

CHILD SAFETY POLICY
of
Redemption Fellowship Church

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CHILD SAFETY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes a child in my Name welcomes me. If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones...it would be better for you if a great millstone was fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:5-6). It is obvious by these Scriptures that Jesus expected children to be included and provided for within the church. Throughout history, children and youth have been included in the worship and ministry of the church. Today, the church may be the only place where some children and youth can find the unconditional love and care they so desperately need to grow, thrive and become whole and faithful people. As Christian adults, we must make it our responsibility to attend to their spiritual growth and nurturing. We are equally responsible for their safety and protection while attending any function of Redemption Fellowship. Because Redemption Fellowship is a community of faith – a safe haven and sanctuary where children and youth can be confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to a Christian life here on earth, and life eternal – we must also implement and enforce a plan to promote child and youth safety and to prevent child abuse.

PURPOSE

The purpose of establishing this Child Safety Policy and the procedures that accompany it is to demonstrate the absolute and unwavering commitment of the members of Redemption Fellowship to the protection and safety of all of our children and youth, both presently and in the future.

SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all current and future workers, compensated and/or volunteer, who will have the responsibility of supervising the activities of preschoolers, children, youth, and mentally handicapped persons.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

1. “Preschooler,” “child,” “children,” “youth,” and “minor” shall be defined as any individual *under* the age of eighteen (18) (or whose mental capacity is that of a minor).
2. “Adult” shall be defined as any individual at least eighteen (18) years of age.
3. “Worker” shall be defined as any adult who serves as a volunteer and/or paid person given the responsibility of working with or caring for minors.
4. “Teenage Worker” shall be defined as any worker at least fourteen (14) years old or older, but under the age of eighteen (18) enlisted to assist with the care of minors in the presence of two adults.
5. “Child abuse” shall be defined as verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a preschooler, child, youth or minor.

6. "Criminal Background Check" is the procedure used to check the background of adult workers and volunteers for any criminal activity.

Policies and Procedures

Recruiting, Screening and Hiring Workers

From the standpoint of reducing the legal liability of Redemption Fellowship if an incident of child abuse occurs, having a thorough screening process for the church's children and youth workers, and having applied that process to all workers (paid and volunteer) will go a long way toward demonstrating that the church has taken reasonable actions to protect its children. When the use of a thorough screening process is coupled with the regular use of additional safety procedures (stated herein) the reasonableness of the church's actions is further demonstrated. In addition, use of a thorough recruitment and screening process will protect the church's workers from false allegations. Finally, screening reduces the risk of a child abuser being recruited to work with the children and youth. The screening of all workers with children and youth, including clergy, creates a win-win situation for the church and the workers.

An application form (attached) that requests comprehensive information will need to be completed by full-time, part-time, paid, volunteer, clergy and lay members who work with the children and youth of Redemption Fellowship. References will also be requested on the application form. The applicants will need to sign an Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check (form attached), authorizing Redemption Fellowship to request information regarding any record of criminal charges or convictions of the applicant. While this process understandably trespasses into the privacy of our lives, the security of our children and youth outweighs the personal invasion inherent with such investigations and disclosures. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of the background and reference checks, or the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements will be maintained in the strictest of confidence. Failure to sign the authorization will not necessarily eliminate the applicant from consideration, but will be taken into account when reviewing the person's application.

After reviewing applications and verifying references, a personal interview will be conducted with those whom the church is seriously considering for work with the children and youth of Redemption Fellowship. The interview will be used to clarify any questions about information on the application and to develop a firsthand impression of the applicant. Interviews will be conducted by the department heads of the Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry and/or members of the Human Resources Committee. Clergy and/or other lay leaders may also be invited to participate in the interview process.

If an applicant is approved through the interview process, a background check will be performed and references will be contacted. Upon receiving clearance from the background check, the applicant will be notified of their start date.

This procedure will apply to volunteers, paid staff, clergy and lay members.

I have received a copy of the Child Safety Policy and have been trained in such.

Name

Date

12/15/2009

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Annual Training for Workers

All workers with children and youth, (including occasional workers, such as those who volunteer for the Harvest Fest and/or special children's programs), whether the workers are paid, volunteer, part-time, full-time, clergy or lay, are required to attend an annual training session at which they are informed of the:

- church's policies for the prevention of child abuse,
- procedures to be used in all ministries with children and youth,
- appropriate steps to report an incident of child abuse, and
- details of the state laws regarding child abuse.

Those who are currently working with children and youth during the writing and implementation of this policy will be required to complete an application at the first training session. On a Sunday following the annual training, the workers will be recognized and prayed for during the service.

First Aid/CPR Training

It is hoped that first aid or CPR will never be needed during any church function. Nevertheless, ministries with children and youth inevitably involve minor scrapes or worse. Redemption Fellowship believes that our workers must be prepared to deal with emergencies and to that end, will provide first aid and CPR training during the annual orientation meeting. In the event of an accident, appropriate emergency personnel will be contacted immediately, if needed. Once the emergency situation has been resolved, the worker in charge will complete an Accident Report (attached) and promptly submit the report to the Church Business Administrator.

The Open Door Policy

Classroom doors shall be open during all children and youth classes, including but not limited to Sunday school, Wednesday night activities, Children's church and youth activities. A person will be stationed in the hallway to monitor the classrooms during the Sunday school hour only. This person will serve as a greeter for visitors, helping them to locate the appropriate classroom, but will also serve as a monitor in the event of a disruptive child. The child will be sent to the monitor who would then escort the child to the parents. The monitor will also watch children as they go to and from the bathroom.

Discipline of Children

Discipline of children is clearly recognized as the parents' responsibility and it is not the intention of Redemption Fellowship or its leaders to assume that responsibility. However, in the event of a disruptive child during any children's classes at Redemption, the teacher will have the option of speaking to the child in a Christ-like, loving manner in order to end the disruption. At the discretion of the teacher, the child will be excused from the class and escorted to the parents after the child has been spoken to by the teacher a maximum of three times.

VBS – 2-Adult Rule

Because VBS is an activity that is open to the community, many children attend who do not normally attend Redemption Fellowship and whose parents are not known by the teachers/members of Redemption Fellowship. For the safety of all of the children

attending VBS, a minimum of two adults will be in each classroom. Teenagers will be allowed to assist in classes, but will not be allowed to be in charge of any class.

Teenage Workers

Teenagers, 14 years and older, will be allowed to assist in the Nursery and Children's Church. Interested teens will be required to complete a questionnaire and their parents will be required to sign the questionnaire, signifying that they are aware of their teen(s) desire to work with the children, and they understand that a schedule of workers will be posted in each Sunday's bulletin. If the teen is not listed to work that Sunday, the teen will be expected to be in the Sanctuary during morning service.

The "Five-Years-Older" Rule

Many times, especially in youth ministry, the people who volunteer or who apply for a paid youth worker's position, are in college or have just graduated. If a junior in college (age 20 or 21) is serving as a worker in the senior-high youth group, the worker may be leading youth who are only three or four years younger than he/she is. At Redemption Fellowship, the workers with the youth must be at least five years older than the oldest youth in the group. This rule is in place for the protection of both the youth and the workers. If a college student is serving an internship with the youth at Redemption Fellowship, there still must be two other adults present at all youth functions.

Nursery & Toddler Check-in and Check-out

For the protection and safety of our infants and toddlers, the parent/guardian who brings their child(ren) to the Nursery and/or Toddler classroom will be required to check their child in by registering the child's attendance and signing their name. Upon sign-in, the nursery/toddler worker will issue the parent a card with a number on it that corresponds to the number on the sign-in sheet. **Only** the parent/guardian who signs the child in will be allowed to pick up the child and sign him/her out. The parent will be required to turn in the card with the sign-in number on it upon picking up their child. This rule prevents children from being accidentally left in the Nursery (where each parent assumes the other parent has picked the child up) as well as prevents the child being picked up without the other parent's knowledge and permission. When a visitor leaves their child in the nursery, or a child is left in the nursery for the first time, an information card will need to be completed on the child. This allows the nursery workers to have all pertinent information and to give excellent care to the child.

Classroom Doors

The doors of the Nursery and Toddler rooms at Redemption Fellowship are half-doors. The bottom half of the doors are to remain closed at all times. This offers protection against children wandering outside the classroom. The top half of the door is to remain open at all times, allowing for visual access into the room. It is hoped that all doors of children and youth rooms will ultimately be fitted with half-doors.

Open-Door Counseling

At all counseling sessions with children or youth, the door of the room shall remain open for the entire session. The session is to be conducted with 2 adults present so that there is a witness to the counsel/advice offered. Counseling sessions conducted behind closed doors or with only one adult present offer an opportunity for false allegations of abuse. Closed doors also make it easy for the child abuser to have the privacy and isolation he or she needs.

Advance Notice to Parents

The children and/or youth workers of Redemption Fellowship must **always** give the parents advance notice and full information regarding the event(s) in which their children will be participating. The workers are also required to inform parents of any event in which a worker will be alone with their child. Prior to the event, parents must sign a permission slip and/or waiver (form attached) giving their full permission for the child to participate in the event and to receive any medical treatment, if necessary. Children/youth who do not have a permission slip on file for the particular event will **not** be allowed to participate in that event unless and only if the youth director speaks with one or both of the child's parents and receives verbal permission for the child's participation and medical treatment if necessary. There will be **no** exceptions to this rule. This is for the protection of the church as it proves that parents were informed of the event or warned of the situation. It gives the parents the opportunity to agree to have their child receive necessary medical treatment in the event of an accident or injury and/or also prevents the child from being alone with a worker without the parents' knowledge.

Playground Equipment and Supervision

For the health and safety of our children and youth, the workers are to know how all church-provided games and playground equipment works. When children are on the playground, adequate adult supervision is to be present (1 adult per no more than 5 children) at all times. These times would include, but not be limited to the following: Sunday school, Children's Church, Wednesday night activities, Vacation Bible School, fellowship dinners, receptions, etc. If there is no supervised play on the playground at a time when children are present, parents should not allow their children on the playground unless accompanied by one of the parents.

Other outdoor activities will require the need for specialized knowledge and training. Swimming or other water activities will require a supervisor with lifeguard skills. First aid and CPR will be required for hiking, camping, etc.

In some activities the dangers outweigh the enjoyment. These are classified as hazardous and extra hazardous. Hazardous activities should be stringently supervised with strict limitations. Extra hazardous activities will not be sponsored by the church.

Hazardous

Water slides
Water-skiing
Snow skiing
Rafting
Canoeing
Paddle boating
Horseback riding
Rope jumping
Basketball
Volleyball
Softball
Sack Races
Touch football
Roller skating
Ice Skating

Extra Hazardous

Hay rides
Mud Olympics
Dune buggies
Snow tubing
Unsupervised swimming
Obstacle courses
Haunted houses
Tackle football
Snowmobiles
Monkey bar equipment
Rodeos
Rope swings
Fireworks displays & stands
Motorbikes
Rock Climbing
Trampolines
Bungee-jumping

Parent and Family Education

In addition to annual orientation for workers, a parent and family education session will also be held yearly. Included in the session will be discussions on the facts of child abuse, how to recognize child abuse, how to report abuse, Redemption Fellowship's policies and procedures for child safety, etc. Sessions may also be held for children and/or youth to teach them the behavior that is expected from the workers, teachers and other adults involved in their lives. These sessions will be held on a yearly basis in order to accommodate new members.

WORKER/VOLUNTEER CODE OF ETHICS

While acting in our capacity as a Youth/Children/Preschool/Handicapped worker or volunteer of Redemption Fellowship, the following code of ethics will apply:

1. Smoking or using tobacco products in the presence of minors is strictly prohibited.
2. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal, or illicit drugs is strictly prohibited.
3. Workers and volunteers of minors shall not abuse such minors, including:
 - Any direct observations or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a minor;
 - Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a minor;
 - Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any person and a minor;
 - Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind to a minor(s);
 - Infliction or physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor;
 - Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of Redemption Fellowship;
 - Mental or emotional injury to a minor;
 - The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of Redemption Fellowship;
 - The presence, possession or being under the influence of any legal, illicit drugs;
 - The consumption of or being under the influence of alcohol while leading or participating in a function for minors of Redemption Fellowship Church.
4. Workers and volunteers must treat all people of all races, religions and cultures with respect and consideration.
5. Workers and volunteers will not use or tolerate the use of profanity in the presence of minors.
6. Workers and volunteers must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect any minor's health, including but not limited to, contagious disease.
7. Workers and volunteers will portray a positive role model for minors by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy and maturity.
8. Workers and volunteers will be expected to act and react with Christian love and understanding in all situations.
9. Workers and volunteers will do everything in their power to avoid being put in a situation where they are alone with a minor other than their own child(ren).

10. I understand that as a worker or volunteer with minors for Redemption Fellowship, I will be subject to a background check, including criminal history.

11. I understand that any violation of this code may be grounds for removal as a worker or volunteer with minors.

Print Name _____ Date _____

Applicant's Signature _____

Recognizing Child Abuse

Generally, child abuse is categorized and defined in five primary forms:

- 1. Physical abuse**
Physical abuse is defined as abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (belt, strap, knife, etc), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones and any wide variety of non-accidental injuries to a child's body.
- 2. Emotional Abuse**
Emotional abuse is abuse in which a person exposes a child or youth to spoken and/or unspoken emotional cruelty. Children exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being locked in a closet, being deprived of any sign of parental affection, being constantly told they are bad or stupid, or being allowed or forced to abuse alcohol or drugs. Emotional abuse sends a message to the child of worthlessness, badness, and being not only unloved, but undeserving of love and care. Emotional abuse can be very difficult to prove and is always devastating to the victim.
- 3. Neglect**
Neglect is abuse in which a person endangers a child's health, safety, or welfare through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education and even affection and affirmation of the child's self-worth. This is perhaps the most common form of abuse, and it is the least reported form of abuse.
- 4. Sexual Abuse**
Abuse in which sexual contact between a child and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth) occurs. The child is never truly capable of consenting to or resisting such contact and/or such sexual acts. Often the child is physically and psychologically dependent upon the perpetrator of the abuse. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exploitation of and exposure to child pornography or prostitution.
- 5. Ritual Abuse**
Ritual abuse is abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violations of a child are inflicted regularly, intentionally and in a stylized way by a person or persons responsible for the child's welfare. The abuser may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse. The abuse may include cruel treatment of animal(s) that belong to the child or repeated threats of harm to the child, other persons known by the child and/or animals. Reports of ritual abuse are often extremely horrifying and may seem too grim to be true. Children making such reports **must not** be ignored.

Where Can Abuse Happen?

Unfortunately, abuse of children and youth can happen anywhere and at any time. When a child or youth reports that he/she has experienced any of the behaviors described on the previous page, serious attention should be given to the child and to the report. While every child's story may not be an actual case of abuse, the truth needs to be determined to prevent either further harm to the child or further false allegations.

Child abuse is criminal behavior and is punishable by law in every state of the America. Each state may have its own specific legal definition of child abuse, however generally speaking, child sexual abuse exploits and harms children by involving them in sexual behavior for which they are unprepared, to which they cannot consent, and from which they are unable to protect themselves.

The child victim is **never responsible** for causing the abuse and the child victim is **never to be blamed** for the abuse. The child victim is **never capable of consent to abusive behavior**, either legally or morally.

Knowing the Facts

- The National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse reports that in 1997 (latest data available) over 3,000,000 cases of child abuse and neglect were reported to child protection service agencies. This statistic is only for America.
- Studies have estimated that 1 out of 3 girls are sexually abused before the age of 18. Studies have also estimated that 1 out of 7 boys have been sexually abused before the age of 18. These numbers are probably underestimated because many children are reluctant to report abuse.
- The National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse also reports that at least 2000 deaths attributable to child abuse and/or neglect are reported each year. This number is probably higher because of cases where the cause of death is difficult to determine.

Consider the first statistic: 3,000,000 incidents of abuse each year equals 8,219 children abused each day; 343 children abused each hour; nearly 6 (5.7) children are abused every minute; and one child is abused every 10-12 seconds of every hour of every day, including the Sabbath. Again, these numbers are probably higher since the latest statistics available are from 1997. In the time it took to read this paragraph, at least 3 children were abused somewhere in America.

The Church at Risk

In light of the statistics stated above, it appears that any organization involved with children is a place where abuse could occur. The risk for churches is so high because:

- Churches behave as relatively trusting organizations, relying upon members and their leaders to conduct themselves appropriately. Members may tend to have an “it could never happen here” attitude. Sometimes this attitude persists even in the face of questions or reports of misconduct.
- Churches normally will not screen its volunteers and/or employees who work with children and youth. Often, no investigation is done at all before total strangers are allowed to work with the youth and children.
- Churches routinely provide opportunities for close contact and for close personal relationships with their children and youth. In fact, these are nurtured and encouraged as the members try to live out the gospel message.

Recognizing the possibility of child abuse and the frequency of the occurrence of child abuse is only part of the church’s responsibility. Members must become knowledgeable on how to recognize the signs of possible abuse and how to safely carry out the children’s and youth’s ministries without providing opportunities for abuse to occur. The church must **not** withdraw the ministries to children and youth because of a fear of abuse occurring, but rather must insure that the ministries are carried out in responsibly safe circumstances.

Indicators of Child Abuse

Children suffering from abuse will seldom, if ever, tell anyone about the situation. Thus, we as adults, must learn to recognize the signs of abuse. Listed below are possible signs of abuse, although the signs may not necessarily be proof of abuse. Taken individually, any one of the signs could be a symptom of other more or less serious problems. However, when these indicators are observed in a child or youth, they should be considered as warnings that warrant further investigation.

Possible Signs of Physical Abuse

Behavioral Indicators

1. Is wary of adults
2. Is either extremely aggressive or withdrawn
3. Is dependent and indiscriminate in his/her attachments
4. Is uncomfortable when other children cry
5. Generally controls his/her own crying
6. Exhibits a drastic behavior change when not with parents or caregiver
7. Is manipulative
8. Has poor self-concept
9. Exhibits delinquent behavior, such as running away from home
10. Uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs
11. Is self-mutilating
12. Is frightened of parents or of going home
13. Is overprotective of or responsible for parents
14. Exhibits suicidal gestures and/or attempts suicide

15. Has behavioral problems at school

Physical Indicators

1. Has unexplained* bruises or welts, often clustered in a pattern
2. Has unexplained* and/or unusual burns (cigarettes, doughnut-shaped, immersion-lines, object-patterned)
3. Has unexplained* bite marks
4. Has unexplained* fractures or dislocations
5. Has unexplained* abrasions or lacerations
6. Wets the bed
(*or explanation is inconsistent or improbable)

Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse

Behavioral Indicators

1. Is overly eager to please
2. Seeks out adult contact
3. Views abuse as being warranted
4. Exhibits changes in behavior
5. Is excessively anxious
6. Is depressed
7. Is unwilling to discuss problems
8. Exhibits aggressive or bizarre behavior
9. Is withdrawn
10. Is apathetic
11. Is passive
12. Has unprovoked fits of yelling or screaming
13. Exhibits inconsistent behaviors
14. Feels responsible for the abuser
15. Runs away from home
16. Attempts suicide
17. Has low self-esteem
18. Exhibits a gradual impairment of health and/or personality
19. Has difficulty sustaining relationships
20. Has unrealistic goal setting
21. Is impatient
22. Is unable to communicate or express his/her feelings, needs or desires
23. Sabotages his/her chances of success
24. Lacks self-confidence
25. Is self-deprecating and has a negative self-image.

Physical Indicators

1. Has a sleep disorder (nightmares or restlessness)
2. Wets the bed
3. Exhibits developmental lags (stunting of his/her physical, emotional, and/or mental growth)
4. Is hyperactive
5. Exhibits eating disorders

Possible Signs of Neglect

Behavioral Indicators

1. Is truant or tardy often or arrives early and stays late
2. Begs or steals food
3. Attempts suicide
4. Uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs
5. Is extremely dependent or detached
6. Engages in delinquent behavior, such as prostitution or stealing
7. Appears to be exhausted
8. States frequent or continual absence of parent or guardian.

Physical Indicators

1. Frequently is dirty, unwashed, hungry, or inappropriately dressed
2. Engages in dangerous activities (possibly because he/she is unsupervised)
3. Is tired and listless
4. Has unattended physical problems
5. May appear to be overworked and/or exploited

Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse

Behavioral Indicators

1. Is reluctant to change clothes in front of others
2. Is withdrawn
3. Exhibits unusual sexual behavior and/or knowledge beyond developmental age
4. Has poor peer relationships
5. Either avoids or seeks out adults
6. Is pseudo-mature
7. Is manipulative
8. Is self-conscious
9. Has problems with authority and rules
10. Exhibits eating disorders
11. Is self-mutilating
12. Is obsessively clean
13. Uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs
14. Exhibits delinquent behavior such as running away from home
15. Exhibits extreme compliance or defiance
16. Is fearful or anxious
17. Exhibits suicidal gestures and/or attempts suicide
18. Is promiscuous
19. Engages in fantasy or infantile behavior
20. Is unwilling to participate in sports activities
21. Has school difficulties.

Physical Indicators

1. Has pain/and or itching in the genital area
2. Has bruises or bleeding in the genital area
3. Has venereal disease
4. Has swollen private parts
5. Has difficulty walking or sitting

6. Has torn, bloody and/or stained underclothing
7. Experiences pain when urinating
8. Is pregnant
9. Has vaginal or penile discharge
10. Wets the bed

In addition to these indicators, children who have been sexually abused at a church function may exhibit some of the following symptoms:

1. Unusual nervousness or anxiety about being left in the nursery or Sunday school class
2. Reluctance to participate in church activities that were previously approached with enthusiasm
3. Nightmares including a childcare worker or teacher as a frightening character
4. Comments such as “I don’t want to be alone with _____” referring to a childcare worker or Sunday School teacher
5. Unexplained hostility toward a childcare worker or teacher

Possible Signs of Ritual Abuse

1. Disruptions of memory or consciousness
2. Flashbacks
3. Unexplained mistrust and mood swings
4. Eating disorders
5. Agitation or despair that seems to occur in cycles
6. Fear of the dark, especially at sundown or a full moon
7. Nightmares or sleep disorders
8. Fear of ministers, priests, or others wearing robes or uniforms
9. Any of the symptoms of sexual abuse

No segment of our society is immune from child abuse. It occurs in every economic, racial, ethnic, religious and other demographic groups. As Christians, we must be vigilant in protecting our children and youth and in preventing child abuse in the community of faith.

Who are the Abusers?

In order to prevent child abuse, we must not only recognize the signs of abuse, but we must also be able to recognize that the abusers of children are more often than not familiar adults trusted by the children. Less than 20% of child abuse is perpetrated by strangers. In other words, in more than 75% of the reported incidents of child abuse, the victim was related to or acquainted with the abuser.

Abusers come from every segment of society and can be found in every racial, ethnic, economic and social group. Some are charismatic leaders; some are sociable; some are very sympathetic to troubled children; some are married and have children of their own; some are young (even as young as 13 or 14); and some are older adults. When they are identified, they may look very much like us.

Within the churches, the abusers may be Sunday school teachers, nursery workers, preschool workers, children’s choir helpers, VBS leaders or teachers, camp counselors, youth group counselors, clergy or anyone else who works with children and youth.

PROFILE OF A CHILD ABUSER

Sexual Abuse

Men 18 and up

- Low self-esteem
- Need for power and control
- Poor family relationships, though the relationships often look okay from the outside
- Difficulty in interpersonal relationships...relates to others immaturely both socially and emotionally...may not be involved with peers or engage in adult group recreational activities
- Difficulty with impulse control
- History of past physical/sexual victimization...80-95% of child molesters were themselves molested as children
- Primary interests are in children
- May be involved in youth activities such as group leaders or coaches
- May be single or married...if married, they are often experiencing marital difficulties...they have difficulty in developing satisfying, supportive, intimate relationships with adults
- May have a specific age of children they prefer to work with
- May be of any sexual orientation or preference
- May have been insecure in childhood with frequent moves, early physical illnesses and marital difficulties between parents
- Many are less of a team player
- Difficult time asking for help with his problems
- Don't admit to stress or recognize a need to have a plan to deal with it
- Use children to fulfill their needs or validate their sense of competence and well-being
- Highly skilled at gaining the trust and confidence of children
- Sensitive to children's needs and have a way of putting children at ease
- Move frequently and unexpectedly
- Seeks opportunities to be alone with children
- Has an idealistic perspective of children...may refer to them as objects
- Often good at convincing others about their competence and caring

Adolescent

- Lack of contact with peers
- Few or no extracurricular activities
- Generally feels powerless and inadequate
- May feel more comfortable with children younger than themselves
- Males, in particular, may be frequently chosen to baby-sit because they make themselves available and relate well to young children
- May come from a family where there has been physical or sexual abuse
- May seem socially immature for their age
- May lack a close relationship with a father figure

Women

- May have married young
- Reared in a very strict home
- Her family was/is very religious
- Her husband is gone frequently and is not very supportive
- Is sexually naïve and immature
- Is very dependent on the father figure
- Frequently the victim of physical abuse
- Low self-esteem
- The husband exaggerates his masculinity dress, work and with peers and usually has drug or alcohol problems that affect his sexual performance
- Is lonely
- Does not have much tenderness in her life

Physical Abuse

- Negative attitude about life and people
- Labeled as having a “hot” temper
- Blames others: “he made me,” “it was her fault”
- History of child abuse as a child
- Uses harsh, age inappropriate discipline
- Offers illogical or unconvincing excuses for what occurred
- Exhibits out of control behavior

Emotional Abuse

- Blames and belittles children
- Cold and rejecting
- Withholds love

CAUTION: A profile list such as this can be misleading because many of the characteristics here can describe men/women who do not molest. Have more than one or even all of these items does not necessarily increase the odds of that person being a molester. Although this profile has some value in pointing out particular needs of people and risks associated with them, great caution should be used when assigning this profile to any one individual. Few molesters ever report the characteristics listed here. Neither are interviewers trained to properly elicit this information. Individuals with abusive personalities are more often subtle and skillfully manipulative in their approach to their employers, as well as their approach to children. This makes it essential for those responsible for hiring or enlisting volunteers to gain information from collateral resources such as past employers, friends, families and criminal background checks.

Adapted from: Johnson, Becca, Cowan. 1992. For Their Sake: Recognizing, Responding to, and Reporting Child Abuse. Martinsville, IN: American Camping Association. Reprinted here by permission of the publisher. For permission beyond limited use in creating church policy, please contact the publisher at 317-342-8456.

Adapted from YMCA Child Abuse Prevention Training Manual with permission of the YMCA of the USA, 101 N. Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60606.

Consequences of Child Abuse

When a child is abused within the church, many victims are created including the child, the congregation, the child's family and often the family of the abuser.

Of foremost importance is the child who has been harmed; he or she must be cared for. The trauma of abuse will cause emotional injury as well as physical injury and these scars will last through the victim's life. The child's innocence has been stolen. When the abuse is perpetuated by a trusted person within the church, even greater harm is done to the child's faith in God and faith in the church. Experiences of abuse in the church create massive obstacles to the child's development of a living, sustaining faith. This consequence is no less important than the physical injuries or the eventual depression, fear, and lack of sufficient self-esteem that often develops as a result of abuse.

Congregational members also become victims after abuse has been revealed. Members are stunned that such a crime could have been committed within their midst. They are humiliated at their failure to maintain the church as a safe and holy place for children and youth. Members are afraid that they are not equipped to help in the child's and family's healing process. They are angry that a person who had been welcomed into their fellowship would dare to violate the gospel's mandate by harming a child. Often, members are divided when they begin to discuss how to address all of the problems created by the incident.

The congregation may also suffer for a very long time if civil or criminal litigation ensues as a result of the abuse. Litigation in the courts keeps the incident alive for an extended period of time and may make resolution of the emotional issues more difficult. Although criminal or civil litigation is often necessary in these situations, the litigation process itself will not provide what is needed for healing among the congregation's members.

Finally, the financial consequences of child abuse in the church cannot be ignored. A victim of child abuse and his or her family will suffer financially since the costs of counseling and medical treatments go higher every year. The financial costs of lawsuits also rise every year.

Currently, no congregation can afford, either financially, ethically, or morally to fail to implement strategies for the prevention of child abuse. As Christians, we are not called to discontinue our congregations' ministries with children and youth. We are called to minister to them with great joy and with the knowledge that we are making every effort to provide ministry to our children and youth in ways that assure their safety while they grow in their faith and knowledge of the Christian walk.

Reporting Suspected Abuse

If a child is in immediate danger (for example, obviously being beaten, left alone overnight, etc) the police should be called immediately. In all other cases, reports should be made to the Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS) office in the county where the child lives. (See Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse, attached) People who call to report suspected abuse do not have to be sure that mistreatment has occurred. They simply need to report what they have seen or heard. Reports are confidential and the caller does not have to give his/her name, although it is helpful to the

child in the long run if the caller does give his or her name and address and, if necessary, testify in court.

The State of Georgia does not require that licensed, ordained ministers report suspected child abuse, even if they are children's ministers or youth ministers. Instead, they are considered "permissive reporters" and are encouraged to report when they have reasonable cause to believe that abuse has occurred. Individuals who are required to report suspected abuse in the state of Georgia include physicians, dentists, nurses and other medical personnel, school teachers, administrators and guidance counselors, law enforcement personnel and others who work with and/or have the opportunity to observe children and youth.

The State of Georgia does allow for reports to be made anonymously, however it is advisable to take the precaution of making the report by phone in the presence of an objective witness, such as the church pastor or the church's attorney, who can verify that the report was made and by whom in case this is needed later. Reports should include the name and address of the child and the child's parents or caretakers, if known, the child's age, and the nature and extent of the child's injuries, including any evidence of previous injuries, and any other information that the reporting person feels might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries and the identity of the perpetrator.

In addition to reporting suspected cases of abuse, the pastor and church members must be prepared to respond to others regarding allegations of abuse. We must be prepared to respond to the victim and his or her family, to the news media, to the church's insurance agent and possibly to the abuser and the family of the abuser.

Faithful response to the victim will include taking the allegation very seriously and respecting and protecting the victim's privacy, as well as providing sympathetic concern for the victim and his or her family. The victim is never to be blamed nor should there be any implication that the victim was in any way responsible for the abuse.

It is necessary to notify the church's insurance agent if an allegation of child abuse has been made and stated to have occurred within the church property or during a church activity.

The Elders of Redemption Fellowship will designate one person who will speak to the media. Questions will be answered honestly without adding any extra or unnecessary information. No other person will be authorized to speak to the media on behalf of the church.

In summary, when an allegation of child abuse is made against a worker or member of Redemption Fellowship, the officials of the church will be prepared to do the following:

- Notify the parents of the victim, and take any and all necessary steps to assure the child's safety until the parents arrive. **The safety of the victim must and will be the church's primary concern.**
- The accused abuser will be immediately removed from further involvement with children and/or youth. This will be done in a dignified and Christian manner.
- The proper law enforcement and/or child protective agency will be notified.

- The church's insurance agent and lawyer will be contacted.
- A written record will be maintained of the steps taken by the church in response to the allegation.
- The designated spokesperson for the church will be notified so that he or she may prepare any necessary statements or responses to the news media.
- A brief and honest statement will be prepared that can be made to the congregation **without giving unnecessary details, placing blame, interfering with the victim's privacy, or violating any confidentiality concerns.**
- The church will be prepared to cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by law enforcement officials and/or child protective services.

A Time of Healing

It is understood that when allegations of sexual abuse are made and found to be true, that much healing will be needed, not only in the life of the victim and his or her family, but also in the lives of the church members. The reality of ministry after abuse is that it must be aimed at assuring justice for all and healing for those who are suffering. Neither justice nor healing can be achieved in a short period of time.

The first step in ministry to the congregation when allegations have been made must be telling the truth. This means engaging in honest communication about what has happened. It does **not** mean engaging in gossip or speculation and it most definitely does not mean blaming the child victim in any way.

It is important to provide honest and forthright information. This may be handled by a letter to the members of the congregation that briefly explains the situation and the initial action taken by the church. The letter will not include the identification of the child victim or that of the accused abuser. It will include a statement of the actions taken to assure the safety of all the children and to assure the congregation of the church's continuing ability to provide ministry to the children and youth.

The Pastor and Elders of Redemption Fellowship may feel it necessary to call for a congregational meeting to further address the situation. Such a meeting will be approached thoughtfully and prayerfully. A specific day, time and place will be announced in advance so that members may choose whether to attend. Those addressing the congregation will be the Pastor and Elders. The meeting agenda will include, but not be limited to fact sharing, questions and answers, small group sharing time and a closing time of prayer and intercession..

The fact sharing will include an accurate description of what has happened and what actions have been taken or will be taken. The identity of the victim and accused abuser will not be released. Questions will be answered as honestly as possible.

The small group sharing time will allow the people to identify and verbalize their own personal feelings about the incident. Each small group will have a facilitator to guide the discussion. This will not be a time of gossip or a time for the congregation to try and strategize a response and/or premature forgiveness for the abuser.

After the small group time has ended, the congregation will reassemble for a time of prayer and intercession for each other and the leaders of Redemption Fellowship as they seek justice for all involved and healing for all who are suffering.

Additional times of open and honest communication, ministry and healing will be convened according to the needs of the congregation.

CONCLUSION

Churches need to be prepared! This is the legal reason for creating safety policies, but there's a deeper, more significant reason – to protect the children. Policies are only printed expressions of the value placed on our children. If the only reason for safety policies is to protect the organization, the church has missed God's love for children.

Some people may think that our church is too small or that our church "knows" everyone so we don't need to worry about these safety problems. Remember it's much easier to make plans and develop safety policies as a means of prevention, rather than wait until they are needed as a reaction to an abuse case.

Some churches tend to take the biblical concept of trusting God to an extreme. They think nothing bad can happen to Christians. We must not be unwise regarding children's safety. There is no automatic protection from evil for the faithful. We're to watch and be ready. Accidents will happen. There will always be unforeseen circumstances that need to be handled. But the church should build into its organization sturdy, safety-policy fire blocks into the walls of its ministry to protect children.

Redemption Fellowship Church desires to be "a church that cares" through the implementation of the above policy. Implementation of these provisions will enable Redemption Fellowship Church to provide a more safe and secure environment for each individual of our church family and guests.

APPLICATION FOR CHILDREN/YOUTH WORKER

Redemption Fellowship Presbyterian Church of America believes that children are a gift from God and should be treated as such. It is not only our legal but also our moral obligation to protect the health and welfare of our children.

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or compensated) involving the supervision or custody of minors. It is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

PERSONAL

Date: _____

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Are you over the age of 18? Yes _____ No _____

Identity must be confirmed with a state driver's license or other photographic identification. Copy to be attached to completed application.

Current Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Home Telephone: _____ Work Telephone: _____

Cell Telephone: _____

Emergency Contact: Name _____ Telephone: _____

Please list the last 10 years of previous addresses:

Position applied for: _____

Date you are available to start: _____

QUALIFICATIONS

Academic Achievements: (schools attended, degrees earned, dates of completion)

Continuing education completed: (Courses taken, dates of completion)

First aid training? Yes _____ No _____ Date completed: _____

CPR training? Yes _____ No _____ Date completed: _____

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Please list your previous employers for the past 5 years.

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Dates Employed: _____ Position: _____

Responsibilities:

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Dates Employed: _____ Position: _____

Responsibilities:

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Dates Employed: _____ Position: _____

Responsibilities:

CHURCH HISTORY AND PRIOR CHILDREN/YOUTH WORK

Name of church of which you are currently a member: _____

List (names and addresses) other churches you have regularly attending during the past five years: _____

List all previous church work involving children and/or youth (list each church's name, address, type of work performed and dates): _____

List all previous non-church work involving children and/or youth (list each organization's name, address, type of work performed, and dates): _____

List any gifts, callings, training, education or other factors that have prepared you for children or youth work: _____

Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony (including but not limited to: drug-related charges, child abuse, and/or other crimes of violence, theft or motor vehicle violations)? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please explain:

Has any person living in your household ever been convicted of or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony (including but not limited to: drug-related charges, child abuse, and/or other crimes of violence, theft or motor vehicle violations)? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please explain:

PERSONAL REFERENCES

Please list three personal references who are not relatives or former employers.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

How long has this person known you? _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

How long has this person known you? _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

How long has this person known you? _____

WAIVER AND CONSENT

I, _____, hereby certify that the information I have provided on this application for working with the youth and/or children (either voluntary or paid) of Redemption Fellowship is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for children or youth work. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by Redemption Fellowship Church, I hereby release any individual, church, youth organization, charity, employer, reference, or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account of compliance or any attempts to comply with this authorization. I waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in this application.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the By-Laws and policies of Redemption Fellowship and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT. This is a legally binding agreement which I have read and understand.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date _____

Witness Signature: _____ Date _____

AUTHORIZATION AND REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK

The following is required by law enforcement agencies and other entities for positive identification purposes when checking records. It is confidential and will not be used for any other purposes.

Please print your full name _____

Please print any other names you have used _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Social Security Number _____ Date of birth _____

Gender: Male ___ Female ___

Race: African American ___ Asian ___ Caucasian ___ Hispanic ___ Other ___

Drivers License Number _____ State issuing license _____

Name as it appears on license _____

Signature _____

Subscribed and sworn before me:

Notary Public _____ Date _____

SEAL

My commission expires _____

REFERENCE CHECK FORM
For Office Use Only

Applicant Name: _____

Reference Name: _____

Reference Address: _____

Reference Phone: _____

1. What is your relationship to the applicant?
2. How long have you known the applicant?
3. How well do you know the applicant?
4. How would you describe the applicant?
5. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to children and/or youth?
6. How would describe the applicant's ability to relate to adults?
7. How would you describe the applicant's leadership abilities?
8. How would you feel about having the applicant as a volunteer worker with your child and/or youth?
9. Do you know of any characteristics that would negatively affect the applicant's ability to work with children and/or youth? If so, please describe.
10. Do you have any knowledge that the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime? If so, please describe.
11. Please list any other comments you would like to make.

Reference inquiry completed by: _____

Signature

Date

PARTICIPATION COVENANT STATEMENT

The congregation of Redemption Fellowship Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, volunteers and paid workers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

1. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) will be allowed volunteer to work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity.
2. Adult survivors of child abuse need the love and support of our congregation. Any adult survivor who desires to volunteer in some capacity to work with children or youth is encouraged to discuss his/her willingness with one of our church's ministers before accepting an assignment.
3. All adult volunteers involved with children or youth of our church must have been members of the congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
4. Adult volunteers and paid children/youth staff shall observe the "Two-Adult Rule" at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children or youth.
5. Adult volunteers and workers with children and youth shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse and to stay current on first aid and CPR practices.
6. Adult volunteers and workers shall immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth? Yes___ No ___
2. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe the "Two-Adult Rule" at all times? Yes ___ No ___
3. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to abide by the six-month rule before beginning a volunteer assignment? Yes___ No ___
4. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by the church related to your volunteer assignment? Yes ___ No___
5. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to your supervisor? Yes ___ No ___
6. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to discuss with a minister of this congregation your experience, if any, as a survivor of child abuse? Yes ___ No ___
(Answering yes to this question does not automatically disqualify you from volunteering with children or youth.)
7. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to inform a minister of this congregation if you have ever been convicted of child abuse? Yes___ No ___

I have read the **Participation Covenant** and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Print Full Name

REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse:

2. Victim's Name: _____

Victim's age/date of birth: _____

3. Date/place of initial conversation with/report from victim: _____

4. Victim's statement (detailed summary): _____

5. Name of person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship of accused to victim: (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other):

6. Reported to Pastor/Session by: _____ Date/time: _____

Summary:

7. Call to victim's parent/guardian by: _____

8. Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary:

9. Call to local DFACS by: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary:

10. Call to local law enforcement agency by: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary:

11. Other contacts: _____

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

Signature of Person Completing Form

Date

ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

(Please print all information)

Date of accident: _____ Time of accident: _____

Name of child/youth involved: _____ Age: _____

Address of child/youth: _____

Location of accident: _____

Emergency Personnel Contacted: Yes _____ No _____

Parent or guardian: _____

Name of person(s) who witnessed the accident:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Describe accident:

CHILDCARE WORKER POSITION DESCRIPTION
(Paid or Volunteer)

Position: Nursery Childcare Worker / Elementary Childcare Worker

Reports to: Nursery Supervisor / Children's Director

General Qualifications Required:

1. All childcare staff members shall be of good character and be of the Christian faith.
2. All childcare staff members shall:
 - ✦ Be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy
 - ✦ Have a basic understanding of children and their needs
 - ✦ Be adaptive to a variety of situations
 - ✦ Be willing to grow in their knowledge of children through periodic education and training events.
3. All childcare staff members shall have a physician's report stating that the staff member is in good health.
4. Redemption Fellowship Church hires without regard to race, sex, or national origin.

Educational Qualifications Required:

All childcare staff members shall have completed the equivalent of a high school diploma.

Duties of Childcare Staff Member:

1. Provide physical, emotional and intellectual support and stimulation to each child in your care, as appropriate for the circumstances.
2. Provide appropriate guidance to each child in your care.
3. Develop a relationship of trust and continuity with the children in your care that will enhance each child's development of positive self images.
4. Provide support and assistance to parents when they arrive and depart with their child.

Performance Expectation of a Childcare Staff Member:

1. Be punctual. Notify your supervisor in advance if you must be late.
2. Be reliable in your attendance. Notify your supervisor in advance if you must be absent.
3. Attend periodic training and education events provided by the church.
4. Be polite, friendly, and courteous to others, both children and adults.
5. Do not engage in physical punishment/discipline of any child.
6. Cooperate with other childcare staff and with parents.
7. Abide by and apply the childcare policies of Redemption Fellowship Church at all times.

I have read the position description for childcare workers of Redemption Fellowship Church and understand its contents. My signature below indicates my agreement and covenant to abide by the requirements set forth above.

Signature of Applicant

Date

PERMISSION SLIP

Name: _____ Age _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Parental Authorization:

My child, _____, has my permission to attend the activity described below.

Parent's Printed Name: _____

EVENT: _____

Date: _____ Times: _____

I will instruct my child to obey the rules of conduct announced by the adults in charge (sponsors) of the activity.

I agree that neither Redemption Fellowship nor the sponsors are responsible for loss or damage to my child's property.

I agree to be responsible for any damage or injury my child inflicts on other persons or property. In case of emergency, the sponsors are authorized to arrange for emergency medical aid for my child on my behalf.

My child also has permission to ride to and from the activity with the sponsors. (The names of the drivers will be made available to the parents.)

Signature of Parent Date

In case of emergency, contact: _____

Telephone (daytime) _____ Telephone (evening) _____

PLEASE LIST ANY ALLERGIES OR OTHER MEDICAL CONDITIONS:

