



A CALL TO ACTION

Top 15 Ways Faith Leaders Can Support Healthy Families

Incorporate any of these ideas during the October Weekend (October 24-26, 2014) and other times throughout the year.

1. Use the **universal prayer** to end domestic violence during the October weekend in your sermon (see back page).
2. Make a **connection** with your **local domestic violence program** and other local service providers, so you know how to refer those in need (see MNADV website for listing).
3. Host a **food or diaper drive** to collect items for your local domestic violence shelter (shelters often have wish lists on their website).
4. Hold a **prayer breakfast**. Invite your local domestic violence program and survivors to tell their story.
5. Incorporate issues of healthy relationships and domestic violence into your **weekly sermon**.
6. **Encourage healthy marriages and healthy families** that are free from violence, each day of the year.
7. **Place brochures** in your bathrooms so that victims know where to get help (visit MNADV website to order a free supply).
8. Hold a moment of silence and then **break the silence**. Victims need to know that they can seek out assistance. **Refuse to be silent**.
9. **Encourage parents** to talk to teens about healthy relationships.
10. Include a message and local hotline number in your **weekly bulletin** so victims know they are not alone and that help is available.
11. Know where to refer someone who is using violence in their relationship to a certified **Abuser Intervention Program** (visit GOCCP's website for listings).
12. Incorporate the idea of healthy families and healthy relationships that are free from violence in **children's sermons and teen groups**.
13. Consider having a **survivor give testimony** during your service or at another faith sponsored event. Be sure that it is a safe environment and a healing experience for them.
14. Recognize the **signs and symptoms** of an abusive relationship. Learn how to support a victim's **safety plan** (Visit VAWnet.org Special Collection on Religion and Faith Trust Institute).
15. Attend the Interfaith Domestic Violence Coalition's **Day of Learning** on October 1, 2014, and attend other domestic violence trainings (Visit the FaithTrust Institute and MNADV).



UNIVERSAL PRAYER

Holy One of life and love,

Bless us with the strength to greet each day with energy and purpose and we work to eradicate sexual and domestic violence and terror.

Grant us the wisdom to recognize stumbling blocks for what they are and the creativity to maneuver our way around them.

Open the eyes of those who see violence against women and children as inevitable outcomes of the world in which we live; let them hear the cries of those in need; widen their hearts to hold the many faces of those in this world and beyond who demand our unending support; call forth compassionate words of change from their mouths and commitment to acts of justice and transformation from their hands.

Draw us together as a community of diverse narrative, culture and history, offering support through our presence and intention.

Remind us that we are not alone; we are not alone.

Help us to engage in intentional practice of thanksgiving; let us be grateful for the accomplishments of those who came before us, the progress we have made and the prospect of a brighter tomorrow.

When we are tired and veer towards complacency, stretch out your hand and re-ignite the passionate fire for divine humanity that lives within.

You, who rolls away the darkness into light, send us forth as messengers, truth tellers and witnesses to illuminate what is and demand with fortitude a world of safety and respect for women and children in body, mind, and spirit.

Just as the dove found an olive branch in the receding flood waters, so too may we find signs of peace and the potential for hope and renewal. May that time come speedily and in our day.

And let us say,

Amen.

Authored by Rabbi Lisa Gelber on behalf of the FaithTrust Institute