of the community and the church in the story of MARTIN (introduced in Module 2).

Story

The facilitator asks for a volunteer to re-read MARTIN's story.

A contemporary story of a family. The name of the father is MARTIN and the mother is called MONIQUE and into this family were born four children called CHARLES (10 years old), who has a club-foot, but who is intelligent and full of life, JEAN and MARC (twins 8 years old), and NOEL (6 years old).

MARTIN worked for the Marsavco company as an accountant. He used to have a happy family life with good mutual understanding between parents and children, sharing together and living in peace. In short, a flourishing life. The children were all growing up normally and were doing well in their studies. MARTIN was considered a fortunate and happy man.

12 years after his first marriage, he entered into a second (polygamous) marriage with MARIE (24 years old) and into this family were born two children, PHILIPPE (2 years old) and MARCIA (1 year old). Martin was sharing his salary between these two households. After some time he ended up helping himself from the funds of the company he worked for, in order to meet the needs of his two households. As a result MARTIN lost his job after an audit showed that he had taken a significant amount of money from Marsavco. Afterwards, the socio-economic situation of MARTIN's family became very difficult and the following events took place: the children had to leave school, there was not enough to eat and their health deteriorated, as they lost weight and suffered other illnesses which affected their school results. NOEL, a sensitive child, was traumatised by their difficult situation, by the frequent and violent fights between his parents, and the constant and aggressive jibes from his former friends, and he started to wet his bed.

MARIE started to think that the children of the first marriage were responsible for all this misfortune. She succeeded in convincing MARTIN to suspect that his children were witches.

Unable to find a solution to the problems that had happened in his family, MARTIN went to see Pastor JOSEPH hoping to find a solution from God. Pastor JOSEPH invited all the members of MARTIN's family to a prayer evening held in the church especially for the occasion. As a result of this prayer meeting, the pastor confirmed that three of his children, NOEL (6 years old), JEAN (8 years old) and CHARLES (10 years old), were behind all the misfortunes that had affected the family. A few months later, the situation had worsened at home and in the community in the following ways: constant suspicions of the parents and of members of the community, threats, torture and other abuses directed towards the three accused children. Unable to stand up to the abuse they were suffering, and feeling effectively driven from their home, the children ran away and chose to live on the streets.

Study in Groups

The participants divide into three groups to discuss the following questions:

- **Why are the children living on the streets? Who is responsible? Make a list.**
- **Imagine the potential consequences for NOEL, JEAN and CHARLES. What are the realities of life for children who live on the streets?**
- **How would Jesus treat these children?**
- **What was Jesus' reaction when his disciples were driving away the children?**

After a few minutes, the participants give their answers in plenary. Then the facilitator asks the question:

- **How should MARTIN, MARIE, the Pastor and the members of the community have behaved differently?**

Having heard the responses of the participants, the facilitator emphasises that they had a responsibility to protect, to listen to, to value, to respect, and to care for the children, and to prioritise them; in other words, they ought to have followed the example of Jesus.

Activity 2 (45 minutes)

Goal — To demonstrate the role of the community in child protection.

Game

If possible, play the game outside, because it requires a lot of space. A participant plays the role of a child; two others are his parents, six others are designated as "lions". The remainder represent the community.

First time: The 'child' stands in a space with one 'parent'. The "lions" try to catch the child. The 'parent' tries to prevent them. The community does nothing more than observing. (It is impossible to protect or to save the 'child' from the lions).

Second time: Repeat the activity with two 'parents' trying to protect the 'child' from the lions. The community does nothing more than observing. (It is difficult to protect or to save the 'child').

Third time: repeat again with all the other participants who represent the church and the community. The members of the church and of the community surround the 'child' together with the 'parents'. The lions try to attack the 'child'. (In this instance, the parents and the members of the church and of the community should be able to prevent the lions from attacking the 'child').

Questions

After the game, the participants sit down and the facilitator asks the following questions:

- **What have you learned from this activity?**
- **What do the lions represent?**
- **Why are the people around the child so important?**
- **Sometimes children do not have parents to protect them. Sometimes, the person responsible for them is an aged grandparent, for example. How can we help this grandmother or this grandfather as a member of the “circle” to help the child?**
- **Some children have parents who do not succeed in protecting them, or who do not have the will to do it, or who harm them. What is the role of the community and of the church in protecting the child?**
- **What is the role of the community and of the church in child protection?**

Principle: Ubuntu

Our game illustrates the principle of **UBUNTU** — the principle of humanity and compassion towards others — I am only a person among other persons: “I am what I am thanks to what we all are.” Or in Zulu, UMUNTU NGUMUNTU NGABANTU.

It is a marvellous African principle which expresses the best values of the tribe. Many African cultures have a proverb which embodies the idea that a whole village is needed to raise a child, or that a child does not belong to a single parent or to a single household. It is a way of affirming: “not me, but all of us together!” We are declaring that we are all responsible for the well-being of others, especially of those who are vulnerable and who need us.

Activity 3 (40 minutes)

Goal — To examine what the Bible says about the role of the community and particularly of the Church.

Study in Groups

The participants are divided into three groups, and the facilitator gives them the verses on pieces of paper.

Group A: Isaiah 58:5–11, James 1:27, Amos 5:21–24

Group B: Ezekiel 34:1–10, Proverbs 31:8–9, Micah 6:8

Group C: Exodus 22:22, Psalm 10:9–14, and 17–18, Psalm 82:3–4

The Heart of the Matter

The facilitator asks the participants to study these verses and to answer the following questions:

- **What do we learn from these verses? As the people of God, how should we behave towards vulnerable people within our communities, especially marginalised children and the victims of witchcraft accusations?**
- **Describe how our churches and our wider communities follow the biblical mandate to look after the poor and the oppressed (positive). Give specific examples of the ways in which our churches and our wider communities oppress and do harm to those that God commands us to protect (negative).**

A representative of each group shares their answers in plenary. A volunteer notes the answers on a piece of paper pinned to the wall.

Explain

The facilitator emphasises the biblical attitudes, and the contrast between the biblical model and the example set by our communities and our churches in reality. By involving ourselves in witchcraft accusations and the persecution that follows, our churches and our communities are doing harm to those very people whom God orders us to protect and care for – widows, orphans and the marginalised. As the people of God, we must imitate him and live according to His culture, His values and His ways.

Activity 4 (30 minutes)

Goal – To identify changes that we need to bring to our churches and wider communities concerning vulnerable children.

Revision

The facilitator gives a short revision, as follows:

- children have a vital place within the family;
- children belong to the community in general;
- children need to be protected and kept secure – especially the most vulnerable and marginalised children like those who are thrown onto the streets, those who live with disability and those who are accused of witchcraft;
- we must live according to the culture of King Jesus, who loves and protects children. He never drives them away. He never does them any harm. We, too, must protect vulnerable children, and act in their defence. We must protect them from the “lions” and we must never behave like lions ourselves. Too often, we, our churches, our communities, look like the lions described in Psalm 10:9 (*‘Like lions crouched in hiding, they wait to pounce on the helpless’*).

Discuss

The participants are divided in three groups to discuss the two questions below:

- **What should our churches and our community do differently to bring about changes in order to be aligned with the Biblical model? How can we bring about a change in culture and behaviour which drives away children (accused of witchcraft)?**
- **In your opinion what could help to increase the safety of the children in your community?**

Note: the Bible does not require us to create grand, very expensive schemes to protect the vulnerable members of our communities. We should each share the things we have been blessed with (our money, possessions, shelter, love, talents, time, our voices to speak up for the most vulnerable people) as much as we can: help, accept, and welcome the one in front of you. Above all, do no harm, never mistreat them, and never drive them away. Matthew 25:35–46.

A representative of each group shares the group responses in plenary, and the facilitator notes the ideas on the flip-chart.

Closing (20 minutes)

Goal — Conclusion: what have we learned today?

The facilitator asks each participant to write on a post-it *three things* that he / she learned over the course of the workshop, and three things that he / she will put into practice to bring about changes within his church or his community. Pin the post-its on the sheets on the wall. The facilitator reads them to the participants by way of a summary. (After the participants have left, a volunteer collects them and the facilitator reads them to check that the teaching has been understood and to identify any misunderstandings that need to be corrected in the next session.)

The facilitator repeats that the Bible shows us that the community, and above all the Church, are responsible for all children and that we must all be involved in meeting their fundamental needs, in their protection and their defence, so that they can flourish.

He explains that tomorrow or during the next workshop, we will examine child protection and children's rights.

Prayers

Departure



Module 7

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND THE ROLE OF THE LAW IN CHILD PROTECTION

Overall aim: To provide a meaningful response to the phenomenon of accusations of witchcraft made against children with a view to bringing about changes in culture and behaviour in local communities.

Objective of this module: By the end of the module, the participants will have a better understanding of the legal context of children's rights, and the importance of acting to protect children, notably:

- the principles of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and national laws which govern child protection; and
- how to promote child protection in our churches and our communities.

Before the Workshop

- Materials — flip-chart, marker pens, paper, scotch tape.
 - Prepare the Bible verses for Activity 4, written onto sheets of paper.
 - Write out copies of the scenario and questions (but not the answers!) for Activity 5. You will need one copy for each small group.
 - Copies of the questions for group discussion (to give to each group at the start of the appropriate activity).
 - Make photocopies or electronic copies of the Appendices for each participant.
-

Opening (10 minutes)

Prayer and Worship

Review (20 minutes)

Goal — Revision of the first six modules.

The Heart of the Matter

The facilitator asks the participants to summarise the key learning points from the **earlier modules**. These notes will help guide the dialogue and the facilitator can indicate the diagrams and key points on the wall at each stage.

In the **first module**, we learnt that children are a gift from God, created in his image and for whom he has a clear plan and purpose.

We also looked at God's heart for children. We noted that Jesus respected them, listened to them, loved them, prioritised them, but the disciples wanted to drive them away. Often, our own behaviour and attitudes towards children do not reflect the example of Jesus but rather that of the disciples.

In the **second module** we have learned that accusations of witchcraft against children are not in conformity with the Word of God. The so-called 'signs' of witchcraft are unreliable and have several other possible explanations. So, we cannot trust these 'signs' or cite them to justify accusations of witchcraft against children.

The Bible shows clearly that we need to accept responsibility for the consequences of our own actions, and that we are not to seek to put the blame on others, who would suffer as a result.

In the **third module** we learnt that the presence of a physical handicap, or of difficult behaviours are also false 'signs', and not an indication of witchcraft.

We explored further the basic needs of the child, be they physical, spiritual, social, mental or emotional, to ensure their healthy development and enable them to flourish and fulfil their potential. Failure to meet these needs inhibits children's growth and development.

And we considered the effects of trauma on the child due to conflict, abuse, rejection, or severe deprivations. We have seen the negative coping strategies that the child may develop, emotional or physical problems, or regressive behaviour.

These behaviours are often falsely interpreted to be 'signs' that the child is a 'witch' when in fact these behaviours are normal responses to abuse, lack of care, to trauma or to a difficult family situation.

We also examined Bible verses regarding appropriate attitudes and behaviours towards people with disabilities. The Bible teaches us that every child is a gift and creation of God, including children who have disabilities or who are twins.

In the **fourth module**, we talked about spiritual powers, the omnipotent power of God, and the victory of Jesus Christ on the cross, meaning his victory of good over evil. Accusations of witchcraft against children often have their roots in fear while Christians should live a life rooted in faith in Jesus Christ and in all that he has accomplished on the cross. And we looked at what the Bible teaches concerning 'witchcraft'.

In the **fifth module**, we considered the role of pastors as 'good shepherds'. And also we looked at some practical recommendations as to how to respond to an accusation of witchcraft made against a child.

The Heart of the Matter

Then in the **sixth module**, we examined the role of the community, and particularly the church, in child protection and in the prevention of accusations of witchcraft.

We learned that the Bible clearly teaches that the community, and above all the Church, is responsible for every child, especially those who are marginalised, and that we should meet their needs, and uphold their protection and defence so that they can flourish.

Today (in this final **seventh module**) we will explore children's rights in the context of national law and international law, and the importance to act for the protection of children.

Activity 1 (30 minutes)

Goal – To introduce the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC).

Explain

The facilitator explains that nearly every country in the world, and **all the African nations**, have ratified **the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** as a commitment to improve the lives of children. First conceived at the beginning of the twentieth century by a Christian visionary named Eglantyne Jebb, the document was the subject of many revisions before being finally adopted by the United Nations in 1989. This document has become the most influential legal instrument in the world to ensure that children are protected and that they have all they need to grow and flourish, and to realise their God-given potential.

The facilitator explains that the **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)** was adopted in Addis-Ababa in Ethiopia in July 1990 and consists of articles which for the greater part reflect those of UNCRC. It has been signed and ratified by all African nations with the exception of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, the Sudan, and South Sudan.

The facilitator gives a copy of the table (Appendix 2 printed on both sides of the sheet) to each participant.

Then he explains that the table contains the most pertinent articles for our discussions, but most of the other articles also have parallels in both documents. He underlines that these are universal principles, not Western or European ones, and that the African continent has declared its agreement with them. He also explains that these principles have their roots in the Bible and are consistent with the Word of God. He invites the participants to spend 10 minutes reading them.

The facilitator stresses that UNCRC and ACRWC apply to children's daily lives and the difficulties that they have to face, and that they give us the major principles to apply in every situation, to ensure that:

- The **best** interests of the child is the **primary** consideration;

The Heart of the Matter

- The child is protected from **any form** of violence, suffering or brutality, whether physical or mental, from abandonment or neglect, from abuse or exploitation.

Activity 2 (20 minutes)

[Note: this will need to be researched for the country where the training is taking place. The details in the Activity below are for DR Congo. **If national law does not apply, omit this activity.**]

Goal — To introduce the role of the national law in child protection.

Explain

The facilitator says that national law also deals with the question of child protection. He hands out copies of the articles selected from Congolese law (Appendix 3, printed on both sides of the sheet if relevant – available in French only) pointing out that Congolese law refers to both UNCRC and ACRWC as having prompted the national law, even though D.R.Congo has not yet ratified ACRWC.

He emphasises that Congolese law mentions specifically the special protection accorded to children accused of witchcraft (Article 62) and the forbidding of such accusations, which are severely punished by the law (Article 160).

Question

The facilitator comments here that the Church has a role to play in raising awareness of these laws and in insisting on their enforcement by the authorities and by citizens. He asks the question to the whole group in plenary:

- **What positive action can we take to raise awareness among our congregations and in our communities regarding children's' rights and child protection?**

After a few minutes, the ideas are noted on the flip-chart.

Activity 3 (20 minutes)

Goal — Introduction to the realities of child abuse.

True or False?

A volunteer pins up a sheet with the word "True" on the right wall, and a sheet with the word "False" on the left wall.

The participants stand and clear a space for the game. The facilitator explains that he will make some statements. If you think that the statement is true, you have to run to the right side of the room, if you think that it is false, run to the left side of the room.

The Heart of the Matter

After each statement and after the decision (choosing the true side, or the false side) of the participants, the facilitator gives the correct answer and says that we will discuss these after the game.

Declarations

- Beating children is never right and constitutes a form of abuse. (T)
- Sexual abuse of children is not a problem in this country. (F)
- Children with disabilities are in greater danger of being mistreated than children who have no disability. (T)
- Children often invent stories in which they say that they are being abused. (F)
- A pastor or a director of a church would never abuse a child. (F)
- Only men mistreat children; women are less to be feared. (F)
- Boys are sexually abused as often as girls. (T)
- Even an accusation of witchcraft is, of itself, abusive. (T)

Study in Groups

The participants divide into three groups to discuss the following questions:

Group A

- Why does beating children constitute a form of abuse? Are there better ways to discipline them?

Group B

- Why are children with disability more at risk of abuse? What should we do to protect them?

Group C

- Why is an accusation of witchcraft abusive?

A spokesperson from each group gives their answers in the plenary session that follows. The facilitator leads the discussion and recaps the principal points.

Activity 4 (20 minutes)

Goal – To understand the role of the church in protecting children.

The facilitator explains that our churches should be places where children are protected and where their rights are rigorously defended.

In God's Word

The facilitator sticks the verses below to the walls and explains that as churches, we have a mandate and a biblical responsibility to ensure that the law is respected, and to act when we see the law being broken.

Romans 13:1

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Proverbs 31:8–9

Speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak out and judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

God has a lot to say about child protection and He repeats these things several times in the Bible. If God tells us something, we need to pay attention to what He is saying: when He says the same things more than forty times, it means that it is something which is extremely important and that we have to listen and act on it.

He asks for volunteers from the participants to read the following verses:

Psalms 82:3–4

Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Isaiah 1:17

Learn to do right, seek justice, defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

Zechariah 7:9–10

This is what the Lord Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against one another.'

Luke 17:2

It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied round their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble.

The facilitator asks the participants the following questions:

- **In the light of these verses, what should our churches be like for children? What kind of place should our church be? Can you give some practical examples?**

Activity 5 (60 minutes)

Goal – Learn how to start taking action.

Explain

Then the facilitator puts up two sheets of paper on the walls. On one sheet he writes “**Child Protection Officer**” and on the other he writes “**Declaration of Commitment to Child Protection**”. He explains that there are two practical things to do to help us towards our goal:

Every church should have a **Child Protection Officer**.

- This person must be someone of great integrity, who has the wellbeing of children at heart.
- This person is responsible for the procedures (established in advance) for responding to allegations or incidents of mistreatment.
- This person advises the leaders of the church (pastors and those who work with children) and the congregation regarding good practice for child protection.
- This person trains the congregation (with the leaders of the church) in how to put into practice the procedures (established in advance) for responding to allegations or incidents of mistreatment.

Every church should have a **Declaration of Commitment to Child Protection**.

The facilitator gives a copy of the **Declaration of Commitment to Child Protection** (Appendix 4) to each participant and explains that it is a template to help the participants to draw up their **Declaration of Commitment Child Protection** for their churches after the workshop, in discussion with the leaders from their churches. The final version should be taught to the congregation, signed by the church leaders and displayed on the wall of the church. Then it must be followed and enforced. If there is nothing to add to the template, the participants can use the template as it stands.

Principles

He states that for now, we will discuss only the main principles, which we will call the Golden Rules. The facilitator writes them, one at a time, on two sheets pinned to the wall, and discusses each with the participants (For example: What does it mean in practice? How do we do this? etc.)

The Golden Rules

When a child says that someone has abused him, or following an incident of abuse:

- a) The best interests of the child are the most important consideration.

The Heart of the Matter

- b) Always believe the child (children only very rarely invent stories of abuse).
- c) Do not promise confidentiality. On the contrary, explain to the child that for his or her own protection and that of other children, you will be obliged to inform others of the abuse.
- d) Make sure that the child is in a place that is totally safe.
- e) If it is a case of physical or sexual abuse, the child must be taken to hospital to receive medical care and for the doctor to be able to give evidence of the abuse in a report to the police.
- f) Record in writing precisely what the child says, without comments and without asking leading questions (for example, "What happened (next)?", NOT "What did Mr. X do to you?").
- g) Inform the person Child Protection Officer of the incident or accusation.
- h) The Child Protection Officer and representatives of the church do NOT investigate the allegation or incident.
- i) The Child Protection Officer reports the allegation or incident to the police, referring to the national law on child protection if necessary. The police will investigate.
- j) If the allegation is against the pastor or another leader of the church, he or she must be suspended temporarily during the investigation by the police.
- k) If possible, it is better not to discuss the situation with the congregation or with other members of the community. Gossip does not help anyone and is contrary to the Word of God (1 Timothy 5:13 – '*gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not*'). Ideally, the Child Protection Officer and church leaders are the only people informed of the accusation.

Please note that these Golden Rules assume that the authorities will pay positive attention.

Study in Groups

The facilitator now reads out the following scenario:

Abel, a child of nine years old, has become very withdrawn. He refuses to play with the other children, pushing them away, and is rude and sullen towards adults. When you try to talk with him to ask what is wrong, he begins to cry. He eventually tells you that Mr. Paul, the Sunday School teacher, has touched him on the genitals and beat him with a stick. Mr. Paul said that if Abel told anyone, he would beat Abel's younger sister, Claudine, even harder. He begs you not to tell anyone that he has told you what Mr. Paul has done.

The Heart of the Matter

In small groups the participants are to answer the following four questions:

- **What do you do now?**
- **What questions should you ask?** — note: possible answers: “What happened?” “When did that happen?” “Where did that happen?” “What happened next?”
- **What should you write down?**
- **What should the Child Protection Officer do?**

In their responses, the participants should consider as many of the Golden Rules as possible.

Discuss

The facilitator now asks them the question:

- **How would you ensure that the authorities take Abel’s case seriously and that they will treat the child involved sensitively?**

After discussing this question in plenary, the facilitator promotes good practice, for example:

- making sure that the child is accompanied at all times by a member from the church staff, chosen by the child, and whom he or she trusts;
- asking the police for written confirmation of receipt of the file prepared by the Child Protection Officer with the details of the allegation;
- returning regularly to the police station to discuss the progress of the enquiry;
- ensuring that the child is in a safe place throughout the investigation;
- keeping in mind that the best interests of the child take precedence over all other factors.

Closing (30 minutes)

Goal — Conclusion: To measure the impact of the whole training on the attitudes of the participants. Commitment of the participants to action.

The facilitator explains that it is the end of the training. He asks each participant to write on a post-it two things he has learned during Module 7 and the three main things that he has learned during the training as a whole. A volunteer collects the answers.

Questionnaire

New copies of the Questionnaire from Activity 1 in Module 1 (see Appendix 1 of this Module) are given out and the participants are asked to fill them in to see if there have been changes in attitudes because of the training. A volunteer collects them in.

The Heart of the Matter

Commitment to Act

The facilitator asks the participants to raise their hand if they are committed to action:

- by raising awareness among the congregation in their church and in their community of children's rights, and the national law on child protection;
- by appointing a Child Protection Officer in their church;
- by establishing a declaration of Commitment to Child Protection in their church (Appendix 4);
- by training the congregations in their church on how to put it into practice;
- by defending with all their strength the rights of children in their community.

Then he asks them to sign the a document of Commitment (in Appendix 5) explaining that he will keep the document and contact all the participants after three months to find out what has been done following the training.

Finally he gives each participant a Personal Action Plan (in Appendix 6) and asks them to fill it in. He explains that this is a personal document which will not be shared with the other participants and that each participant will take away his own plan to remind him of what he has learned and of what he has decided to do about it.

Explain that the facilitator and team will be in touch in three months / six months / one year's time to find out what progress the participants are making in putting their Personal Action Plans into practice and to offer further encouragement, guidance and advice, if needed.

Evaluation

The facilitator gives a copy of the Initial Evaluation Form (in Appendix 7) to each participant and asks them to complete it. The sheets are then collected in and kept ready for follow-up evaluation after three months / six months / one year.

Certificate

He thanks the participants for their attention and their contributions during the workshop. Each participant is given a certificate (in Appendix 8).

Worship

Prayers

Departure

Questionnaire – Module 7

Please look at the images below and respond to the questions at the side.



1. A child wets the bed.

a. What are the possible explanations, in your view?

.....

.....

.....

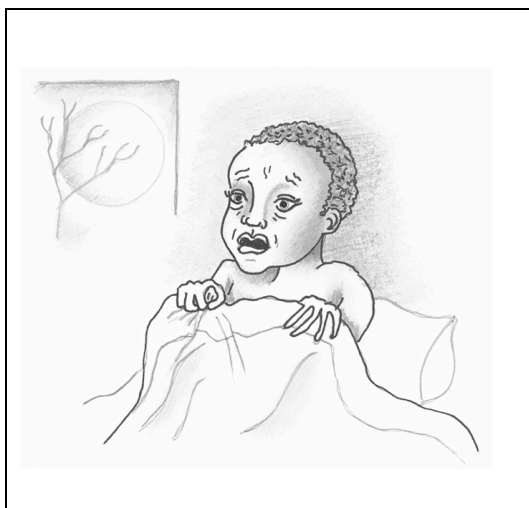
.....

b. What do you think should happen to the child?

.....

.....

.....



2. A child has a nightmare.

a. What are the possible explanations, in your view?

.....

.....

.....

.....

b. What do you think should happen to the child?

.....

.....

.....



3. A parent who is very ill, and a child with a swollen stomach.

a. What are the possible explanations, in your view?

.....

.....

.....

.....

b. What do you think should happen to the child?

.....

.....

.....

Appendix 2

Similar articles in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

AFRICAN CHARTER ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD (ACRWC)*	UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)**
<p>Preamble – the Charter of the Organization of African Unity recognizes the paramountcy of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights proclaimed and agreed that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed therein, without distinction of any kind such as race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status,</p> <p>RECOGNIZING that the child occupies a unique and privileged position in the African society and that for the full and harmonious development of his personality, the child should grow up in a family environment in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,</p> <p>RECOGNIZING that the child, due to the needs of his physical and mental development requires particular care with regard to health, physical, mental, moral and social development and requires legal protection in conditions of freedom, dignity and security,</p>	<p>Preamble – Recognizing that the United Nations has, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenants on Human Rights, proclaimed and agreed that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,</p> <p>Recalling that, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations has proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance,</p> <p>Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,</p> <p>Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,</p>
<p>Article 1.3 : Any custom, tradition, cultural or religious practice that is inconsistent with the rights, duties and obligations contained in the present Charter shall, to the extent of such inconsistency, be discouraged.</p>	
<p>Article 2 : For the purposes of this Charter, a child means every human being below the age of 18 years.</p>	<p>Article 1 : For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of 18 years.</p>
<p>Article 3 : Every child shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed in this Charter irrespective of the child’s or his / her parents’ or legal guardians’ race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status.</p>	<p>Article 2 : States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child’s or his or her parent’s or legal guardian’s race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status</p>

The Heart of the Matter

Article 4.1: In all actions concerning the child undertaken by any person or authority the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration.	Article 3: In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
Article 5: Every child has an inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law.	Article 6: States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.
Article 7: Every child who is capable of communicating his or her own views shall be assured the rights to express his opinions freely in all matters and to disseminate his opinions subject to such restrictions as are prescribed by laws.	Article 12: States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
Article 11: Every child shall have the right to education.	Article 28: States Parties recognize the right of the child to education.
Article 12: State Parties shall recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.	Article 31: States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
Article 13: Every child who is mentally or physically disabled shall have the right to special measures of protection in keeping with his physical and moral needs and under conditions which ensure his dignity, promote his self-reliance and active participation in the community	Article 23: States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.
<p>Article 14: Every child shall have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical, mental and spiritual health</p> <p>for example, 14.2.c. to ensure the provision of adequate nutrition and safe drinking water;</p> <p>Article 20 (2): State Parties to the present Charter shall in accordance with their means and national conditions take all appropriate measures:</p> <p>a) to assist parents and other persons responsible for the child and in case of need, provide material assistance and support programmes particularly with regard to nutrition, health, education, clothing and housing;</p>	<p>Article 24: States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health</p> <p>for example, 24.2.c. To combat disease and malnutrition, including within the framework of primary health care, through, inter alia, the application of readily available technology and through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking-water,</p> <p>Article 27:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. 2. The parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development. 3. States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.

The Heart of the Matter

<p>Article 16: State Parties to the present Charter shall take specific legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment including sexual abuse, while in the care of the a parent, guardian, school authority or any other person having care of the child.</p>	<p>Article 19: States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.</p> <p>Article 37 : States Parties shall ensure that:</p> <p>(a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.</p>
<p>Article 17 : State Parties to the present Charter shall in particular::</p> <p>2a) ensure that no child who is detained or imprisoned or otherwise deprived of his / her liberty is subjected to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;</p> <p>Article 20 : Parents or other persons responsible for the child shall have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development the child and shall have the duty:</p> <p>a) to ensure that the best interests of the child are paramount at all times;</p> <p>c) to ensure that domestic discipline is administered humanely and in a manner consistent with the inherent dignity of the child</p>	<p>Article 37 : States Parties shall ensure that:</p> <p>(a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.</p>
<p>Article 25: Any child who is permanently or temporarily deprived of his family environment for any reason shall be entitled to special protection and assistance.</p>	<p>Article 20: A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State.</p>

ACRWC * – http://www.achpr.org/files/instruments/child/achpr_instr_charterchild_eng.pdf

* ratified by every African nation except **Central African Republic**, Democratic Republic of Congo, **Djibouti**, **Guinea-Bissau**, **Liberia**, Sao Tomé et Príncipe, Sudan, South Sudan, **Swaziland**, **Sahrawie Arab Democratic Republic**, **Somalia**, **Tunisia** and **Zambia**, (of which most – in bold – have signed but not yet ratified).

UNCRC ** – <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

** ratified by every African nation.

Appendix 3

[Note: this legal framework is for use in the D.R. Congo. If necessary, replace this Appendix with the national laws of the relevant locality, as appropriate.]

R.D. Congo — loi n° 09/001 du 10 janvier 2009 portant protection de l'enfant

Exposé des motifs

La condition de l'enfant dans le monde en raison de sa vulnérabilité, de sa dépendance par rapport au milieu, de son manque de maturité physique, intellectuelle et émotionnelle, nécessitant de soins spéciaux et une protection particulière n'a cessé d'interpeller depuis un certain temps la communauté internationale et nationale.

Dans le souci de trouver une solution durable à cet épineux problème, l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies a adopté, le 20 novembre 1989, la **Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant**... Les Etats africains, pour leur part, ont adopté en juillet 1990, la **Charte africaine des droits et du bien-être de l'enfant** pour assurer une protection et porter un regard particulier sur la situation critique de nombreux enfants à travers tout le continent.

...Cependant, en dépit des efforts déployés, de nombreux enfants continuent d'être **maltraités, discriminés, accusés de sorcellerie**, infectés ou affectés par le VIH/SIDA ou sont l'objet de trafic...

Pis encore, **de nombreux enfants vivent dans la rue**, victimes d'exclusion sociale, d'exploitation économique et sexuelle tandis que d'autres sont associés aux forces et groupes armés.

C'est dans ce contexte que s'est fait sentir le besoin pressant d'élaborer dans notre pays une loi portant protection de l'enfant. Ainsi, cette loi poursuit notamment les objectifs ci-après (dont le premier est):

— garantir à l'enfant le droit de bénéficier des différentes mesures à caractère administratif, social, judiciaire, éducatif, sanitaire et autres **visant à le protéger de toutes formes d'abandon, de négligence, d'exploitation et d'atteinte physique, morale, psychique et sexuelle**.

Article 6

L'intérêt supérieur de l'enfant doit être une préoccupation primordiale dans toutes les décisions et mesures prises à son égard.

Par **intérêt supérieur de l'enfant**, il faut entendre le souci de sauvegarder et de privilégier à tout prix ses droits.

Article 9

Aucun enfant ne peut être soumis à la torture ni à des peines ou traitements cruels, inhumains ou dégradants.

Article 10

Aucun enfant ne peut être privé de liberté de façon illégale ou arbitraire.

L'arrestation, la détention ou l'internement d'un enfant ne peuvent être décidés qu'en conformité avec la loi.

Article 13

Tout enfant a droit à la vie.

Article 49

Les pratiques, traditions et coutumes qui portent atteinte au développement, à la santé, voire à la vie de l'enfant sont interdites.

Article 57

L'enfant a droit à la protection contre toute forme d'exploitation et de violences.

The Heart of the Matter

Article 62

Est considéré comme en situation difficile et bénéficie d'une protection spéciale, notamment:

1. l'enfant rejeté, abandonné, exposé à la négligence, au vagabondage et à la mendicité;
5. l'enfant habituellement maltraité ;
7. l'enfant accusé de sorcellerie ;
10. l'enfant vivant avec handicap;
12. l'enfant orphelin,

Article 147

Les coups et blessures volontaires portés sur l'enfant sont punis de trois à six mois de servitude pénale principale et d'une amende de cent mille à deux cent cinquante mille francs congolais,

En cas de préméditation, l'auteur est passible de six à douze mois de servitude pénale principale et d'une amende de cent cinquante mille à trois cent mille francs congolais.

Article 148

Les coups et blessures volontaires porté sur l'enfant ayant entraîné une maladie ou une incapacité de plus de huit jours sont punis de six à douze mois de servitude pénale principale et d'une amende de deux cents mille à trois cent cinquante mille francs congolais

Article 150

Les coups et blessures volontaires ayant entraîné la mort d'un enfant sans intention de la donner sont punis de cinq à vingt ans de servitude pénale principale et d'une amende de cinq cents mille à un million de francs congolais.

Article 151

Le fait de soumettre un enfant à la torture est puni de un à cinq ans de servitude pénale principale et d'une amende de cinq cents mille à un million de francs congolais.

Article 160

En cas d'accusation de sorcellerie à l'égard d'un enfant, l'auteur est puni de un à trois ans de servitude pénale principale et d'une amende de deux cents mille à un million de francs congolais

Article 170

Le viol d'enfant est puni de sept à vingt ans de servitude pénale principale et d'une amende de huit cent mille à un million de francs congolais.

Le minimum de la peine est doublé si le viol est le fait :

1. des ascendants de l'enfant sur lequel ou avec l'aide duquel le viol a été commis;
2. des personnes qui ont autorité sur l'enfant;
4. des agents publics, des ministres de culte qui ont abusé de leur position

source : <http://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/JO/2009/L.09.001.10.01.09.htm>

Appendix 4

Template for a Declaration of Commitment to Child Protection to be signed and displayed on the wall of the church, with the congregation being taught how to understand and follow it. The template can be adapted for schools too.

DECLARATION OF OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD PROTECTION

Name of church:

Name of Child Protection Officer:

.....

Our church places great value on children and believes that:

- All children, including children who live with disabilities, are a gift of God, and have the right to love, safety, and support to reach their God-given potential.
- The welfare of the child is of overriding importance.
- Each of us must take responsibility for helping to create a safe environment for children.
- Children teach us a lot and should be listened to.
- God uses children as part of His mission here on earth, so we encourage children to participate in every aspect of church life.

In our church, we commit to treating children in the following ways:

- We will protect children from all forms of physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional abuse.
- We will not shout at children or try to humiliate them.
- We will listen carefully to children and treat their opinions as important.
- We will not hit or discipline children in a physical or violent way.
- We will use a method of discipline that congratulates and rewards children for good behaviour, and verbal reprimands and the withdrawal of privileges if this is not effective.
- We will not allow an adult to be alone with a child, apart from the child's parent or guardian.

The Heart of the Matter

- We will not touch a child in an inappropriate way on any part of the body that would normally be covered by shorts and a tee-shirt, and will not hug or tickle them in an inappropriate way.
- We will not discriminate between children, by treating them differently or favouring some over others.

If we see or suspect the abuse of a child, or if a child says that someone has abused him or her, we will take the following action, recognising that the child's best interests come before all other considerations :

- We will believe what the child has said (children rarely invent stories of abuse).
- We will not promise confidentiality, but we will explain to the child that for his / her own safety and that of other children, we will need to report the abuse.
- We will ensure that the child is in a safe place and receives the medical attention and emotional support he / she needs if necessary.
- We will take detailed notes and give them to the Child Protection.
- The Child Protection Officer will report the matter to the police. The police will investigate. We will not investigate the allegation ourselves.
- If the allegation involves the pastor or other church leader, he / she will be suspended during the police enquiry.
- If possible, we will not discuss the situation with other members of the congregation or community. Gossip helps no one and is against the Word of God.

Our church will seek to prevent child abuse in the following ways:

- We will carefully check any person who wishes to interact with children in our care, by asking for references, interviewing them, and asking them to declare any incidence of child abuse involving them, ideally by means of police checks, if possible.
- We will actively teach our church and our community about child protection.
- We will support the vulnerable families in our church.
- We will teach children their rights and responsibilities and how to protect themselves.

Signatures of Church Leaders:

.....

..... Date:

Appendix 5

COMMITMENT TO ACTION TO PROMOTE CHILD PROTECTION

We, the undersigned, commit ourselves to action to promote Child Protection in our churches and our communities in the following ways:

- a) by raising awareness among our congregations and among the members of our communities about the fundamental rights of the child and our national child protection law;
- b) by appointing a Child Protection Officer in our churches;
- c) by drawing up and displaying a Declaration of Commitment to Child Protection in our churches;
- d) by training our congregations in how to put it into practice;
- e) by wholeheartedly and vigorously defending children's rights in our communities.

Place: Date:

Signatures:

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Appendix 6

Personal Action Plan		
Things to Stop	Things to Start	Things to Continue
Things I used to do that I will no longer do in the light of this training.	Things I did not do before but which I will start to do in the light of this training.	Things I used to do and will continue to do in the light of this training.
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
New Insights and Key Principles which will influence my work...		
a. b. c.		

Initial Evaluation Form

1. What have you learnt from this training? – 3 to 5 things per person.
2. What will you do differently in the future as a result of this training? – 3 to 5 things per person.
3. How will you share what you have learnt with other people?

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dotted lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

Note the responses. Continue on another sheet of paper if necessary. Keep these all safe for future reference, and to compare with the responses to the **Follow-On Evaluation Questions**.

Certificate

HEART OF THE MATTER Keeping our Children Safe from Harm



This is to certify that

.....
has attended the Heart of the Matter course
for keeping children safe from harm in church and community.

hosted by:

place: date:

facilitator: *sign*
