**Safe Sanctuary Training Manual**

**Why do we need to be aware of Child Sexual Abuse?**

Current FBI statistics indicate that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 7 boys have been sexually abused.

There is a 3% apprehension rate of sexual abusers.

Mostly because 85% of abuse is never reported.

5% of abused girls report the abuse.

Reporting rate is even lower for boys.

**What about the offender?**

* Most are men.
* NOT strangers. The perpetrator is known to the victim in over 80% of sex crimes.
* Occupation or volunteer work involves children.
* Prefer a particular age.
* Molested as children.
* Most knew victim and had spent time establishing a trusting relationship.

Sex offenders often come from all walks of life and from all socio-economic groups. They can be male or female, rich or poor, employed, or unemployed, religious, or non-religious, highly educated, or uneducated or from any race. 50% are married.

Sex offenders are usually non-violent and have few problems with the law. Pedophiles are frequently respected community members.

Sex offenders have great social skills. This is what enables them to gain the confidence and trust of not only the children but the parent as well. Sex crimes flourish in secrecy. Sex offenders have secretive and manipulative lifestyles, and many of their sexual assaults are so well planned that they appear to occur without forethought.

**What do offenders look for?**

* Specific age, gender, physical characteristics
* Children with poor communication skills and/or have poor communication with parents.
* Children who are vulnerable due to intellectual or emotional delays
* Children who are experienced with street drugs.
* Runaway
* Low self-esteem

Many pedophiles seek out mothers or single parent families for the purpose of victimizing their children. They offer money for food, baby-sitting services – anything to be helpful and put them in a position to gain confidence and trust of the parent.

Most sex offenders “groom” their victims prior to any sexual abuse. They play games with the children, take them to fun restaurants, and buy them gifts.

Other “grooming” techniques used by sex offenders:

* Overnight trips
* Shared secrets
* Accidental touches to gauge child’s reactions.
* Non-sexual touches
* Sex talk
* Drugs or alcohol
* Pornographic pictures

**What do offenders avoid?**

* Involved parents.
* Children with good communication skills
* Children who don’t agree to keep a secret.

**How do offenders keep children from telling?**

* Offender has developed a position of trust.
* Special attention and gifts
* Threats
* Desensitization
* Plays on child’s sense of guilt.
  + Sexual guilt
  + Child feels responsible for what has happened.
  + Anger towards parents
  + Child feels disloyal to family.
  + Afraid of possible family break-up
* Plays on child’s fears of disclosure.
  + Child won’t be believed.
  + Offender will harm victim, parents, siblings, pets, etc.
  + Loss of family income if offender has been providing food, money, or gifts to family

**What do you do when someone discloses to you?**

* Believe.
* Stay calm.
* Listen and don’t try to pry out information.
* Let them know they did nothing wrong.
* Don’t make promises.
* Commend child for telling.
* Report to Christian Education Director and Pastor.

**GUIDELINES FOR ADULT VOLUNTEERS**

**WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

Two adults are required to be always present with children and youth, both at church and off-site.

Adults should be alone with minor children only with parent’s permission.

Adequate supervision for all programs involving children and youth must be maintained from the time the children arrive until they are picked up by parents or guardians. Children are to be released only to designated parent or guardian.

All adult supervisors must be approved in advance by designated church leadership before supervising overnight or out-of-town activity.

Adults are to report all encounters with children that might be misunderstood. Document event with a memo and place in designated church file.

Do not single out child or young person for gift giving. Make gift giving a group activity and/or make gifts “from the church” or “from your class.”

Have “open-door policy” that gives parents, clergy, and church staff the right to visit and observe a class or program at any time unannounced.

Establish touch boundaries. Offer children choices, a hug, or a handshake. Don’t assume all children want to be touched. Never touch any part of the body that would be covered by a modest swimsuit or touch the clothing which covers those parts.

Overnight events must always have a minimum of two adults on the premises. Ground rules for event are to be established ahead of time. Have separate sleeping areas for boys and girls and privacy of changing clothing.

No R-rated movies are to be shown at any church sponsored activity and PG-13 movies must have parental approval.

Never show youth any material which displays nudity or could by any standard be called pornographic. Confiscate anything brought by youth that might be considered pornographic and document such activity.

Never allow alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs be brought to or consumed during any church-related activity for children/youth. If a youth comes to any church program intoxicated (from either drugs or alcohol), the parents should be called, and arrangements made for the youth to get home safely.