HAPPY BIRTHDAY…
OR THE END OF CHILDHOOD?

WHAT YOU’LL NEED: printouts of the words/instructions below; card/paper; pens and pencils.

For children like Nang, 13, is an important age as it’s when most Lao children drop out of school. They are expected to start earning an income and helping provide food for their family. Their childhood is over.

REFLECT:
What were you doing when you were 13?
What were you looking forward to?
What hopes and dreams do you think Nang has?
What hopes and dreams do you think God has for Nang?

PRAY:
Make a ‘birthday card’. Inside it, write your prayer for a 13 year old like Nang living in another country.

ACT:
Take a photo of the card and put it on Twitter and Facebook using the hashtag #nochilddtaken. Send your card and prayer back to Tearfund. We can post your prayer on our website to help others pray for vulnerable children and to encourage our partners.
PICK UP A PENCIL

WHAT YOU’LL NEED: printouts of the words/instructions below; pencils.

In Nang’s community the nearest secondary school is 35km away. Very few families can afford to send their children there.

Pick up a pencil, and use it to help you focus on your school days.

What has your education enabled you to do?
How might your job, home, family and/or lifestyle be different if you hadn’t been able to go to school?

Tearfund partner WCL helps parents buy uniforms and supplies to make sure children can complete their primary education. The WCL team also runs training and awareness workshops to help children and families earn a safe income and make good decisions about the future.

As you hold your pencil, pray for those children who are not able to access education. Pray that they will be able to make safe and secure choices leading to a brighter and more hopeful future.
BARRIERS

WHAT YOU’LL NEED: a roll of masking tape; two pieces of furniture eg two chairs.

String the tape between the two pieces of furniture to form a barrier. Remind your group/congregation that an estimated 3,000 children are trafficked worldwide every single day.

Ask people to think about how children like Nang struggle to escape being trafficked because of factors, problems or circumstances which act as barriers.

Ask them to suggest what these barriers are, eg poverty, cultural beliefs, attitudes towards children, lack of opportunities such as jobs and education, lack of choice and so on.

Invite people to suggest ways of breaking down some of these barriers. Then invite someone to break the tape while speaking out their prayer for children at risk of trafficking.
Nang is a happy child but she’ll be highly vulnerable of being trafficked when her education ends next year. Many don’t know the danger they are in.
Tearfund is supporting Anne’s work with vulnerable families in Laos, where she delivers trafficking-awareness workshops and family counselling.
Tearfund’s partner teaches new skills, such as cooking, so that girls can earn an income safely, close to home.
1 in 3 girls will end up in the sex trade if they leave Laos for a 'better life' in Thailand.
Families are desperately poor where Tearfund works in Laos. 14-year-old Kalei searches for frogs every day to help feed her family.
Mothers may never hear from their daughters again once they are lured across the border.