



Safe Haven Guidelines

Rev. Nov 2018



**Model Guidelines for the Protection of
Children and Youth from Abuse**

SAFE HAVEN GUIDELINES

Model Guidelines for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse

Introduction

For the sake of the witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are intentional, open and clear about the integrity and standard of conduct to which each congregation, institution, organization or agency in ministry is called and to which its leaders are held accountable. This document is intended to provide guidelines for a “Safe Haven” for children and youth in congregational life.

Who are child abusers? In 75% of reported cases of sexual abuse, the offenders were known to the victims or their families. Research has shown that child abusers come from all ethnic and economic groups. Based upon case studies, many who abuse children do so out of ignorance of proper disciplinary techniques, thereby inflicting unintentional emotional or physical abuse. Unlike physical abuse of a child, which may be accidental, child sexual abuse is a premeditated act. Child molesters defy the stereotypes we have created. It is not easy to identify these individuals.

Note: Children with handicaps often become targets for all kinds of abuse. Their handicapping conditions may increase parental frustration, resulting in neglect, emotional abuse, and physical abuse. Vulnerability to sexual abuse is increased due to physical or mental conditions perceived by the abuser to increase the child’s helplessness.

Theological / Biblical Framework

Children are a blessing and a gift from the Lord. - Psalm 127:3 (CEV)

For members in our congregations, becoming a Safe Haven for children, youth and their families affirms our Baptism into the priesthood of believers.

Directly from the Affirmation of Baptism, Evangelical Lutheran Worship page 236:

“You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism: to live among God’s faithful people, to hear the word of God and to share in the Lord’s supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?”

As the church, we bear witness to God’s grace in our lives that comes to us through Holy Baptism. Many of the children to whom we offer a Safe Haven have not been baptized. Many of their families and caregivers have not been baptized. Indeed, many of us who work to form Safe Havens for children and youth have not been baptized. As we work together for the well-being of children, youth and their families, we ultimately invite people to receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Scriptures for Reflection:

Mark 10:13-16 Jesus blesses the children

Mark 9:33-37 Who is the greatest?

Mark 4:35-5:1 Jesus stills a storm.

There are many other scriptures in both the Old and New Testament that give the responsibility for care of all children to the adults, parents, grandparents, Godparents, etc. Every congregation is called to be a place of hope and healing for people of all ages in their community.

Adopting the “Model” Guidelines as Policy

All agencies, institutions and organizations serving children and youth are encouraged to use these guidelines to develop policies for the prevention of child and youth abuse. It is intended and expected that local adaptations, changes, amplifications, improvements, expansions, or other types of revisions be made.

It is very important that the policy you adopt and implement complies with federal employment laws and with your state or local employment and privacy laws and other laws on, for example, checking criminal records. All laws are subject to change from time to time by action of state legislatures, Congress and state and federal courts. Therefore, you should develop and review your policy with assistance from persons knowledgeable in these laws.

Implementation of your policy should include regular training of adults in your congregation, organization or agency. It is the work of the local expression or institution to develop, implement, teach and hold accountable people who work with children and youth.

Disclaimer

This document is intended as a suggested guideline, not a policy or manual. It does not cover every issue that you may want to consider in the development of such policies. Nor does it necessarily reflect the law of each state. You should consult with your own legal counsel and other professional advisors or insurance policies before adopting any policies for the prevention of child or youth abuse.

Poverty, Children and Advocacy

Children who live in poverty tend to suffer from a wide range of health-related problems, including hearing and vision problems. Many poor families are unable to afford notepaper, books or activities that promote learning. Special fees for art supplies, science labs or team sports may be out of reach. Poor children have far less access than others to computers. People living in poverty often do not have health insurance. Poverty can bring a quiet sense of shame for children and their families.

Racism, sexism, citizenship status, and classism are all factors that affect the economic health and well-being of families. The impact of poverty makes it almost impossible for children to grow up feeling safe, secure and protected. When parents or caregivers are consumed with survival issues, there is little time or energy left for tending to the emotional and spiritual needs of their children.

If our congregations are truly committed to helping children, our focus needs to be broadened beyond our own families and the families in our congregations to encompass all children.

Effectively working towards a Safe Haven for children and youth living in poverty includes:

- a. Advocacy
- b. Discovery (learning)
- c. Accompaniment
- d. Community Organizing

Action Plan: What can my organization, agency, congregation or family do to respond to poverty with children and youth?

___ Look with honesty at your neighborhood. Talk directly with local schools (teachers, counselors & principals) about needs facing the children in your area. Consider the gifts of your congregation. Where is the match?

___ Consider larger issues: abuse, hunger, safety, housing, education, gangs, drugs. Pick one; become informed as to how this issue is being expressed in your community, where services are and where the needs are. Can you help?

___ Support parenting needs. Every community has this need. Every congregation can do this.

___ Create mentoring programs in partnership with local schools. (Contact Big Brothers Big Sisters)

___ Be involved in any recovery programs needed, including responding to natural disasters.

___ Write letters to support change in public policy regarding needs. (Example: WIC, affordable housing)

___ Consider a sister-parish relationship with a church experiencing poverty in or out of this country.

___ Pray endlessly for the children others are not praying for. Be relentless. Involve others.

___ Contact local congregations whose membership is less economically privileged. How can you be stronger as partners?

Acknowledgements

This Model Guideline is the second edition of Safe Haven Guidelines written to increase our capacity to care for our children and youth.

Resources used to create this document include:

Safe Haven for Children, ELCA

The Boy Scouts in America

The Girl Scouts in America

The Episcopal Church – Safe Guarding God’s Children

Guidelines for a Safe Haven Congregation – First Edition and Second Edition

Definitions

Relationships among people are at the foundation of Christian ministry and, as such, are central to the life of the church. Defining healthy and safe relationships through guidelines, policies and codes of conduct is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of personal interaction in our ministries. Rather, it is to assist in more clearly defining behaviors and practices that allow the church to more fully demonstrate its love and compassion for children and youth in sincere and genuine relationships.

Children and Youth

Individual – refers to people of all ages

Adult – refers to any individual 18 years old and older

Child – refers to any individual under the age of 12 years old.

Youth – refers to any individual who is at least 12 years old, but not yet 18 years old. A youth may also be an individual who is 18 years and older, but still high school.

Adult Leader – refers to any adult (21 years of age or older) trained to work with children or youth.

Church Personnel – refers to church staff, adult leaders, or any volunteer....

Church Personnel

For the purposes of these guidelines, the following are included in the definition of Church Personnel when they are functioning in their respective roles for the church:

1. All Rostered leadership whether stipendiary or non-stipendiary who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
2. All paid personnel whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of services by the synod, congregations, schools, camps or other agencies. For example: Pre-schools, After-school Programs, Theater Groups, Choirs, and Day Camps.
3. Those who contract their services to the church, its congregations, schools or other agencies.
4. Volunteers, including any person who enters into or offers him or herself for a church related service, or who actually assists with or performs a service, whether or not they have been selected or assigned to do so. Volunteers include members of advisory boards, committees, etc. For example: Adults serving as sponsors at youth gatherings, at camp, in Sunday school classrooms, as drivers, etc.

Church Personnel fall into to one of two categories:

For the purposes of this guideline, the following are included in the definition of Church Personnel Who Regularly Work With and Around Children or Youth:	For the purposes of this guideline, the following are included in the definition of Church Personnel Who Occasionally Work With and Around Children or Youth:
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All clergy whether stipendiary or non-stipendiary, who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.	Sunday School Teachers.
All persons who supervise or assist with supervising children or youth, other than church school teachers, in ministries, programs or activities more often than occasionally.	All paid or volunteer Church Personnel whose work regularly takes them throughout the facility or grounds or who have keys giving them access to the buildings on the grounds.
All persons who provide transportation to children or youth without other adults in the vehicle more than occasionally.	All persons who supervise or assist with supervising children or youth in ministries, programs or activities infrequently, generally no more than three times a year or for one program or activity during a year that lasts less than a month (i.e. assisting with preparation of the Christmas Pageant, teaching one "unit" for rotation Sunday School, serving as a substitute Confirmation mentor, etc.).
Any paid personnel whose living quarters are on the grounds of the church, school or other related agency.	All persons who provide transportation to children or youth without other adults in the vehicle infrequently, generally no more than three times a year (i.e. driving to camp, synod gatherings, service projects, etc.).
	All persons who work or assist in the nursery four or fewer times a year, whether on an emergency basis or otherwise.
	Adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth once or twice a year.

Becoming an Adult Leader

We value the safety of all children and youth. We believe that our adult leaders reflect Affirming, Available, and Authentic attitudes, or simply put, act as AAA adults.

There are certain steps one must follow in order to be an adult guide with children/youth at _____ Church. They are:

- We strive for all leaders to be members of the church between 6 months to one year.
- Completing a volunteer leader form is required.
- Participate in an interview with pastor/staff.
- Submit to a social security and background check.
- Attend yearly leadership training provided by the church.

To remain as an active adult leader at the church, the individual must:

1. Complete and submit a leader application for a criminal background check/social security check before the first year of serving and then every 2 years after that.
2. Attend at least one leaders training per year.
3. Follow and encourage others to follow the Safe Haven Guidelines of the church.
4. Serve as a leader at least one children/youth event at the church per year.

Monitoring and Supervision of Programs

The monitoring and supervision of programs and activities involving children or youth is important for safeguarding children and youth and involves several aspects. Structural guidelines or standards for the programs and activities for children and youth can provide a system for managing this supervision. These include such things as clarity on who approves new programs, how many adults need to be present and the like. In addition to setting structural guidelines the church leaders should make sure the guidelines are followed. Programs and activities have to be monitored and supervised to do that.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Every program for children and youth should have established ratios for adults and children. Compliance with these established ratios is required at all times, including activities that occur off church premises. When both boys and girls are participating, male and female adult presence is preferred. (1:6 is recommended).
2. Existing programs (more than two years old) should be monitored for safety so that there is no assumption that care is taken to supervise programs as leadership is handed from one person or team to another over time.
3. Documentation of applications, screening requirements and training are kept up to date over time so that standards do not decrease.
4. Church Personnel should not be alone with a child or youth or multiple children or youth where other adults cannot easily observe them. This includes hotel rooms, classrooms, offices, etc. One-to-one conversations with children or youth should be held in an open or public or other place where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others.
5. Church Personnel over the age of 21 should directly supervise Church Personnel under the age of 18 and be physically present during all activities. This includes day camps, youth gatherings, outdoor ministry events, field trips, etc.
6. Church Personnel should develop new programs for children and youth within the vision, mission and values of the congregation or organization. Development of new activities should include plans to provide a Safe Haven for children or youth.
7. Each program should consider age-appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of children and youth using restrooms and showers or baths.
8. When supervising or assisting private activities such as dressing, showering or diapering infants or children, Church Personnel should remain in an area observable by other adults or work in pairs.
9. At least two unrelated (non-family members) Church Personnel are recommended to supervise activities.
10. Signed Permission to Participate forms (including Emergency Contact Information and Consent for Treatment) should be required for all activities.

Adult Supervision

1. A minimum of two adults in every classroom and/or at every event. The following adult to child ratios must be maintained:
 - a. Infants (ages 0-1) - one adult to three infants (1:3)
 - b. Toddlers (ages 1-2) - one adult to six toddlers (1:6)
 - c. Age 2 – 8th grade – one adult to eight children (1:8)
 - d. 9th – 12th grade – one adult to twelve youth (1:12)
2. At least one male and one female adult present at all children/youth events where there are male and female children/youth participants.
3. All male and female individuals will sleep in separate areas on overnight events.
4. All children, youth and adults are expected to participate in all activities, worships, etc.
5. When you are serving as an adult leader at an event, funds are always available to pay for adults' fees and registration costs for events.

Safety Guidelines for Youth-Led Childcare

1. Youth leaders overseeing childcare must have attended Safe Haven Training.
2. Youth leaders are to follow all Safe Haven Guidelines while caring for children.
3. To avoid distractions, youth leaders are not allowed use cell phones while caring for children.
4. Youth are to keep the group together at all times for safety reasons.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Affection

Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth.

Some **positive and appropriate** forms of affection are listed below:

- Brief hugs. Preferred hugs are side-to-side hugs, one-arm hugs and a-frame hugs.
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- “High-Fives” and hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting beside small children
- Kneeling or bending down for huddles with small children
- Holding hands during prayer
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate (for example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities.)

The following forms of affection are considered **inappropriate** with children and youth in ministry settings because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to groom children or youth and their parents for later molestation or can be, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses on the mouth
- Holding children over three years old on the lap
- Any sexualized touching; Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas or other private rooms.
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth
- Showering or bathing in the same room as a child or youth
- Changing clothes in the same room as a child or youth
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth
- Wrestling with children or youth
- Tickling children or youth
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth
- Any form of unwanted affection or physical contact
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples would be, "You sure are developing," or "You look really hot in those jeans"
- Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth
- Private meals with individual children or youth
- Private electronic or written communications with children or youth.
- Private scheduled meetings, outings or events just with child or youth

Physical Safety

1. All children and youth are required to have a current, completed release form on file every school year in order to participate in church hosted/sponsored ministry events.
2. All prescription medications will be given to children/youth only with written permission from parents/guardians. All medications must be in original bottles or packaging.
 - a. High school prescriptions dispensed on a case-by-case basis.
3. Two adults will remain with children and youth until all children/youth have been picked up from an event. No child/youth will be left alone under any circumstances.
4. Pick-up and drop-off area will be at main entrances to the building in use.
5. Parents are to come into the building to pick up children 5th grade and younger, unless otherwise communicated by the staff overseeing that ministry.
6. At any event children/youth will travel in groups of three or more when leaving the group for any reason. They must first receive approval from the key adult leader.
7. Liquor, drugs, weapons, lighters, knives, or fireworks are not allowed at any time unless an adult needs a lighter for an event.

Physical Interaction

1. Adults will not meet alone with children or youth in private places for any reason.
2. Meeting in public places and in view of other people, if the individual insists on meeting alone, is preferred.
3. No adult is to remain with a child/youth one-on-one after ministry events.
4. Two adults stay with child/youth until all have been picked up by the appropriate parent/guardian.
 - a. If this is unavoidable, we recommend you phone the parent/guardian.
 - b. If circumstances arise in which an adult needs to drive a child/youth home and they will be alone together in the vehicle, call ahead to the parent/guardian to let them know an arrival time. This can avoid communication misunderstandings.
5. Adults are to refrain from engaging in any inappropriate displays of affection – refer to previous sections entitled “Appropriate and Inappropriate Affection.”
6. Students are to refrain from engaging in any inappropriate displays of affection - refer to previous sections entitled “Appropriate and Inappropriate Affection.”
7. Dancing and inappropriate physical contact such as slam dancing, body passing, stage diving, freaking or grinding is not allowed at youth activities.

Emotional Health

1. Pranks and practical jokes that could cause physical or emotional harm to another individual will NOT be tolerated. This includes hazing. Hazing is illegal in Texas and is punishable under Texas law.
2. Skits, songs, or presentations that make fun of an individual or their gender, sexual orientation, ethnic heritage, economic status, or religious tradition are not acceptable.
3. All skits, songs and other presentations are to be approved by adult leaders.
4. Explicit or suggestive language and/or jokes about sexual, ethnic, gender, economic, or religious matters is not acceptable.
5. Any form of insulting bullying is not acceptable.
6. When using movies in an educational or recreational setting, movies must be previewed by the adults in charge.
 - a. Movies with a G rating are acceptable for children 5th grade and younger.
 - b. Movies up to a PG rating may be acceptable for youth in 6th-8th grade
 - c. Movies up to PG-13 may be acceptable for 9-12th grade students.
 - d. Movie clips from R-rated movies may be used in appropriate circumstances.
7. Adults are to use good judgment about songs listened to while traveling, in a large group setting, and by individuals. Adult guides have the right to turn off music they feel is unacceptable.

Social Media Guidelines

“Social media are a collection of online platforms and tools that people use to share content, profiles, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives and media itself, facilitating conversations and interactions online between groups of people.” - *Doreen Moran, Digital and Social Marketing*

“Friending”

Friending youth is a powerful ministry tool when used appropriately. When adults “friend” people under age 18 they should also “friend” their parents. Involving parents in this decision is important. An example of this request:

I would like to request to be your child’s friend on Facebook and/or twitter. I prefer “friending” both youth and their parents as part of my practice to promote transparency and appropriate adult – youth relationships. I encourage you to monitor all of your child’s social media practice. I am happy to support you in navigating social media with your youth.

This practice promotes the safety of children and youth while providing good accountability with the adults who work with youth.

Posts

Social media, by its very definition, is a public forum. There is no privacy in social media, even with the use of security settings. Think before you post. Would you say this in a room filled with congregation members? With youth?

Be aware of unintended consequences that may result from the misunderstanding of posts. Remember that you represent the ministry of your church and Jesus in all places you go, even online.

Groups or Pages

Consider communities that gather on Facebook in the same way you would a community gathered in a room or a home. Youth Pages or Groups should be monitored at all times by Safe Haven Adults.

Social Issues

1. All discussions of sexuality will take place in a group setting with more than one adult present.
2. Adults will not discuss personal sexual experiences for any reason.
3. Honor the trust built in small groups when students share their thoughts and feelings. Please refrain from gossiping.
4. Be it understood that it is unethical to present yourself as a professional counselor without the proper credentials.
5. Never promise confidentiality to anyone. Let child/youth know there are some issues that are required by law to be reported.
6. All forms of abuse of a minor must be reported to proper authorities. This includes physical, sexual, neglect, and abandonment.

Responsible Behavior

Individuals participating in activities will sign a covenant at the beginning of each year, along with parent/guardian. This covenant will outline behavior expected of children/youth at events. In the event the covenant is broken and behavior is unacceptable, the following actions will be taken:

1. Personal talk with key adult leader about the behavior.
2. Call to parents about the child or youth’s behavior.
3. If behavior is severe the child/youth could be sent home from an event.

4. If behavior continues, youth could be suspended from future ministry activities.

Travel Safety

1. All drivers must be 25 years of age or older to transport children/youth.
2. All drivers must submit to a yearly check on their driving record. Adults with speeding tickets or DWI's in the last 5 years may not drive children/youth for church sponsored events.
3. All traffic laws must be obeyed.
4. While riding in a vehicle all passengers will wear their own safety belts properly at all times.
5. All drivers are prohibited from using cell phones while operating a vehicle with children/youth.
6. No youth will be allowed to drive themselves along with other children/youth in their personal vehicles if the activity meets and leaves from the church grounds.
7. Youth may carpool together to events held on church grounds and may only take home youth they brought with them.
8. No adult shall drive a child/youth home without the presence of another adult unless obtaining prior parental approval.
9. Multiple cars are traveling to a destination should caravan; remaining in sight of each other and makes stops together as well.
10. One adult guide in the group should have the Travel Binder containing copies of the completed release forms.

Action Plan for Accidents

1. Assess the situation. If it is not safe to leave people in the vehicle, evacuate immediately.
2. If anyone is injured, make them as comfortable as possible. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE THE INJURED PERSON. Keep him or her warm. Administer first aid only if you have the proper training.
3. Call 911 for ambulance or police. Give the location clearly and distinctly. Do not hang up until instructed to.
4. Get name, phone #, driver's license #, license plate #, and insurance of other parties involved in the accident as well as names and telephone numbers of any witnesses.
5. Call pastor or youth staff to inform him/her of the accident and the well-being of the persons involved if staff are not a part of the group.
6. Call the families of those who are involved in the accident. Explain the status and the situation to the family members in a calm manner.
7. E-Mail or write down details from the accident and send to the appropriate staff that oversees this ministry. See back of booklet for type of information needed.

Action Plans

Confidentiality

When a youth asks if you can keep a secret, you should tell them that you are not able to make that commitment. Assure them that you care about them and that you want to hear what they have to say. This includes abuse, suicide threats or information regarding crimes.

Action Plan When You Suspect Abuse:

1. Document your concerns.
2. Share concerns with supervisor, pastor or board chair.
3. Report confirmed abuse to legal authorities.
4. Continue to love and support the child or youth and seek to have appropriate follow up care by you or others in church.

Action Plan for Known Sexual & Physical Abuse:

1. Give Affirmation & Hope
 - Praise the youth for having the courage to come forward.
 - Give hope through your willingness to listen, understand and care for them.
2. Give Assurance
 - I love you and I will accept you no matter what.
 - God loves you no matter what.
 - You can be totally honest.
 - Please don't be afraid to tell the whole story.
 - Don't be afraid to admit your fears or present your perspective.
 - I promise to listen and to do everything I can to understand you and help you. (Only say this if you intend to follow through.)
2. Assist the child or youth in facing the issue. If this is a sexual abuse issue, this is a conversation that needs to be heard by more than one Church Personnel, if possible. Encourage the child or youth to talk with another adult, preferably of the same gender. This is for your protection, as well as that of the child or youth, if questions of further sexual abuse arise.
3. It is important for the child or youth to understand they have been abused. Even if the child entered the relationship willingly, a sexual relationship between an adult and a child or youth is abusive.
4. Encourage the child or youth to get professional help. Assist them or have someone in the church assist them in connecting with a professional counselor. Work with a parent or parents to make a plan for recovery. If they are in immediate harm in their home, assist them in temporary shelter.
5. Acknowledge your responsibility to document the abuse and to share this information with the authorities.
6. Continue to be part of the healing of the child or youth, as appropriate.

Reporting Abuse

1. Church Personnel may be legally required to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to the appropriate state authorities. You can report abuse in two ways: www.txabusehotline.org or 1-800-252-5400
2. Failure to report suspected abuse of children or youth may be a crime. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. Every state provides immunity from civil liability for persons required to report suspected abuse in good faith and without malice. Simply stated, "in good faith" means that the person submitting the report believes what he or she is reporting to be true.
3. In addition to reporting to the state authorities, Church Personnel are to report any suspected or known abuse of children or youth that may have been perpetrated by Church Personnel directly to the pastor, organizational or council president so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims.
4. Reports of suspected or known abuse that involve rostered Church Personnel should be reported to the Bishop or Assistants to the Bishop through a telephone call, or meeting.

Sexual Misconduct

Human sexuality can become the basis for oppression and injustice, which violates the intention of God.

When the gift of human sexuality is misused, it is a sin against God, and contrary to the evangelical witness of the church. The protection of both the child and the adult within the context of Christian fellowship is imperative. All conduct toward others should follow and pattern the conduct of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

1. Sexual touch refers to any contact with the penis, vagina, buttocks, breast/chest area.
2. This is NOT permitted at any time.
3. Remember that suspicions are not reality. Talking with others about your suspicions can spread rumors and bring about emotional, social, and spiritual damage to all individuals involved. Discussion of this nature should be done in private confidence with an ordained pastor.

Advising Youth on Personal Issues

Unless you are a trained, certified, professional counselor, you are not qualified to handle every situation that may arise as you serve in Children, Youth and Family Ministry. Issues that should be referred to your Pastor and/or to a trained professional include:

- Child Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual Abuse or Sexual Molestation
- Drug & Alcohol Abuse
- Economic Exploitation

Suicide

Suicide is the second leading cause of death in 15-24 year olds. Suicide occurs 3-4 times more often in boys than in girls. The most common method is by gun. Cluster suicide is becoming a growing problem. Using alcohol or drugs or experiencing depression increases the incidence of suicide. Suicide threats or casual remarks should always be taken seriously. Report this immediately! The person may sound casual about suicide, but only because suicide seems no worse than the other mental pain that they are already suffering.

Parents of youth and the pastor in the congregation should always be alerted about suicide threats. Suicide threats often require the involvement of mental health professionals.

SAMPLE Adult Leader Form/Application

Personal Info:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Date of Birth (MM/DD/YEAR): _____
Social Security #: _____ Driver's License Number: _____ State DL was issued in: _____
Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Best time to contact you: _____
Email Address: _____
Address 1: _____
City: _____
State: _____
ZIP Code: _____
T-Shirt Size: YS YM YL AS AM AL AXL A2XL

Tell Us About You:

How long have you been actively involved or a member at _____?
6 months to a year 1-3 years 4-7 years 8 years or more

What experience or skills do you bring to this ministry?

Why do you want to be a leader with the children and youth ministry at _____?

Tell about an adult who has influenced your faith life.

Screening Questions:

Have you ever been the subject of a child abuse investigation?

Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a criminal offense or are you now under charges for any criminal offense?

Personal References – Please list personal references, not related to you, we can contact

Name: _____
How long you have known this person? _____
Relationship with this person: _____
Cell Phone: _____
Email: _____

Name: _____
How long you have known this person? _____
Relationship with this person: _____
Cell Phone: _____
Email: _____

Acknowledgment of Background Check and Driving Check:

I understand and give permission to _____ to submit my personal information for background check and driver check (if applicable) in accordance with _____ Church's Safe Haven Guidelines.

Signature:

Medical and Liability Release

I hereby indemnify and hold _____ Church from and against any liabilities that may be incurred during _____ events (including travel to and from events). I also authorize, in the event that I cannot be personally contacted, _____ Church and/or its agent to authorize any medical treatment for the health in connection with any accident or similar emergency. I understand that I am responsible for any charges that may be incurred for such medical treatment. Release valid through _____.

Signature:

Today's Date (MM/DD/YEAR):

Media Release Electronic Permission:

I give permission for _____ Church to use, publish, or disclose newsletters, brochures, periodicals, posters, websites, or other media related vehicles, any photographs, videos, audios, and any other material in which I may have appeared, spoken, written, or otherwise been represented. I understand a copy of this release will be kept on file to indemnify _____ Church against any of their use of the materials indicated above.

Yes, I give full permission to the above.

No, I do not give permission to the above.

Today's Date (MM/DD/YEAR):

Staff Use Only:

Completed by:

_____ Completed Volunteer Leader Form

_____ Completed interview

_____ Background check submitted

_____ Background check cleared

_____ Drivers check submitted

_____ Drivers check cleared

_____ Training completed

SAMPLE Volunteer Leader Interview

Applicant's name _____ Date _____

Ministry position sought _____ Interviewer _____

Position _____

1. Why are you interested in helping in this ministry?

2. What experience do you have working with this age group?

3. What tasks and responsibilities do you expect to have in this ministry?

4. What do you think is the most important thing you need to know to carry out this ministry?

5. What challenges do you see arising for you in this ministry?

6. Tell me a little about your faith journey.

SAMPLE Child/Youth Release Form

This release form should be completed by parents/guardians for every preschooler/elementary child in your family who plans on participating in all children and youth ministry related activities with _____ church.

Participant Information

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Age or Grade as of September 1, _____
Date of Birth (MM/DD/YEAR): _____
T-Shirt Size: YS YM YL AS AM AL AXL A2XL
Email Address: _____
Address 1: _____
City: _____
State: _____
ZIP Code: _____

Parent Information

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____
E-Mail: _____
Cell Number (xxx-xxx-xxxx) _____
Does child live with this parent/guardian?
Yes or No
Name of Parent/Guardian: [Control] _____
E-Mail: [Control] _____
Cell Number (xxx-xxx-xxxx): _____
Does child live with this parent/guardian? Yes or No
Name of Emergency Contact, if parents cannot be reached: _____
Cell Number of Emergency Contact (xxx-xxx-xxxx): _____

Medical Information

Does your child have any food allergies? Please explain.
Existing medical conditions/restrictions to physical activity:

Help us to help your child have a good experience in our ministry! Please check all that apply to him/her:

ADD
ADHD
On the Autism Spectrum
Dyslexia
Other learning or processing disorders
Other
None

If listed you listed "other" in previous question please explain. If you checked any of the above, please let us know of strategies used at home or at school that will help your child have the best experience.

Medical and Liability Release

I hereby indemnify and hold _____ Church from and against any liabilities that may be incurred during _____ events (including travel to and from events). I also authorize, in the event that I cannot be personally contacted, _____ Church and/or its agent to authorize any medical treatment for the health of my child/children in connection with any accident or similar emergency. I understand that I am responsible for any charges that may be incurred for such medical treatment. Release valid through _____.

Signature of Parent/Guardian:

Today's Date (MM/DD/YEAR):

Media Release Electronic Permission:

I, the parent/guardian of this child/children give permission for _____ Church to use, publish, or disclose newsletters, brochures, periodicals, posters, websites, or other media related vehicles, any photographs, videos, audios, and any other material in which I or my child may have appeared, spoken, written, or otherwise been represented. I understand a copy of this release will be kept on file to indemnify _____ Church against any of their use of the materials indicated above.

Yes, I give full permission to the above.

No, I do not give permission to the above.

Today's Date (MM/DD/YEAR):

Ministry Covenant

Covenants are agreements between each other and God about how we live together as a community. I will talk with my child about the following items: Every person is a child of God. We represent Jesus and Living Word in all places. My child will act in a way that glorifies God and is consistent with Christ's teaching. This includes: fully participating in the events; treating people and property with respect; including and welcoming all people; and making sure he/she is dressed appropriately. My child will refrain from public displays of affection (PDA), and the use or possession of weapons, alcohol, tobacco, drugs or drug paraphernalia. I further understand that consequences for my child violating this covenant may include asking me to attend events with my child or possibly my child being sent home at my own expense.

Signature of Parent/Guardian:

Today's Date (MM/DD/YEAR):

SAMPLE Scholarship Request Form

Confidential

At _____ our value is that money should NEVER be an issue that stops a youth from participating in a ministry. In cases where assistance is needed, we have money set aside to offer scholarships to families requesting help.

Financial Assistance is available for all children and youth ministry events.

- All information on this form is completely confidential.
- The Scholarship Request Form should be submitted to the appropriate church staff person before the event or ministry begins.
- The youth's family is asked to contribute whatever amount of money they can.
- Financial Assistance, if approved, is available for the registration fee only

Event _____ Date of Event _____

Event Cost _____ Family Contribution to the Cost _____ Scholarship Amount Requested _____

Name of Youth _____

Parent's name(s) _____

Address _____

Work _____ Cell _____

Parent E-Mail _____

Please describe the situation that causes your need at this time. Please be as detailed as possible:

Staff use only

Approved Amount _____ Staff Signature _____