

Safe Sanctuary Training



Reducing the Risk of Abuse
in the Church

St. Luke's United Methodist Church

Introduction to St. Luke's Policy

Throughout the gospels, Jesus provides teachings on providing a peaceable kingdom for all of God's people, including our most precious gifts, our children and youth (Matthew 5:9, Luke 18:15-17). The peaceable kingdom begins with sanctuary, which is to be a community of protective nurture and harmony (Psalms 20:1-2, 27:4-5).

Risk Reduction Goal

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical, verbal and sexual abuse has claimed the attention of our nation and society. St. Luke's United Methodist Church is committed to providing protective care of all children, youth, vulnerable adults and volunteers who participate in church sponsored activities.

WHY Safe Sanctuary?

- As Christians, we are called to create a safe sanctuary in our church.
- Prevent the occurrence or even the appearance of abuse.
- Protect workers from false accusations and/or suspicions.

Scope of Policy

This policy shall apply to all persons including all paid and unpaid leaders who have direct or indirect contact with children and youth who participate in St. Luke's United Methodist Church events and activities.

Safe Sanctuary applies to:

- Any event on or off campus which occurs in the name of St. Luke's United Methodist Church.
- Off-campus events include, but are not limited to: sporting events, mission trips, Sunday School socials, Bible studies, field trips, etc.

Types of Abuse

- Physical
- Verbal
- Sexual



What is Physical Abuse?

Any act of omission or act that endangers a person's physical or mental health, including but not limited to any intentional physical injury caused by the individual's caretaker. Physical abuse may result from punishment that is overly punitive or inappropriate to the individual's age or condition.

What is Verbal Abuse?



Any verbal act that humiliates, degrades, or threatens any child, youth or vulnerable adult.

What is Sexual Abuse?

- Sexual abuse of minors includes touching them in inappropriate ways such as fondling, inappropriate touching of the minor's body, and inappropriate kissing.
- Non-touch abuse includes making remarks of a sexual nature, showing the child explicit pornographic materials, or making the minor watch others engaged in sexual activity.

Remember:

- With abuse it's not just what you do... it also includes what you do NOT do.
- Not stepping in to stop an abusive action or situation is also abuse!
- You must be proactive to prevent abuse or situations that might lead to abuse.

Who must complete Safe Sanctuary training?



- St. Luke's Staff
- Any volunteer who comes into direct or indirect contact with children or youth

What is the certification process?

- Read and complete the complete policy and application
- Grant permission to contact 2-3 references and conduct a background check
- Complete this training presentation, including the quiz at the end.
- The individual is certified upon satisfactory completion of the above steps



**Plan for Reducing the
Risk of Abuse**

Plan for Response to Known Incident of Abuse:

I. Assess needs for emergency care for the victim

- A. Notify parents and/or other legally responsible adult
- B. Provide emergency healthcare as needed, including 9-1-1
 - 1. First Aid
 - 2. Emergency services
 - 3. Hospital emergency room
- C. Arrange for crisis counseling and/or long-range counseling where deemed appropriate.

Plan for Response (continued):

- II. Take precautions to secure the area
 - A. Maintain the integrity of the area and protect all evidence for the professional investigation.
- III. Assisting the victim and victim's family
 - A. Obtain medical help as needed. The care and safety of victim is the first priority.
 - B. Take all allegations seriously and do not prejudge the situation
 - C. Offer and provide pastoral resources as needed
 - 1. Show care and support to prevent further hurt

What if the media is involved?

Senior Pastor or designated representative will be informed of all details of the incident and will release any information that is to be disseminated to the media

IV. St. Luke's will:

A. Notify legal authorities as required

1. Report incident to Children's Protective Services
2. Immediately contact church's insurance carrier
3. Inform the St. Luke's Board of Trustees, any other appropriate church body, and church legal counsel

Please note:

- Church staff will be informed of incident on a "need to know" basis (to ensure privacy of the victim and/or accused) and their support enlisted as needed
- Full cooperation must be given to civil authorities under the guidance of church attorney.

What should I do?

Document Actions Taken

- A. Document all your efforts at handling the incident
- B. Do not attempt an in-depth investigation.
 - 1. This should be left to professionals who are familiar with this type of case. This is to protect the rights of the victim and the accused.
 - 2. Individual files will keep with all documented actions, conversations, etc.
- C. File will be retained in a locked and secure area to insure privacy and confidentiality.

Dealing with the Accused

- A. Remove the accused/abuser from any further contact with children, youth, vulnerable adults and staff

- B. Treat the accused with dignity and support
 1. Do not confront the accused until the safety of the child, youth or vulnerable adult member is secured
 2. Offer and provide pastoral care to family of abuser as appropriate
 3. Offer outside counseling services as appropriate
 4. Refer to outside clergy if deemed more desirable or as requested by the family



Hallmarks of our
Safe Sanctuary Policy

Two by Two

Try to always have two certified persons present whenever a child or youth is present.



Line of Sight

- Stay visible to others.
- Keep the door open.
- Stay in an area where others can see you.



Safety in Numbers

- Especially with children, try to avoid situations where there is one adult and one child.
- When non-Safe Sanctuary certified adults are present, make sure at least one Safe Sanctuary certified individual is present.

Restroom Assistance

(in regards to children)

- Children in 1st grade and up can go to the restroom in pairs without direct supervision. (An adult should wait outside the restroom.)
- If you must accompany a child into the restroom alone, leave the door open and alert another adult.
- If you encounter an “ongoing” situation (perhaps you have a child with special needs in your class), contact Director of Children’s Ministries or Human Resources to make arrangements for assistance.

Changing Diapers

- It is appropriate to change diapers as needed.
- Diapers should be changed in an open environment.
- In most cases, we will have paid caregivers available to assist with changing diapers.

Fire Alarms

- If the fire alarm sounds, the building should be evacuated.
- Gather the children/youth, count and take attendance before leaving
- Go out the nearest safe exit (posted in all classrooms).
- Once outside, take attendance again
- Stay outside the building until the “all clear signal” is given.

Health Emergencies

- First aid kits and AED machines are located in numerous areas. Familiarize yourself with locations.
- Children's Resource Room (B1 36) and After School Care Office/Gym are the two closest in the children's wing.
- Do not hesitate to call 911 if needed.
- Contact a staff person as soon as possible.

Appropriate Discipline

- For children:
 - Set age appropriate expectations and rules, with the help of the children.
 - Use gentle reminders. Teach children appropriate behavior through actions and words.
 - Redirection and individual conversations work well.
 - Physical or punitive punishment is never appropriate.
 - The best exercise for the brain is EXERCISE!
 - Contact Director of Children's Ministries for suggestions and guidance.

Setting Boundaries

- Physical boundaries change as an individual ages. Holding a young child in your lap is appropriate. Holding an older child or youth in your lap is not appropriate.
- Always be aware of where a conversation might go. Steer conversations appropriately.
- If you feel boundaries are being violated, allow great distance to come between you and the young person.
- Contact a staff person if you feel uncomfortable with a situation.

Who is a “responsible party”?

Children, older youth and college students may be used in supervisory situations with children. (Ex: Teen Staff at Vacation Bible School)

Anyone under the age of 21 is considered an assistant leader and not “in charge” of youth.

Overnight Accommodations

- It is strongly recommended that two adults (or for children, one adult and one older youth) be present in each room or in close proximity to the room.
- If only one adult is present, there must be more than one child/youth present.
- Adults are not to sleep in the same bed with a child/youth.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

*It is not the intent
that matters...*

**IT IS HOW IT IS
RECEIVED THAT
IS THE ISSUE!**

Who to contact about our Safe Sanctuary policy:

Julie Ellerbrock

**Director
Children's Ministries**

713-402-5040
jellerbrock@stlukesmethodist.org

Christy Dulaney

**Assistant Director
Children's Ministries**

713-402-5042
cdulaney@stlukesmethodist.org

Katy Cox

**2s-Kindergarten
Sunday School Coordinator**

713-402-5014
kcox@stlukesmethodist.org

Lori Fahrbach

**2nd-5th Grade
Sunday School Coordinator**

713-402-5134
lfahrbach@stlukesmethodist.org

What's next?

While it's fresh on your mind, take the quiz on this presentation. The quiz is located here:

<http://www.stlukesmethodist.org/safesanctuary>

This page also gives instructions for the other steps to secure your Safe Sanctuary certification.

Thank you for your dedication to the children and youth of St. Luke's!