

Syllabus for Safe Church Process: Policy Development & Education

Session 1:

Policy Development: Theological framework, terms and definitions to use in the policy; the Child Protection Committee and its role

Theological Statement – What is our purpose in developing this policy? How does it fit with our mission?

Defining our terms:

- Fixed definitions (as designated in state law) for types of child abuse; definition of child; definition of perpetrator
- Church determined terms and definitions for approved adult; volunteer; teaching assistant; nursery attendant; vacation Bible school teachers and helpers; youth worker; choir assistant; day camp staff; designated pastor (or other) to receive reports
- Formation of Child Protection Committee
- Child Advocate/Chair of Committee

Educational Focus:

Overview of our project:

- Review of schedule
- Policy template, sample policies
- Meeting space
- Keeping your leadership/congregation informed
- Scheduling on-site education at your church

Overview of a Safe Church:

- Scheduling on-site education at your church
- Abuse of power; the challenge of leadership
- Facts & Statistics on child abuse
- Types of abuse under PA Child Protective Services Law (CPSL)
- Possible Signs of abuse
- Understanding sexual abuse and impact on children

Session 2:

Policy Development: Selection of Approved Adults, certifications and record keeping; general guidelines for protection of children & youth; permissions for overnight activities; child/adult ratios

- Guidelines for Selection of 'approved adults'
- Required certifications & training

- Record keeping
- General Guidelines for protection
“Two adults” rule; visibility; diapering; bathroom procedures; empty room policy; appropriate touch; overnight activities; transportation of children & youth; youth mentoring programs
- Permission for activities/youth overnight activities
Medical release form
Transportation of children/youth
- Child/adult ratios
- Youth Mentoring programs

Educational Focus:

- Adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse
Long term impacts
Shame/fear/secretcy
PTSD, Dissociation
Stages of healing
Male survivors of childhood sexual abuse
Retreat for adult survivors

Session 3:

Policy Development: Setting-specific protection guidelines for nursery and classrooms; key policy; guidelines for known sexual offenders

- Setting specific details: Nursery; classroom; youth activities
- Developing a Key Policy/incorporating revisions into existing policy
- Providing community for known sexual offenders
- Standard minimum guidelines for including known sexual offenders
Offender specific covenant
Requirement for counseling/contact with pastor
Support for the offender (spiritual/practical/emotional)
Supervision of the offender while on church property (fidelity to covenant)

Educational Focus:

- Child sexual offender types (situational, preferential, pedophile)
Characteristics of pedophiles
Learning from offenders: “Conversations with a Pedophile” by Dr. Amy Hammel Zabin
Female sexual offenders
When a child is the offender (supplemental material)
- The 5 stage ‘grooming’ process used to engage and entrap children
- Why children often don’t tell anyone about the abuse

Session 4:

Policy Development: Responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

- Requirements of state law for mandated reporters
Mandated vs. non-mandated reporting

- Care/Guidance/Supervision clause; “3rd party” reporting
- Church internal process for making the report – who does what/when/how
- Reasonable cause standard for reporting;
- Investigation is by legal authorities (not church!)
- Policy violations

Educational Focus:

- Framework for Pastoral Response: Victim & Offender
- Responding to a child’s disclosure
 - When the alleged offender is a parent (video & discussion)
 - When the alleged offender is someone outside the family (video & discussion)
- Reporting in the state of PA
 - Types of abuse & indicators
 - Reasonable cause/professional judgment standard
 - Mandated vs. permissive reporting

Session 5:

Policy Development: Policy location & accessibility; Training requirements for those who work with children; annual education sessions for parents and others; curriculums for children & youth; training for supervision of sexual offenders; Selecting/Modifying Forms for Appendix;

Educational Focus:

- Spiritual Wounds of sexual abuse; Focus on forgiveness

Wrapping up loose ends, and preparing for Implementation

- Challenges and strategies
- Service of Celebration

Session 6:

Training for staff & volunteers:

What is child sexual abuse?; impacts; responding to disclosure; mandated reporting; overview of grooming process; review of policies; teacher training on curriculum