**Supervision and Care of Youth & Children**

Encourage participants to consider the following: for the next few minutes everything we talk about will guide us to think intentionally about how we create space and opportunity within the camp/mission trip/backpack or canoe trip setting for youth and children to be nurtured safely by adults who will care for them, mentor them, and provide an example of God’s love in action.

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**A Biblical Mandate**

**Read Matthew 18: 1-6**

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.*

Spend a few minutes talking to those around you about how this text might connect to our purpose here today. Invite responses as a group.

**Points to Cover:**

· Tragically, churches/camps have not always been safe spaces for children. Child sexual abuse occurs in churches both large/small, urban/rural and the problem cuts across economic, cultural, racial lines.

· We must assume that every congregation has within it adult survivors of sexual abuse.

· The Safe Sanctuary training was created to promote the safety of children in our churches it is grounded first and foremost in a theological understanding of Christ's ministry of justice and care for all people. We are all called to that same ministry.

· But safety doesn’t happen without thoughtful attention and effort. And we can’t assume that “those things don’t happen in our church/camping program.”

**Basic Safety Rules**

1) Three Person/Two Adults Rule – At least three people will be present with children and youth in cabins, small groups, and other activities at camp and on trips. Ideally this means two unrelated adults (over the age of 18) with one camper or campers. Practically speaking, there may be times when three people means two or more campers and one adult. At no time is it acceptable for one child or youth to be alone, out of sight or behind closed doors with one adult.

2) Private Conversation In A Public Place Rule – Private conversations between one adult and one child or youth may only be conducted within sight of others.

3) Five Years Older Rule – Those supervising young people should be at least five years older than those in their care.

4) Background Checks – required for every counselor or mission trip adult volunteer.

5) Sleeping Rules – When sleeping in separate rooms at an event, two adults must be present in each space but in a separate part of the room.

6) Outside Adults - On mission trips/service projects/camps, youth should not be left alone with clients or outside agency personnel or adult visitors.

7) Shower times – in the event of open showers, separate shower times for youth and adults are a must.

8) Adult supervision on Outings – When travelling, mixed gender groups should be supervised by both male and female adult leaders. Additionally, unrelated adults and youth should not share hotel rooms.

9) Safe Church training – All adults working with youth and children should participate Safe Sanctuary training at least once every three years, plus yearly refresher training.

10) Appropriate Responsibility and Attitude of Staff – All staff should have a focus of the campers’ safety and spiritual wellbeing while at camp or outings. This includes

\* Engaging with campers

- Participating to full physically capable ability in all activities

- If work, family or school issues need to be addressed it is done at a

time and place that causes no audio or visual interruption to the

camp community

\* Awareness of what campers disengage from group events and why

- This may mean staff is spread out during free time to ensure

campers or staff are not alone or in pairs or groups that do not

follow safe sanctuary guidelines

- Conversations with Camper and Director when continued isolation

happens to get to the root of the problem

\* Positive Attitude

- Camp and Personal Concerns are reserved for staff meetings and

never shared in front of campers

11) Appropriate Discipline – All children and youth are to be treated with respect, including following these discipline guidelines when a young person is misbehaving:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * No physical punishment or physical coercion. * No degrading or disparaging remarks. * Respond to the misbehavior individually and away from the group. * Use “I” messages when talking with a young person (“I need you to stop what you are doing.” “I don’t like the way your behavior is disrupting our activity” “I need you to help me out by sitting down and listening. Will you do that for me?”) | * Focus on the use of positive reinforcement rather than negative attention. * Provide options (“Would you rather sit over there and wait until we are done, or would you rather do this other activity instead?”) * Focus on logical consequences of misbehavior rather than punishment. * Utilize “time out.” * ·In the event of child or young person will not respond, contact, the director. |

12) Go over Camper Orientation Packet with Campers

13) Be familiar with “Help I am a counselor….what will I be doing at Camp”

14) Be familiar with **Social Media Policy**

* No pictures of camp that include campers posted by volunteers on personal social Media accounts.
  + Excludes Volunteers who are working in same youth group. Then refer to local church policy
  + Photos may be posted (as long as waivers are signed) on Official Mid-America or MUP social media platforms
* No Picture in Cabins, Bathrooms, Bath house or Pool changing areas
* No pictures of camp that include other staff without their permission.
* Campers must send friend request - you can't suggest or initiate.
* All communication on social media must be public, or involve another person (virtual rule of 3)

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**SAFE SANCTUARY TRAINING**

The Safe Sanctuary program was developed in the Methodist church due in large part to a discovery that a beloved pastor who had been leading church camps for years had been abusing children during his entire tenure.

**Facing Facts about Abuse** *From Missouri KidsFirst www.missourikidsfirst.org*

Learning the facts is the first step to preventing and addressing child abuse and neglect in our communities. The statistics and facts below will help you understand the prevalence of child abuse and neglect and the impact that child abuse and neglect has on children, families and communities.

**Child abuse and neglect is highly prevalent nationally and in Missouri.**

• At least 1 in 7 children have experienced child abuse and/or neglect in the last year. ( 1 )

• Child sexual abuse is likely the most prevalent health problem children face with the most serious array of consequences. About one in 10 children will be sexually abused before they turn 18, including one in seven girls and one in 25 boys.( 2 )

• In Missouri, there were 5,852 substantiated cases of child abuse and/or neglect in 2016. Approximately 30% were cases of physical abuse and 25% were cases of sexual abuse.(3)

• Missouri Child Advocacy Centers served over 8,500 children in 2017. Over 5,700 children reported sexual abuse and 2,100 reported physical abuse.( 4 )

**Child abuse is often not disclosed.**

• Only 38% of child victims disclose the fact that they have been sexually abused and some never disclose in their lifetime. ( 5 ),( 6 ),( 7 )

• About 90% of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser.( 8 )

• 30% of children who are sexually abused are abused by family members and the younger the victim, the more likely it is that the abuser is a family member.

• About 60% of children who are sexually abused are abused by people the family trusts (e.g. coaches, teachers, clergy).

The impact of child abuse and neglect is substantial.

• In the short-term, children who are abused and neglected may suffer immediate physical injuries as well as emotional and psychological problems. Child abuse and neglect can also affect long-term health outcomes, mental health, social development, and risk-taking behavior into adolescence and adulthood:

• Childhood violence increases the risks of injury, sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, mental health problems, delayed cognitive development, reproductive health problems, involvement in sex trafficking, and noncommunicable diseases.

• Given the high prevalence of child abuse and neglect and its vast consequences, the associated economic impact is substantial. In the United States, the total lifetime economic burden associated with child abuse and neglect was approximately $124 billion in 2008. ( 9 ),( 10 ),( 11 )

• Child sexual abuse has been linked to higher levels of risk behaviors

• Academic problems are a common symptom of child abuse. Sexually abused children tended to perform lower on tests, have higher absentee rates and are more likely to drop out of school.( 12 )

• Children with a history of child sexual abuse demonstrate an increase in rates of substance abuse/dependence and delinquency and crime.( 13 )

***These statistics point to a reality that we as representatives of the Church have a responsibility to put policies and practices into place to safeguard our youth. If we take seriously the call to provide places of safe sanctuary for our youngest brothers and sisters, we have to be willing to do more than just assume we are safe enough.***

|  |
| --- |
| **RESOURCES**  Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: A Technical Package for Policy, Norm, and Programmatic Activities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  Child Sexual Abuse Statistics, Darkness to Light  Missouri KidsCount  1 Finkelhor, D., Turner, H. A., Shattuck, A., & Hamby, S. L. (2015). Prevalence of childhood exposure to violence, crime, and abuse: Results from the National Survey of Children’s Exposure to Violence. JAMA Pediatrics, 169(8), 746-754.  2 Townsend, C., & Rheingold, A.A., (2013). Estimating a child sexual abuse prevalence rate for practitioners: studies. Charleston, S.C., Darkness to Light.  3 Missouri KidsCount (with data from the Missouri Department of Social Services)  4 2017 Missouri Statistical Report. National Children’s Alliance  5 London, K., Bruck, M., Ceci, S., & Shuman, D. (2003) Disclosure of child sexual abuse: What does the research tell us about the ways that children tell? Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 11(1), 194-226  6 Ullman, S. E. (2007). Relationship to perpetrator, disclosure, social reactions, and PTSD symptoms in child sexual abuse survivors. Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 16(1), 19-36  7 Broman-Fulks, J. J., Ruggiero, K. J., Hanson, R. F., Smith, D. W., Resnick, H. S., Kilpatrick, D. G., & Saunders, B. E. (2007). Sexual assault disclosure in relation to adolescent mental health: Results from the National Survey of Adolescents. Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, 36, 260 – 266.  8 Finkelhor, D. (2012). Characteristics of crimes against juveniles. Durham, NH: Crimes against Children Research Center.  9 Leeb, R. T., Lewis, T., & Zolotor, A. J. (2011). A review of the physical and mental health consequences of child abuse and neglect and implications for practice. American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine, 5(5), 454-468.  10 Gilbert, L. K., Breiding, M. J., Merrick, M. T., Thompson, W. W., Ford, D. C., Dhingra, S. S., & Parks, S. E. (2015). Childhood adversity and adult chronic disease. An update from ten states and the District of Columbia. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 48(3), 345-349.  11 Fang, X., Brown, D. S., Florence, C. S., & Mercy, J. A. (2012). The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention. Child Abuse & Neglect, 36, 156-165.  12 The Issue of Child Abuse: Child Abuse Statistics, Darkness to Light.  13 The Issue of Child Abuse: Child Abuse Statistics, Darkness to Light. |

**What is Safe Sanctuary? –**

Brainstorm around the word "Sanctuary." What images come to mind when you think of the word "sanctuary?" What words, thoughts, ideas come to mind? (ex: a place we feel secure, unthreatened, free to be who we are). Realize that what is “sanctuary” for one person may be just the opposite for others. (e.g. some love crowds/some hate them)

Why would we want to apply the ideas of "sanctuary" to places where adults and youth/children come together?

· Some youth live in situations where sanctuary is scarce

· As Church, we are called to protect the oppressed and weak

· As Church, we are called to practice justice

Why might persons who have been abused by the church often experience lifelong spiritual struggles/emotional trauma comparable to those abused at hands of family member/friend?

· Church may be the only place a person felt safe.

· Church forms a person's understanding of God.

· Church leaders are often seen as examples of God’s nature

· Church is supposed to offer an alternative to the ways of the culture/world.

**Identifying Abuse – Safe Sanctuary Reference Sheet**

* **Neglect** is failure to provide nutritional, surgical, medical, or any other care necessary for the well-being of the child or youth.
* **Physical Abuse** is any deliberate act that inflicts bodily harm to a person.
* **Emotional Abuse** is any deliberate act with the intention of harming a person emotionally or psychologically.
* **Sexual Abuse** is any sexual contact or sexually explicit language, gestures, or images by a staff person with, or directed to, a participant.
* **Grooming** includes patterns of behavior which make a child/youth more vulnerable to molestation, or which prevents a child/youth from reporting molestation.
* **Hostile Environment** exists with the inappropriate use of sexually explicit words, gestures, or images. Inappropriate, non-sexual, expressions of anger, frustration, or fatigue also create a Hostile Environment.
* **Seductive Behavior** is behavior that is inappropriate and offensive without threat of repercussion.
* **Sexual Coercion** is coercion of sexual activity by threat of punishment.
* **Sexual Imposition** includes gross imposition like prolonged gazing, fondling, grabbing, assault, or rape.

**TALKING ABOUT TOUCH**

The gift of touch is one that can offer healing, peace, and support.

Touch can also cause confusion, fear, and shame. As persons committed to creating sanctuary, it is important that we honestly examine our own patterns of touching…and consider the message we send with our hands.

***How many of you consider yourself a "toucher?" How many of you are not comfortable with touching?***

***What sorts of things influence your comfort with touching?***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Personal history * Relationship between "toucher" and "touched" * Motivation of "toucher" * Location of touching | * The setting * Person's age * Cultural heritage * Who initiates the touching |

***What are signs that tell us whether or not someone is comfortable with touch?***

In this group, we represent a full range of comfort and discomfort with touching. We can be sure that this is also the case with the children and youth to whom we minister.

CONSIDER: Why do you touch?

Do you touch to share God’s compassion? As we are in ministry with children and youth, this is to be the ONLY motivation for touch.

o Do you consider yourself a “toucher?”

o Are you comfortable with touching?

o What sorts of things influence your comfort with touching?

o Does your touch stem from a personal hunger for affection?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * What are “good touches” or some ways to give good touches? * What makes a good touch good? * What are some “bad touches” or some ways to give bad touches? * What makes a bad touch bad? | * What are some of the places on the body which are sensitive to touch and are thus “hot spots?” * What are some of the non-verbal signals that can give us clues to a person’s response to being touched? |

SAFE TOUCHES

A-frame hug

Sideways hug

Touch on shoulder

“high five”

handshake

standing or sitting in close proximity

**Recognizing/Reporting Abuse**

A child or youth who has experienced abuse MAY express the trauma in SOME of the following ways:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Sexual acting out (may include public masturbation, sex play/language/drawings, language indicating a non-age appropriate awareness of sexual activity) * Withdrawal * Nightmares * Bedwetting * Fear of the dark * Aggression * Depression | * Anxiety * Fear of a particular person * Bruising * Genital irritation or discharge * Self-mutilation * Fear of "going home" (not to be confused with the sadness a child or youth may express at the close of camp or mission trip experience) |

NOTE: While any one of these may indicate an internal struggle, it does not necessarily mean a child or youth has been abused.

**Review the steps for responding to suspected abuse (whether you observe possible signs, or the youth/child reports abuse directly to you):**

· Be honest – Don't promise to keep it a secret but assure child you will do what is in his/her best interest

· Don't deny allegations made by child. Simply listen.

· Control your emotional response. Just listen.

· Don't prolong the conversation. Just listen. (If possible, ask only open-ended, rather than leading, questions.)

· Provide emotional support and take the child or youth to the pastor or other care givers as deemed safe (pastors are required to report suspected abuse).

· Document your recollection of the conversation in writing as soon as possible (See Attached)

Suspected or reported abuse will be reported by the Camp Director or Outdoor Ministries leadership, as described in the Camp Staff Manual.

**Scenarios for a Physically and Emotionally Safe Camp- (*All are based on events in other camping programs and campsites)***

**Scenario 1:**

About 30 minutes after lights out, a group of counselors are sitting outside their cabins visiting. They believe they are close enough to be found if needed and respond if there is a problem with the campers in their cabins. The relaxing mood, however, is suddenly shattered by shrieks coming from Cabin 3. As the counselors rush to the cabin and enter, they find five small girls in pajamas huddled around another small figure that appears to be unconscious and bleeding from near an ugly bump on the head. Holding the unconscious girl in a sitting position, the girls are gently slapping her face crying, “Brittany, wake up!!!” As several of the counselors ask in unison, “What happened?!!” Five voices all start talking at once, some now crying. When directed to speak just one at a time, Lashauna speaks. “I don’t know what happened, I don’t know!!!” she cries. “We were being quiet!!! Brittany and me, we were making flashlight shadows, she was on the top bunk, leanin’ down here---then..then..her flashlight dropped an’ she said ‘oooh!’ an’ I heard her hit something, then I saw her layin’ on the floor there, not movin. So I went to her, an..and…when I turned her over, I saw the blood coming out from her head!!!” Lashauna and the other girls continue to cry.

**What are the next steps to responding to this scenario?**

**What decisions led to this scenario and why were they made?**

**Scenario 2:**

Messy games are organized as a first night activity. Each small group is a team, and everyone is expected to participate. One activity involves passing a sock filled with flour from one team member to the next. Janice, an African-American youth, refuses to participate and tells everyone she will not get messy. Her team tries to encourage her to play, then becomes frustrated when her lack of participation hurts their team’s chances to win. The youth make jokes about her acting like a spoiled princess. Counselors complain to each other that she has a bad attitude and Janice becomes more distant over the next couple of days. One of the directors sits with Janice to talk about her bad attitude and tries to get her to try harder to respect the camp community. Janice gets even more upset and asks to go home. The director calls Janice’s pastor about the issue. Rev. Greene asks the director to share in detail what happened because Janice is a very outgoing young woman who always participates in activities at home. Upon hearing about the messy games’incident, Rev. Greene reminds the director that not all people’s hair can easily be rinsed of flower or other messy ingredients, and that it probably took Janice a long time to fix her hair for the first day of camp. The director realizes that Janice was put in an uncomfortable position and that their assumptions were off base.

**How could this situation have been handled better?**

**What is the best-case scenario and the worst case scenario for how it ends?**

**Scenario 3:**

Jon is a first-year seminary student who has just returned home exhausted from a week of church camp serving rising 6th and 7th graders. Upon arriving home from camp, Jon finds that a popular camper, 13-year old Ben, has found Jon on Facebook and has sent a friend request. Jon accepts this; Ben and he share interests in guitar, and friending Ben will give him a chance to continue to mentor Ben. Four days later, Jon has received friend requests from what seems like every kid in camp; Jon reluctantly friends them, too, because he reasons that it would look bad if he was friends with only Ben. Before long, Jon is hearing almost constantly from campers through Facebook, Twitter, and even some text messages on his phone number, which he has no idea how they got.

The conversations vary widely. Some of the girls from camp wrote to John thanking him for the good times at camp, asking when they can see him again. One Facebook thread begun by one of the girls talked about how ‘hot’ Jon is and his sexy way of playing the guitar. Jon responds to some in individual chats or messages, redirecting them to work hard in school and do well. Thinking of the spiritual ‘highs’ of the week where campers had committed their lives to serving Christ, he encourages some of the campers to remember some of the special moments they had in camp.

One afternoon while Jon is leaving a pickup basketball game with friends, he receives a text message on his phone. When he opens it, he gives a shout of “Whoa!” Soon several of his friends are standing and looking over Jon’s shoulder at the texted message—actually a ‘sexted’ message of one of the girls from camp in a suggestive pose in her bra and panties, blowing him a kiss. All kinds of explanations and comments about what to do are offered, and more people join the huddle looking at the image and offering their advice. One who walks up and sees the picture on the phone happens to recognize his second cousin in the photo, and quietly walks away.

The next morning as he is leaving home, Jon receives a visit from his senior minister who asks to talk. He asks about the images of campers on his phone that Jon has been seen passing around. Jon had kept the photo on the phone, intending to go to his minister and ask what to do, and reluctantly shows it now.

**Where were mistakes made in this scenario?**

**How could our social media policy have protected Jon and the youth?**

Social Media Guidelines

* No pictures of camp that include campers posted by volunteers on personal social Media accounts.
  + Excludes Volunteers who are working in same youth group. Then refer to local church policy
  + Photos may be posted (as long as waivers are signed) on Official Mid-America or MUP social media platforms
* No Picture in Cabins, Bathrooms, Bath house or Pool changing areas
* No pictures of camp that include other staff without their permission.
* Campers must send friend request - you can't suggest or initiate.
* All communication on social media must be public, or involve another person (virtual rule of 3)

**Scenario 4:**

During a fall retreat, the church youth group sponsors have chosen an adventure challenge course where members of the group have to work together to solve problems. When they get to the last challenge, getting all members of the group over a 6-foot-high brick wall, the sponsors are pleased, because they this challenge will finally give a chance for Charley to participate. Charley is 15 and has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair to get around; so far, he has sat and watched the rest of the group work. But on this event, the sponsors announce, “I’ll bet even Charley can participate on this one. Charley, how about we let the group help you over the wall!!!” Charley gives a grin that looks game but is less than enthusiastic. One of the sponsors says, “Don’t worry Charley, it’ll be okay. This is trust building, so just trust the others, they won’t let you down.” So, the group lifts Charley out of his chair, and working together, do get him over the wall…. but as he makes it over, they forget he cannot stand and his limp body falls to the ground with his leg twisted awkwardly underneath him. As the sponsors check the leg of the boy squinting his eyes tight in obvious pain, they notice several scars already on the leg, possibly indicating earlier surgeries.

**What are the next steps that should be taken in this scenario?**

**How could this situation have been handled better?**

**How does this experience translate to our week of camp?**

Some other common situations – How do you respond?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| • Camper keeps trying to sit on your lap (happens at all age levels)  • Fellow counselor expresses romantic interest in you and seeks some private time  • Most campers exit cabin, leaving you alone with one straggler  • Camper asks for a private conversation about something personal | • Fellow counselor makes inappropriate jokes, remarks, and uses awkward touch  • Fellow counselor makes fun of church and publicly shares lack of beliefs (not just doubts)  • Fellow counselors leave cabin at night to hang out, leaving you as only adult |

**SAFE SANCTUARY LITURGY**

***Adapted with permission from Raymond Community United Church of Christ***

**Leader:** We join together as people of faith, seeking to create a more secure and loving environment for our beloved children.

**ALL: We join together as people who love the church, follow Jesus Christ, and hope for a world where people would not intentionally hurt others.**

**Leader:** We do this with confidence in the new life found in Jesus Christ, who invited the children to come to him.

*Mark 10:13-16 (NRSV)*

*People were bringing little children to Jesus in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them and blessed them*.

In all we do, all we say, all that we are, there is God's Spirit of hope.

**All: In times of challenge and fear, we hold onto the light of God's grace.**

**Leader:** When we move through times of transition as people and as the Church, God's gentle guidance grants us strength and vision.

**All: As people who care about our children and our churches, we acknowledge the reality of hurt and pain that can be inflicted.**

**Leader:** As the Body of Christ, we stand ready to affirm our role in teaching and protecting all of our children.

**All: As we take steps to make our Church safe, we remember the gospel call to love God and serve God - to help those who are least among us.**

**Leader:** And so, we call upon God's wisdom to grant us strong voices and clear actions that will help to make the Church a place of safety, teaching and inspiration.

**All: Thanks be to God for gathering us together this day, challenging us to be a reflection of Christ’s compassion, love, peace, and grace for all. Amen**