




# *Establishing a Safe and Caring Ministry for Children*

A Leadership Certification  
Course #6



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# Our Most Valuable Assets



➤ *The ministry of children...*

- Sabbath School
- Vacation Bible School
- Adventurers
- Pathfinders
- Juniors & Earliteen
- Youth
- Child Care Centers

➤ *A multitude of opportunity  
and risk*



# Jesus Said...



- *“Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me ...  
– Mark 9:37*
- *By both His teachings and example, Jesus underscored the importance of children.*

# Protection of Precious Resources

## A Caring Ministry

*Kids our Sacred Trust*



- **We are entrusted with the care of children**
- **Interaction is safe and properly supervised**
- **We have a moral and legal obligation to assure children are properly cared for and treated at Adventist Churches**



# Care of Children



- **Parents have the right to expect that the Church will provide proper care for their children**
- **Proper Supervision of Activities**
- **Releasing children to appropriate adults**
- **Protecting adult volunteers and employees from false accusations**



# Establishing A Local Action Plan

***Moving Child Protection  
Practices Forward in  
Seventh-day Adventist  
Churches in the world***



# Challenges

- **Conservative Nature of Adventists**
- **Difficulty to Get Individuals to Volunteer**
- **Too Many Volunteers, Too Little Time**
- **Lack of Power to Enforce Requirements**
- **Church Manual & Nominating Committee Issues**





## New Opportunities for Best Practices

*“The local church should take reasonable steps to safeguard children engaged in church-sponsored activities by choosing individuals with high spiritual and moral backgrounds as leaders and participants in programs for children.”*

**Church Manual Revision – 2000**



# Churches Are Vulnerable



- ✓ Community of Trust
- ✓ Ignorance of Facts
- ✓ Lack of Safeguards
- ✓ Numerous Opportunities
- ✓ Easy Access
- ✓ Constant Need for Volunteers to help with Children and Youth
- ✓ Child Abusers are aware of these vulnerabilities



# Facts About Child Sexual Abuse

- Child Age Victims
  - 1 in 3 Girls by age 18
  - 1 in 8 Boys by age 18
- Over 80% of the time the Abuser is known by the Victim
- 75% of all crimes committed against children is sexual in nature



## More Facts



- If abuse occurs in a Church a respected member will most likely be the molester
- Sexual abuse occurs in all races, socioeconomic and religious groups
- The average age of victims is 8-11 year old
- Sexual abuse is rarely a one time offense
- Children seldom lie about Sexual abuse – Less than 8%

# Personal Ministry

- **Respect and Concern**
  - Children
  - Volunteers
  - Employees
- **Proper Screening**
  - Volunteer Forms
  - Six Month Rule
- **Education & Training**



# *Strategic Ministry*



- Child Abuse Awareness and prevention training must be included as part of the leadership training of all individuals who work with our children
- This includes proper screening of employees and volunteers
- Having a plan to report Abuse Cases when warranted





# **Developing Best Practices**

- ✓ **Develop Child Protection Guidelines for use at the local church level in the North American Division**
- ✓ **Employ Volunteer Screening methods throughout the division**
- ✓ **Adopt and implement the use of the Six Month Rule**
- ✓ **Adopt and implement the Two Adult Rule in Children's Ministry programming**



# Church Leadership Support

- *Involvement is Critical to the Success of your Policy*
  - **Children's Ministries Leaders**
  - **Professionals**
  - **Pastoral Team**
  - **Parents**
  - **Youth Volunteers**
- *Not the Pastor's Job*
- *Board Approval & Implementation*



# Key Policy Elements

- ✓ *Simple & Understandable*
- ✓ *Establish Rules of Conduct*
- ✓ *Screening Measures will be Employed – Volunteer Forms*
- ✓ *Establish a Six Month Rule*
- ✓ *Establish a Two Adult Rule*
- ✓ *Church Board approval of All Off-site and Overnight Activities*





# Six Month Rule



- **Don't Rush new members or individuals who transfer into children's ministries programs**
- **Carefully screen and become acquainted with new people by using a six month rule in your ministry**





# Volunteer Forms

- ✓ *Make a Difference*
- ✓ *Provides Information*
- ✓ *Demonstrates the Seriousness*
- ✓ *Allows for Further Follow-up*
- ✓ *Be Consistent in Application*
- ✓ *Maintain in a Confidential Manner*



# Screening Personnel



- *Respect the Person*
- *Encourage Participation*
- *Explain the Reason for your Screening Program*
- *Protection of Children*
- *Protection of Adults*
- *Ensure Confidentiality*
- *Require Participation*





# A Sacred Trust...

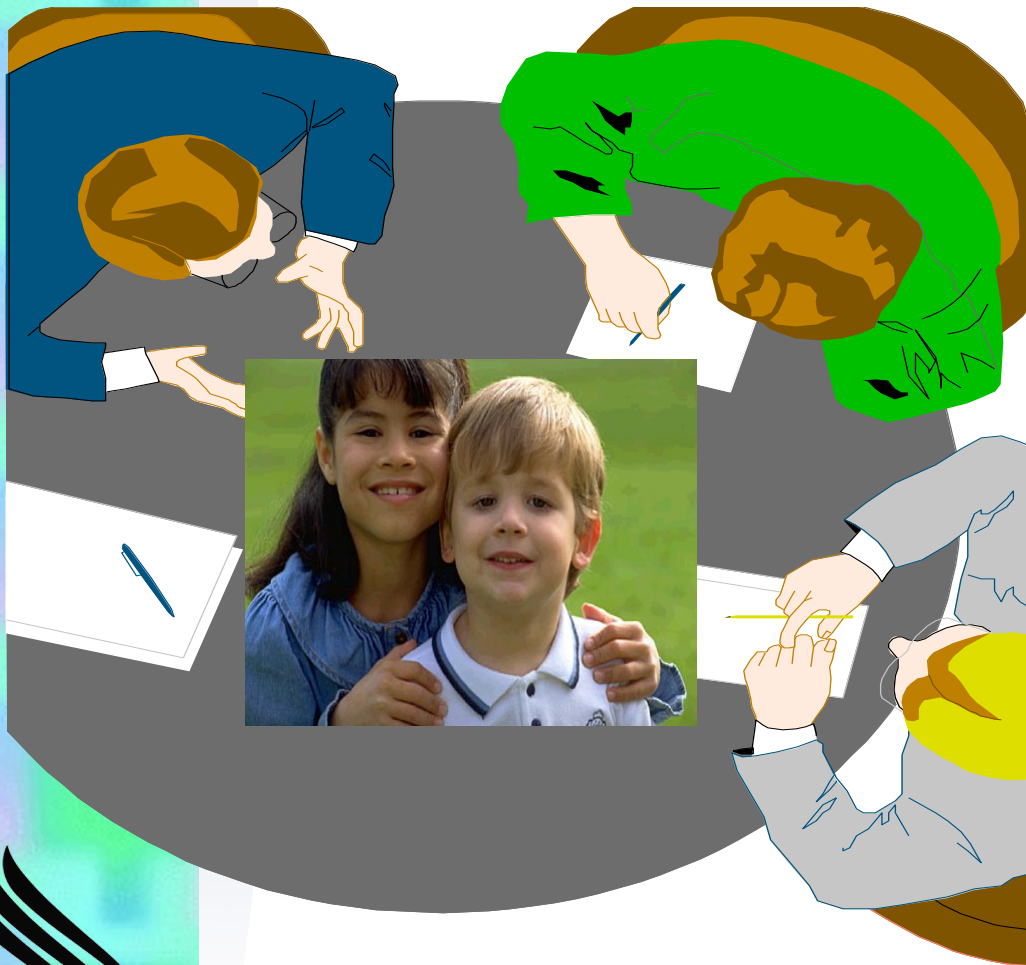
## *One Strike and You're Out ...*

A constellation of factors are converging at the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that raise the legitimate question whether the minister Or counselor who sexually violates children should ever continue In professional ministry...

- First of all, apart from castration, recidivism rates for all forms of intervention are unacceptably high.
- Second, legal trends – the growing liability for abuse, canceled insurance when pedophile restoration is attempted and the crushing cost of legal defense and damages for abusers in ministry.
- Finally, the resistance of church parents is fatal to restoration. As one parent of a young child told us emphatically, “Whether or not a pedophile can be restored, I am not going to allow my children to be the guinea pigs that prove the success of the church’s restoration experiment.” **Sexual Misconduct in Counseling & Ministry – Pg. 125**



# Keep Focused on the MISSION...



- **Protecting Kids from Harm**
- **Loss of Trust**
- **Potential Liability**
- **Church Resources**
  - Dollars
  - Time
  - Diversion from Mission
- **Negative Press**
- **False Accusations**



# Monitoring Your Program

**Premises Review  
& Training**

**Screening  
Follow-up**

**Taking  
Corrective  
Action**



**Abuse Free  
Christ – Centered  
Children’s  
Ministries**





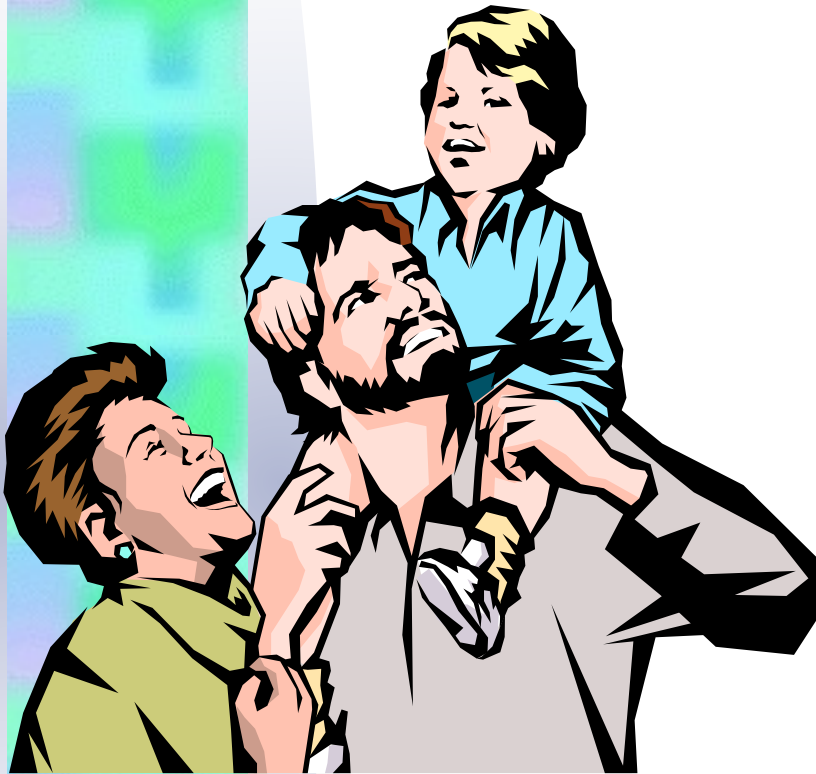
# Universal Ministry

- **Everyone Shares in the Responsibility**
  - Parents
  - Leaders
  - Volunteers
- **Moral & Legal Duty**
- **The privilege of Service to Other in molding young minds for eternity**





# It Takes Commitment...



*Our Adventist Community will be a safe environment where children are loved and valued; where children are able to appreciate their own worth and importance; and where children can grow and develop the character to be accountable for themselves and act responsibly towards others.*