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Introduction

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." John 10:11

Purpose

The Good Shepherd Program is designed to help churches and other ministries develop programs to reduce the risk of abuse or injury to infants, children, and youth who participate in their programs. The Good Shepherd Program is about stewardship of one of God's great gifts--children and teens. This program enables churches to develop a prevention program without having to "reinvent the wheel."

Sexual or physical abuse and accidental injury to young people happens more frequently in churches than we realize. Church insurance companies report that incidents are increasing "at epidemic rates." Abuse or serious accidents are disastrous for children, families, church members, church budgets, and the church's ability to spread the Gospel effectively.

Tragically, in a number of cases, the evidence suggests that incidents and injuries could have been prevented with simple procedures and techniques.

Good Shepherd Program Objectives

The Good Shepherd Program is designed to:

- educate church leaders and youth ministry workers about prevention of abuse or accidental injury,
- enable church leaders and ministry workers to develop procedures and practices that reduce these risks,
- protect adults from mistaken or groundless allegations,
- reduce liability for churches,
- build parental confidence in church programs, and
- prepare church workers to respond should an incident or accident occur.

The authors strongly believe that churches must strive to protect children from all forms of maltreatment, so this program tries to be as comprehensive as possible. However, child sexual abuse is the most difficult risk for most churches to address. The content of *The Good Shepherd Program* focuses upon prevention of child abuse, child sexual abuse, and overall safety of children and youth.

No Prevention Program is Foolproof

The ideas and techniques suggested here are the result of substantial experience and consideration by a large number of people who care for kids. These concepts have been implemented successfully in a wide variety of churches and youth programs. They are widely considered to significantly reduce the risks of accidents and abuse.

Persons who are driven to abuse children are sometimes capable of circumventing even the best screening, training, and supervision programs. The most careful preparation cannot avoid all accidents. However, leaders in the field of youth programs generally agree that steps can be taken that will greatly enhance the safety of young people participating in ministries.

No program of risk reduction can prevent abuse or injuries 100 percent of the time.

The Language of Prevention — A Glossary of Terms

This is a glossary of terminology as used in this manual. Technical definitions used for clinical purposes may differ. Legal definitions will vary by jurisdiction.

Abused or neglected child — a child whose mental or physical health is endangered or threatened by the actions or failure to act by people responsible for the child's care.

Boundaries—Property boundaries are the limits or dividing lines between pieces of real estate. People have boundaries, too, that guide our physical and emotional relations. Personal boundaries are like fences, separating appropriate behavior from improper behavior. The lines change according to the child's age and the relationship between the child and the adult. In a physical sense boundaries govern appropriate behavior. For example, it is fine for a four year old to sit on the lap of her Sunday school teacher, but not for her 14-year-old sister to sit on the lap of her youth group sponsor. Any child with weak boundaries is more vulnerable to sexual molestation. Healthy boundaries enable a child to recognize and reject inappropriate behavior.

In relationships, boundaries govern our behavior and roles. For example, youth ministers should understand the boundaries of their roles and avoid intruding into the responsibilities of a parent.

Child maltreatment—harm to a child by a caretaker or another person who may come into contact with the child. This includes acts of commission (assault) as well as acts of omission (failure to protect). In other words -- physical, emotional, or sexual abuse and neglect.

Child molester— a person who has sexually violated children.

Child protective services— a generic name for agencies of municipal or state government that

investigate child maltreatment and provide services to victims and families. May also be called "social services, human services, child welfare," or similar names. Child protective services work closely with law enforcement and the courts. Most child protective services staff people have in-depth social work and family counseling training.

Child sexual abuse—includes but is not limited to any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child. Also referred to as molestation.

Children and/or youth—generally anyone less than 18 years of age. This category may also include persons over 18 years of age who are not able to fully protect themselves from exploitation or give consent for sexual activity (due to age, intellectual or physical impairments, or other incapacities). The definition of a "child" or "minor" may differ according to various state statutes and regulations. Consult your legal advisors as to how these terms may be defined and used in your state.

Denominational organization—dioceses, synods, conferences, or similar associations of churches that may have policies that interact with an individual church's policies and guidelines.

Emotional abuse may take two forms:

failure to provide love, emotional support, and adult guidance (an act of omission), or, conduct that threatens a child's self-esteem and emotional development, such as humiliating, insulting, or belittling a child (an act of commission).

Grooming—a pattern of behavior by a child molester which makes a child more vulnerable to molestation or prevents a child from reporting molestation. Often molestation occurs only after considerable contact with the molester that allows the molester to evaluate and increase the vulnerability of a victim. Example: a child molester involves a teen in viewing pornography and consuming alcohol as an introduction to sexual activity. Later the molester threatens the child by saying "Don't tell anyone or you'll be in more trouble than me for drinking and having those magazines."

Mandatory reporting—Many states or other jurisdictions have laws that require certain types of caretakers (teachers, social workers, child care workers) to report suspected child maltreatment to child protective services or law enforcement. Since these rules vary greatly by jurisdiction and are frequently changed, *The Good Shepherd Program* strongly advises each user of this program to understand the mandatory reporting requirements that are applicable. If mandatory reporting is required, this information should be integrated into the guidelines and procedures of the user organization.

Molestation—see child sexual abuse.

Neglect—failure of a caretaker to provide for a child's basic needs or prevent harm to the child.

Pedophile and hebephile -- Pedophile is a clinical diagnosis of a person with a compulsive sexual desire for children who have not yet reached the age of puberty. A hebephile is similar to a pedophile except the desire is focused on adolescent children. The sexual desire must have lasted at least six months and be strong enough to cause significant stress on the individual or cause the individual to act.

Warning: These are clinical terms used by mental health professionals for particular types of child molesters. Not all child molesters are pedophiles or hebephiles. Pedophiles or hebephiles who have not acted upon their fantasies are not child molesters. Since most church workers are not qualified to diagnose these conditions, church workers are best advised to stick to the term child

molester for reasons of simplicity and clarity. This is especially important when making reports to child protective workers, law enforcement agencies, or in court testimony. The term child molester stems from outwardly visible behavior that is harmful, regardless of its psychological roots.

Physical abuse—nonaccidental injury to children caused by the acts of parents or others.

Preferential child molester—molester who actively plans to molest children and works to gain access to them. Preferential molesters will typically abuse children repeatedly and will assail hundreds of children throughout their lifetimes.

Program or ministry leader— persons who direct one component of the church's ministry to children. This category includes: youth pastor, nursery school director, Sunday school superintendent, and mid-week club chairperson.

Red flag— an informal term for any indication that an individual may not be well suited to caretaker roles with children or youth. A red flag raises suspicions and causes program leaders to look more closely at an individual's qualifications or behavior. (Please see Model Policy #4 of the Good Shepherd Model Policy Manual.)

Risk management —a field of management in which an organization or business evaluates the risks it faces and minimizes or transfers risk in order to protect the effectiveness of the organization. Risk management usually includes the purchase of insurance as a part of the overall process.

Sexual abuse/assault/exploitation—any act of sexual intimacy lacking mutual consent and involving force or threat of force. This includes situations in which the victim is unable to give consent due to age, intellectual or physical impairments, or other incapacities. Note that this definition applies regardless of the ages of the victim and victimizer (i.e., adult-adult, adult-child, or child-child).

Sexual misconduct —*The Good Shepherd Program* defines this term as improper, exploitive sexual behavior between adults. Examples include a counselor who has sex with a person they are counseling or a minister having an extramarital affair with a church member. Note that some individuals and organizations use this term to refer to all inappropriate sexual activities, relationships, and behavior, whether involving children or adults.

Situational child molester —molester who does not actively plan to molest children but is presented with the temptation and acts on impulse. Often the molestation would not occur without exceptional circumstances or unusual stress.

Survivors of abuse —Often youth workers choose to refer to people who have experienced abuse as "survivors" instead of "victims." This term helps the abused individuals see themselves as people who are overcoming a problem rather than as people who are powerless, defined by the abuse they have experienced.

Worker or ministry worker—any person who has custody or supervision of children under 18 years of age during church activities, whether in a paid or a volunteer role. This includes parents of kids who participate in activities.

Workers by type:

Primary workers—All paid staff and those volunteers in roles with greater responsibility or risk should be classified as primary workers and should meet the primary screening standards. Primary workers have greater responsibility and more opportunity to harm children, so churches must take extra care in their screening.

Roamers – Designated persons who make periodic and unannounced checks on classrooms to make sure everything is okay and no help is needed.

Ongoing Supervision of the Child Safety Program

The **PASTOR** will appoint one person to supervise the child safety program. This program shall govern all church activities that involve custody of children and teens less than 18 years of age.

Annual Review of Safety Program

Each program leader will review compliance with safety policies and potential risks annually in a brief written report that will be given to the person responsible for the child safety program.

(Minister to Children) The reports should include:

- A listing of any new programs or program changes and the additional risks these changes may incur.
- A brief summary of policy violations and the program leader's response to these violations.

Any patterns of violations that suggest policy changes are needed should be identified.

The supervisor will summarize the reports received from program leaders and submit an overall report annually to the leadership of the church.

Waiver of Policies

Church policies may be waived occasionally for exceptional circumstances. The goal of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** is to promote safety while maintaining practical flexibility in children's and youth ministry. Waiving policies will only be authorized by the Senior **PASTOR** and the appropriate minister (Minister of Students and/or Minister to Children).

Modification of Policies

Changes in these policies must be approved by **PASTOR AND MINISTER TO CHILDREN/MINISTER OF STUDENTS**. These policies may be modified or withdrawn by **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** at any time. These policies are not intended to create an implied or express contract with any person. They are not intended to create a legally enforceable or binding promise or representation.

Activities Covered by These Policies

All activities of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** that require church workers acting within the scope of their duties to have custody of persons less than 18 years of age shall follow these policies.

ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH interprets the above guideline to mean that all children's and youth activities of the church as of this date, **BY BEGINNING OF 07/08 CHURCH YEAR (SEPTEMBER 1, 2007)**, must observe these policies.

Operating Policies for All Children's and Youth Ministries

Statement of Purpose

As a church, we believe that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of children is vital. This policy is intended to ensure that church activities involving children are consistent with the teachings and example of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the Christian tradition of nurturing vulnerable children.

The primary purpose of this policy is to promote the safety and well-being of children and youth by providing clear instructions about the operation of children's and youth ministries at **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH**. The leaders of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** sincerely request the cooperation of the adults in our church who must abide by the stringent guidelines of this policy.

Child and Youth Safety Takes Priority

The greatest priority of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** children's and youth programs is to help kids through the Gospel and ministry of Jesus Christ. It is obvious that any sexual exploitation, abuse, or endangerment directly contradicts this priority and the values of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH**.

Workers and supervisors who oversee youth workers must keep this priority in mind: adults do not have a right to serve as workers. Adults merely have an **opportunity** to serve when selected by the church. This means that workers should err on the side of caution as they make subjective decisions involving the well-being of children and youth.

A Higher Standard

As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, we must strive to be worthy of a very high standard of trust. For this reason, every worker at **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** must avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior. All workers must diligently avoid any conduct that appears wrong to a reasonable observer, even if no actual misconduct takes place.

Supervision of Children's and Ministry Workers

Adequate Supervision of Youth Workers

- Church staff and Workers who supervise youth workers/children workers are charged with the diligent enforcement of these policies. Violation of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or re-assignment from youth work/children work for both workers and staff, at the discretion of the church.
- Supervisors and all youth workers/children workers who suspect any unhealthy or abusive activities must discuss their suspicions promptly with the Minister to Children or Minister of Students or Senior Pastor.

Touching Policy

We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. The church should deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** has implemented a touching policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be carefully followed by anyone working with children and youth.

1. Hugging, kisses and other forms of appropriate physical affection between workers and children are important for a child's development and are generally suitable in our church setting.
2. Physical affection should be appropriate to the age of the child or youth. (For example, it is generally appropriate for a four-year-old to sit in a nursery worker's lap and give a kiss on the cheek, but it is not appropriate for a teenager and youth leader to behave this way.)
3. Touching should be initiated by the child or youth. It should be a response to the child's need for comforting, encouragement, or affection. It should not be based upon the adult's emotional need.
4. Touching and affection should only be given when in the presence of other children's ministry or youth workers. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misconstrued as such when two adult workers are present and the touching is open to observation. This rule is especially important when diapering a baby or helping a young child change clothes or use the restroom.
5. Touching behavior should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. As ministry workers our behavior must foster trust at all times; it should be above reproach.
6. A child's preference not to be touched should be respected. Do not force affection upon a reluctant child.
7. Church workers are responsible to protect children under their supervision from inappropriate touching by others.
8. Church workers must promptly discuss inappropriate touching or other questionable behavior by other workers with their ministry leader or Pastor.

Worker Selection and Supervision

The following guidelines will be used as **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** reviews applicants for positions in children's or youth ministry:

1. All children's workers must be 18 years of age or older. All Youth Workers must be 18 years of age or older and a minimum of 5 years older than the oldest youth in attendance. Younger children (grade 7 through age 17) can assist in the room, but cannot take the place of adult workers. No persons under the age of 18 will be allowed to be in the infant and/or toddler classroom.

Definition of workers:

Two Adult Rule: Adult workers working with children and youth shall observe the **Two Adult Rule** at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children or youth. This rule accomplishes two important objectives. First, it reduces the risk of child abuse.

Secondly, it reduces the risk of unfounded claims of abuse. Team Teachers/Workers cannot be immediate family (of the same household). Members of the same family shall be counted as one teacher; therefore another adult will be assigned to assist.

Workers: Volunteers and staff with long-term, ongoing, direct contact with children and youth one-on-one are considered primary workers. (Ex. Any weekly based teachers such as Sunday School teachers, etc.)

Volunteers who have infrequent direct contact or contact only in group settings are considered secondary workers, (ex. VBS, Children's Church, Choir Chimes, Sonshine Camp, etc.)

Roamers: Designated persons who makes periodic and unannounced checks on classrooms to make sure everything is okay and no help is needed.

All workers will be screened in identical fashion.

Helpers: Anyone who aids in ministry and is not counted in the 2 adult and/or roamer rule including grade 6 through age 17. Any helper involved with youth must be a minimum of five years older than the oldest youth in attendance.

2. All candidates (excluding Helpers) may participate in a confidential interview. Interviews may be conducted by the leader of the program in which the applicant will work or by other persons designated by the program leader. Church policy and guidelines should be discussed during the interview. A group setting may be used to discuss the policies and procedures/guidelines.
3. Must be a church member in regular attendance for at least 6 months and having demonstrated a profession of faith prior to becoming a worker. (This may not apply to prospective church employees or to interns who are not church members.)

4. Applicants must complete and sign an application form, which includes the Confidential Questionnaire, a character reference check, and a Release Authorization for a criminal background check.
5. Any person applying for a worker position who is a survivor of child sexual or physical abuse needs love and acceptance from the church family, along with the realization that his/her experience with abuse and the recovery process may be pertinent to suitability as a ministry worker. Applicants who are survivors of abuse should discuss this in confidence with the pastor.
6. All workers who drive vehicles (Church owned, rental, or personal) for conducting church business or transporting children must complete an "Auto Safety" form. Drivers should be a licensed adult who has been approved by Elizabeth Baptist Church transportation committee to drive church vehicles. It is preferred to have two adults in each vehicle, at least one of whom has been approved pursuant to the Good Shepherd program.
 - Personal Vehicles –
 - a.) if at all possible, church vehicles should be used for children/youth transportation
 - b.) in the event that a personal vehicle is used, there must be at least two children/youth with the licensed driver
 - c.) occupancy shall be limited to the number of seatbelts available in the vehicle
 - d.) except as otherwise provided, with written permission of parent/guardian, children/youth may only travel in personal vehicles to church functions with licensed driver, 18 years of age or older, approved by the staff person in charge of the activity
 - e.) it is preferred that drivers of personal vehicles be approved pursuant to Good Shepherd program
 - f.) Auto Safety Certification Form will be completed at a minimum of one week prior to event and reviewed by program leader.
7. Directors may check at least two references for each applicant. References may be checked by phone, mail or in person.
8. Church employees must be certified in CPR. It is strongly recommended that anyone working directly with children/youth will be CPR certified. Costs for this training will be paid for by the church.
9. All workers agree that they understand the guidelines and will agree to abide by them by signing "Guidelines" forms for their positions.
10. Two Appointed Reviewers, who are longstanding members of the church will be assigned by the Pastor to review all confidential information. This includes the information from

the background checks, the Confidential Questionnaire that is part of the application. After reviewing the results from the background checks, an approved list will be provided to the Nominating Committee. Should the reviewer have any concern as a result of the background checks or the Confidential Questionnaire they will be taken to the Pastor. The church will secure and keep confidential all other information received in the applicant selection process. Only the Pastor will have access to the records (Confidential Questionnaire and background checks). In the absence of a Pastor, the Good Shepherd Committee in consultation with the ministerial staff, will appoint the new reviewers.

11. Applicants can begin working while the church is waiting for background information and references, with the understanding that during this time all work will be closely supervised.
12. The church reserves the right to repeat a background check on persons who have a break in service of one or more years who have had five or more years of service.

Process for Applicants:

- Nominating Committee will contact potential children/youth workers.
- Workers who accept positions will receive from the Nominating Committee an application packet (consisting of the application form, confidential questionnaire, and authorization form for criminal background checks).
- Worker/Applicants will return the completed application packet to the secured drop box at EBC.
- The Appointed Reviewers will retrieve the application packets from the drop box.
- The Appointed Reviewers will review the confidential questionnaire for each applicant. The reviewers will then order criminal background checks for each applicant. Any application packets flagged as questionable will be forwarded to the senior pastor.
- Original documents for each application packet will be stored in a secured location at EBC. The confidential questionnaire and criminal background check will not be distributed to anyone other than the Appointed Reviewer, the Senior Pastor, or the Applicant.
- Upon finding an application acceptable, the Appointed Reviewers will forward a copy of the application form (no questionnaire or background check) either to the Minister of Students or Minister to Children, depending on the program. The ministers will give the application form to the respective program leaders.

- Program leaders will contact the references listed on the application form. Program leaders will also conduct interviews with the applicant at this time.

Description of Application Packets –

- A. Application Form – includes Contact Info, Employment History and 3 References
- B. Confidential Questionnaire – Questions of a personal and private nature concerning abuse
- C. Authorization for Criminal Background Check – will require Social Security Number

Guidelines –

- A. Nominating Committee will contact the worker and ask them to fill the position
- B. If candidate is interested, Nominating Committee will send a packet to the Applicant
- C. Completed packet to be dropped in Lock Box at EBC
- D. Program Leader will Contact Candidate for Interview

Minimum Age

All children's workers must be 18 years of age or older. All Youth Workers must be 18 years of age or older and a minimum of 5 years older than the oldest youth in attendance. Younger children (grade 7 through age 17) can assist in the room, but cannot take the place of adult workers. No persons under the age of 18 will be allowed to be in the infant and/or toddler classroom. All workers must be 18 years of age or older.

Confidential Interviews

All applicants may be interviewed for suitability for the work they desire to do. Interviews will be conducted by the leader of the program in which the applicant will work or by other persons designated by the program leader. A team of interviewers may be used. Church policy and guidelines should be discussed during the interview.

Six-Month Rule

Applicants must have been a member in regular attendance of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** for at least six months and having demonstrated a profession of faith prior to becoming a worker. This time of interaction between ministry leaders and the applicant allows leaders to better evaluate the suitability of an applicant for youth work. In some situations this rule is not feasible and may be waived (such as church employees or interns who are not church members). If the six-month rule is waived, program leaders may take additional steps to screen the applicant at their own discretion.

Application Forms

Applicants must complete and sign an application and the related waivers giving permission to

check references and background information.

Survivors of Child Abuse

Any applicant who is a survivor of childhood sexual or physical abuse needs the love and acceptance of the **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** family. A person's experience with abuse and their recovery process may be pertinent to their suitability as ministry workers. Applicants who are survivors of abuse should discuss this in confidence with the person who conducts the confidential interview. If an applicant is uncomfortable doing so, they may have the interview conducted by a pastor.

When evaluating candidates, the following factors will be considered if an applicant is a survivor of child abuse:

- whether the applicant has previously committed an act of child abuse or molestation (anyone who has maltreated children may not serve in children's or youth ministry)
- the extent of professional counseling the applicant has received
- the opinion of references, especially professional counselors who have served the applicant
- the opinion of leaders in other churches or youth organizations in which the applicant has been involved
- how closely the church is able to supervise and monitor the position for which the applicant is applying

Criminal Background Check

Required for worker positions.

References

Church leaders will check **at least** two references for each worker. The references will be done by phone, mail, or in person. Whenever possible, the references should include: persons who have known the applicant well for an extended period of time and/or a former supervisors, etc. The "Children's and Youth Worker Reference" form will be filled out by the person conducting the phone reference check.

Auto Safety

Persons who will drive vehicles for conducting church business or transporting children on a regular basis must complete an "Auto Safety" form. This rule is at the discretion of the appropriate ministry leader. It is not necessary for people who will not transport youth.

First Aid Training

Church employees who supervise young people must maintain current certification in basic first aid and basic CPR. Costs for this training will be paid by the church. Employees will be paid for attending training. New employees must get this certification within 90 days of the start of their employment. Nursery workers and others serving young children may also want training in infant and toddler CPR. Other workers are encouraged, but not required, to get training if they frequently accompany kids on adventure activities: water sports, camping, home-building mission trips, etc.

Signatures on Guidelines

All applicants must agree by signature that they understand the guidelines pertaining to their positions and that they agree to abide by them. This requirement will be met by having applicants sign the printed "Guidelines" forms that are appropriate to their position. Staff members or volunteers who work with several ministry areas should sign the appropriate form for each ministry area.

Confidentiality of Information

The church will keep confidential all information received in the applicant selection process. Selection information will be marked as such and stored with limited access afforded only to church staff and others with a need to know.

Delays in Receiving Information

While the church is waiting for background information and references, applicants may begin working in contact with children. During this time only closely supervised work should be done by the applicant. Failure to receive satisfactory responses in a timely manner may result in dismissal or withdrawal of the offer to work with the youth ministry program.

Procedures for Background Checks/Applications/Confidential Questionnaires/Guidelines

Remove application packets from “Good Shepherd” box.

Each packet should contain the following for each person.

1. Application
2. Confidential Questionnaires
3. Authorization for Criminal Background Check
4. “Guidelines for.....” Sheets

For the Application - Please complete the following steps.

- A. Check to make sure the application is completed in its entirety.
- B. Set aside until background check is complete
- C. If background check comes back ok, please put the application(with the Guidelines Sheet attached) in the corresponding notebook for the Children’s Ministry and/or Youth Ministry
- D. Complete Yes_____ No_____

For the Confidential Questionnaire - Please complete the following steps.

- A. Check to make sure the Confidential Questionnaire is completed in its entirety.
- B. Check for any problems or “red flags” that raise a question.
- C. If any questions are raised or problems arise, please pass this entire packet to the Pastor.
- D. If no questions or “red flags” come up, set aside until background check is complete.
- E. If background check comes back ok, please file in the appropriate safe and secure location designated by the staff.
- F. Complete Yes_____ No_____

For the Authorization for Criminal Background Check - Please complete the following steps.

- A. Check to make sure the Authorization for Criminal Background Check is completed in its entirety.
- B. Run the background check on the individual.
- C. Print the Background check and attach it to the Authorization.
- D. If a problem or “red flag” comes back on the background check, please have a consultation with and pass the individuals packet to the pastor.

- E. Sign and date the Authorization for Criminal Background Check form, stating the check has been completed, in the space provided.
- F. Attach to the Confidential Questionnaire and file in the appropriate safe and secure location designated by the staff.
- G. Complete Yes_____ No_____

For the “Guidelines for...” Sheet - Please complete the following steps.

- A. Check to make sure it is signed.
- B. If background check comes back ok, please attach to the application and put in the corresponding notebook for the Children’s Ministry and/or Youth Ministry
- C. Complete Yes_____ No_____

If there are any problems (red flags or questionable background checks) please give the entire completed packet to Pastor.

If there are no problems and the background check comes back ok, remember to:

1. Attach Application and Guidelines Sheet together and put in the notebook for the Children’s Ministry and/or Youth Ministry.
2. Attach the Confidential Questionnaire to the Authorization for Criminal Background Check and printed copy of background check and file in the appropriate safe and secure location designated by the staff.

When each item is complete, please check yes or no in the appropriate box.

It is of greatest importance that all information be kept confidential.

Reviewer’s Name_____ Date_____

Confidential Questionnaire Personnel File Checklist

Name _____ Reviewer _____

Has applicant been a church member for at least six months? **Y** **N** Waived

R=Received, W=Waived, NR=Not Required

Items contained in this file:

Initials/Date

Signed Application Form	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	mandatory	_____
Signed Release and Authorization Form	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	mandatory	_____
Reference 1	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	mandatory	_____
Reference 2	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	mandatory	_____
Reference 3	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NR	_____
Interview Notes	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NR	_____
Criminal/Court Records Background Check	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NR	_____
Child Abuse Registry Check (if available)	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NR	_____
Signed Auto Safety Form (if driving)	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NR	_____
Copy of Driver's License and Proof of Insurance (if driving)	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NR	_____
Signed Permission/Waiver Form	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	mandatory	_____
Special Waiver Forms (if needed)	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NR	_____
Signed Copy of Applicable Guidelines for Youth Workers	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	mandatory	_____

The applicant has:

Received a copy of the job description(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NR	_____
Received a copy of the applicable Guidelines for Youth Workers	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NR	_____
Received a copy of the Rapid Response Guidebook	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NR	_____
Attended appropriate training	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NR	_____
Current CPR and first aid certification	<input type="checkbox"/> R	<input type="checkbox"/> W	<input type="checkbox"/> NR	_____

Children's and Youth Ministry Application

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Note: This form is to be completed by all applicants (volunteer and employee) for any position involving supervision or custody of minors. This application is used by **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** to help promote a safe environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs or use our facilities.

Any applicant who has ever been convicted of child sexual abuse, physical abuse, or domestic violence should not volunteer service in any church sponsored activity or program for children or youth. Applicants with criminal records of other types will be evaluated at the discretion of church leaders.

Any applicant who is a survivor of childhood sexual or physical abuse needs the love and acceptance of the **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** family. Applicants who have such a history should discuss their desire to work with youth with the **MINISTER TO STUDENTS OR MINISTER TO CHILDREN** or senior pastor prior to any participation as a youth worker.

All applicants must study and agree to obey the guidelines that are provided for their program and position within the church's children's and youth ministry.

Please answer each question.

Consistent with relevant law, the information on this application will not be disclosed to unauthorized persons. Circle **Y** for yes or **N** for no. You may use the back of the paper for explanations or you may attach extra pages.

Applicant Identification

Name _____
Last First Middle

Y N Have you used any other names? If yes, please list complete name and dates of use on the reverse side of this application.

Present Address _____
Street City State Zip

Home Phone (____) _____ Work Phone (____) _____

What age of children/youth work do you prefer? _____

On what date would you be available? _____

Church Activity

List other churches you have attended over the past five years.

<i>Church Name</i>	<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Contact</i>	<i>Years Attended</i>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Name of church of which you are (check one): _____

a member currently most recently I have never been a member of a church before.

If a member of this church, how long have you been attending **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH**? _____

List previous work (church and non-church) involving children or youth.

Use a separate sheet of paper if needed.

<i>Church Name</i>	<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Contact</i>	<i>Type of Work</i>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

List gifts, callings, training, education, or other factors that may have prepared you for work with children and youth. Use a separate sheet of paper if needed.

Please give a statement of your Christian faith:

Employment History

Identify the last three employers for whom you have worked. Include part-time and temporary employers. Start with your most recent employer.

<i>Employer Name & Supervisor's Name</i>	<i>Area Code & Phone Number</i>	<i>Title & Duties</i>	<i>Dates Employed</i>	<i>Reason for Leaving</i>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Please describe your activities during any gaps in employment in excess of three months. Do not include leave or time off due to illness or medical treatment.

References *(Please list people not related by blood or marriage.)*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address & Telephone</i>	<i>Years Known/Relationship</i>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Applicant's Statement

I hereby authorize all employers, organizations, churches, and other entities and persons identified in this form to release any information contained in their files or records concerning me.

In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH**, I hereby release **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** and 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. I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF, AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT.

I understand and agree that it is critical to the mission and ministry of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** that all employees and volunteers conform to the highest standards of safety, interpersonal conduct, and sexual morality. I affirm that I will strictly comply with **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** youth ministry policies and procedures, including those concerning child safety and protection, sexual abuse and misconduct, and interpersonal relationships. I understand and agree that failure by me to abide by such policies and procedures may result in my immediate dismissal, or disciplinary action, all in the discretion of the church.

My responses above are truthful and accurate. I understand and agree that if they are not truthful and accurate, **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** may determine that I am no longer qualified to be associated with its programs as a church worker, employee, or volunteer in any capacity.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Youth/Children's Worker Authorization for Criminal/Court Records Check

Release Authorization

In connection with my application for placement, I understand that an investigative report may be requested that will include information as to my character, work habits, performance, and experience, along with reasons for disciplinary action or termination of past employment. I understand that as directed by policy and consistent with the job described, you may be requesting information from public and private sources about my: criminal record, driving record, education, and previous employment.

The fact that applicants have a criminal record will not be an automatic bar to employment or work as a volunteer. Factors such as age at the time of the criminal offense, seriousness and nature of the violation, time elapsed, and subsequent rehabilitation will be taken into account. In certain states (Colorado, Illinois, Ohio, Oklahoma, or Washington state), applicants are not required to disclose the contents of sealed criminal records. I acknowledge that a telephonic facsimile (fax) or photographic copy shall be as valid as the original. This release is valid for most federal, state, and county agencies, including the Minnesota Department of Labor.

I hereby authorize, without reservation, any law enforcement agency, court, institution, information service bureau, school, employer, or other organization or person contacted by the employer or its agent to furnish the information described above.

Signature *Print your full name* *Today's Date*

The following information 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 purpose.

Print other last names you have used

Home Address *City* *State* *Zip*

Social Security Number *Date of Birth*

License Number *Name as it appears on license* *State Issuing License* *Driver's*

Check completed by _____ Date _____

CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

Date: _____

- Y N** As a church youth worker, do you agree to observe all guidelines and policies regarding working with youth or children?
- Y N** Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (felony or misdemeanor, except for minor traffic violations)? You will need to answer "yes" if you have entered into a plea agreement, including a deferred sentence or deferred judgment arrangement, in connection with a criminal charge. If you have been convicted of such an offense, please attach a statement of explanation, including nature of offense, date, court where conviction was entered, and any other relevant information.
- Y N** Have you ever been charged with a sexual offense, offense relating to children, or crime of violence? If you have been charged with such an offense, please attach a statement of explanation, including nature of offense charged, date, law enforcement agency making the charge, and any other relevant information.
- Y N** Have you ever been reported to a social services agency, law enforcement authority, child abuse registry, or similar organization regarding abuse or misconduct involving children? If so, provide a description of the circumstances and name and address of the entity receiving the report.
- Y N** Have you ever been subjected to expulsion, reprimand, or other discipline by a church, denomination, or other organization? If so please describe the circumstances and provide the name and address of the church, denomination or religious organization involved.
- Y N** Have you ever been disciplined or dismissed from employment or a volunteer position by any employer, including charitable and religious organizations, following an allegation of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or other immoral or inappropriate behavior or conduct? If so please describe the circumstances and the name and address of the employer.
- Y N** Have you ever been the subject of a civil lawsuit involving sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or other immoral behavior or conduct, involving adults or children? If so please describe the circumstances and provide the name and address of the employer, educational institutions, church, or other organization where the lawsuit, investigation, or allegation arose or occurred.
- Y N** Have you ever been the subject of a complaint or disciplinary proceeding against a

professional license or other license held by you, including but not limited to a license to provide child care or similar services?

- Y N** Have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary action, transfer, or dismissal, or been named as a defendant in a civil or criminal lawsuit, as a result of an accident or mishap involving children? If so please describe the circumstances and provide the name and address of the employer, church, or organization with which you and/or the children were associated at the time of the incident.
- Y N** Do you have any investigation, review, or disciplinary action pending by an employer, organization in which you volunteered, licensing authority, or professional association for sexual misconduct, violence, or misconduct involving children?
- Y N** Were you abused as a child? *You may refuse to answer this question, or you may discuss your answer in confidence with a pastor or church leader rather than answering on this form. Answering yes or failing to answer will not automatically disqualify an applicant for children or youth work.*

Children's and Youth Worker Reference Form

All information will be held in confidence and will not be released to unauthorized persons.

Applicant Name _____

Reference Name _____

Church or Organization _____

Contact Date _____

Person Contacting the Reference _____

Method of Contact ___ phone ___ letter ___ personal conversation

Reference Questions

How do you know the applicant? For how long have you known him or her?

Would you recommend this applicant for a position of trust supervising youth and children? Why or why not?

At this point ask any relevant and legal questions that are appropriate to the situation, such as specific duties, length of employment, strengths and weaknesses when dealing with young people, etc. Information may be noted on the back of this paper. Remind the reference that "information will not be disclosed to unauthorized persons."

Closing Question

Is there anything else we should know about this person before putting him/her in a position of trust with youth and children?

Auto Safety Certification

This form is intended for workers who have responsibility to conduct church business or transport youth/children by personal auto and/or church van or bus. Only persons 21 years of age or older, with valid driver's licenses and valid personal auto insurance may transport others as part of church activities.

Circle either **Y** for Yes or **N** for No. The information on this application will not be disclosed to unauthorized persons.

Y N Are you now a licensed driver? Please present your license to staff so they may copy it for the records.

Y N Do you currently have personal auto insurance? Please present your proof of insurance card to staff so they may copy it for the records.

Y N Have you been ticketed for driving violations (parking tickets not included) within the past 2 years? (If yes, please explain the nature of the tickets on the back of this paper.)

Agreement to Notify of Driving Events

I agree to immediately inform **CHAIRMAN OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE** or Senior Pastor if my driver's license is suspended or revoked, if I am ticketed for a driving offense, or if I have DUI or DWI charges pending. I must also notify **CHAIRMAN OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE** or the Senior Pastor if my personal auto insurance is canceled or not renewed. These notifications are required even if the offenses are not related to church work. The church will not release this information to unauthorized persons. *Note: Being ticketed for a minor offense does not automatically disqualify a worker from transporting people.*

Seat Belt Usage

I agree to transport persons only in passenger seats equipped with appropriate seat belts and child safety seats. I agree to require seat belt usage and child safety seat usage at all times. In buses that are not outfitted with seat belts, this rule does not apply.

Safe Vehicles

I agree to transport persons only in vehicles that are in safe operating condition.

I have truthfully and accurately responded to the questions above. I agree to notify the church if any of the driving events listed above occurs.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please print name _____

Guidelines for Nursery Workers –

*Note: We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. The church must deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** has implemented a policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be strictly followed by anyone who has custody or supervision of nursery age children. We pray for God's blessing for our children, workers, and church.*

Before You Begin

Six-Month Rule -- All workers must be a church member in regular attendance of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** for at least six months and having demonstrated a profession of faith prior to working in the nursery. This guideline may be waived for employees.

Completion of Application -- All nursery workers must complete and sign an application form.

Release Authorization Form -- All nursery workers must complete and sign a Release Authorization form.

References -- After gaining the applicant's permission, church leaders may contact references. Persons asked for references may be suggested by applicants or selected by church leaders. The church may contact employers, former ministers, and persons who have supervised applicants in church work previously.

Interview -- All nursery workers may be interviewed by a nursery or church leader to determine their suitability for nursery work. Information from this interview will not be released to unauthorized persons.

Background Check and Social Services Registry -- After gaining the applicant's permission, church leaders will conduct a criminal background check and a registry check for applicants: this is mandatory for primary positions and strongly suggested for secondary positions.

Signed Agreement to Follow Guidelines -- All nursery workers must sign the agreement at the end of these guidelines to show their commitment to observe these guidelines.

Guidelines

Two-Person Rule -- Two workers must be present in each nursery room at all times. This rule accomplishes two important objectives. First, it reduces the risk of child abuse. Secondly, it reduces the risk of unfounded claims of abuse. Teams of workers cannot be of the same household.

Only assigned workers may be in the nursery. There are two exceptions to this rule: nursing mothers and parents called to the nursery to calm an upset child.

Only parents can receive their child from the nursery. Nursery workers should release children only to their parents (not to older siblings). Children will be signed in by an adult, be given a beeper, and specify who will pick up the child.

Punishment (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are never appropriate in **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** activities. This rule holds true even if

parents have suggested, or given permission for, corporal punishment. Nursery workers must consult a nursery leader or other church leader if they need help with discipline techniques.

Workers must report suspected or observed child abuse to the nursery leader or a pastor immediately. Violations of these guidelines or suspect behavior by other workers must be reported in the same manner.

Workers must avoid even the appearance of misconduct. This is needed in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations.

Workers who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved from nursery duty at the sole discretion of church leaders.

I have read the guidelines above. I agree to observe them faithfully:

Signature _____ Date _____

Guidelines for Children's Sunday School Teachers

*Note: We live in an age where sexual misconduct and child abuse is a reality in our society. The church must deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** has implemented policies to help safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be strictly followed by anyone working in the Sunday school program. We pray for God's blessing for our children, workers, and church.*

Before You Begin

Six-Month Rule -- All workers must be a church member in regular attendance of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** for at least six months and having demonstrated a profession of faith prior to teaching Sunday School.

Completion of Application -- All Sunday School teachers must complete and sign an application form.

Release Authorization Form -- All Sunday School teachers must complete and sign a Release Authorization form.

References -- After gaining the applicant's permission, church leaders may contact references. Persons asked for references may be suggested by applicants or selected by church leaders. The church may contact employers, former ministers, and persons who have supervised applicants in church work previously.

Interview -- All Sunday school teachers may be interviewed by a church leader to determine their suitability for teaching. Information from this interview will not be released to unauthorized persons.

Background Check and Social Services Registry -- After gaining the applicant's permission, church leaders will conduct a criminal background check and a registry check for applicants: this is mandatory for all positions.

Auto Safety Form -- All Sunday School teachers who will be driving children or conducting other church business must complete and sign an Auto Safety form.

Signed Agreement to Follow Guidelines -- All Sunday School teachers must sign the agreement at the end of these guidelines to show their commitment to observe these guidelines.

Guidelines

Two-Person Rule -- Two workers must be present in each Sunday School room at all times. This rule accomplishes two important objectives. First, it reduces the risk of child abuse. Secondly, it reduces the risk of unfounded claims of abuse. Teams of workers cannot be of the same household.

Punishment (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are never appropriate in **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** activities. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested, or given permission for, corporal punishment. Teachers must

consult their supervisors or a pastor if they need help with misbehaving youth or discipline techniques. Psychological punishment such as humiliation by derogatory remarks, harsh or profane language, or actual or implied threats of physical punishment are never appropriate in **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** activities. Children will not be punished or shamed for bathroom accidents. Children will not be denied food or forced to eat food.

Teachers must report suspected or observed child abuse to the Sunday School Director or Pastor immediately. Violations of these guidelines or suspect behavior by other workers must be reported in the same manner.

Workers must avoid even the appearance of misconduct. This is needed in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations.

Workers who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved from Sunday School duty at the discretion of church leaders.

I have read the guidelines above. I agree to observe them faithfully:

Signature_____ Date_____

Guidelines for Youth Leaders, Teachers, and Workers

*Note: We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. The church must deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** has implemented a policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be strictly followed by anyone working with youth in **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH**. We pray for God's blessing for our children, workers, and church.*

Before You Begin

Six-Month Rule -- All workers must be a member in regular attendance of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** for at least six months and having demonstrated a profession of faith prior to becoming youth workers (except compensated employees and interns who meet "frequent contact" screening standards).

Completion of Application -- All youth program leaders must complete and sign an application form.

Release Authorization Form -- All youth workers must complete and sign a Release Authorization form.

References -- After gaining the applicant's permission, church leaders may contact references. Persons asked for references may be suggested by applicants or selected by church leaders. The church may contact employers, former ministers, and persons who have supervised applicants in church work previously.

Interview -- youth leaders may be interviewed by a church representative to determine their suitability for youth group work. Information from this interview will not be released to unauthorized persons.

Background Check and Social Services Registry -- After gaining the applicant's permission, church leaders will conduct a criminal background check and a registry check for applicants: this is mandatory for all positions.

Auto Safety Form -- All youth workers who will be driving children or conducting other church business must complete and sign an Auto Safety form.

Signed Agreement to Follow Guidelines -- All youth leaders must sign the agreement at the end of these guidelines to show their commitment to observe these guidelines.

Guidelines

Team Leadership -- Teams of adults (at least two adults not in the same household) must supervise and be present at all activities. This policy has three purposes: it provides for more than one adult to help ensure appropriate levels of supervision, it protects adults from unfounded allegations, and it lessens the possibility of an adult becoming a "guru" who thrives on the dependency of youth as well as an adult having undue influence over an individual youth.

Overnight Activities -- At least two adults will supervise overnight activities. If the participants are male and female, then male and female chaperones must be present. If these conditions cannot be met, then the event should be postponed. It is never appropriate for an adult chaperone who is not a family member to share a bed with a youth. Males and females attending events must not share the same sleeping quarters and should have separate access to bathroom facilities. Experienced adult workers should be included with adults who are newcomers to youth ministry.

Sleeping Arrangements

- a) On overnight trips. Room arrangements shall be as follows, if at all possible:
- b) In hotel/motel settings, youth/children will be housed separately from adults. (Exception: Members of the same household.)
- c) In camp settings, where all males share one room and all females share another room, there will be a minimum of three persons when youth and adults share the same room.
- d) No children/youth shall ever share a bed with an adult.
- e) Co-ed rooming is not permitted except for married couples and family units.
- f) The staff person in charge of the event must have a list of occupancy. Each chaperone will have a list of assigned children/youth.
- g) At no time shall males be in female rooms or females be in male rooms.
- h) All event participants will adhere to the established curfew and behavior guidelines.

Counseling -- Youth workers are not prepared or supported for long-term counseling or formal therapy. Adult leaders are encouraged to refer youth who they suspect have a serious need for counseling to the Youth Minister.

Informal Contact (Independent of Church Activities) -- Informal contact refers to phone calls, letters, or face-to-face contact between an adult worker and a youth that is not connected to official church activities. The church recognizes that informal contact between worker and youth frequently occurs. For example, workers may hire teens as baby sitters for their own children, or workers may see kids during social events with the child's family. This interaction is usually legitimate and beneficial. However, workers should seek permission of parents before having informal contact with their child. The worker should clearly let the parent know the nature of the contact and that it is not part of church activity. Parents are responsible for monitoring this informal contact.

Transportation To and From Meetings -- Transportation to and from meetings is not part of church or youth group activities. Parents are responsible for providing or arranging for this transportation. Parents are discouraged from asking leaders to transport children. However, if a leader does transport a child at the parent's request, this should be recognized as informal contact (not a part of church activities), and the guidelines for informal contact should be followed (see paragraph above).

Transportation as a Part of Church Programs -- The church may from time to time provide transportation as an official part of church activities. For example, the church may provide transportation to out-of-town events or field trips. When children are transported as part church activities, all guidelines will apply. See Item #6 in General Guidelines for a

more detailed transportations description. Following the two-adult rule and having all drivers complete an auto safety certification form are especially important.

High Adventure Activities -- Special precautions must be taken on high adventure activities, such as rock climbing, hiking, overnight camps, raft trips, or the like. Both physical safety and safety from abuse are at risk in high adventure situations. A high ratio of adults to youth is recommended. Guides for high adventure activities should be licensed by the sports governing body or government authorities to guide groups whenever possible. *High adventure camping often raises unique circumstances involving individual privacy, sleeping arrangements, bathroom facilities, and so on. Adult leaders must be vigilant to avoid suspicious or misinterpreted behavior in these circumstances.*

Confidentiality -- **Youth workers must report to a clergy person if a minor discusses harming himself or others, committing a crime, or being abused.** There are limits to confidentiality when working with youth. Questions about such cases or other issues of confidentiality must be discussed promptly with the youth minister (or senior minister if the youth minister is not available). Any serious issues discussed in confidence should be reviewed with one of the ministers, who will also protect the confidential nature of the discussion. Conferring with a minister on sensitive issues is not considered breaking a confidence.

Youth Supervising Youth -- Minors may help adults lead youth activities only under the direct leadership of adults. A minor may not be used to meet the team leadership or team counseling guidelines discussed above.

Gifts -- Youth workers are generally discouraged from giving personal gifts or money to youth. When the giving of personal gifts is desired, the youth worker must first notify parents and the youth minister. Gifts can be easily misinterpreted. Gifts given to groups of young people are appropriate, such as graduation presents or awards for participation.

Punishment -- punishment (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are not appropriate in **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** activities. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested, or given permission for, corporal punishment. Youth workers must consult their supervisors or a minister if they need help with misbehaving youth or discipline techniques. Psychological punishment such as humiliation by derogatory remarks, harsh or profane language, or actual or implied threats of physical punishment is not appropriate in **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** activities.

Open Door Policy -- All youth events should be open door. This means that workers, parents, and church members have a right to observe any youth activity.

Dating or Sexual Involvement -- No adult youth worker is to date a youth or be romantically or sexually involved with a youth. Any adult with prior incidents of sexual misconduct may not be a youth worker or serve in any capacity of youth ministry at **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH**. There are no exceptions to this guideline.

Workers must report suspected or observed misconduct by other workers to the Youth Minister or Pastor immediately.

Supervision and Communication -- Youth workers must meet on a regular basis with the youth program leader and the youth program leader must meet with the Minister of Students periodically to discuss any issues regarding these guidelines. Appropriate topics that must be discussed include problems, accountability, policy clarification, personal feelings, or other issues that may interfere with youth ministry efforts.

Workers must avoid even the appearance of misconduct. This is necessary in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations.

Workers who disobey these guidelines may be relieved from youth program duty at the discretion of church ministerial staff leaders.

I have read the guidelines above. I agree to observe them faithfully:

Signature_____ Date_____

Guidelines for Weekly Activity Leaders

This includes any activities other than Sunday morning activities. This would include choir, IMFC, and mission organization, and others that meet weekly.

*Note: We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. The church must deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** has implemented a policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be strictly followed by anyone working with youth. We pray for God's blessing for our children, workers, and church.*

Before You Begin

Six-Month Rule -- All workers must be members in regular attendance of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** and having demonstrated a profession of faith for at least six months before becoming workers.

Completion of Application -- All workers must complete and sign an application form.

Release Authorization Form -- All workers must complete and sign a Release Authorization form.

References -- After gaining the applicant's permission, church leaders may contact references. Persons asked for references may be suggested by applicants or selected by church leaders. The church may contact employers, former ministers, and persons who have supervised applicants in church work previously.

Interview -- All workers may be interviewed by a church representative to determine their suitability for this ministry. Information from this interview will not be released to unauthorized persons.

Background Check and Social Services Registry -- After gaining the applicant's permission, church leaders will conduct a criminal background check and a registry check for applicants: this is mandatory for all positions.

Auto Safety Form -- All workers who will be driving children/youth or conducting other church business must complete and sign an Auto Safety form.

Signed Agreement to Follow Guidelines -- All workers must sign the agreement at the end of these guidelines to show their commitment to observe these guidelines.

Guidelines

Team Leadership or Two-Adult Rule – All weekly events must be supervised by at least two unrelated adults who have been approved. For field trips at least one worker should be the same gender as the children on the activity. Experienced adult workers should be included with adults who are newcomers to this work. *This policy has three purposes: it provides for more than one adult to help ensure appropriate levels of supervision, it protects adults from unfounded allegations, and it lessens the possibility of an adult*

becoming a "guru" who thrives on the dependency of youth as well as an adult having undue influence over an individual youth.

Overnight Activities -- It is never appropriate for an adult chaperon who is not a family member to share a bed with a youth. Males and females attending events must not share the same sleeping quarters and should have separate access to bathroom facilities. Adult workers should be included with adults who are newcomers to youth ministry.

Sleeping Arrangements

- a) On overnight trips. Room arrangements shall be as follows, if at all possible:
- b) In hotel/motel settings, youth/children will be housed separately from adults. (Exception: Members of the same household.)
- c) In camp settings, where all males share one room and all females share another room, there will be a minimum of three persons when youth and adults share the same room.
- d) No children/youth shall ever share a bed with an adult.
- e) Co-ed rooming is not permitted except for married couples and family units.
- f) The staff person in charge of the event must have a list of occupancy. Each chaperone will have a list of assigned children/youth.
- g) At no time shall males be in female rooms or females be in male rooms.
- h) All event participants will adhere to the established curfew and behavior guidelines.

Counseling -- Children/Youth workers are not prepared or supported for long-term counseling or formal therapy. Adult leaders are encouraged to refer youth who they suspect have a serious need for counseling to the Youth Minister.

Informal Contact (Independent of Church or Club Activities) -- Informal contact refers to phone calls, letters, or face-to-face contact between an adult worker and a youth that is not connected to official church activities. The church recognizes that informal contact between worker and youth frequently occurs. (For example, workers might hire teens as baby sitters for their own children, or workers may see kids during social events with the child's family.) This interaction is usually legitimate and beneficial. However, workers should seek permission of parents before having informal contact with their child. The worker should clearly let the parent know the nature of the contact and that it is not part of church activity. Parents are responsible for monitoring this informal contact.

Transportation To and From Meetings -- Transportation to and from club meetings is not part of church or club activities. Parents are responsible for providing or arranging for this transportation. Parents are discouraged from asking club leaders to transport children. However, if a leader does transport a child at the parent's request, this should be recognized as informal contact and the guidelines for informal contact should be followed (see paragraph above).

Transportation as a Part of Church Programs -- The church may from time to time provide transportation as an official part of church activities. For example, the church may provide transportation to out-of-town events or field trips. When children are transported as a part of club activities, all guidelines will apply. Following the two-adult rule and having all drivers complete an auto safety certification form are especially important.

Gifts -- Youth workers as a general rule are not to give personal gifts or money to youth. When the giving of personal gifts is desired, the youth worker first must notify parents and the worker/leader. Gifts can be easily misinterpreted. Gifts given to groups of young people are appropriate, such as graduation presents or awards for participation.

Open Door Policy -- All club events should be open door. This means that pastors, parents, and church members have a right to observe any youth activity.

Confidentiality -- Leaders/Workers must report to a program leader or clergy immediately if a minor discusses harming himself or others, committing a crime, or being abused. There are limits to confidentiality when working with youth. Questions about such cases or other issues of confidentiality must be discussed promptly with the youth pastor (or senior pastor if the youth pastor is out of town). Any serious issues discussed in confidence should be reviewed with one of the pastors, who will also protect the confidential nature of the discussion. Conferring with a leader or pastor on sensitive issues is not considered breaking a confidence.

Youth Supervising Youth -- Minors may help adults lead youth activities only under the direct leadership of adults. A minor may not be used to meet the team leadership or team counseling guidelines discussed above.

Punishment -- punishment (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are never appropriate in **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** activities. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested, or given permission for, corporal punishment. Workers must consult their supervisors or a pastor if they need help with misbehaving children/youth or discipline techniques. Psychological punishment such as humiliation by derogatory remarks, harsh or profane language, or actual or implied threats of physical punishment is not appropriate in **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** activities.

High Adventure Activities -- Special precautions must be taken on high adventure activities, such as rock climbing, hiking, overnight camps, raft trips, or the like. Both physical safety and safety from abuse are at risk in high adventure situations. A high ratio of adults to youth is recommended. Guides for high adventure activities should be licensed by the sports governing body or government authorities to guide groups whenever possible. *High adventure camping often raises unique circumstances involving individual privacy,*

sleeping arrangements, bathroom facilities, and so on. Adult leaders must be vigilant to avoid suspicious or misinterpreted behavior in these circumstances.

Workers must report suspected or observed misconduct to their supervisor or senior pastor immediately. Violations of these guidelines or suspect behavior must be reported in the same manner.

Supervision and Communication ---leaders must meet on a regular basis with the program leader, and the program leader must meet with the senior pastor periodically to discuss any issues regarding these guidelines. Appropriate topics that must be discussed include problems, accountability, policy clarification, personal feelings, or other issues that may interfere with youth ministry efforts.

Workers must avoid even the appearance of misconduct. This is necessary in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations.

Workers who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved from their duties at the discretion of church leaders.

I have read the guidelines above. I agree to observe them faithfully:

Signature _____ Date_____

Guidelines for Interviewing Applicants

Red Flags

Red flags alone do not mean that an individual is a potential danger to youth. But they are possible indicators that an individual may participate in unhealthy relationships with children or even be a child molester. Red flags are signals for program leaders to consider the applicant more carefully, to look a bit deeper into his or her background, and to be especially careful in making decisions to approve or disapprove the applicant.

A specific interest in a certain age group or gender. Child molesters sometimes fixate on children of the same age they were when first molested.

Over-involvement with children and youth. Excessive activity with youth may indicate a person is fixated on youth, lacks adult outlets for recreation, or is seeking access to youth in a variety of programs.

Lack of adult relationships. Healthy workers have adult relationships for friendships and, when appropriate, for romantic reasons. They do not need to turn to youth to meet their basic need for relationships.

Lack of adult interests. Interest in adult hobbies and in adult groups shows that youth workers have balanced lives that are not overly concentrated on children.

Instability in work and life. Look out for people who move or change jobs frequently and do not have a plausible explanation for it. Child molesters often move from place to place as people become suspicious or to seek out new opportunities to molest children. Instability in work may mean that an applicant has a drug or an alcohol problem.

Gaps in a person's life history. A unexplained gap in a resume or history may mean that the applicant served a prison term or is covering up a difficult time in his or her life.

A history of abuse or family instability. A person who experienced abuse or family problems while growing up may have unresolved emotional issues. These issues can interfere in their ability to work with children. Also, child abuse often occurs in unstable families facing problems with alcohol/drugs, mental illness, extreme poverty, etc.

Stressful events in the applicant's recent past. Events such as the death of a close family member, divorce, marital problems, unemployment, etc., often cause stress. This stress can lead applicants to react in unhealthy ways.

Evasive or misleading answers. Dishonesty is an indicator that a person is not trustworthy enough for working with kids and may be hiding vital information.

Rigidity in belief or doctrines. Applicants may have strong beliefs, but they should demonstrate flexibility in dealing with different points of view and accepting people as they are. A larger-than-expected proportion of child abusers come from rigid, orthodox backgrounds that encourage a one-dimensional perspective on important issues. Be cautious with applicants who have an overly-strong, personal agenda for youth. Look out for statements such as "I want to train children to believe in God just like I do" or "Children today are spoiled, so I want to teach them the strong discipline I grew up with."

What To Look For

Applicants with a clear explanation of why they want to work with youth.

Applicants with well-balanced lifestyles involving work, family, friends, recreation, and spiritual growth.

Applicants who have demonstrated maturity and people skills over the long term in their life experiences.

Applicants who are open to differences in people, flexible in dealing with people, and have a sense of humor.

Applicants who demonstrate appropriate reactions to stress.

Applicants who understand the need for screening and supervision and who react to it positively rather than defensively.

Interview Questions

Start the interview with a reminder that "information will not be disclosed to unauthorized people." Begin with light questions and ask the more personal ones as the applicant relaxes.

1. Tell me about your family when you were growing up.
2. What were your family's religious beliefs when you were a child?
3. Tell me about your hobbies and interests outside of church.
4. What is the biggest problem in children's lives right now? (Look for a coherent, well-reasoned answer that demonstrates the applicant has thought about kids' problems.)
5. Give me a brief rundown of your life. (Follow up with questions to address where they grew up, their childhood, education, work experience, churches they have been a member of, job and residence changes, etc.)
6. Tell me about other work with children you have done.
7. Is there anything else I should know about you that might affect how you work with children at **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH?**

Training Strategies for Prevention of Abuse

Outcry Training for Children and Parents

ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH will institute outcry training for kindergarten-age children and above and their parents. (*Suggested training outlines are provided in the Good Shepherd Handbook.*) The objectives of outcry training are to enable kids or parents to:

- recognize abuse,
- resist abuse,
- report abuse or attempted abuse, and
- reduce the shame, stigma, and confusion with open discussion, clear information, and unconditional support for children.

Training for Children's and Youth Ministry Workers

ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH will train workers to keep young people safe. This training is mandatory for children's and youth ministry workers and other church workers who may work with children's and youth ministry.

The training will be offered to incoming workers. Refresher training will also be offered to veteran workers. The training will include the following information:

1. the nature of the problem, especially child sexual abuse
2. recognition of child abuse indicators in children and in adults who may be abusers
3. explanation verbally and in writing of policies and rules that apply to each category of worker
4. discussion of expectations
 - avoiding the appearance of misconduct
 - monitoring coworkers' behavior
 - accountability for violation of rules
5. recognizing inappropriate behavior and situations open to problems or misunderstandings
6. reporting requirements (*You must explain this responsibility clearly to workers, especially if church employees are mandatory reporters under your state law.*)
7. how to respond to an incident or an emergency- This should include topics such as:
 - what to do when you believe a child is the victim of inappropriate conduct by a church worker
 - what to do when you believe a child in your program is a victim of abuse by family members or others
 - what to do when you believe that two children in your program are involved in inappropriate sexual activities
 - what to do when two adult church workers are engaged in an inappropriate sexual relationship
8. your church's touching policy
9. appropriate discipline techniques
10. who to turn to for advice or help

Response Procedures for Serious Incidents—Abuse or Accidents

General Principles

When responding to allegations of abuse, the church and its representatives will keep several key principles in mind:

1. Reports should be taken seriously.
2. Allegations should be handled with sensitivity for people's privacy and confidentiality.
3. The church should cooperate with law enforcement and social services. (*An attorney should be retained to guide the church in this area.*)
4. The victim should not be blamed.
5. The church should seek to provide support as appropriate for alleged victims, alleged offenders, and their families during this period of great stress.
6. The insurance carrier should be contacted as soon as possible.

Reports of questionable behavior must be taken seriously.

They should not be ignored or allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the accuser, the accused, and the church.

Allegations may occur in a variety of ways.

Since the church cannot control how a report will surface, it is important that officers, employees, and volunteers follow the steps described below. These steps will ensure that the allegation is channeled to the appropriate person and that the problem is not compounded by an improper response.

Non-church related allegations must be taken seriously.

Young people frequently choose to confide in church youth workers about abuse happening outside of the church. It is important that reports of this type are also handled sensitively and appropriately. The church's policies also apply to reported allegations not related to church activities or workers. These policies are appropriate for allegations involving church activities **and** non-church related reports of abuse.

When a Victim Reports Abuse

The person hearing the initial report should follow these steps:

Listen supportively.

Hear the victim out -- do not minimize or discount the allegation.

Do not judge the allegation negatively or positively.

Ask basic questions to clarify facts if needed, but do not try to investigate or verify the allegations of the report.

Note the pertinent details in writing as soon as possible after hearing the report, but don't take notes when the victim is speaking. Give him or her your full attention.

Contact the program leader, youth pastor, or senior pastor immediately. The leader or pastor will help decide on the next step, consult with legal counsel, and make the report to law enforcement if necessary.

If the senior pastor is being accused, the person receiving the initial report should contact the chair of the church's leadership council or a denomination representative if applicable. *(You should change this to reflect the proper title of the leader of your church council. Also include the title of an appropriate denominational leader if your church is a member of a denomination that has a procedure for reporting clergy misconduct to the denomination.)*

Do not discuss the allegation with anyone except those who have a need to know and are helping to respond.

If the safety of the child is at issue, the worker must use his or her own judgment to decide the best way to proceed. Youth workers may contact law enforcement directly if timing is critical and church leaders are unavailable for consultation. You may add the phone numbers for law enforcement and child protection hotlines here.

Police _____

Sheriff's Department _____

Child Protective Services _____

Church Workers Who Observe Questionable Activities or Suspicious Behavior

Any person who observes violations of church guidelines or has reasonable suspicions of inappropriate activity is required to report these concerns to an appropriate leader.

Write brief notes to document specifically what you have observed.

Contact the program leader, youth pastor, or senior pastor as soon as possible. In a private conversation, the program leader or pastor can help evaluate any suspicions.

The program leader or pastor is responsible for any further response to the situation. He or she must document the report in the confidential files. Possible responses can range from reminding the worker about following guidelines to reporting the incident to law enforcement.

Church Workers Responding to Serious Accidents

Render appropriate first aid and call for appropriate emergency help.

Provide emotional support to the victim(s) and other young people who may be upset by the

accident. (Prayer is usually appropriate!)

Contact the program leader, youth pastor, or senior pastor as soon as possible after ensuring the safety of victims. One of these leaders should then take charge of responding to the accident using the procedures listed below in this policy.

Write brief notes about what happened while the event is still fresh in your memory.

Be cautious about making statements that imply responsibility or provide information against the interests of the church and its workers.

Church Leaders Responding to Abuse

In cases of **serious** incidents, the leadership of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** will form a small team consisting of appropriate church leaders and any legal counsel they may retain (*recommended*). The team should respond quickly to an accident or report of abuse using the following guidelines:

The team should **evaluate the report** with the person(s) who heard the initial report.

The team should **decide** if a report to authorities is warranted. Guidance of the church's attorney is often necessary because reporting statutes and relevant criminal statutes may be complicated. This is a decision based on the information at hand and applicable laws.

The team should **not attempt to verify the allegations**.

The team should **contact law enforcement or social services**. Phone numbers are:

Police _____

Sheriff's Department _____

City or county child abuse hotline _____

The team should **cooperate with law enforcement** under the guidance of the church's attorney. With the consent of law enforcement, the team should **inform** the victim's parents, the accused worker, and the alleged victim that the child and youth worker are not to have further contact (including verbal contact). Also, the youth worker is to refrain from any youth work until the issue is resolved.

The team should **inform the church's insurance carrier**.

The team should **inform the denomination**.

The team should designate one of its members as a **spokesperson**. All contact with the news media should be handled by the spokesperson. The team should inform all necessary persons not to respond to media inquiries except to refer questions to the spokesperson.

The team should consider hiring a **public relations firm** or representative to help manage the publicity of a serious incident.

The team should **document** its activities in writing. Briefly log what is learned and what and when actions are taken. Logs should be dated and initialed or signed each time an entry is made.

Tips for Dealing with the News Media

Your church may be in the media spotlight if you have a serious accident or case of abuse. In general the media (and the public) want to know about institutions like churches that appear to misuse their authority or contradict their own principles. The fact that we do not expect children to get hurt by church workers makes the story newsworthy.

News of serious incidents usually reaches the media--when a law enforcement agency responds it usually goes on the public record. Since you can't prevent adverse publicity, prepare for it, minimize the damage, and manage it as best you can.

How to Deal with the Media After a Serious Event

Appoint a spokesperson and refer all inquiries to him or her. Ask everyone to refer media inquiries to the spokesperson. You may have someone in your church who is qualified for this or you may ask your attorney to serve this function.

Don't lie! Don't cover up! The truth usually comes out anyway. However, this does not mean you have to answer or provide negative information.

Take your time in responding. You may delay answering inquiries until you are prepared to do so or until you get advice from the response team. Don't let the pressure of the moment force you to say things that are inaccurate or poorly thought out.

Use "no comment" when necessary. You should not lie, but you do not have to answer media questions. The spokesperson may want to explain why the church is not commenting, so the public doesn't view "no comment" as a way of avoiding difficult questions. Possible explanations:

"We have no comment out of respect for the privacy of the victims and accused."

"We will not comment until we have a better understanding of what has occurred."

Present positive information even if you are saying "no comment" to some questions. Examples:
After a serious allegation of abuse:

"The church is committed to the safety of our young people. We have policies in place focused on child safety and we have a very good record to date. Over 200 kids take part in our church activities every year without any problems. Our prayers and sympathy are with everyone affected by this event. We are doing our best to cooperate with the authorities as they conduct their investigation."

After a serious accident:

"The church deeply regrets that this terrible accident has happened. We take the safety of our youth very seriously. We have policies in place focused on preventing injuries. Over 200 kids take part in our church activities every year and this is the first time an accident like this has happened. We are doing all we can to help the victim and his family and friends in this difficult time. They have our sympathy and our prayers."

Do not judge the guilt or innocence of anyone accused of wrongdoing. Do not judge whether or not allegations are warranted or true. As the church representative you should express regret that someone may have been harmed, hope for justice, and offer verbal support for people struggling with the effects of the incident.

Limit your comments to objective facts. Avoid conjecture or broad conclusions.

Avoid statements that cast blame or doubt on one of the people or families involved in the situation, even if such information may serve to protect the interests of the church. If people feel the church is attacking them, they are more likely to sue or provide biased information to investigators.

Avoid giving names of sexual abuse victims. This might be seen as an invasion of privacy. Also, most media outlets will not use them but do not take this for granted.

Avoid naming accused wrongdoers. The media may do this based on public records, but the church should avoid discussing individuals accused of wrongdoing. This might result in a defamation lawsuit brought by the wrongdoer. Consult with the church's attorney before discussing persons accused of wrongdoing with anyone other than church leaders with a need to know.

Don't say or show anything to reporters that you don't want to be publicized. Going "off the record" is a very murky subject that causes a lot of grief.

Do not give information and ask to remain anonymous. This is unprofessional and suggests you have something to hide. You may be embarrassed later if your anonymity is not protected.

Sample Form #10:

Confirmation Letter for Your Church's Insurance Carrier

Dear _____:

I am writing today in regard to the liability insurance policy for **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH**, policy # _____. I would like to confirm the terms and conditions of this policy as part of my church's overall plan of child safety and risk management.

Please answer the following questions about our policy as specifically as possible:

1. Does this policy cover child abuse, neglect, and child sexual molestation by church employees and volunteers?
2. Does this policy cover sexual misconduct by church employees and volunteers?
3. Does this policy cover church volunteers as well as church employees?
4. Will this policy pay for legal fees if the church, its employees, or volunteers are sued?
5. Will this policy pay for damages resulting from emotional distress and physical injuries? If so, in what circumstances?
6. Are lawsuits related to employment practices covered by this policy?
7. Will this policy pay for libel, slander, and defamation claims?
8. Does this policy cover personal vehicles used by employees and volunteers in the course of church activity?
9. Does this policy cover church activities that occur away from church property? in other states? in foreign countries?
10. Does this policy cover errors and omissions by church employees?
11. Please provide us with a list of specific coverages and activities included in this policy.
12. Please provide us with a list of specific coverages and activities excluded by this policy.
13. Based upon your experience insuring other churches, can you give us a list of specific coverages that we lack and should add to our insurance coverage?
14. Please explain the specific actions our church must take if we need to report a claim.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Sample Form #11:

Letter or Announcement to Congregation Announcing Child Safety Policies

Note: This letter should be customized as needed to fit your situation.

Dear _____,

We live in an age where sexual misconduct, child abuse, and accidental injury is a reality in our society. The church must deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. The leadership of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** will begin implementing new policies to help safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them.

Soon, our church will increase our efforts to screen and supervise staff and employees. We are revising operating policies for children's and youth programs. All church workers, volunteers, and employees will be subject to these new guidelines.

I want to assure you that these changes are not a reaction to a problem or "scandal" that has occurred. Instead they represent our best efforts to *prevent* problems in the future.

These changes will mean additional effort for staff, volunteers, and parents. I, and the leaders of our church, believe the children are well worth the effort. We thank you in advance for your cooperation and your patience with this process.

If you have questions about these new policies, please contact _____ **<INSERT APPROPRIATE NAMES AND PHONE NUMBERS HERE>**.

Safe and secure kids are a witness to God's love, expressed through careful staff and volunteers. We pray for God's blessing for our children, workers, and church.

Sincerely,

Sample Form #12

Letter or Announcement to Parents Announcing Child Safety Policies

Note: This letter should be customized as needed to fit your situation. You may want to announce specific training meetings for parents in this letter or a bulletin announcement.

Dear _____,

We live in an age where sexual misconduct, child abuse, and accidental injury is a reality in our society. The church must deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. The leadership of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** will begin implementing new policies to help safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them.

Soon, our church will increase our efforts to screen and supervise staff and employees. We are revising operating policies for children's and youth programs. All church workers, volunteers, and employees will be subject to these new guidelines.

I want to assure you that these changes are not a reaction to a problem or "scandal" that has occurred. Instead they represent our best efforts to **prevent** problems in the future.

In an effort to keep you informed, we will be sending you printed information about what we are doing to reduce the risks of harm to your child, and what you can do to help. Also, we will invite you to training that will help you and your child recognize abusive or dangerous situations, and instruct you in how to seek help.

These changes will mean additional effort for staff, volunteers, and for you as a parent. I, and the leaders of our church, believe the children are well worth the effort. We **thank you** in advance for your cooperation and your patience with this process.

If you have questions about these new policies, please contact _____ **<INSERT APPROPRIATE NAMES AND PHONE NUMBERS HERE>**.

Safe and secure kids are a witness to God's love, expressed through careful staff and volunteers. We pray for God's blessing for our children, workers, and church.

Sincerely,

Sample Form #13

Trip Planning Sheet

Instructions

Church policy requires children's and youth ministry workers to complete this form prior to events involving children that meet any of the following three standards:

1. trips that are estimated to be longer than 50 miles round trip,
2. overnight events (in town or out), or
3. taking young people to participate in activities that may pose special hazards, such as swimming, boating, camping/hiking, cycling, climbing/rope courses, skiing, airplane flights, or similar. *(You may change these standards to fit your situation. These standards are selected to rule out a trip to another church for a concert but to rule in the events that provide unusual hazards: out-of-town travel, overnight events, and "adventure" activities.)*

Submitted by: Name _____ Date _____

Approved by: Name _____ Date _____

Who is going on this trip?

___ Sunday school ___ youth group other _____

Adult workers who will be going: Name _____

Name _____

Adult workers who will be driving: Name _____

Name _____

Destination: _____

When will you leave?

When do you expect to return?

Date _____ Time _____ Date _____ Time _____

Emergency phone number(s) where you can be reached (if possible):

If phone contact is not possible, what is the best way to contact you in an emergency? (*i.e.*, *sheriff's department, park ranger, resort management, etc.*)

How are you traveling:

church vehicle private auto other _____

Check any hazardous activities you expect to participate in during this trip.

Please be prepared to discuss these hazards and precautions with the church leader approving this form. *Note: Any activities prohibited by your church's insurance coverage should be listed above so that they can be discussed in advance.*

swimming boating camping/hiking cycling
 climbing/rope courses skiing airplane flights other _____

Checklist:

permission waivers signed by parents/guardians (including emergency medical permission)
 permission waivers available during trip

first aid kit

safety and maintenance checklist if church vehicle used

Rapid Response Guidebook

Miscellaneous notes, additional plans, precautions regarding this trip:

Sample Form #14

Permission/Waiver Form

Name of Child or Adult Participant (please print) _____

Parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) of child participant _____

Address _____

Home Phone (_____) _____ Work Phone (_____) _____

Age of Child _____ Birth Date _____ Academic Grade _____

School _____

Functions and Activities

It is my understanding that participating in the programs and recreational and other activities of ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH is a privilege. Prior to my participation in such activities, I acknowledge that there are certain risks associated with the activities, including, by way of example, physical injury due to activity-related accidents, physical injury due to transportation-related accidents, illness, or even death. In addition, I acknowledge that there may be other risks inherent in these activities of which I may not be presently aware.

Release of Liability

By signing this Permission/Waiver Form, I expressly warrant that the child named above or I, if I am a participant, am capable of withstanding both the physical and mental demands of the activities discussed above. I also expressly assume all risks of the child or me participating in the activities, whether such risks are known or unknown to me at this time. I further release ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH and its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, and agents from any claim that my child may have or that I may have against them as a result of injury or illness incurred during the course of participation in the activities. This release of liability shall include (without limitation) any claims of negligence or breach of warranty. This release of liability is also intended to cover all claims that members of the child's or my family or estate, heirs, representatives, or assigns may have against ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH or its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, or agents.

I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH and its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, or agents from any and all claims arising from my participation in its activities and programs, or as a result of injury or illness of my child during such activities.

First Aid and Emergency Medical Treatment

I recognize that there may be occasions where the child named above or I, if I am a participant,

may be in need of first aid or emergency medical treatment as a result of an accident, illness, or other health condition or injury. I do hereby give permission for agents of **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** to seek and secure any needed medical attention or treatment for the child named above or me, if I am a participant, including hospitalization, if in the agent's opinion such need arises. In doing so I agree to pay all fees and costs arising from this action to obtain medical treatment. I give permission for attending physician(s) and other medical personnel to administer any needed medical treatment, including surgery and, again, I agree to pay for the medical treatment.

Special Events and Field Trips

I understand that the child named above or I will be participating in (*insert name of special event or activity*) _____ from _____ until _____. I understand that during this period my child/ward or I, if I am an adult participant, may take part in activities such as: _____ and other activities consistent with the purposes of the church.

Publicity

On occasion, **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** takes photographs or makes an audio or videotape recording of children and/or adults involved in church activities. Such photographs or video records may be used by staff and participants to remember the activities and participants. In addition, such photographs and audio/visual recordings may be used in **ELIZABETH BAPTIST CHURCH** publications or advertising materials to let others know about our ministry. In addition, local news organizations may hear of our activities or events, and our church may invite or allow them to photograph or record our events for news reporting on special interest features. I consent to the use of any such audio or visual record of the child named above or me, if I am participating, to be used, distributed, or displayed as agents of the church see fit. This consent includes but is not limited to: photographs, videotape, and audio recordings. Furthermore, I give permission for the child to be interviewed by the news media, or for such photographs and other audio or visual records to be used by the news media.

Health Insurance Information

Insurance Company _____ Policy Number _____

Insurance Company Phone Number _____

Medical Doctor _____ Phone number _____

Emergency Contacts

Names of persons and telephone numbers to call in case of emergency:

Name _____ Relation _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Swimming Ability

- Non-swimmer
- Beginner (capable of swimming for several minutes in deep water)
- Moderate (capable of swimming several lengths of pool)
- Advanced (capable of swimming long distances)

Medical History

Special medical needs or concerns (allergies, conditions, dietary needs, medications, etc.):

Other Information

Other information leaders should know about the child or adult participant:

For Use Only if the Participant is a Minor

I represent that I am the parent/guardian of _____, who is under 18 years of age. I have read the above Permission/Waiver Form and am fully familiar with the contents thereof.

I give permission for the child named above to participate in the activities of Elizabeth Baptist Church, including any special events/activities described above. In consideration for allowing the participation of the child in the activities of Elizabeth Baptist Church, I hereby consent to the Permission/Waiver Form, including the Release of Liability above, on behalf of the child, and agree that this Permission/Waiver Form shall be binding upon me, my family, heirs, legal representatives, successors, and assigns.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian _____ Date _____

Print Name of Parent or Legal Guardian _____

Witness Signature _____ Date _____

Adult Volunteers and Employees

As an adult volunteer or church employee, I hereby agree to each of the consents and waivers listed above, including the Release of Liability, as pertaining to my own participation in functions, activities, special events, and field trips.

Signature _____ Date _____

Young Person's Agreement

I agree to participate in the functions and activities of Elizabeth Baptist Church, to cooperate with the leaders and other young people, and to conduct myself as a Christian. I promise to respect God, respect myself, respect other persons, and respect property. I understand that my continued participation in church activities depends on my support of this agreement.

Signature _____ Date _____