

# Millennium Development Goal 3



*Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education in all levels of education*

### Scripture Reflection:

He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath, and there was a woman there possessed by a spirit that had crippled her for 18 years. She was bent double and quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her he called her and said, 'You are rid of your trouble,' and he laid his hands on her. Immediately she straightened up and began to praise God. (Lk 13:10-13)

### Food for thought

Equal opportunity is something we take for granted in Australia. Women are seen as making a valuable contribution to society as men. This isn't always the case. For a whole range of complex reasons, women, especially poor women have been left behind. In our world, about 876 million adults are illiterate; two thirds of them are women. When Jesus encountered the woman who was bent double, weighed down by her situation, enfeebled and unable to stand proudly, he reached out to raise her up. He saw in her the potential to stand tall and

look the world in the eye. All women deserve to be so empowered and to have access to all they need to become who God intended them to be!

### A story from the field

La Pintana is a fast-growing and poor urban area on the outskirts of Santiago in Chile. All the usual social and domestic problems of such an area are apparent. But most people are honest and hardworking. They see that the future will only change for their children with education. But study is difficult in overcrowded, under-resourced one-room homes. The Columban Parish of San Esteban Martir has responded to the lack of urban infrastructure and limited educational opportunities, especially for women through the establishment of the Centre for Human Development. Volunteer mothers supervise the children in their homework and a library has

been established. Many workshops and classes are run in order to assist the women in income generation for their families. Workshops in ceramics, clothing and soft-toy making and small-business training have now assisted hundreds of women and girls to a better future.

### How should we respond?

\* Invite others to share in a reflection time on how Jesus interacted with and responded to women.

\* Invite women from different cultures and backgrounds to share their experience of being a woman.

\* Discern whether there are women in your local community who are isolated.

Initiate an outreach program to end the marginalisation.

**To make poverty history**



*These young girls and boys have a right to a decent education and equal opportunities for all.*

### Share of women in non-agricultural wage employment, 1990 and 2004 (%)

	1990	2004
South-Eastern Asia	13	17
Western Asia	17	20
Northern Africa	20	20
Sub-Saharan Africa	32	35
Oceania	28	37
South-Eastern Asia	37	38
Eastern Asia	38	41
Latin America & the Caribbean	38	43

*Women inch forward in labour markets of all regions, though deep inequalities remain*

### Share of women in single or lower houses of parliament, 1990 & 2006 (%)

	1990	2006
Oceania	1	3
Northern Africa	3	7
Western Asia	5	8
CIS, Asia	-	11
CIS, Europe	-	11
Southern Asia	6	13
South-Eastern Asia	10	16
Sub-Saharan Africa	7	16
Eastern Asia	20	19
Latin America & the Caribbean	12	20
World	12	17

*Women's political power is growing, though men still dominate*