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Tennessee Baptist Churches giving through the Cooperative Program and the Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions make TBMB ministries possible.

TENNESSEE BAPTIST CONVENTION SEXUAL ABUSE TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Dani Bryson

*Assistant District Attorney General for the 23rd Judicial District
First Baptist Church, Dickson*

Ann Singleton

*Title IX Coordinator for Union University
First Baptist Church, Jackson*

Victoria Tillman, TBMB Chair-Elect

*Attorney at Law, McKinney & Tillman, P.C.
Bell's Campground Baptist Church, Powell*

Charles W. (Chuck) Cagle

*Attorney at Law, Lewis Thomason, P.C.
First Baptist Church, Nashville*

Gary D. Chesney

*Price & Ramsey Insurance Group
First Baptist Church, Morristown*

Clay Hallmark, TBC President

*Senior Pastor
First Baptist Church, Lexington*

Sam Nichols

*Executive Pastor
First Baptist Church, Collierville*

Kevin Shrum

*Senior Pastor
Inglewood Baptist Church, Nashville*

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A Letter from TBC President, Clay Hallmark

At the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention (TBC), messengers gave me the assignment of assembling a Sexual Abuse Task Force (SATF) with the purpose of being proactive in helping victims, churches, and Baptist people deal with the hurt, pain, and challenges of sexual abuse, allegations, and harassment. The SATF consisted of some of the finest Baptist leaders from across our state that has ever been assembled. Their focus, dedication, diligence, mercy, grace, and love have been evident throughout the process. Additionally, their expertise and education on the matters of sexual abuse have been unmatched. Each of the SATF members has a deep desire to make a difference in the lives of people and families who have endured or have suffered in any way related to sexual abuse. I believe you will sense their heart for ministry in these resources.

The goal of the SATF is not to just resource Tennessee Baptists, but to also equip them. Through Harvest Field team leaders, Association Mission Strategists, and churches, this booklet, along with our website www.tnbaptist.org/abuseresources, will give you the information and skills necessary to make a difference in the lives of others. Our prayer is that you will learn and implement these “Preventative Best Practices” and proactively know what to do if an occurrence of abuse takes place in your church or family.

Tennessee Baptists are a diverse group of God’s people. There is strength in our diversity. There is also strength in our ability to unify this diversity for the purpose of Kingdom work. Together, we have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people all around us. Let us not forget the words of the Psalmist who reminds us “The LORD is near the brokenhearted; He saves those crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18, CSB).” If this is the heart of God, then this must also be the heart of all Tennessee Baptists.



Clay Hallmark

Senior Pastor

First Baptist Church, Lexington, TN

President 2021-22, Tennessee Baptist Convention

TBC SATF Charter

On November 16, 2021, messengers to the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, meeting at Brentwood Baptist Church, Brentwood, Tennessee, authorized the newly elected president

“to appoint a sexual abuse task force for the purpose of evaluating:

- 1) The process of how The Tennessee Baptist Convention (TBC) responds to allegations of sexual abuse occurring in churches and TBC entities and reported to TBC
- 2) The process of how Tennessee Baptist Mission Board (TBMB) seeks to protect those it serves from sexual abuse and responds to allegations growing out of TBMB ministries and events
- 3) The resources and assistance provided by TBC and TBMB to cooperating churches to help educate church leaders on best practices to protect their congregants from the evil of sexual abuse.”

The task force was charged to compile a report, including suggestions for improvements, for presentation to Cooperating Tennessee Baptist Churches no later than the 2022 annual meeting of the TBC in Cordova, TN. The TBC SATF published its initial report in the Baptist and Reflector on May 25, 2022. The TBC SATF concluded its charge with the publication of Ministering Well: Best Practices and Resources Related to Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response for presentation to the Convention on November 15, 2022.

PREAMBLE (with Addendum)

The members of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Sexual Abuse Task Force (TBC SATF) believe that the best practices we are recommending need to be set within a clear understanding of Baptist polity. Doing so will allow us to do all we can to confront the evil of sexual abuse, within the parameters of our organizational polity. Looking to Scripture in concert with Article VI¹ and Article XIV² of the TBC's statement of faith, the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*³, we make the following observations about our polity:

1. We recommend widespread acceptance and implementation of the following best practices by all cooperating Tennessee Baptist churches as we seek wisely and prudently to address the issue of sexual abuse.
2. As an outgrowth of our collective duty to care for the abused, we strongly urge anyone who knows of or has reason to suspect that abuse has taken place to report it to law enforcement for inquiry into the incident and determination of whether abuse has occurred for the purposes of seeking justice and restoration for the abused, exoneration for the falsely accused, and strengthening of the churches for evangelism and missions. How can this take place with Baptist polity in view?
3. *"A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel..." At a minimum, this means that Tennessee Baptist churches are autonomous. Further, it means that the TBC – as a network of churches – is not a "top-down" organization that can dictate the processes, procedures, or leadership in the life of a local church. Instead, the TBC is a "bottom-up" organization where like-minded Baptist churches voluntarily choose to cooperate with one another and with agencies, entities, and ministries."*⁴

1 *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, Article VI on "The Church."

2 *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, Article XIV on "Cooperation."

3 Tennessee Baptist Convention Bylaw VIII prescribes that no person may serve on the specified leadership roles "unless the person has agreed that he or she will, if elected, covenant to serve in accordance with, and not contrary to, the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

4 *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, Article VI on "The Church."

4. The “seat” of authority in Baptist polity is the local church, with the Lord Jesus Christ at the center of this autonomy, mediated through the centrality of Biblical authority.⁵
5. While the local church remains autonomous, the TBC may determine, as a body in session, that a local church is functioning contrary to and not in accordance with “*principles, programs, and policies of the Convention.*”⁶ In such cases, TBC can choose to disassociate from said church without violating that church’s autonomy. This would be within the spirit of Article XV in the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* that we “*should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick.*”⁷
6. However, local autonomous churches may at times “*organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God.*”⁸ For this reason, a local Baptist church may voluntarily associate with a local association, state convention, national convention, and their affiliate entities and ministries, or with none, any, or all of the entities and agencies that emerge out of this cooperation. These voluntary cooperative affiliations by no means usurp church autonomy.
7. Conversely, no single, autonomous church can dictate to an association or convention what it must do without the collective consent of the churches of the association or convention. Associations and conventions are autonomous as well. The boundaries and definitions of what it means to be a cooperating church within these affiliations are determined by the whole of the body.
8. It is within this framework that the TBC SATF can make recommendations, suggestions, and highlight best practices concerning this most important matter. While we can highly suggest, strongly recommend, and sincerely hope for widespread implementation of these best practices, we cannot mandate, require, or dictate what a local body of believers can or should do.
9. We recognize that churches and TBC ministries operate together,

5 *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, Article I on “The Scriptures.”

6 Tennessee Baptist Convention Constitution, Article II on “Composition.”

7 *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, Article XV on “The Christian and the Social Order.”

8 *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, Article XIV on “Cooperation.”

“grounded in mutual trust for the purpose of common ministry.”⁹ Further, we recognize these important and sensitive issues can be divisive and need to be handled with great care, affirming that “Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.”¹⁰

10. Our goal in recommending these best practices is to be preventive rather than reactive.
11. We offer these best practices recommendations with sincere and well-intentioned hearts and minds in the hope of addressing the terrible scourge of sexual abuse. These recommendations reflect previous statements and suggestions adopted by the TBC.

ADDENDUM

SIX OBSERVATIONS

1. The TBC (Convention) is a single unit. The will of the majority of the messengers from the cooperating churches establishes *“the principles, programs, and policies of the Convention.”¹¹*
2. Stated another way, no individual church or small group of churches sets the parameters for cooperation; messengers from the churches, acting in harmony with one another and acting as a super majority of messengers (two thirds), set the parameters on behalf of the whole.
3. Messengers establish for the Convention its interpretation of its “principles, programs, and policies.”¹¹ Three illustrations suffice:
 - a. Messengers to the Convention adopted that *The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)* establishes the doctrinal framework for serving in any leadership role of the Convention, whether “*as a member of a standing committee, a director of TBMB, a trustee of a Convention institution, or in any other elected leadership*

9 Tennessee Baptist Convention Bylaws, Bylaw VII, Section K on “Relationships of Institutions to the Convention.”

10 *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, Article XV on “The Christian and the Social Order.”

11 Tennessee Baptist Convention, Article II on “Composition”

roles in and with the Convention.” Bylaw VIII ¹²

- b. Messengers to the Convention require a church (a) to subscribe to and support the principles, programs, and policies of the Convention; and (b) to give financially to the Convention in order to send messengers to the annual meeting.
 - c. The TBC has, from time to time, declared that a church is no longer considered a cooperating church with the TBC for a variety of reasons.
4. If messengers to the Convention determine that a church is no longer a “cooperating church” with the TBC, it is not exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction¹³ over the church since the church has the same right of self-determination whether or not it is deemed a “cooperating church” with the TBC.
5. If messengers to the Convention determine that a church is no longer a “cooperating church” with the TBC, it is not acting as advisory counsel in case of differences between the churches or associations;¹³ it is determining for itself what constitutes acceptable practices to be deemed a “cooperating church” with the TBC.
6. If messengers to the Convention determine that a church is no longer a “cooperating church” with the TBC, it is not interfering with the constitution of any church¹³ since no church constitution can impose the wishes or determination of that single church on any other Baptist body without approval on the part of both bodies.

12 Tennessee Baptist Convention Bylaws, Bylaw VIII, on “*Baptist Faith and Message*”

13 Tennessee Baptist Convention Constitution, Article IV on “Limitation”

12 THINGS A CHURCH CAN DO TO PROTECT MINORS

1. Institute the Two-Adult Rule: There must always be at least two adults in the room, in the car, in the van, or anywhere that minors are gathered. These two can NOT be husband and wife.
2. Institute the Six-Month Rule: An individual must be a member of the church for at least six months before being considered for work with minors in any way. Pedophiles and others looking to prey on minors will not likely stay at the church that long.
3. Carefully select all volunteers and staff who work with minors:
 - a. Use an application process. Collect prior church membership, prior volunteer service, and references.
 - b. Call prior churches, volunteer service entities, and references. Ask all for an additional reference not suggested by the applicant.
 - c. Always ask prior churches and service entities, “Would you allow this person to work with minors at your church/service entity again?” A “no” answer requires more investigation.
 - d. Conduct criminal background screening that includes sex offender registries. TBMB can connect you to a screening service.
 - e. Conduct an interview with the applicant and ask tough questions.
4. Provide training to all volunteers and staff who work with minors:
 - a. Teach age-appropriate interaction standards on how to physically and verbally engage with a minor.
 - b. Teach how to spot abuse that may be happening elsewhere.
 - c. Teach church policy on protecting the safety of minors.

5. Provide supervision of volunteers and staff. This is in addition to the two adults for all events including classes, outings, trips, recreation, and other activities. Their assignment is to ensure conformation to policy and procedures.
6. Institute a communication policy. This would include parental approval of any electronic communication between volunteers and staff with minors.
7. Develop a comprehensive security plan for the church:
 - a. Make sure that the person who picks up the minor is the same person who dropped off the minor or has some form of specific permission to pick up the minor (e.g., tag given to person dropping off).
 - b. Secure hallways and classrooms so that unauthorized adults can NOT come in contact with minors.
 - c. Require that leaders wear photo ID badges.
8. Engage Parents as Partners in Ministry:
 - a. Conduct an all-parents meeting at least annually where you talk about the ministry and what parents can expect to happen during the year.
 - b. Review the procedures, protocols, and documents used by the church to keep children safe.
 - c. Engage parents to serve as volunteers where appropriate.
9. Put windows in all classroom doors. Do NOT allow anyone to cover those windows up. Supervisor should be able to walk by classrooms and observe.

- 10.** Avoid transportation in private vehicles: Rent or own vans or buses, so that the two-adult rule can be easily instituted. Set standards for approved drivers and conduct Motor Vehicle Registration (MVR) checks on all drivers.
- 11.** Communicate policies to Church: Regular communication of policies and procedures within the church will not only reassure members and visitors of the safe environment, but it will create a culture of child safety so that everyone will notice when something is not right. It will also steer predators away from the church.
- 12.** Prepare an allegation response plan. The plan should include calling the authorities to investigate, communicating with parents, communicating with church when appropriate, and dealing with news media.

Sexual Abuse Response Checklist

Has Church Leadership taken these steps upon learning of an allegation?

1. Has leadership taken all of the allegations seriously without engaging in denial, deflection, minimization, or blame?
2. Has leadership ensured the safety of any adults, children, and youth directly or indirectly associated with the allegation?
3. Has leadership promptly contacted all necessary authorities in accordance with Tennessee state laws?
4. Has leadership implemented appropriate restrictions on alleged perpetrators?
5. Has leadership collected, in writing, all relevant, accurate information regarding the allegation including dates, times, and persons contacted?
6. Has leadership notified the insurance carrier concerning the allegation(s)?
7. Has leadership notified the church attorney concerning the allegation?
8. Has leadership maintained strict confidentiality regarding the allegation(s) and disclosed only to those persons in a need-to-know capacity (e.g., leadership, attorney, insurance agent, state reporting agencies)?
9. Has leadership identified a church spokesperson?
10. Has the spokesperson prepared a written, public statement?
11. Has leadership, including the spokesperson, prepared a written statement to be delivered to the church congregation?
12. Has leadership developed a program of support services and a plan to provide those support services to the victim, including the family of the victim?

IMPORTANT TERMS FOR USE IN INQUIRIES INTO ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

DISCLOSURE – Disclosure of sexual abuse means a child has chosen you as the person he or she trusts enough to tell. (www.d2l.org)

DISCOVERY – You have witnessed a sexually abusive act perpetrated by an adult or youth upon a child or you know by some other means that abuse has taken place. (www.d2l.org)

FALSE LIGHT – Publicity to a matter concerning another that publicly puts the other person in a false light, provided:

- a. the false light would be highly offensive to a reasonable person; and
- b. the actor had knowledge of, or acted in reckless disregard as to the falsity of the matter and the false light it would cause.

FORCE – Force may refer to physical pressure or intimidating threats of physical pressure or may refer to emotional coercion, psychological force, or manipulation to coerce a victim into non-consensual sex. (<https://www.rainn.org/articles/sexual-assault>)

FORCIBLE SEXUAL OFFENSES – Acts that include forced penal-vaginal intercourse, forced oral or anal sodomy, forced digital or inanimate penetration of a sexual orifice (acts now also included in the definition of rape), sexual battery (molestation) and indecent exposure, among others as well as attempts to perpetrate any of the above acts. (<https://www.ncaa.org>)

GOOD FAITH REPORT – A report involving reasonable suspicion of abuse (see definition of suspicion below). Those who report and “act in good faith” are immune from any civil or criminal charges that may be sought. The reporter has the right to remain confidential and anonymous. (www.tn.gov)

MANDATED REPORTER – A person required by law to report a reasonable suspicion of abuse. Everyone in Tennessee is a mandated reporter under state law. Any person with a reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused or neglected must, under the law, report that knowledge or suspicion immediately to the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services or to local law enforcement. The reporter may remain anonymous.

SUSPICION – You have seen signs in child’s behavior, have seen physical signs of, or have witnessed boundary violations by adults or another youth toward a child, and/or you see physical signs of sexual harm. (www.d2l.org)

TENNESSEE STATUTES REGARDING ABUSE

Current April 2022

▪ **MANDATORY REPORTING**

Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-1-403; 37-1-605 A person must report when:

- he or she knows that a child has been harmed by abuse or neglect.
- he or she knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been sexually abused.
- he or she is called on to render aid to any child suffering from an injury that reasonably appears to be caused by abuse
- A physician diagnoses pregnancy or an STD in a child under the age of 13

▪ **FAILURE TO REPORT**

Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-1-615 Knowingly or intentionally failing to report known or suspected child abuse, or intentionally preventing another from reporting known or suspected child abuse is a crime.

▪ **CONFIDENTIALITY OF REPORTER'S NAME**

Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-1-409 The identity of reporter is only released to limited state agencies as required by law.
It is irrelevant in civil proceedings.

▪ **ABUSE IN THE CONTEXT OF PASTORAL CARE**

Tenn. Code Ann § 39-13-505 An adult parishioner is incapable of consenting to sexual contact within the clergy-parishioner relationship

For clarity, the following are some fundamental definitions:

The Tennessee Baptist Convention (Convention) is an autonomous unincorporated association composed of messengers who are members of, and have been chosen by, autonomous Baptist churches which have chosen to cooperate. Messengers determine Cooperative Program allocations and ministry priorities for the Convention, elect officers and standing committee members, appoint TBMB directors and Convention institution trustees, adopt recommendations and resolutions on matters of interest, and hear reports from related entities.

Tennessee Baptist Mission Board (TBMB) is a nonprofit, religious, public benefit corporation, and is governed by Directors appointed by the Convention. TBMB is responsible for conducting all activities on behalf of the Convention between the meetings of the Convention. (Convention Constitution Article VII and Bylaw VI)

Convention Institutions are those entities identified in the Convention Bylaws whose trustees (governing body) are appointed by the Convention. The Convention institutions are autonomous nonprofit corporations, neither owned nor operated by the Convention. Governance of the Convention institutions is vested in their respective boards of trust in all matters. (Convention Bylaw VII)

**TBMB ABUSE
RESOURCES**

SCAN ME



<https://qrcodes.pro/BkvZIY>

RESOURCE LIBRARY

PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TRAINING

Ministry Safe

www.ministrysafe.com

(Gregory Love/Kimberlee Norris)

Reducing the Risk

www.reducingtherisk.com

(Richard Hammar)

PREVENTION RESOURCES

Abuse Prevention Checklist

<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/safety-library/riskmanagement-forms/safeguarding-against-sexual-abuse-checklist>

Abuse Prevention Resources

<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/safety-library/riskmanagement-articles/children-and-youth/abuse-prevention>

www.churchmutual.com/169/Sexual-Abuse-Prevention

Protect: A Youth Worker's Guide to Navigating Risk

<https://youthministry360.com/products/protect-ayouth-workers-guide-to-navigating-risk>

BACKGROUND SCREENING

ClearStar Background Checks

<https://www.tnbaptist.org/church-support/church-leadershipadministration/employee-volunteer-background-screening-services>

Lifeway Background Checks

www.lifeway.com/en/shop/services/church-administration/backgroundchecks/products-pricing.html

Church Mutual Background Checks

www.churchmutual.com/109/Background-Screening

READING LIST

The Biblical Principles Behind Reporting Sexual Abuse

by David Sanchez, *Director of Ethics &*

Justice in the Christian Life Commission

www.texasbaptists.org/article/the-biblical-principles-behind-reporting-sexual-abuse

SCAN TO READ ARTICLE



<https://qrcodes.pro/EdNM0s>

BOOKS:

Becoming a Church that Cares Well for The Abused

by Brad Hambrick, *Gen. Editor, Churchcares.com*

Sex: Abuse, Pain, Deliverance

by Fay Ellis Butler R.N. Ph.D.

The Church Leader's Handbook: A Guide to Counseling Families and Individuals in Crisis

by William R. Cutrer

Understanding Sexual Abuse: A Guide for Ministry Leaders and Survivors

by Tim Hein, Debra Hirsch

SCAN ME



Caring Well

SCAN ME



GuideOne

SCAN ME



SMC Ins.

SCAN ME



Praesidium

FORMS, SAMPLE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, AND OTHER RESOURCES

www.caringwell.com/resources/

www.guideone.com/policyholder/value-added-services/sexual-misconduct-and-abuse-prevention-resources

www.smcins.com/resources.html

www.praesidiuminc.com

SAMPLE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES and related forms from two of our cooperating Tennessee Baptist churches can be found in the **Appendix**, beginning on page 37.

LINK TO THE COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

The following is a link to the Committee on Credentials, which is a committee of the TBC tasked with the responsibility of making recommendations to the messengers to the annual meeting regarding whether a church is operating in cooperation as set forth in Article II of the Constitution of the TBC. If you know of a TBC cooperating church that is functioning contrary to and not in accordance with the “principles, programs, and policies of the Convention” in regards to “providing for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless and the sick” (as set forth in Article XV of *the Baptist Faith and Message 2000*), then you may report the same to the Committee on Credentials by using the link below.

SCAN ME



<https://qrcodes.pro/U1zvPY>

Please note that in light of Baptist polity, as discussed in the Preamble found herein on pages 6-9, the Committee on Credentials will not investigate or police TBC churches. Please see Paragraph L.6 of Convention Bylaw IV for the duties of the Committee on Credentials.

If you are in a dangerous situation, please seek immediate help from your local authorities. Please note that Tennessee Baptist Mission Board is not an investigatory or policing agency; it can only offer guidance and counseling.

If you are a victim of abuse and are unable to seek counsel from your local church, TBMB has a designated, trained staff person (or TBMB has engaged an independent contractor) to receive calls regarding allegations of sexual abuse and to provide initial guidance. Please use the link below to reach Tennessee Baptist Mission Board.

TENNESSEE BAPTIST MISSION BOARD

SCAN ME



<https://qrcodes.pro/ZwjRu9>

Critical Contact Information

CHURCH LEADERSHIP *(Include all who should be on the list)*

Pastor Name _____

Address _____
(City) (State) (Zip)

Email _____

Telephone _____ Cell _____

CHURCH ABUSE REPORTING COORDINATOR

Name _____

Address _____
(City) (State) (Zip)

Email _____

Telephone _____ Cell _____

CHURCH SPOKESPERSON

Name _____

Address _____
(City) (State) (Zip)

Email _____

Telephone _____ Cell _____

CHURCH ATTORNEY

Name _____

Address _____
(City) (State) (Zip)

Email _____

Telephone _____ Cell _____

CHURCH INSURANCE AGENT

Name _____

Address _____
(City) (State) (Zip)

Email _____

Telephone _____ Cell _____

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

(Phone)

POLICE DEPARTMENT

(Phone)

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

(Phone)

INTERIM SUPPORTIVE MEASURES

_____ church may implement interim measures, if appropriate. The church will offer supportive measures to the Complainant and Respondent without fee or charge. Supportive measures are designed to restore or preserve access to the programs and activities of the church without unreasonably burdening any party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties, or to the church's worship environment, and to deter sexual misconduct of any type.

Supporting measures may include, but are not limited to:

- Counseling
- Modifications of work or activity schedules
- Church chaperone services
- Mutual restrictions on contact between the parties
- Changes in work locations
- Leaves of absence
- Increase in security
- Regular monitoring of areas of the church campus.

(NOTE: Union University has adopted a list of supportive measures that are recommended for use with reporting and responding parties to a University Title IX complaint. We have modified and adopted the list of supportive measures to be considered and used during and after a sexual abuse allegation / incident.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

(from Union University's Campus Life Handbook)

Emphasis on the **worth of all individuals**

Luke 12:7 *"Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows."*

Galatians 6:1-2 *"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."*

Emphasis on **self-discipline**

Galatians 5:22-26 *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other."*

Emphasis on **personal integrity**

Proverbs 12:22 *"Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."*

Respect for **community authority**

Romans 13:1, 2 *"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment."*

ALLEGATION RESPONSE RESOURCE LIST

**In Addition to Local Law Enforcement You May
Contact The Following Organizations**

TN CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE

The Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline is a call center accepting all reports of suspected child abuse and neglect for the state of Tennessee.

1-877-237-0004

<https://apps.tn.gov/carat/>

NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE HELPLINE

Dedicated to the prevention of child abuse, the hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The hotline offers crisis intervention, information, and referrals to thousands of emergency, social service, and support resources. All calls are confidential.

1-800-422-4453

www.childhelp.org

CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION GATEWAY

Promotes the safety and well-being of children, youth, and families through connections to child welfare professionals and resources.

1-800-394-3366

info@childwelfare.gov

Counselor and Legal Services Contact Information

Tennessee Baptist Mission Board has secured permission to provide names of counselors and/or counseling centers across the state who are willing to assist Tennessee Baptist churches seeking to minister to survivors of sexual abuse. Each provider has confirmed he or she is a professionally trained, licensed, trauma-informed Christian counselor. Any church requesting a list of names is responsible to contact the counselor or counseling center it deems best suited to meet the needs of those the church is seeking to serve. The church is responsible for negotiating with the counselor or counseling center how any and all incurred costs will be paid. To receive a list of counselors, please complete and submit the following form.

Church Name

Church Leader First Name

Last Name

Email Address

Church Address

City

State

Zip Code

SUBMIT

SCAN to access form



<https://qrcodes.pro/IFJrdz>

“THE FORGOTTEN PRACTICE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE”

Galatians 6: 1-2

By Alan Stewart, Senior Pastor, Rechoboth Baptist Church

Several years ago, I had a pastor friend who was facing a serious situation in his church. He had made the discovery that his youth pastor had engaged in sexual misconduct with one of the young men in the youth group. As the situation was being investigated, it was discovered that the youth pastor had a long track record of the same behavior in five previous churches. However, each of those churches had passed him along to the next with a favorable and glowing recommendation. The story made headline news, and by the time the dust had settled, the damage had been done.

Stories like this have become all too commonplace. While it does not surprise us to hear such stories in secular society, we are left shocked and alarmed to hear that such behavior has infiltrated the house and family of God. Even God's people are not able to avoid the alluring images that bombard their lives on a daily basis on television, on the internet, in magazines, and on billboards as they drive down the road. In such a sex-saturated society, how can we help protect people in our churches from sexual sin and from being the victims of sexual abuse?

It may sound simple, but the biblical answer is a long forgotten practice known as church discipline. I'm sure that most have probably heard of church discipline, but few have ever seen it practiced. For some, the subject brings to mind negative thoughts of extreme legalism. But, of all the things that a church does, few things can demonstrate the love of God and the power of forgiveness like church discipline. Perhaps it is this lack of understanding that has left many churches vulnerable to the effects of scandal from within.

When I began serving as a pastor, church discipline was simply not practiced in most churches I knew. I do not recall any courses on church discipline in Bible College or Seminary, and resources to give guidance were very limited. I am grateful for the wisdom shared with me by Pastor Dr. Adrian Rogers and Greek Theologian Dr. Spiros Zodhiates. These men of God, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, provided strong teaching on the importance of this subject in Scripture. As a young pastor, I was greatly helped by their

work.

What I share with you is not an exhaustive list of “how-to,” but rather a basic foundation for understanding the need and role of church discipline as we navigate through this challenging time together.

I. The Purpose Of Discipline

Galatians 6:1, *“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”*

In this passage of Scripture, Paul is writing to the church in Galatia to remind them of their role and responsibility in one another’s lives, but also of their role and responsibility in maintaining a healthy, productive church environment.

In the twilight of civilization, Cain had asked the question of God, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Now, centuries later, the Holy Spirit would inspire Paul to pen an answer to that question as he would write, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

We do have a sense of responsibility in one another’s lives, and there is a reason why. When one part of the body suffers, it will affect every part. The eye cannot boast that a tack is stuck in the foot and not the eye. Who knows but what an infection could set up in the foot and ultimately affect the eye. It is amazing how a simple sinus infection can bring fatigue to the rest of the body! In Matthew 16, Jesus warned of a leaven of moral and mental corruption that had a tendency to spread and infect others.

So, to state the purpose of church discipline very simply, church discipline is to stop and correct inappropriate and unacceptable behavior, and to seek to bring about repentance, forgiveness, and restoration. I like the way the King James words this word of wisdom in Romans 14: 22, *“...Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.”*

II. The Priority Of Discipline

Galatians 6:1, *“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness,*

considering yourself lest you also be tempted."

You will notice there is a priority to get to the bottom of a matter, and to deal with it accordingly. As Paul gives the instruction, he writes, **"...if a man is overtaken in any trespass..."** The word "overtaken" is describing a blind spot that someone is unaware of, a lapse of judgment, a deviation from truth and uprightness." But, further, this phrase carries the idea of "someone caught in the very act." You will recall the spiritual elite brought a woman to Jesus one day and said in John 8:4, **"Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act."** You see this similar concept presented in 1 John 5:16, **"If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death..."**

When it comes to dealing with correcting wrong in another's life, we must be sure to get to the facts. This will demand taking time to conduct interviews and a thorough investigation. Perhaps the best way to get to the facts is through the eyewitness accounts of others. The Bible speaks often of "in the mouth of two or three witnesses." (e.g., Deuteronomy 17:6, Deuteronomy 19:15, Matthew 18:16). This is great wisdom!

I believe it is imperative in our day that churches invest in a video security system. This is another means of gathering facts if the matter took place on campus. A few years ago, we had a child in attendance at our V.B.S. that made an accusation against one of the workers. It was not a sexual accusation, but it was a serious accusation nonetheless. We were able to sit down with the parents and watch every move their child made from room-to-room and discovered it had been a false accusation. The slight cost of the video security system saved us from a much greater loss.

However, if in the process of investigating, should the facts lead to the discovery that a crime has been committed, then the Bible tells us that we are to submit to the laws of the land. (See Romans 13:1-5). At that point, we have a legal obligation and responsibility to notify the findings to the appropriate authorities and follow all mandatory reporting laws.

III. The Parameters Of Discipline

None of us are perfect. If we go looking for imperfections and flaws in others, we are sure to find them. However, the Scriptures give us clear boundaries on those matters in which we are required to confront. When these issues are openly known and rebelliously practiced, we are to confront: heresy (1

Timothy 1:20, Titus 3:10-11), division & discord (Romans 16:17, 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14), and immorality (1 Corinthians 5).

While there are many issues that may fall under the umbrella of “immorality,” the guidance given in 1 Corinthians 5 specifically deals with inappropriate sexual behavior. The Bible is very clear that we are to confront such offenses quickly when they happen in the church.

Another very important question to ask is, “Who should be involved in the discipline?” You will observe in all the other “one another” statements in the New Testament, each of us are commanded to carry them out. But, in Galatians 6, we find the only one with an exclusion. He limits who is qualified in verse one: **“you who are spiritual...”** So, who are the “spiritual”?

1. The word “spiritual” suggests those who have spiritual authority over you.
2. The word “spiritual” would indicate those who are Spirit-filled and Scripturally proficient. In the context of the closing verses of the previous chapter, Galatians 5:25 encourages those that **“live in the Spirit”** and **“walk in the Spirit.”**
3. Those who are “spiritual” will possess redemptive hearts. The guidance given those who are spiritual is to **“restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.”**
4. Those who are “spiritual” are able to consistently demonstrate the love of Christ through forgiveness. That is, they understand Paul’s words in Galatians 6:1, *“...restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”*

Matthew 7:1-5 is a great reminder of why church discipline is limited to only those who are spiritual. It is as delicate as eye surgery! We wouldn’t ask an electrician to perform eye surgery, and in similar fashion, church discipline should be practiced only by those with spiritual skills, knowledge, and sensitivity.

Depending on the church’s structure of organization and government, the leadership is likely those who have already demonstrated the ability to handle such matters in a confident, caring, and confidential manner.

IV. The Process Of Discipline

There is an established pattern in Scripture that gives us a clear picture of how the process of church discipline should be carried out. In Titus 3:10, Paul writes, **“Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition.”** In Matthew 18, Jesus also gives us the instruction of three steps. So, using Matthew 18 as a guide, I want you to consider those steps.

A. A Personal Confrontation

Matthew 18:15, **“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone...”**

What Jesus is describing is a conversation that is one-on-one and face-to-face. (See 2 Samuel 12). In light of the evidence presented, the individual is to be removed from their active positions, and if they confess and repent, they are to be placed with an accountability partner to ensure full restoration. If there is no confession and repentance, then you proceed to step two.

B. A Private Conference

Matthew 18:16, **“But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’”**

By taking witnesses, you strengthen the reproof. Again, if they confess and repent, they are to be placed with an accountability partner to ensure full restoration. If there is no confession and repentance, then you proceed to step three.

C. A Public Citation

Matthew 18:17, **“And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”**

The word “hear” means “to disobey.” The idea is the offender makes a conscious choice, and they choose their sin and lifestyle over their walk with God and their fellowship with the church. At this point, the church withdraws

fellowship from the individual. (See 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15).

Should it come to this point, let me be very frank with you; this will be the most difficult thing you have ever done in ministry! Let me share with you what the experience of being involved in this third step of church discipline was like. During the public meeting, the charge was simply read without all of the graphic details, the dates when the first two steps of church discipline had occurred, and we issued a letter from the church giving the individual two more weeks to repent before officially withdrawing fellowship.

We then closed the service with every person on their knees at the altar in prayer. They were all asked at the conclusion of their prayer to quietly gather their belongings and go to their car without lingering around to talk. While no music was played, the sounds of weeping filled the air as they prayed for the individual. It was one of the most touching moments I've ever experienced in the house of God in my life.

V. The Perspective Of Discipline

In Galatians 6:1, Paul gives the perspective of church discipline when he writes, **“restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness...”** The very heartbeat of confrontation is to seek restoration, and glory is given to God when we are able to secure that in the life of both the offender and the victim!

The word “restore” is literally “restore gently.” It is primarily a medical term that was used of a doctor setting a broken bone. The idea is, not only to set the broken bone, but to make sure that it is useful again. When we are able to do so, Paul calls it “fulfilling the law of Christ” in Galatians 6:2.

What is the law of Christ? It is bearing another's burden as if it was our own, and it is “to seek and to save.” First and foremost, victims are owed our love and support. It takes courage to touch the wounds of others, but it takes Christ-like compassion and care to stop the bleeding, bind up the wounds, and to restore the wounded back to health.

Second, the glory of church discipline is the possibility of gaining rather than losing a brother. At any point or place when confession and repentance is received, we are to joyfully receive, release, and restore. Charles Spurgeon was once asked, “When a man falls in sin, when can he be used again?” He answered, “When his repenting is as notorious as his sin.”

VI. The Product Of Discipline

Confrontation is a very difficult thing to do, but rightly and consistently practiced, church discipline will produce four things:

1. It will protect the purity of church body.
2. It will preserve the seriousness and fear of sin. That is, it becomes a deterrent to others as they understand there are consequences for actions and decisions. Paul would say in 1 Timothy 5:20, *“Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.”*
3. It will ensure that victims know they will find love, support, and encouragement from their church.
4. It will help to work toward the goal of restoring the fallen. Jesus went on to say in Matthew 18:15, **“If he hears you, you have gained your brother.”**

I leave you with a quote from F.B. Meyer, “When we see a brother or sister in sin, there are two things we do not know: First, we do not know how hard he or she tried not to sin. And second, we do not know the power of the forces that assailed him or her. We also do not know what we would have done in the same circumstances.”

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APPENDIX

FIRST EXAMPLE OF GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

[SAMPLE] FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH POLICY ON ABUSE PREVENTION

SECTION E – PREVENTION OF PRESCHOOL, CHILDREN, AND STUDENT ABUSE

Date Approved: May 20, 2012 Approved By: **Personnel Committee**

Statement of Policy:

Members of [SAMPLE] First Baptist Church come from a variety of experiences, backgrounds and needs. Many of [SAMPLE] First Baptist Church ministries include young married and single adults who have children in our preschool, children and youth areas. Church leadership is committed to providing an environment which is as safe as possible for children and youth who attend the church or any sponsored programs or activities, and to take the necessary precautions to protect church leaders from accusations or suspicions.

Church leadership recognizes the need to have formal, written policies and guidelines to help prevent the opportunity for, or the appearance of, abuse to a minor. The following procedures are not based on a lack of trust in a particular worker but instead are needed to protect our preschoolers, children, youth, employees, volunteers, and the entire church body.

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.” Mark 10:14, 16

“Now it is required that those who have been given trust must prove faithful.” 1 Corinthians 4:2

Procedures:

1.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

.01 By fostering awareness of appropriate, as well as inappropriate, behaviors in the presence of minors, [SAMPLE] First Baptist Church, as part of the body of Christ, will demonstrate Christian love and respect for one another.

.02 Leadership recognizes that certain people have exceptional talents for teaching and supporting the growth and development of [SAMPLE] First Baptist Church children and youth, and we wish to encourage them to use their spiritual gifts. At the same time, however, we have set certain criteria for those adults who choose to serve in this capacity, so as to protect the well-being of our children and youth.

.03 Our intent is not to be judgmental, for we are all accountable to God. We rely on God’s wisdom in developing, implementing and carrying out His will through these guidelines. Compassion and truth will be the guiding forces for any investigation, reporting, or follow-up action that results from the procedures as outlined in this policy.

.04 Congregational support is critical for adherence to this policy. The limited nature of our resources, and our desire to devote as much as possible to the work of the Lord, dictate that this policy be fully understood by every member of our congregation and extended family. This will enable staff and leadership to do what is within their power to preserve the church resources for the work of the Lord.

.05 In the context of these procedures, the words “worker” or “workers” can mean any of the following individuals who provide services or work support for the care and oversight of a minor in a ministry activity or event of [SAMPLE] First Baptist Church.

- Any full-time or part-time paid employee of [SAMPLE] First Baptist Church.
- Any self-employed individual who provides such care and support, and
- Any volunteer, no matter their age, which is not compensated for their services.

2.0 PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

.01 The following behaviors are prohibited for all workers. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but is intended to provide guidance as to what may constitute prohibited behavior.

- Threatening or inflicting physical injury upon a child or youth, other than by accidental means.
- Committing any sexual offense against a child or youth, or engaging in any sexual contact with a child or youth.
- Making any kind of sexual advance, or making a request for sexual favors, or engaging in other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

- The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of [SAMPLE CHURCH].
- The presence, possession, or being under the influence of any illegal or illicit drugs or alcohol while leading or participating in a function for minors at [SAMPLE] First Baptist Church.

.02 See Appendix A: (SAMPLE CHURCH) Safe Talk and Safe Touch Policies

3.0 WORKER ENLISTMENT AND SCREENING

.01 All workers with preschool, children, and youth will complete the Disclaimer and Authorization to Release Information, which will be used to initiate a background check. These forms will be placed in an appropriate confidential file maintained by the appropriate minister.

.02 Individuals will complete an application process, including an interview by the ministry representative, prior to approval. See Appendix B: Confidential Volunteer Application Form.

.03 Individuals considered for a volunteer position in the preschool, kids, or student ministries must be members of (SAMPLE CHURCH) for a minimum of 6 months with exception given to new staff, their spouses, and contracted ministry partners. All individuals serving in these ministries must have a cleared background check on file.

.04 All workers must be 18 years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults, but they may not take the place of adult workers. The church may employ responsible teens (under the age of 18 years) in the nursery or other positions with and under the direct supervision of an approved adult worker.

.05 Names of all potential workers should be submitted to the immediate supervisor as an additional screening procedure.

.06 The steps listed above will be completed before the worker is allowed to serve in the preschool, children or youth ministries. Church leadership cannot assume that a person's prior behavior is proper without first verifying their past.

.07 Individuals who have been arrested for, charged with, under probation

for, or convicted of either sexual or physical abuse cannot be used to serve nor will they be employed for any church sponsored activity or program for preschool, children or youth.

.08 Adult survivors of child abuse will be asked to meet with the appropriate minister or director prior to working in the preschool, children, or youth areas.

.09 The use of adolescents must always be under the supervision and care of an adult teacher or adult worker.

.10 Workers shall be allowed to review his/her criminal records check and transcript at the church, but under no circumstances shall the church allow the worker to retain and/or copy his/her transcript.

4.0 GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS IN PRESCHOOL/CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

4.1 WORKER CONDUCT

.01 Under no circumstances shall a worker be alone with a child behind a closed door. Two adults must always be present in each room where children are present.

.02 Whenever possible the door to classrooms shall be kept open or, in the case of rooms with Dutch doors, the top half of the door shall be kept open.

.03 Classes shall remain in assigned spaces. If there is to be a change, the ministry director must be informed and approve the change.

.04 Each teacher/volunteer shall maintain a record/roll of children in their care. This record/roll shall be taken with the class in the event of a fire or other emergency requiring the evacuation of the room so that attendance can be taken after the evacuation.

.05 Care shall be taken that young children do not leave the ministry activity unattended.

.06 Classroom doors must never be locked while occupied. Teachers should be aware of the closest emergency exit in the classroom or hall should an emergency evacuation be required.

.07 Two adult workers must be in all preschool rooms at drop-off and pick-

up times. If one of the workers has not arrived, a parent must be asked to stay in the room until the second worker arrives.

.08 Touching to comfort or affirm a child in an age-appropriate manner is permitted. Children in first grade or older shall not sit in the lap of workers. Workers shall not touch children in genital areas except as necessary to change a diaper or to assist a child in the bathroom as noted below.

.09 Parents of preschool-age children are encouraged to change the diapers of their own children and can check on their children between services if they plan to leave their child for both services. Parents who expect workers to change diapers are encouraged to supply the diapers.

.10 The minister/director shall prescribe, and communicate to the workers, precautionary measures for dealing with dirty diapers, blood, vomit and the like, such as the use of protective gloves. Any items needed for the precautionary measures will be provided by the church. These rules will be updated as new knowledge becomes available.

.11 Either men or women may change diapers if it is done in the open and not behind closed doors.

.12 Only adult female workers may assist children in the bathroom and only where necessary in the case of handicapped individuals and small children.

Special arrangements, which may include a male worker assisting an older handicapped boy in the bathroom, may be made with the consent of the parents and the director. When a child is taken to a bathroom outside the room, someone must check the bathroom before the child is permitted to enter to ensure it is safe.

4.2 DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN

.01 Physical disciplines, such as spanking, are never permitted. Using physical restraint to prevent a child from doing something disruptive or dangerous is permitted and may, in some instances, be necessary. Affirmation and encouragement is always appropriate.

.02 The minister or director shall advise workers on the best age-appropriate discipline methods.

.03 The behavior of a child who is a constant disruption to a class shall be discussed with his or her parents and the minister or director. In

appropriate circumstances, the parents can be asked to attend class to observe or control the problem behavior. If the behavior persists, the child may be removed from the class. A child who is a danger to other children shall be removed immediately.

4.3 RECEIVING AND DISMISSING OF CHILDREN

.01 Children's facilities open fifteen minutes prior to church meetings and services. Parents are asked to call for their children immediately at the close of each session. Sometime even the well-adjusted child will become anxious if he is left after the other boys and girls are gone.

.02 Only the appointed and enlisted workers are to be in the classroom with the children.

.03 Preschool childcare workers are instructed to receive and dismiss children at the door of the classroom by the use of security tag stickers. When preschool children are brought to the preschool lobby, the parent or other authorized person will be asked to check their child in. The parent or authorized person will then be issued a security tag with the child's name and a unique ID number and a second pickup tag. The parent or authorized person will place the sticker with the child's name on the child and keep the other tag to present back to the worker when the child is picked up. The worker will verify that the unique security tag numbers match before releasing the child.

.04 Under no circumstances shall a preschool child be released from a classroom without the worker receiving the matching pickup tag from the parent or authorized person. In the event the parent's pickup tag is lost, the worker must ask for another form of ID/receive permission to release the child from the Preschool Director.

.05 With preschool and kindergarten children, only a parent or other authorized person may pick up children. Parents will be requested to provide the director with any special information regarding a possible child custody dispute.

Leadership shall pay particular attention to who picks up the child. All 1st-5th grade children are required to have a parent or authorized person pick them up from the classroom. There may occasionally be special circumstances where the Children's Minister or their designee releases children to their parents. Parents will pick up children immediately after worship services and before going to other activities.

4.4 CONTINUING TRAINING FOR WORKERS

- .01 The director shall encourage workers to take advantage of ongoing continuing education opportunities. Some classes may be mandatory.
- .02 The director shall provide child abuse prevention material to help the worker gain appreciation for the real need for this policy. These materials will also assist workers in identifying possible child abuse in the future if they see signs of it.
- .03 Mandatory training shall be provided on a regular basis for fire and building safety, first aid, the statutory requirements for mandatory reporting of child abuse, the definition of abuse and other operational guidelines. Workers who do not attend this training will be relieved of their service.
- .04 Fire drills should be conducted for every classroom at least once each year.

4.5 COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

- .01 Workers shall keep open lines of communication with parents.
- .02 Parents shall always be permitted to observe in a classroom, although the worker may tell the parent that his or her presence may be disruptive to the child.
- .03 Parents shall be advised that they must pick up their children no later than ten (10) minutes after the event is over unless special arrangements are made, with consent of the workers concerned.
- .04 Parents shall be encouraged to change diapers and take children to the bathroom before class.
- .05 Parents shall not leave a child if the child has a fever or other severe illness. Parents must advise the workers if the child is on medication.

4.6 STAFFING THE PRESCHOOL/CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

.01 There shall be a minimum of two adult, qualified workers assigned to each class, and a minimum of one assigned to each "break-out group" which is part of a larger class. In kindergarten and preschool rooms, at least one of the workers must be female.

.02 The ratio of workers to children shall never be less than 1:7 for preschool classrooms and 1:9 for school age classrooms.

.03 The director or minister shall make provisions for last-minute replacements of a worker who cannot be present on a given day. If the required number of workers cannot be obtained, the class must be combined with another class.

.04 Parents may be requested to work in children's rooms to fill in or substitute for other workers.

.05 To ensure that there shall be sufficient substitute workers available when regular workers cannot attend, the children's ministry shall develop a program to encourage parents to undergo the worker screening process and to screen these parents on a preliminary basis.

.06 Additional precautionary measures will be implemented for all off-site activities such as field trips and camping. The ratio of workers to children should be 1:4 for such activities. Furthermore, children will be grouped in pairs, the entire group must always be kept together, and a "roll call" will be made as needed.

4.7 USE OF VIDEO CAMERAS

.01 To further protect the children who have been placed in our care and the workers who so faithfully serve in this ministry, video cameras have been placed in the following strategic locations:

- Classrooms in preschool and children's areas
- Hallways in preschool and children's areas
- Playground

5.0 GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS IN YOUTH PROGRAMS

5.1 PHYSICAL CONTACT

.01 Back rubs, neck rubs, massages, kissing, or similar contact are not allowed. Side-by-side hugs are to be used instead of full body contact. Touching need not be completely avoided, but staff and workers must be aware of how it looks and how the person being touched may interpret the contact.

5.2 COMMUNICATION CONTACT

.01 Texting, emailing, or other means of communicating with youth individually without parental consent is generally not appropriate. As a rule, copy parents, staff, etc. if communication with an individual is necessary.

5.3 STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNED ACTIVITIES

.01 A minimum of two (2) adults who have completed the required screening and training shall be present for all activities. A specific ratio of leaders to youth is not suggested; instead, the ratio shall be appropriate for the activity being undertaken. The youth's parent or guardian must grant any exceptions to the two-adult rule, and the appropriate minister shall be contacted in advance and advised that permission has been obtained.

.02 Any one-on-one meeting involving a youth must be conducted with the door open. Planned one-on-one lunches with members of the opposite sex must be held in public places and may only occur if (1) proper approval has been given by the parent or guardian. (2) the designated church official has been notified. (3) separate transportation is used. At no time shall a youth worker pursue a dating relationship with a student.

5.4 UNPLANNED MEETINGS BETWEEN MINISTER AND YOUTH

.01 Unplanned contacts between a youth and a minister or youth workers shall, insofar as possible, be conducted under the same rules, as are planned activities. It shall not be a violation of this policy, however, for the minister to talk with a youth in the minister's office with the door closed, when the youth has requested the closed meeting provided: (1) the door is closed for a relatively brief time, and, (2) the minister informs a fellow minister or ministry assistant at the beginning of the meeting. (3) the director informs fellow minister or ministry assistant at the end of the meeting. (4) the appropriate minister keeps a confidential record of the meeting, its

duration and the identity of the youth involved, and (5) such meetings are infrequent.

5.5 DRIVING RULES

.01 All activities outside the church in which children and youth participate require the completion of a Permission and Medical Consent Form and a Waiver and Indemnity Agreement.

.02 Only leaders or other qualified individuals may drive. All drivers must complete a Vehicle Driver Application stating that they have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance to show to the person in charge of an event, if requested. When one vehicle is used for an event, the two-adult rule still applies. When several vehicles are taken for an event, keeping the other vehicles in sight is an acceptable substitute for the two-adult rule. The number of persons per vehicle must not exceed the number of seatbelts, and all occupants must wear seatbelts. The driver is responsible for insuring compliance with these seatbelt requirements.

5.6 OVERNIGHT TRIP RULES

.01 Permission and Medical Consent and a Waiver and Indemnity Agreement must be completed prior to the trip. Two-adult leadership rule must be followed throughout the trip, with any exceptions clearly stated and approved in advance by the parent or guardian. The total number of adults on each trip will be adjusted according to the requirement of the planned activities.

6.0 GUIDELINES REGARDING CHURCH FACILITIES

.01 Video cameras have been placed in the hallways outside several facility restrooms, which have limited traffic during normal church activities.

.02 Parents are notified periodically requesting that they:

- Accompany their children to the restroom.
- Disallow their children to wander around church facilities unaccompanied.
- Discourage their children from leaving the worship service unattended.
- Accompany their children to all children and youth programs and activities.

.03 Once a quarter, a special notice is placed in the church's bulletin and newsletter requesting parents to adhere to the items noted in point two above. Occasionally, a direct appeal from the pulpit might be required.

.04 Church ushers have been instructed to observe the access to restrooms by minors during worship services. If an usher observes that an adult or older minor enters the restroom while a minor is still in the restroom, the usher has been instructed to enter the restroom if the minor does not exit within a normal time frame.

.05 Church ushers have also been instructed to be alert for minors leaving worship services or wandering around church facilities unaccompanied. If the ushers feel that the minor has no valid reasons for leaving the service, the usher will confront the minor and direct him or her back to the parent or supervised activity. Security Guards have been assigned the responsibility to roam throughout the church facilities while Sunday morning worship services are being conducted to look for wandering minors.

.06 The church facilities staff and security have been instructed to lock all vacant rooms that are not being used during normal church activities. They have also been instructed to report any unusual circumstances where a minor might be present.

.07 A list of possible violations and proper reporting procedures will be posted in each room where activities or programs for minors are conducted.

.08 A weekly inspection of the nursery/toddler area will be conducted by an assigned ministry coordinator. The following items will be inspected. This list is not all-inclusive.

- Are all electrical plugs equipped with child-proof covers?
- Are all drapery/blind cords out of reach of cribs and children?
- Are crib mattresses less than two finger widths from side of the crib frame?
- Are bumper pads present in cribs for children who cannot stand?
- Is the crib rail at least 26 inches above the top of the mattress support?
- Are cribs free from loose or protruding pieces?

- Do the changing tables have safety straps?
- Are safety gates modern and safe (non-accordion style)?
- Do all high chairs have both waist and between-the-leg straps?
- Are the playpens made of mesh and in good working order?
- Are all toys clean and in good repair?
- Are all toys and parts large enough not to be swallowed?
- Is there a gate or door separating the restroom area?
- Are playpens and cribs free from items tied onto them?
- Are doors to closets, hall walls, and other rooms equipped with a lock?
- Are all medications out of the reach of children?

.09 All outside groups requesting use of [SAMPLE] First Baptist Church facilities shall provide proof to the Executive Pastor that they have similar Prevention of Preschool, Children, and Student Abuse policies in place and that they are being adhered to before facility use approval can be granted.

7.0 GUIDELINES REGARDING CHURCH WEBSITE

.01 [SAMPLE] First Baptist Church is committed to protecting the privacy and safety of children. [SAMPLE] First Baptist Church does not knowingly accept personally identifiable information from children who are under the age of 13 without verifiable parental consent. If parents choose to grant permission, a Parental Consent and Release for Publishing or Showing Minor's Image may be accessed from the church office. Parents simply complete the form and mail it to the church office at the address listed. If parents have any questions or concerns about the protection of children's privacy, or if parents wish to deny consent and request that [SAMPLE] First Baptist Church delete their child's information, they can call the church.

.02 [SAMPLE] First Baptist Church will never use the names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, or other information that identifies minors whose photos are used on the church's website, even with permission from parents, since this information could be used by

pedophiles to solicit or seduce children.

8.0 REPORTING AND INVESTIGATIONS

8.1 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

.01 All workers shall immediately report to the appropriate minister any incident of abuse or violation of the two-adult or open door policy of which they have knowledge or which they have observed. Any person making such a report shall keep the information strictly confidential.

8.2 INCIDENT OF ABUSE DEFINED

.01 An “incident of abuse” means any occurrence in which:

- Any person threatens or inflicts physical injury upon a child, youth or vulnerable adult, other than by accidental means, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- Any person commits or allows to be committed any sexual offense against a child, youth or vulnerable adult, or engages in any sexual contact with a child, youth or vulnerable adult, or is reasonably suspected of having done so.
- Any child, youth, or vulnerable adult makes any kind of sexual advance, or makes a request for sexual favors, or engages in sexually motivated physical contact, or engages in other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or is reasonably suspected of having done so.

8.3 OBLIGATION TO REPORT TO THE CHILD ABUSE INVESTIGATORS

.01 In all cases where the ministerial staff or a volunteer has reasonable cause to believe that a child or youth, known to the ministerial staff or a volunteer in an official or professional capacity, may be abused or neglected, he or she shall make a report to the local law enforcement agency’s child abuse investigators. If the ministerial staff or a volunteer is in doubt regarding if a report should be made, he or she shall telephone the agency anonymously and discuss the situation with a counselor to determine if a report should be made. The ministerial staff or a volunteer should make a written record of the name and title of the counselor with whom he or she spoke and the recommendation made by the counselor and it will be kept

by the Executive Pastor.

8.4 REPORTING PROCEDURE

.01 The person reporting an incident of abuse shall contact:

- The Director of Preschool if an incident of abuse involves a child in the preschool ministry (or in his/her absence the Executive Pastor).
- The Young Families Pastor if an incident of abuse involves a child in the 1st to 5th grade (or in his/her absence the Executive Pastor).
- The Active Families Pastor if an incident of abuse involves a 6th grade or above student (or in his/her absence the Executive Pastor).
- The Small Groups Pastor if an incident of abuse involves a vulnerable adult (or in his/her absence the Executive Pastor).

.02 The reporting person shall report all relevant facts with respect to the incident of abuse. Upon receiving a report of an incident of abuse, the person receiving the report, together with the reporter, shall complete an Incident Report. In cases where the alleged wrongdoer is the person to whom a report would ordinarily be made, the reporter shall report the incident to another minister of equal or higher “rank.”

8.5 IMMINENT THREAT

.01 In all cases where an imminent threat of continued or additional abuse exists, any witness shall immediately contact a church security guard or the minister on call and request that immediate steps be taken to ensure the safety of the alleged victim. After the safety of the alleged victim has been secured, the person witnessing the incident of abuse shall complete an Incident Report.

8.6 RESPONDING TO THE REPORT

.01 When someone receives a report of an incident of abuse, he or she should immediately take all steps necessary to ensure the safety of the alleged victim.

After the safety of the alleged victim has been secured, and after the report has been appropriately documented, the person receiving the report shall:

- Immediately contact the parents or guardians of the alleged victim to inform each one of them of the incident and shall ensure each parent or guardian has been notified. If one parent or guardian is the alleged wrongdoer, the person receiving the report shall contact the other parent or guardian and inform him or her of the incident separately.
- Immediately contact the Executive Pastor.
- Immediately contact the appropriate authorities.
- Take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer has no contact with the alleged victim pending investigation.
- Take all steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer is barred from further work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults pending the investigation.

8.7 VIOLATIONS OF THE TWO-ADULT OR OPEN DOOR POLICY

.01 Upon receiving information indicating a violation of the two-adult or open-door policy, the person receiving the report shall document the alleged violation by completing an Incident Report and discuss the violation with the person violating the policy.

.02 If any person refuses to comply with the policy or continues to violate the policy, such person shall be barred from further youth or children's work.

9.0 CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN

9.1 GENERAL GUIDELINES

.01 Select a spokesperson to handle dissemination of information to staff, media and congregation. In his absence, the Executive Pastor will be the spokesperson.

.02 Have ready for release, a clear position statement stating (SAMPLE

CHURCH)'s policy regarding sexual abuse of minors and established safeguards.

.03 Select an attorney who will be present with the spokesperson while answering any investigative questions from the police or social service agencies.

.04 Use text or a prepared public statement to answer media questions and inform the congregation. At all times, the privacy and confidentiality of all those involved must be strictly maintained.

.05 Church spokesperson shall keep in mind that information given to or obtained by news media may have a bearing on the church's liability, so careful judgment shall be exercised.

.06 Anticipate media questions.

.07 If the spokesperson does not know the answer to a question, he shall simply state, "I don't know, but I'll find out for you."

9.2 GUIDELINES FOR SPOKESPERSON

.01 Be prepared.

.02 Define strategy.

.03 Be candid and honest.

.04 Never say "no comment."

.05 Be clear, concise and in context. Do not answer more than what is asked. Do not volunteer information.

.06 Take notes.

.07 Do not ask for quote review.

.08 Always respond to all calls and questions as quickly as possible

APPENDIX A – (SAMPLE CHURCH) Safe Talk and Safe Touch Policies

We are committed to creating and promoting a positive environment for our Preschool, Children's, and Youth ministry that protect them from abuse and our staff and volunteers from misunderstandings. All interactions should teach, encourage, strengthen, and most importantly, help kids grow in the Lord.

Some positive and appropriate verbal interactions:

1. Encouraging words
2. Verbal praise
3. Prayer
4. Including Jesus and God in everyday conversation
5. Clean and age-appropriate humor

Some positive and appropriate forms of affection might be:

1. Brief hugs from the side
2. Pats on shoulder or back
3. High fives and hand slapping
4. Holding hands while walking with small children

The lists provided below are not intended to be an exhaustive list of inappropriate behavior. It is provided for illustration purposes only.

Examples of inappropriate speech:

1. Swearing or cursing
2. Words that are intended to wound

3. Words that address in negative ways a person's body image
4. Statements about physique, Goth, or development
5. Asking private questions
6. Public ridicule
7. Speech that can be interpreted as negative

Examples of inappropriate affection:

1. Any form of unwanted affection
2. Lengthy embraces
3. Holding school-age students on the lap
4. Showing affection in isolated areas
5. Any type of massage
6. Private meals with children or students unless arranged with the parent as a part of your responsibilities.

APPENDIX B – (SAMPLE CHURCH) Confidential Volunteer Application Form

In an effort to safeguard you, the church, and the area of ministry in which you are serving, we require that an application be completed before volunteering can begin. A background check is required as a part of this process. Once we receive the completed application, the ministry team leader will contact you for a follow-up conversation about your interest.

Personal Information

Last Name _____

First Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip Code _____

Phone (_____) _____ Text Y / N

Date of Birth _____

Single _____ Married _____ Widowed _____ Divorced _____

Email address _____

Church Information

How long have you been attending [SAMPLE] First Baptist Church?

Are you a follower of Jesus Christ? Yes _____ No _____

If you are a follower of Christ, when did you make your profession of faith in Christ? _____

Have you ever been baptized? If so, when? _____

Please list any other (SAMPLE CHURCH) ministries in which you are serving:

Church History

1. Church Name, City and State _____

Church Phone (_____) _____ Dates of Service _____

Staff Member Reference _____

Type(s) of ministry in which you were involved: _____

2. Church Name, City and State _____

Church Phone (_____) _____ Dates of Service _____

Staff Member Reference _____

Type(s) of ministry in which you were involved: _____

What age/grade would you like to work with? _____

Are there any specific areas you'd like to serve in?

Circle: greeter | special needs | leader | music | crafts

Personal References (please do not use former employers or relatives and only use people you have known for at least 2 years)

Name/Phone/Email

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

****All information in this form will be kept in the strictest confidence.**

Questions:

1. *Have you ever been accused of, charged with, indicted for, or pled guilty to an offense involving a minor?

No _____ Yes _____ If yes, please describe all convictions:

*In the event that someone has been convicted or accused of such an offense, approval must be made by an executive pastor, the deacons, or possibly even approved publicly before the church body.

2. Have you ever been in a situation where you have been abused?

No _____ Yes _____

If yes, have you received any counseling?

No _____ Yes _____

Would you like to speak with a pastor/counselor?

No _____ Yes _____

Applicant Statement (Please put an X by each statement):

_____ I release all such references from any liability for furnishing such evaluations, provided they do so with good faith and without malice.

_____ Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the policies of this church, and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

_____ I have read the safe talk and safe touch policies.

APPENDIX C – (SAMPLE CHURCH) Non-Member Confidential Volunteer Application Form

In an effort to safeguard you, the church, and the area of ministry in which you are serving, we require that an application be completed before volunteering can begin. A background check is required as a part of this process. Once we receive the completed application, the ministry team leader will contact you for a follow-up conversation about your interest.

Personal Information

Last Name _____

First Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip Code _____ Gender _____

Phone (_____) _____ Text Y / N

Date of Birth _____

Single _____ Married _____ Widowed _____ Divorced _____

Email address _____

Shirt Size: ____AS ____AM ____AL ____AXL ____AXXL ____AXXXL

Coaching Information (Skip if not serving through Rec Ministry):

If a Head Coach, who will assist you: _____ (they must complete an application)

If an Assistant Coach, who will you assist:

Do you plan to coach your child's team: ____ yes ____ no If yes, complete below:

Name of child you will coach: _____

__Male __ Female __Age __ Grade

Backyard Kids Club Information (Skip if not serving at a BKC):

What BKC are you serving at: _____

What (SAMPLE CHURCH) member will you be serving alongside:

Church Information

Church where you are a member or attend?

Are you a follower of Jesus Christ? Yes____ No____

If you are a follower of Christ, when did you make your profession of faith in Christ? _____

Please share a brief account of when you accepted Christ:

Personal References. Please do not use former employers or relatives and only use people you have known for at least 2 years.

Name Phone Email

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

****All information in this form will be kept in the strictest confidence.**

Questions:

2. *Have you ever been accused of, charged with, indicted for, or pled guilty to an offense involving a minor?

No _____ Yes _____ If yes, please describe all convictions:

2. Have you ever been in a situation where you have been abused?

No _____ Yes _____

If yes, have you received any counseling? No _____ Yes _____

Applicant Statement (Please put an X by each statement):

_____ I release all such references from any liability for furnishing such evaluations, provided they do so with good faith and without malice.

_____ Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the policies of this church, and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

_____ I have read the safe talk and safe touch policies.

Thank you for your willingness to serve through investing in the lives of children and their families.

If you have any questions about this application, please contact the [SAMPLE] at (111)123-4567.

APPENDIX D – New Volunteer Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about your salvation experience and church involvement since.

2. Why do you want to serve in preschool/special needs/kids/student ministry?

3. What role in serving the church would best utilize your strengths?

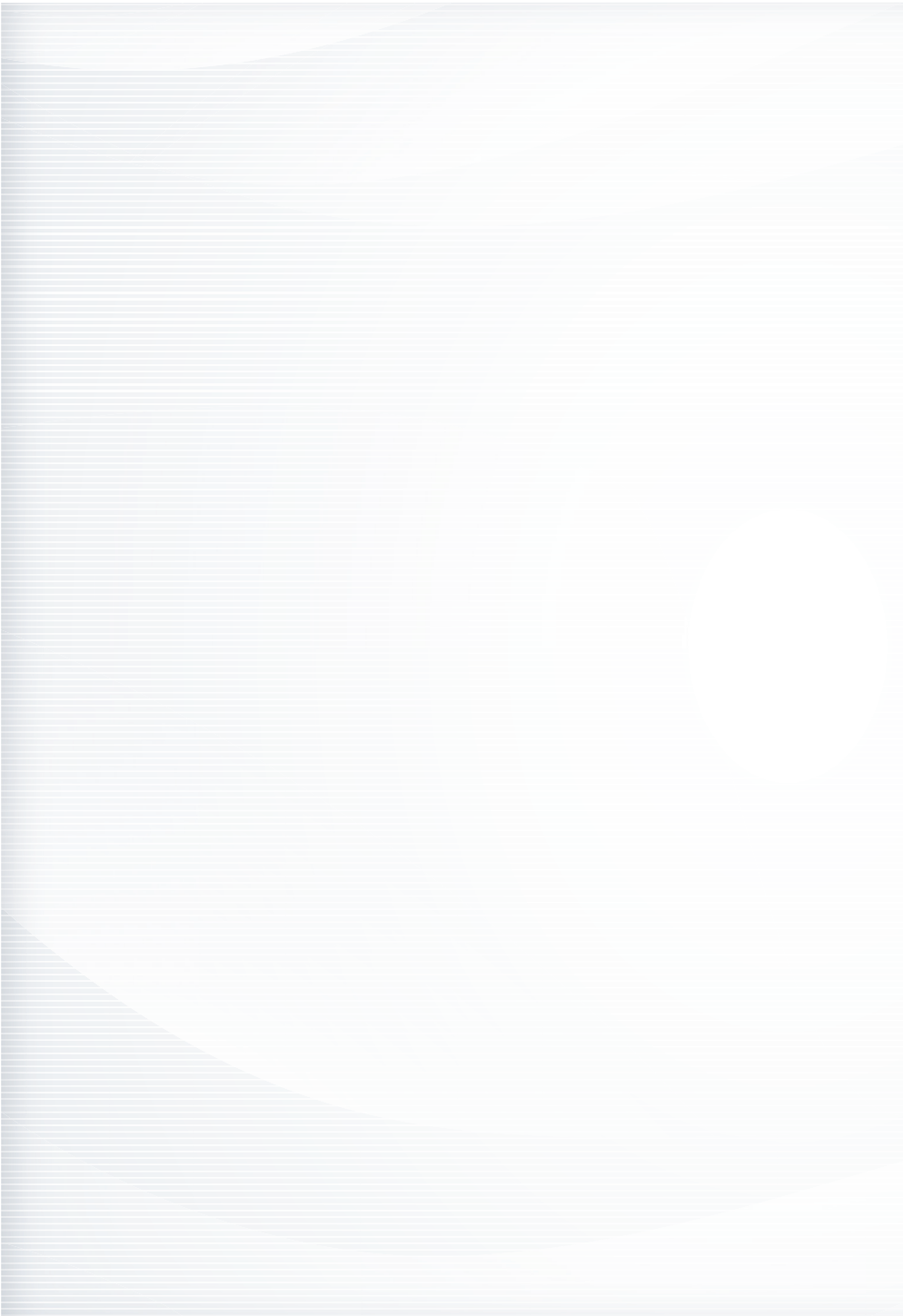
4. How often would you like to serve?

5. Is there anything that we need to know about that might hinder or prevent you from serving with minors?

Date _____

Interviewee _____

Interviewer _____



SECOND EXAMPLE GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

CHILD AND YOUTH ABUSE PREVENTION GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

To help protect children, **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** has adopted the following Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program. It is important that all **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** paid staff and volunteers understand and implement these guidelines to help prevent sexual abuse against children. The following includes the Purpose and Definitions for these guidelines, the outlines of Protection and Prevention, and an Acknowledgement to be signed by those people working with children.

Purpose

These procedures are designed to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in order to:

- 1 Provide a safe and secure environment for children, youth, adults, members, volunteers, visitors, and paid staff.
- 2 Assist **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee, and/or exert control over the activities of children and youth.
- 3 Satisfy the concerns of parents and staff members with a screening process for paid staff and volunteers.
- 4 Provide a system to respond to alleged victims of sexual abuse and their families, as well as the alleged perpetrator.
- 5 Reduce the possibility of false accusations of sexual abuse made against volunteers and paid staff.

Definitions

The following terms used herein and are defined as follows:

- 1 *Paid Staff*: Any pastor, minister, preacher, cleric, or employee who is paid.
- 2 *Children/Youth/Minor*: Any person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by Tennessee state law.
- 3 *Adult*: Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday or as defined by Tennessee state law.
- 4 *Volunteer*: Any unpaid person engaged in or involved in activities and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors or adults.
- 5 *Sexual Abuse*: The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any minor or adult to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of minor or adult, or incest with a minor or adult, or as defined by federal and state law. This includes and is not limited to unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, advances, leering, whistling, or sexual gestures; sexual touching, fondling, molestation, assault, or other intimate physical contact; compelling another person to engage in a sexual act by threats or fear or undue influence; and providing or displaying pornographic materials to another person.
- 6 *Child Emotional Abuse*: Verbal or nonverbal conduct including mental exploitation, degrading communication, or humiliating or threatening conduct that may or may not include bullying or as defined by Tennessee state law.

Protection and Prevention

Volunteer and Employee Screening Procedures

The following screening procedures are to be used with paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All information collected should be maintained in confidence.

- 1 *Employment Application and Volunteer Application:* Any paid staff and volunteers who will work with a minor must complete the Employment Application and/or the Volunteer Application. The release statement attached to the Application must be signed by the individual completing the Application to apply for and qualify for service.

Our Employment Application includes questions regarding:

- Current and previous residence addresses.
- Current and previous employment, including addresses, dates, duties, titles, and reasons for leaving.
- Names and addresses of schools attended and degree(s) earned.
- References from previous employers and organizations that serve children.
- Pending criminal charges.
- Criminal history information.

Our Volunteer Application includes questions regarding:

- Current address.
- Volunteer experience.

- Criminal history information.
- Personal references.

Applications include a statement, which the applicant should acknowledge in writing, certifying that statements provided in the application are true and complete, and any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of the applicant or for dismissal if he or she is employed. This statement authorizes **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** to contact any individual or organization listed in the application.

- 2 Review all statements made in the application, paying specific attention to any gaps in time and irregular employment patterns or unexplained absence. Pursue these gaps with employers listed and in a subsequent interview.
- 3 Conduct interviews with qualified applicants.

If detrimental information is uncovered but the applicant remains desirable, discuss this information with the applicant. In the event the applicant is ultimately hired or accepted as a volunteer, document the reasons for overriding the prior information.

Whenever possible, **the Executive Pastor** will participate in the interview process.

- 4 Contact all listed references for volunteers. Contact each of the volunteer applicant's references and ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes if possible.
- 5 Contact all listed references and employers for paid staff. Inquire as to the reason the applicant left and ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes if possible.

- 6 *Criminal Background Check:* **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** will conduct a criminal background check on all paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All criminal background checks will be updated every three years.
- 7 *Six-Month Rule:* All volunteers will be required to have been a member of **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** for six months and have reviewed and signed the Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program. Volunteers who have been members for less than six months may be provided a waiver with the approval of the ministry leader and executive pastor.

Confidentiality

Information obtained through the screening, application, reference check, interview, and criminal background check will be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above-referenced means will be kept in a secure location and access to it will be restricted if possible. These materials will be archived.

Supervision Procedures

Unless an extenuating situation exists, **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN:**

- 1 Will have adequate number of screened and trained paid staff or volunteers present at events involving minors. Supervision will increase in proportion to the risk of the activity. A minimum number of 2 adults should be present in any group setting.
- 2 Will monitor facilities during activities involving children.
- 3 Will release minors (3rd grade and under) only to a parent or guardian and utilize sign-in.
- 4 Will obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical treatment form and emergency contacts, before taking minors on trips and should provide information regarding the trip.
- 5 Will use two paid staff or volunteers when transporting minors in vehicles.
- 6 Will require that young children be accompanied to the restroom and the paid staff or volunteer wait outside the facility to escort the child back to the activity. Whenever possible, the escort will be the same sex as the minor.
- 7 Will encourage minors to use a “buddy system” whenever minors go on trips off of First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN property.
- 8 Will screen all paid staff and volunteers and approve those individuals in advance for any overnight activities.
- 9 No adult volunteer will serve in a Bible study group, support group, etc. with the same age group of minors more than 2 consecutive years.

Behavioral Guidelines for Religious Organization Paid Staff and Volunteers

All volunteers and paid staff will observe the following guidelines:

- 1 Do not provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to minors.
- 2 To the extent possible, First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN events that are co-educational will have both male and female chaperones.
- 3 Whenever possible, at least two unrelated paid staff or volunteers will be in the room when minors are present. Doors will be left fully open if one adult needs to leave the room temporarily and during arrival to the class or event before both adults are present. Speaking to a minor or minors one-on-one should be done in public settings where paid staff or volunteers are in sight of other people.
- 4 Avoid all inappropriate touching with minors. All touching shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched, not on the needs of the volunteer or paid staff. In the event a minor initiates physical contact and/or inappropriate touching, it is appropriate to inform the minor that such touching is inappropriate.
- 5 Never engage in physical discipline of a minor. Volunteers and paid staff shall not abuse minors in any way, including but not limited to physical abuse, verbal/mental abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse of any kind.
- 6 If you recognize an inappropriate relationship developing between a minor and adult, maintain clear professional boundaries and refer the minor to another individual with supervisory authority.
- 7 If one-on-one pastoral care or ministry is necessary, avoid meeting in isolated environments.

- 8 Anyone who observes abuse of a minor will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and officials of **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** for handling.
- 9 No social networking with minors for personal reasons is allowed by staff. Networking through appropriate program sites may be used when the contact is related to programming.

Disqualification

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over minors who has been convicted of the offenses outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deferred adjudication for any offense outlined below, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control, or oversight of minors:

- 1 Any offense against minors as defined by state law.
- 2 A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, incest, drug-related offenses, or family violence.
- 3 A prior criminal history of an offense against minors.

Sexual Offender at First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN

First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN may allow a person known to be a sexual offender to remain or become a member of the congregation, but they must adhere to specific guidelines. However, first check with the offender's probation/parole officer for any restrictions regarding attending services or other functions where children are present. Ask the probation/parole officer to put any restrictions in writing. If restrictions do not prohibit offender participation, the following additional four requirements must be implemented and remain in force at all times involving any known sexual offender:

- 1 The convicted sexual offender cannot participate in any of the child or youth programs in any way.
- 2 The convicted sexual offender can only participate in a predetermined service each week.
- 3 The convicted sexual offender must report in and be assigned to an escort who will accompany him or her at all times.
- 4 The church leadership needs to be made aware that a convicted sex offender is attending. However, the name does not need to be disclosed.

Response to Sexual Abuse

First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of sexual abuse. All accusations of sexual abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege sexual abuse and those who have been accused of sexual abuse.

When an allegation is made involving sexual abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be told about the guidelines and the procedures to be followed. The executive pastor or an appointed person will begin investigating the allegations and may use the assistance of legal counsel or other consultants. If the senior pastor or executive pastor is the individual accused of sexual abuse, then the chairman of deacons will conduct the investigation. The investigation will be conducted as follows

- 1 Report the incident to appropriate authorities in accordance with the state mandatory reporting laws.
- 2 Report the matter to **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** insurance carrier.
- 3 Cooperate with authorities and the insurance carrier.
- 4 **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** may suspend (with pay for paid staff) the alleged offender while a confidential investigation is being conducted.
- 5 An official of **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** (and legal counsel or other consultants) will then meet with the deacon body of **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** and present a report on their investigation, which will include findings and recommendations of actions.
- 6 An official of **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** will meet with the alleged perpetrator and notify him/her of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.

- 7 An official of **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** will meet with the alleged victim, along with his/her parents or guardians, and notify them of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
- 8 During the investigation, an official of **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** shall maintain contact with the alleged victim and his/her parents or legal guardian, and inform them of the actions taken and assist them in their process of healing.
- 9 An official of **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** (and legal counsel or other consultants) may meet with the alleged perpetrator, the alleged victim, and any others with knowledge of relevant facts.
- 10 Communicate with criminal and civil legal counsel of **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN**.
- 11 Communicate with those affected by the ministry of the alleged perpetrator.
- 12 Hire a consultant or assign a spokesperson to respond to media or prepare a statement for the media if the need shall arise, subject to the approval of the attorney of **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN**.

Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program Acknowledgment

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with minors. The information establishes general practices and guidelines and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment. **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with or without notice.

The terms defined herein are defined for the purposes of the program and do not suppose or establish a legal relationship. These terms are not defined for the purposes of creating a legal relationship with the **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.

I have received a copy of the **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN** Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of the **First Baptist Church [of SAMPLE], TN**.

Print Name

Signature

Date

NOTES ON ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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