

Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Trinity United Methodist Church is to proclaim God's love by building community and living by the example and teachings of Jesus Christ.

VISION STATEMENT

We envision a radically loving community where everyone belongs, everyone is supported, and no one is alone.

**Trinity United Methodist Church
Child/Youth and Vulnerable Adult
Abuse Prevention & Protection Policy
“Safe Sanctuaries”
Revised October 2017**

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I. OUR THEOLOGICAL TASK

Then [Jesus] took a little child and put [him] among them; and taking [her] in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me." (Mark 9:36-37)

Jesus also said, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones..., it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6)

The Church, above all institutions, is called to welcome and nurture children. Our goal is to maintain a safe, secure, loving place where children may grow, and where those who care for them may minister to their needs in responsible ways. In addition, Trinity will meet and minister to adults who are vulnerable in a number of ways: by societal views of "worthiness;" by poverty; by physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; etc. These adult individuals are at as much risk as the "little children" Jesus welcomes.

As followers of Jesus, we are also committed to protect and advocate for children, youth and vulnerable adults participating in the life of the church. The church, at all levels of its organization, is entrusted with the responsibility of providing an emotionally safe, spiritually grounded, and healthy environment for children, youth, and adults in which they are protected from abuse.

Additionally, as we move into caring for the abused child, the church community must also be intentional in embracing the family system as we call upon them to look at their wounds and the wounding of their child. Further, we recognize the grace that God gives in upholding Christian community; and we will look for grace-filled ways of dealing with both those who have been victimized and the accused.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. CHILD ABUSE

May be any act committed by a person in a position of trust (parent, caregiver, Sunday School teacher, pastor, or other) which harms or threatens to damage a child's welfare, including physical, spiritual or mental health. For specific information about Tennessee state law regarding definitions of abuse and neglect and provisions as to who may and must report child abuse or neglect, penalties for not reporting, and required action following the report, please refer to TCA (Tennessee Code Annotated) 37-1-403 and TCA 37-1-412. Child abuse may fall into four categories:

1. **PHYSICAL ABUSE** - Inflicting bodily harm to children constitutes physical abuse. Instances of physical abuse include any physical act of undue force such as assault with a knife, strap, or other implement; burns, fractures, and bruises resulting from being beaten, pushed down, shaken, pinched, slapped, or thrown. Physical abuse does not always leave visible marks.
2. **SEXUAL ABUSE** - Any time a child is used for the sexual stimulation of an adult or older child, abuse has occurred. The child is powerless either to consent to or resist such sexual acts. This includes fondling, sexual intercourse, forced participation in sexual acts, incest, exploitation for the

purpose of pornography or prostitution, and/or exposure to adult sexual activity.

3. **EMOTIONAL ABUSE** - Emotional abuse deeply affects a child's self-esteem by submitting him/her to verbal assault or emotional cruelty. It does not always involve injuries we can see. The child receives the message that he/she is not good and never will be. Emotional abuse can include closed confinement (being shut in a small area), making racial remarks or remarks about gender or sexuality, excessive punishment, using profanity, knowingly permitting drug or alcohol abuse, and/or ignoring or encouraging peer abuse.
4. **NEGLECT** – Neglect involves not hearing nor addressing a child's basic needs for health, welfare, or safety, resulting in harm to the child. It can include any of the following acts of negligence or maltreatment:
 - failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing;
 - abandonment;
 - refusal to seek treatment for illness;
 - inadequate supervision;
 - health hazards in the home, school, or church;
 - ignoring a child's need for contact, affirmation, stimulation and nurture.

B. CODES OF LAW

A child protection program is mandated by statute, which means there are state laws which declare a child's right to be free from abuse and neglect. Refer to the Tennessee Code Annotated for additional information. (See Section II. A. above.)

C. ABUSE OF VULNERABLE ADULTS

Abuse of vulnerable adults includes any report of abuse, neglect (including self-neglect), or financial exploitation of an adult who is unable to protect him/herself due to physical or mental abuse.

Abuse of vulnerable adults occurs in the richest and poorest of families, and each abuser would not be recognized by looking at him/her. Only one in 23 abuse cases are reported, because the abuse goes undetected until the abused person dies. Anyone can become vulnerable if one becomes dependent on others for care. As a church that ministers to many adults both within the walls of our buildings, as well as in persons' homes, members must be aware of signs that abuse may be occurring. Eighty percent of abuse and neglect is committed by people known to the person, often a son or daughter. Here are the types of abuse that occur:

1. **SUBTLE ABUSE** – These vulnerable adults have few if any opportunities to speak to persons in the "outside world." For example, this person could live in a nursing home and could be abused or stolen from.
2. **NEGLECT** – Occurs when the person providing caregiving restricts food, drink, or physical care or necessary medical care.
3. **SELF-NEGLECT** – This is a vulnerable adult who has no responsible caregiver and, due to physical or mental disability, s/he becomes unable to care for him/herself. Signs of self-neglect include the inability to manage finances, hoarding, squandering, or indiscriminate giving of money.

4. PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE – These are similar in definition to the abuse seen with children and youth. Signs could include bruises, unusual marking, lacerations, or other injuries that are inadequately or not explained, fear when approached, or changes in behavior toward a certain caregiver.

If abuse of a vulnerable adult occurs, or is suspected, a call can be made to the Tennessee Elder Abuse Hotline at 1-888-APS-TENN or 1-888-277-8366. If you suspect abuse in a patient in a nursing home or other healthcare facility, call the Health Abuse Registry at 1-800-778-4504.

III. STANDARDS

A. Criteria for Volunteers & Staff

1. MINIMUM AGE - The following standards for Authority Figures (whether volunteers or staff) are designed to separate Authority Figures from the group they are serving by age or enough years to reinforce recognition of the Authority Figure's role.
 - a. AUTHORITY FIGURES – the primary leaders of youth and children's activities.
 - i. To work with youth (6th grade and above), the Authority Figure must be a minimum of 22 years of age.
 - ii. To work with children (infant –5th grade), the Authority Figure must be a minimum of 18 years of age.
 - b. ASSISTANTS – persons who help the Authority Figure and act at the direction of the Authority Figure, including volunteers, such as community volunteers during VBS. Whether working with youth or children, Assistants must be:
 - i. A minimum of 12 years of age and 4 years older than the participants; and
 - ii. In the judgment of a staff member, be competent to assist in the activity.
 - iii. An Assistant may not be counted as an adult in the child/adult ratios.
 - iv. An Assistant must help with at least two other Authority Figures.

2. SIX MONTH RULE

The six-month rule must be employed in scheduling volunteers wishing to give service in the areas of children, youth, and vulnerable adult ministries. All new church members or volunteers must be known to the congregation for at least six months before serving as a volunteer. This rule discourages pedophiles who seek to benefit from the desperate need for volunteers at many churches, but also from churches' willingness to easily trust. Persons not meeting this minimum requirement may serve only in an assistant capacity with two other non-related adults, (See "Two- Adult Rule", pgs. 5 and 6).

3A. POLICY INSTRUCTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The church should ensure that training focused on current issues of child protection is available to and received by staff and volunteers prior to their beginning work with children or youth. Attendance at this training is required of all paid staff members and adult volunteers who work with children and/or youth. Yearly review of these policies is required of all workers with children and youth. Documentation of training attendance and policy review will be kept on file in the church office. The training should include:

- A. The definition and recognition of child abuse.
- B. Trinity UMC's policy and procedures on child abuse and the reasons for having them.
- C. The need to maintain a positive classroom environment, including appropriate discipline and age-level characteristics.
- D. The appropriate behavior for teachers and leaders of child/youth events.
- E. Child abuse reporting responsibilities and procedures.
- F. The definition of appropriate interpersonal boundaries (ways of touching students, appropriate language, etc.)

3B. POLICY INSTRUCTION FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS

For visits to homebound church members, two unrelated adults must be present. The members who visit must be known by the church for six months or longer.

4. SCREENING PROCEDURES – See Section IV, for all vulnerable persons except where indicated.

- a. An application (Appendices A& B)
- b. An interview for prospective staff members (Appendix C)
- c. Disclosure Form (Appendix D)
- d. Reference Checks (Appendix E – for new staff only)
- e. Background Checks (Appendix F- I)
- f. Drug Screenings (staff only) (Appendix J-L)
- g. Special Activities Covenant (Appendix M) for children/youth and parents
- h. Report Form (Appendix N)***
- i. Permission Form for special activities (P. 17 in TUMC's old policies will become Appendix O)
- j. Driver's license and proof of automobile insurance

B. Responsibilities of Volunteers and Staff

1. TWO ADULT RULE

A minimum of two non-related adults is to be utilized in all programming with children and youth. When impossible to staff with two non-related adults, there must be an additional adult serving as a floater with visual and physical access to all areas.

2. ADULT/CHILD RATIOS

Note: All ratios must be understood in light of first having two adults present at all times.

Recommended ratios:

- Infants (non-disabled and not walking) – 1 Adult to 4 Infants
- Toddlers (walking, non-disabled) – 1 Adult to 6 Toddlers
- 2 years of age – 1 Adult to 7 Children
- 3 years of age – 1 Adult to 9 Children
- 4 years of age – 1 Adult to 13 Children
- 5 years of age – 1 Adult to 16 Children
- 6 years of age and above – 1 Adult to 20 Children
- Mixed Age Groups:
 - 6 wks to 30 months–1 to 5
 - 2 to 3 year old–1 to 8
 - 2 to 4 year old–1 to 8
 - 2½ to 3 year old–1 to 9
 - 2½ to 5 year old–1 to 11
 - 3 to 5 year old–1 to 13
 - 4 to 5 year old–1 to 16
 - 5 to 12 year old–1 to 20

b. Residential Camping - Any overnight event should be classified as residential. In residential camping settings, the adults must always be the same sex as the campers.

- Grades 1-3 = 1 Adult to 8 Children
- Grades 4-8 = 1 Adult to 10 Children
- Grades 9-12 = 1 Adult to 12 Children

c. Caution – Adults and authoritative leaders should never be alone with a child or youth.

This can include, but is not limited to:

- An automobile while taking a child home (without parental consent).
- A classroom with windowless/locked doors.
- A cabin at camp.

3. ROOMING

a. In a dormitory [cabin type] setting:

- At least two adults of the same gender as the residents should be assigned to each room of youth or children. Follow “Adult/Child Ratios” to determine when to add additional adults.
- Adults should not share the same bed with a youth or child under any circumstances.
- Adults should not be alone with a youth or child in a room.

b. In a motel/hotel setting:

- Select a hotel with rooms opening to the interior (i.e. a closed hallway) of the building. Where possible, select adjoining rooms on a single hallway.
- When two adults cannot be assigned to a room housing youth, the youth should be roomed separately from the adults. If adjoining rooms are available with doors that can be left in the open position, a single adult in each of the adjoining rooms is acceptable.
- An adult should not share a bed with a child/youth.
- Where adults need to be assigned to separate rooms, it is recommended that one adult room be located between every two youth rooms on the hall.

- Adults should develop a rotating schedule allowing for the hallway to be monitored throughout the night.
- If room checks are needed, they should involve two adults of the same gender as the room residents.

4. TRANSPORTATION

a. Traveling to or from programmed events:

- All drivers should be screened in the same manner as other leadership for an event including a review of their motor vehicle record.
- When private vehicles are used to transport children and youth for programmed church related events, leaders should ensure that appropriate insurance is being maintained by both the church and the private driver.
- All drivers must be 22 years of age or older.
- Where possible, it is recommended that two adults be placed in each vehicle or the vehicles teamed in minimum groups of two that stay together at all times.
- It should be requested of the trustees that they establish safety policies and guidelines for the operation of church owned vehicles and that they should be strictly followed at all times.
- For all trips each child and youth shall have a church provided permission slip signed by a parents/guardian. Yearly, a Special Activities Covenant and medical insurance verification form shall be on file for each child or youth. In the absence of a regular permission slip, yearly Special Activities Covenant, or medical insurance verification form, the church staff person will call a parent or relative to pick up the child.

b. Transporting Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults (e.g. RITI) to and from home:

It is often out of the pastor's, children's or youth leader's control as to the manner and procedures by which children or youth arrive for and depart local church events. It is, however, likely that these persons may occasionally be asked to drive a child or youth. It is essential to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Church related staff should make every effort to avoid transporting a youth or child unless a second adult is in the vehicle with them.
- Make sure that another volunteer or staff goes with you to take a child home unless verbal or written parental consent has been given.
- Call the child's parents as you leave, state the time you are leaving and when you will be there (they know how long it takes to get to their home), then as you leave, your last volunteer or staff can leave. When you drop the child off, walk them to the door and recognize the time. Also, keep a log book of your mileage.

5. MENTORING

Some Assumptions:

Mentoring programs or other efforts to pair children with caring adults are good things. In fact, we know that at-risk children who beat the odds and “make it” frequently credit their success to an ongoing relationship with an adult outside their family who took an interest in them and was there “for the long haul.” However, the movement within The United Methodist Church to reduce the risk of child abuse through the development of careful policies and procedures is also a good thing.

Therefore, the following procedures are suggested in planning any mentoring efforts:

- Work through existing programs in the community that have established, supervised mentoring programs already in place, such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, YMCA’s, Boy and Girl Scouts, public schools, etc.
- Provide basic screening of all adults who will be working with children and youth.
- If a mentoring program is being set up, establish clear written guidelines for settings, boundaries, and environment. Provide training for all adults (or youth, if they will be working with children) who are interested in being mentors.
- Make it clear that all persons are expected to follow congregation, agency and/or conference guidelines for reducing the risk of child/youth abuse.

Make specific suggestions, such as:

Outings should be in public places; routes, time frames, etc. should be agreed upon in advance and known to all; plan activities & outings that include several adults & children (i.e., two sets of mentor & child); one-to-one mentoring or tutoring should take place in a group setting, such as one large room rather than individual rooms spread through the church building.

6. COUNSELING (Pastoral Only)

- a. By counseling we do not mean counseling by a licensed professional. That technical counseling should only be done by a trained and licensed counselor. Our focus is counseling in the Christian tradition better defined as spiritual guidance or pastoral care. This includes skills such as those of listening, encouragement, and compassion.
- b. Open-Door and Visual Access Counseling
At any counseling session with children, youth, or adults the door of the room used should remain open for the entire session or be held in a room that has clear visual and physical access. Ideally, the session will be conducted at a time when others are nearby, even if they are not within listening distance.

7. INTERPERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Adults who model respectful and nurturing behaviors that do not interfere with another’s privacy provide good examples of appropriate ways to relate to others. Youth and children follow the lead of the adults in this regard. Therefore, it is important for the adult workers to be clear about appropriate

behaviors. Adult workers must be attentive to appropriate dress codes, language and demonstrations of affection and encouragement. A good rule of thumb for adult leaders: never initiate a hug and always be the one to end the hug.

8. VISITING AT YOUTH, CHILDREN, AND VULNERABLE ADULTS' HOMES

- a. Follow the two adult rule (non-related adults)
- b. Suggestions:
 - i. If youth or children "drop by", you can visit outside in the front yard, tell them you will meet them at a local restaurant or have them go recruit another adult to be present.
 - ii. Educating youth and children of these requirements before they "drop by" is most beneficial. This way they either recruit another adult ahead of time or call you to have you meet them at a local restaurant.

9. DISCIPLINE (see Training Appendix) See: Children and Youth Appendix

10. OPEN DOOR POLICY

Classrooms or child care rooms may be visited without prior notice by church staff, parents or other volunteer church workers, Sunday School Superintendent, and others at any time. Brief observations of child care rooms and classrooms of children or youth are conducted by the pastor or primary leader during all activities.

IV. SCREENING PROCEDURES

It is the hope that, within the activities of Trinity United Methodist Church, we prevent the abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable persons in our care.

The initial and most fundamental step to prevention is the careful screening of persons who will have access to children under 18 years of age and vulnerable persons. Although we recognize the integrity of an overwhelming number of the persons with discerned callings to ministries with children, youth, and vulnerable persons, we realize that abuse still occurs in the church. Therefore, we believe that all persons should be properly screened and all screening documents kept on file.

The following steps should be followed in screening volunteer and paid applicants:

See Board Appendix

C. DISCLOSURE [Staff Only - Appendix D]

The Memphis Annual Conference requires all persons having access to children, youth, vulnerable persons, and developmentally disabled persons to complete a disclosure form and keep it on file. A proper form is attached and should not be amended.

D. REFERENCE CHECKS [Staff only - Form Appendix E]

It is recommended that a minimum of three references be contacted on all applicants for staff positions having access to children, youth, and vulnerable adults. We prefer that one

of the references be the applicant's pastor and the other two must be non-relatives. A recommended reference form is attached. Suggestion: Have applicant give reference forms to references with the church's address on it to mail back directly.

E. BACKGROUND CHECKS [Appendices F-I]

Staff Parish Committee must check with the insurance company to determine their requirements in this area each time insurance is changed.

1. All volunteers or paid workers with children and youth should submit to:
 - a. Social Security Number Trace/Social Search Report – To determine all present and past places of residence.
 - b. County Criminal Court Check – Current county of or at the state level where applicable.
 - c. National Criminal Database Search - Volunteer (NCDS-V) – To be used in conjunction with the Criminal Convictions Check, this search “throws a net” out to check for any conviction that might have occurred in counties or states of non-residence, i.e., while on vacation or just across the state line.
 - d. Documentation from screening checks (e.g., interviews, written information, personal contacts, references, and background checks, etc.) shall be kept on file indefinitely.

3. Possible Screening Agencies to use to do background checks
 - a. Datafacts – Memphis, TN, 901-685-7599, 1-800-264-4110 or www.datafacts.com [Release Authorization Form, Appendix F]
 - b. Companies available through the District Office.
 - c. Online databases:
 1. <https://apps.tn.gov/foil-app/search.jsp> (TN Felony Offender Information)
 2. <https://apps.tn.gov/methor/> (TN Drug Offender Registry Database)
 3. <https://www.tn.gov/tbi/section/tennessee-sex-offender-registry> (TBI Sex Offender Search)
 4. <https://www.nsopw.gov/en-US> (U.S. Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Website)
 5. <http://state.sor.dps.ms.gov/Captcha.aspx> (MS Sex Offender Registry)

4. Volunteers and Staff
 - a. The screening agency shall mail a report to the pastor.
 - b. The report shall be reviewed by the pastor and a designated person such as the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee Chair. See #6 on page 12 if the report is unfavorable.

5. If a volunteer worker or paid worker (including clergy) has already submitted to a background check because of other volunteerism or employment (as outlined in #1), and the background check is within the last six years, such background check may be submitted. If the check is not in all 4 areas, and is not readily accessible, a new check needs to be initiated.
 - a. Release Form for Background Check Transfer [See Appendix G]

- i. Signed by the employee giving the employer/volunteer organization permission to share the background check information with the new employer/volunteer organization.
- ii. Signed by the employer/volunteer organization verifying the background check and stating that the copies exactly match the originals on file with the employer or organization and that neither the copies nor the originals have been altered in any way.
- iii. Copies of the original background checks then need to be sent to the new employer/volunteer organization.
- iv. The date of the background check must fall within the time frame of the current quadrennium.

6. Procedure in case of an unfavorable report

a. Volunteers or Staff

- i. The person shall be notified with a “Notice of Unfavorable Report” form. [Appendix H]
- ii. The Pastor and Pastor-Parish/Staff-Parish Relations Committee Chairperson shall meet with the person to discuss the report.
- iii. Review Process shall consider the following factors:
 - 1. The nature and seriousness of the crime
 - 2. The relationship of the crime to the purpose of the congregation
 - 3. The age of the person at the time of the commission of the crime
 - 4. The time elapsed since the person’s crime
- iv. Any charge that deals with sexual abuse or child abuse shall prevent the person from working with children and/or youth.
- v. Any action taken shall be placed in person’s file.

7. Keeping files.

- a. There shall be two persons designated to process all applications, related documents and background checks.
- b. All references (solicited or unsolicited), disclosure statements, and background checks shall be kept indefinitely and remain confidential.
- c. All files shall be kept under “double lock” – in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office.

F. DRUG SCREENING [APPENDIX J-L]

Random drug screenings may be occasionally required at the request of the Prevention Policy Board for any or all staff. Screenings are administered to ensure that the environment is safe for all youth, children, vulnerable adults, and fellow employees

G. FEDERAL AND STATE LAW

Trinity UMC must comply with the requirements of all Federal and State laws affecting or relating to employment or child abuse. In any case where there is a conflict between such laws and the procedure outlined in this document, said laws shall prevail and the

procedure outlined in the document shall be modified to the extent necessary to eliminate such conflict. Such exceptions to this policy shall apply only to related provision.

V. IMPLEMENTATION: PREVENTION POLICY CHECKLIST

See Prevention Policy Appendix

VI. PREVENTION POLICY BOARD DUTIES

Implementation: Prevention Policy Checklist

A. The SPPRC shall nominate a "Prevention Policy Board" to oversee ongoing implementation of this policy. Members of the board shall be elected at the annual Charge Conference

1. Possible Members shall include the following

- a. Pastor
- b. Staff Parish-Pastor Relations Committee (SPPRC) Chairman
- c. Trustees Member
- d. Director of Midtown Montessori School
- e. Representatives from groups that engage in ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
- f. Lay Leader

2. See "Prevention Policy Board Duties" for specifics, Section VI, page 15

A. The Board shall meet at least twice per calendar year.

B. The Board shall report directly to the Church Council.

C. Education:

1. Formally educate all volunteers and employees annually, with provision being made for volunteer/employee training mid-year as new staff members or volunteers are added.
2. Educate all children and youth.
3. Informally educate our congregation annually about the contents of the policy and why it is necessary.

D. Ensure compliance with the policy.

E. Be available to answer questions about the policy.

F. Grant exceptions to the policy in appropriate circumstances.

G. Review and renew the policy annually or as needed.

H. Evaluate Board functions.

I. Assist with investigations when called upon.

J. Other duties, as needed.

1. Check church's liability coverage each time policy is changed.
2. Make sure all employees and volunteers are protected in the coverage.

- 3. Work with insurance agent and attorney to review coverage.
- K. Keep a detailed folder of all efforts your church makes to reduce the risk of child abuse.
- L. Does your insurance require background checks, yearly training, etc.?
- M. Know the child intervention resources in your area and make that information available to your church.

Implementation checklist – see Prevention Policy Board Appendix

VII. REPORTING ABUSE/ALLEGED ABUSE

All reports of child abuse must be taken seriously and handled in ways that care for the wellbeing of both the abused and the accused. **All cases of suspected abuse must be reported to the Department of Children’s and Human Services in Tennessee.** Initial reports should be made to county/local branch of these departments. Immediately report your suspicions by calling the Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline at 1.877.237.0004. Someone is available 24/7. If you believe that the child is in immediate danger, you should call your local police or sheriff’s office. To report to law enforcement:

Memphis, TN: 901.528.2222

Shelby County, TN: 901.379.7620

If you believe the allegation of abuse/neglect you are reporting requires action in less than 24 hours, please contact The Department of Children's Services Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-237-0004 or 1-877-54ABUSE (1-877-542-2873).

NOTE: If in doubt, these departments would prefer that a call be made to discuss what has been witnessed or suspected. These agencies have trained and responsible personnel who can make the appropriate determination about whether something is suspect. Reports must meet statutory definitions of abuse before they will be pursued. **Efforts of individuals to investigate before calling the appropriate state agency are forbidden. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect can result in criminal charges.**

A. A Written Report [Sample Form Appendix N]

A written report of basic information is necessary to ensure on-going ministry to, and advocacy for, victims and others involved in a suspected case of abuse. Any report of child abuse or suspected child abuse should be accompanied by a written record of the information. Basic information shall include:

- Names, ages, addresses, telephone numbers of both the abused and the accused.
- Nature of the abuse, dates (if possible), and factual details that brought the report into being.
- The name of the person making the report, date information was received, their signature and any other factual information. Reports shall be brief and void of speculation, unsupported opinion, and information not relative to the situation. These reports need to be filed in a secure place to ensure the confidentiality of

the person who has made the disclosure. All reports shall be made in ink or typed.

B. To Whom Shall the Report Be Filed

The report should be filed with the director of the program or pastor, at the Institution or Conference Event where the suspected abuse took place. In the event that the Director and/or ordained minister is the alleged perpetrator, the report must be made to the District Superintendent and subsequent handling should follow the procedures outlined in the "Conference Professional Sexual Misconduct Policy." In every case, information should be well documented and safely secured by the person making the report, as well as those receiving it.

C. Additional Reporting Steps

1. If immediate danger exists to a child, contact Police, Sheriff or Highway Patrol immediately and wait for their arrival or follow their instructions.
2. Incidents of child abuse or reasonably suspected cases of abuse, whether allegedly perpetrated by individuals associated with the church or outside of the church shall be reported to the pastor and chairman of SPPR
3. Pastor and Chairman will then follow the guidelines set forth in the policy.
 - a. Notify the parents of the victim and take any necessary steps to assure the child's safety until parents arrive.
 - b. Do not confront the abuser with anger or hostility. Treat him or her with dignity, but immediately remove him or her from further involvement with children or youth.
 - c. Contact the proper agency below: (this is as per the "Legal Considerations" stated above)
Tennessee Department of Human Services and/or Children
Shelby 901-543-7120
 - d. Contact the law enforcement agency.
 - e. All facts and circumstances of an incident shall be documented by the pastor with the cooperation of the reporting person, if different. (See Conference Prevention Policy, Appendix N)
 - f. All steps taken in the handling of the incident and/or report shall be documented.
 - g. Pastor shall contact the District Superintendent.
 - h. The Pastor shall file a report with the insurance company and church legal counsel, if the suspected abuser is on staff or a volunteer with the church.
 - i. An in-depth investigation shall be carried out by the civil authorities rather than by church personnel.
4. The Pastor shall be sole spokesperson for the church in-so-far as media inquiries are concerned.

Consult the Conference Director of Communications at 731-664-8480 and your District Superintendent for help in writing a proper statement.

X. SAMPLE FORMS IN APPENDICES A-P

Sample forms are intended as guides only. Local congregations should develop forms to comply with the requirements of the

- laws of your state;
- your congregation's policies;
- local law enforcement;
- and your congregation's insurance agent.

A. Employment Application

B. Volunteer Application

C. Sample Interview Questions

D. Disclosure Form

E. Reference Inquiry Form

F. Release Authorization Form

G. Release Form For Background Check Transfers

H. Notice of Unfavorable Report

I. Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA): Summary of Your Rights

J. Substance Abuse and Testing Policy

K. Pre-Employment/Volunteer Drug Testing Consent and Release Form

L. Certificate of Agreement for Drug Screening

M. Special Activities Covenant

N. Report Form for Suspected Instances of Abuse

O. A Synopsis of the 2004 - 2005 Memphis Conference Policy

P. Children's Project Page

Appendix A

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION FOR TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1738 Galloway Avenue, Memphis, TN 38112

Name _____ Soc. Sec. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone # _____ How long at this address? _____

Previous address _____
How long at this address? _____

Driver's License # _____ Issuing State _____

Emergency Contact Name _____ Phone # _____

Position Desired _____ Salary Desired _____

Present Employer _____
May we inquire of your employer? _____

Have you ever applied here before? If so, when? _____ Position? _____

Who referred you to us? _____

References: (Not immediate family and must be over the age of 21)

1. Name: _____
Address: _____
Business phone: _____ Home phone: _____
How long have you known this person? _____
2. Name: _____
Address: _____
Business phone: _____ Home phone: _____
How long have you known this person? _____
3. Name: _____
Address: _____
Business phone: _____ Home phone: _____
How long have you known this person? _____

Educational Background (include degree major where applicable):

<u>School/ Institution</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Degree/Certification</u>	<u>Dates</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

List any other pertinent Educational experiences (i.e., training programs attended, workshops, conferences, courses, etc.) and dates attended: _____

List other experiences and dates working with children/youth. _____

Why do you want to serve in this position? _____

What talents or gifts do you possess? _____

When would you be available to begin? _____

Have you ever been convicted of a felony including any involving a suspended sentence?

Yes _____ No _____

Have you ever been reported for child abuse or neglect?

Yes _____ No _____

If you answered "yes" on either of the above, for what and when? _____

By signing this form, I am affirming that the above statements I have made are true and factual to the best of my knowledge; and I am granting permission for all persons, organizations or agencies listed above to be contacted, as well as the Department of Human Services or state law enforcement in conducting a criminal records check for the expressed purpose of pre-employment screening.

Applicant's Signature

Date

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FOR MEMPHIS CONFERENCE
(Please print or type)

Name _____ SS# _____ Male () Female ()

Address _____ City _____ State ___ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ How long at present address? _____

Previous address _____ How long at this address? _____

Driver's License No. _____ Issuing State _____

Emergency Contact Name _____ Phone Number _____

Volunteer position desired _____

Have you ever applied here before? _____ If so, when? _____ Position? _____

Who referred you? _____

References: (Not pastor or immediate family and over the age of 21)

1. _____

Name

Address

How long have you known this person? _____

Business Phone

Home Phone

2. _____

Name

Address

How long have you known this person? _____

Business Phone

Home Phone

Appendix B (2 of 2)

Education Background (list Diplomas, Degrees and Certification):

School/Institution	Address	Title	Dates

List any other Educational experiences (i.e., training programs attended, workshops, conferences, courses, etc.) and date(s) attended.

List other experiences and dates working with children/youth. _____

Why do you want to serve in this position? _____

What talents or gifts do you possess? _____

When would you be available to begin? _____

Have you ever been convicted of a felony including any involving a suspended sentence?

Yes__ No _____

Have you ever been reported for child abuse or neglect? Yes _____ No _____

If so on either of the above, what and when?

By signing this form, I am affirming that the above statements I have made are true and factual to the best of my knowledge; and I am granting permission for all persons, organizations or agencies, such as Department of Human Services or state law enforcement, listed above to be contacted or by conducting a criminal record check for the expressed purpose of pre-employment screening.

Date

Applicant's Signature

Appendix C

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following are some suggested questions which may be used in an interview.

1. Why are you interested in being associated with (organization)?
2. How would you describe (or identify) yourself?
3. When you read the job description, what appealed to you the most?
4. What specific skills do you bring to this job?
5. With what age group and sex do you prefer to work? Why? Please give examples of your work with this age group.
6. If you are trained are you willing to work with other age groups or sex?
7. What kinds of programs or activities would you be willing to lead, supervise or conduct? If trained would you be willing to conduct other activities?
8. What do you feel are chief indicators of a successful program or activity?
9. Give a specific example of how you overcame a difficulty in job, school or family.
10. Give an example of how you overcame a problem with a youngster other than your own. How were you disciplined as a child? How would/do you discipline?
11. Under what supervision style do you work best?
12. In what types of activities or recreation do you participate?
13. What were your favorite subjects in school?
14. What would you like to tell us that hasn't been covered?
15. What questions do you have about our organization?
16. Other questions as raised re: information given on application form.

One might conclude the interview with one or two hypothetical situations which are typical in your organization and ask the applicant how they would respond in that situation.

Appendix D

DISCLOSURE FORM

Our church cares about the children and youth in our programs, and desires to ensure their safety while they are in the church's supervision. Some state legislatures have helped us assure security for children, vulnerable adults and developmentally disabled people by requiring disclosures by all people who will work with them, and the United Methodist Church supports this requirement. Because we care for children and youth, our church joins in asking any new staff member who will be providing supervision/ leadership with children, youth, vulnerable adults and/or developmentally disabled persons to complete this disclosure form.

Please complete the following questions by circling "Yes" or "No" and please attach an explanation for any "Yes" answer.

1. Have you ever been convicted of any crime against children or other persons.
Yes No
2. Have you ever been found in any dependency action to have sexually assaulted or exploited any minor or to have physically abused any minor? Yes No
3. Have you ever been found by a court in a domestic relations proceeding to have sexually abused or exploited any minor or to have physically abused any minor?
Yes No
4. a. Have you been convicted of the possession, use, or sale of drugs within the last 7 years? Yes No
b. Have you been released from incarceration for a conviction of the possession, use, or sale of drugs within the last 7 years? Yes No
5. Within the past 30 days have you abused alcohol, legal or illegal drugs? Yes No
6. Has your drivers' license been suspended or revoked within the last 7 years?
Yes No
7. Have you ever been convicted of crimes relating to financial exploitation where the victim was a vulnerable adult? Yes No
8. Have you ever been found by a court in a protection proceeding to have abused or financially exploited a vulnerable adult? Yes No
9. a. Have you ever been licensed by a licensing board that licenses businesses/professions? (If yes, please answer b. and c.) Yes No
b. Have you ever been found by that licensing board, or any other disciplinary board, to have sexually or physically abused or exploited any minor or developmentally disabled person? Yes No
10. Have you ever been found by that licensing board or any other disciplinary board, to have abused or financially exploited any vulnerable adult? Yes No

11. Other than the above matters, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance and care of young people, vulnerable adults or developmentally disabled persons?
Yes No

I certify that the information I have provided is true and correct; if it is found that the answers given are untrue, I understand it may be cause for dismissal.

Signature

Date

Appendix E

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION
REFERENCE INQUIRY FORM

Please complete this form as it relates to this person and his/her characteristics and qualifications to work with children or youth. Return the completed form to:

Trinity United Methodist Church, 1738 Galloway Ave., Memphis, TN 38112
Inquiring Organization Name and Address

_____ Applicant

How long have you known the applicant? _____

In what capacity? _____

Does s/he work well with others? _____

How would you rate him/her in the following areas? Please give explanations.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Do Not Know
Personal Habits					
Character					
Morals					
Compassion for those in need					
Responsible to complete commitments					
Emotional stability					
Christian maturity					
Receives constructive criticism well					
Health					
Other Comments?					

Would you want this person to work with your child or youth? Why/why not?

Reference inquiry completed by: _____
Signature Date

Appendix F

RELEASE AUTHORIZATION

I hereby authorize and request any former employer, school, law enforcement agency, or other persons having personal knowledge about me to furnish Trinity United Methodist Church with any and all information in their possession regarding me, in connection with an application for employment/volunteerism by conducting the following checks: 1) Social Security Number Trace, 2) Criminal Convictions/Sex Offender Check by county (and/or state where applicable), 3) Motor Vehicle Records, and 4) National Criminal/Sex Offender Database Search. I understand and offer my consent for Trinity United Methodist Church's authorized agent to inquire and/or obtain the records necessary or pertinent to volunteer or staff employment in The United Methodist Church. My signature on this form waives any rights I may have to bring action for defamation, invasion of privacy or any similar cause against Trinity United Methodist Church or its agents. I acknowledge that a photocopy or fax of this authorization may be accepted with the same authority as the original. According to the Fair Credit Reporting Act, I am entitled to know if employment/volunteerism is denied because of information obtained by the consumer-reporting agency. If so, I will be notified and given the name and address of the agency or the source which provided the information.

Today's Date: _____ Signature: _____

The following must be filled out completely for your application to be considered. (Please Print)

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE
-----------	------------	--------

MAIDEN NAME/FORMER MARRIED NAME	DATE OF CHANGE
---------------------------------	----------------

CURRENT ADDRESS	CITY/STATE/ZIP	COUNTY	LENGTH AT ADDRESS
-----------------	----------------	--------	-------------------

FORMER ADDRESS	CITY/STATE/ZIP	COUNTY	LENGTH AT ADDRESS
----------------	----------------	--------	-------------------

FORMER ADDRESS	CITY/STATE/ZIP	COUNTY	LENGTH AT ADDRESS
----------------	----------------	--------	-------------------

NOTE: WE NEED ALL ADDRESSES FOR THE LAST SEVEN YEARS

Social Security Number	Date of Birth
------------------------	---------------

Driver's License Number	State of Driver's License Issue
-------------------------	---------------------------------

Appendix G

RELEASE FORM Background Check Transfer

1. Applicant Name: _____ Social Security No.: _____
Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

2. Present Employer/Volunteer Organization(s) currently or recently affiliated with:
Supervisor/Director Authorized to release records: _____
Phone: _____ Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____

3. New organization requesting a background check of: _____
(Name of Staff Member)

Pastor/Director: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ City/ST/Zip: _____

I, _____, give permission to _____
(Applicant's Name) (Employer/Volunteer Organization, #2)
to make a copy, without any additions or subtractions, of the background check performed on me. Said
copies may be sent directly to _____
(#3 above)

I, _____, verify that the copies attached have not been altered and match
(Employer/Volunteer Organization, #2)
the original exactly.

4. Organization used for background check: _____

Date Conducted: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ City/ST/Zip: _____

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Employer or Supervisor at current or recent organization:

Date: _____

A Summary of Your Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act

The federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) promotes the accuracy, fairness, and privacy of information in the files of consumer reporting agencies. There are many types of consumer reporting agencies, including credit bureaus and specialty agencies (such as agencies that sell information about check writing histories, medical records, and rental history records). Here is a summary of your major rights under the FCRA. **For more information, including information about additional rights, go to www.ftc.gov/credit or write to: Consumer Response Center, Room 130-A, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20580.**

- **You must be told if information in your file has been used against you.** Anyone who uses a credit report or another type of consumer report to deny your application for credit, insurance, or employment – or to take another adverse action against you – must tell you, and must give you the name, address, and phone number of the agency that provided the information.
- **You have the right to know what is in your file.** You may request and obtain all the information about you in the files of a consumer reporting agency (your “file disclosure”). You will be required to provide proper identification, which may include your Social Security number. In many cases, the disclosure will be free. You are entitled to a free file disclosure if:
 - a person has taken adverse action against you because of information in your credit report;
 - you are the victim of identity theft and place a fraud alert in your file;
 - your file contains inaccurate information as a result of fraud;
 - you are on public assistance;
 - you are unemployed but expect to apply for employment within 60 days.In addition, by September 2005 all consumers will be entitled to one free disclosure every 12 months upon request from each nationwide credit bureau and from nationwide specialty consumer reporting agencies. See www.ftc.gov/credit for additional information.
- **You have the right to ask for a credit score.** Credit scores are numerical summaries of your credit-worthiness based on information from credit bureaus. You may request a credit score from consumer reporting agencies that create scores or distribute scores used in residential real property loans, but you will have to pay for it. In some mortgage transactions, you will receive credit score information for free from the mortgage lender.
- **You have the right to dispute incomplete or inaccurate information.** If you identify information in your file that is incomplete or inaccurate, and report it to the consumer reporting agency, the agency must investigate unless your dispute is frivolous. See www.ftc.gov/credit for an explanation of dispute procedures.

- **Consumer reporting agencies must correct or delete inaccurate, incomplete, or unverifiable information.** Inaccurate, incomplete or unverifiable information must be removed or corrected, usually within 30 days. However, a consumer reporting agency may continue to report information it has verified as accurate.
- **Consumer reporting agencies may not report outdated negative information.** In most cases, a consumer reporting agency may not report negative information that is more than seven years old, or bankruptcies that are more than 10 years old.
- **Access to your file is limited.** A consumer reporting agency may provide information about you only to people with a valid need -- usually to consider an application with a creditor, insurer, employer, landlord, or other business. The FCRA specifies those with a valid need for access.
- **You must give your consent for reports to be provided to employers.** A consumer reporting agency may not give out information about you to your employer, or a potential employer, without your written consent given to the employer. Written consent generally is not required in the trucking industry. For more information, go to www.ftc.gov/credit.
- **You may limit “prescreened” offers of credit and insurance you get based on information in your credit report.** Unsolicited “prescreened” offers for credit and insurance must include a toll-free phone number you can call if you choose to remove your name and address from the lists these offers are based on. You may opt-out with the nationwide credit bureaus at 1-888-5-OPTOUT (1-888-567-8688).
- **You may seek damages from violators.** If a consumer reporting agency, or, in some cases, a user of consumer reports or a furnisher of information to a consumer reporting agency violates the FCRA, you may be able to sue in state or federal court.
- **Identity theft victims and active duty military personnel have additional rights.** For more information, visit www.ftc.gov/credit.

States may enforce the FCRA, and many states have their own consumer reporting laws. In some cases, you may have more rights under state law. For more information, contact your state or local consumer protection agency or your state Attorney General. Federal enforcers are:

TYPE OF BUSINESS:	CONTACT:
Consumer reporting agencies, creditors and others not listed below	Federal Trade Commission: Consumer Response Center - FCRA Washington, DC 20580 1-877-382-4357
National banks, federal branches/agencies of foreign banks (word "National" or initials "N.A." appear in or after bank's name)	Office of the Comptroller of the Currency Compliance Management, Mail Stop 6-6 Washington, DC 20219 800-613-6743
Federal Reserve System member banks (except national banks, and federal branches/agencies of foreign banks)	Federal Reserve Consumer Help (FRCH) P O Box 1200 Minneapolis, MN 55480 Telephone: 888-851-1920 Website Address: www.federalreserveconsumerhelp.gov Email Address: ConsumerHelp@FederalReserve.gov
Savings associations and federally chartered savings banks (word "Federal" or initials "F.S.B." appear in federal institution's name)	Office of Thrift Supervision Consumer Complaints Washington, DC 20552 800-842-6929
Federal credit unions (words "Federal Credit Union" appear in institution's name)	National Credit Union Administration 1775 Duke Street Alexandria, VA 22314 703-519-4600
State-chartered banks that are not members of the Federal Reserve System	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Consumer Response Center, 2345 Grand Avenue, Suite 100 Kansas City, Missouri 64108-2638 1-877-275-3342
Air, surface, or rail common carriers regulated by former Civil Aeronautics Board or Interstate Commerce Commission	Department of Transportation, Office of Financial Management Washington, DC 20590 202-366-1306
Activities subject to the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921	Department of Agriculture

SUBSTANCE ABUSE & TESTING POLICY

Letter to all Employees

[Date]

The illegal use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol are problems that invade the workplace, endangering the health and safety of the abusers and those who work around them. Trinity United Methodist Church (Trinity UMC) is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace free of substance abuse without jeopardizing valued employees' job security.

To address this problem, Trinity UMC has developed this policy regarding the illegal use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol. This policy formally and clearly states that the illegal use of drugs or the abuse of alcohol or prescription drugs will not be tolerated. As a means of maintaining our policy, we have implemented a substance abuse testing program. This policy was designed with two basic objectives in mind: (1) employees deserve a work environment that is free from the negative effects of drugs and alcohol and the problems associated with their abuse, and (2) Trinity UMC has a responsibility to maintain a healthy and safe workplace.

** To assist us in providing a safe and healthy workplace, the Memphis Conference maintains a resource file of information on various means of employee assistance in our community, including but not limited to drug and alcohol abuse programs. Employees are encouraged to use this resource file, which is located at the Conference Program Ministries Team with the staff person who works with children and youth. In addition, we will distribute this information to employees and volunteers for their confidential use.

An employee or volunteer whose conduct violates Trinity UMC's Substance Abuse Policy and who does not accept help will be disciplined up to and including termination.

It is important that we all work together to make this Church a drug-free workplace as part of our continual effort to provide a safer and more rewarding place to work.

Sincerely,

Trinity United Methodist Church

Appendix K

PRE-EMPLOYMENT
DRUG TESTING CONSENT &
RELEASE FORM

I hereby consent to submit to urinalysis and/or other tests as shall be determined by Trinity United Methodist Church in the selection process of applicants for employment/volunteerism for the purpose of determining the drug content thereof.

I agree that

(Name of physician or clinic)

may collect these specimens for these tests and may test them or forward them to a testing laboratory designated by the church for analysis.

I further agree to and hereby authorize the release of the results of said tests to Trinity United Methodist Church (Trinity UMC).

I understand that it is the current illegal use of drugs and/or abuse of alcohol that prohibits me from being employed by Trinity UMC.

I further agree to hold harmless the Church and its agents (including the above-named physician or clinic) from any liability arising in whole or part out of the collection of specimens, testing, and use of the information from said testing in connection with the Church's consideration of my employment/volunteer application.

I further agree that a reproduced copy of this "Pre-Employment/Volunteer Drug Testing Consent and Release Form" shall have the same force and effect as the original.

I have carefully read the foregoing and fully understand its contents. I acknowledge that my signing of this consent and release form is a voluntary act on my part and that I have not been coerced into signing this document by anyone.

Applicant (print name): _____

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness (print name): _____

Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix L

CERTIFICATE OF
AGREEMENT FOR
DRUG SCREENING

I do hereby certify that I have received and read the Trinity United Methodist Church "Substance Abuse and Testing Policy" and have had the drug-free workplace program explained to me.

I understand that any or all employees may occasionally be required at the request of the Prevention Policy Board, to submit to drug screening to insure a safe working environment.

I also understand that if my performance indicates it is necessary, I will submit to a drug and/or alcohol test.

I further understand that failure to comply with a drug and/or alcohol testing request or a positive confirmed result for the illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol may lead to discipline up to and including termination of employment and/or loss of workers' compensation benefits*.

Name of Employee/Volunteer (please print) _____

Employee/Volunteer Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix N (1 of 2)

Report Form for Suspected Instances of Abuse
(To be filled out by Director of the Program or the Pastor)

1. Volunteer/paid staff observing/receiving disclosure of alleged sexual abuse:

Date/time/place: _____

Brief notes: _____

2. Victim's Name: _____

Victim's age/Date of Birth: _____

3. Date/time/place of initial conversation with alleged victim: _____

Alleged victim's statements: _____

4. Name of alleged accused (paid staff, volunteer, other): _____

If alleged accused is staff or volunteer, date/time/place of initial discovery: _____

Notes of conversation: _____

Suspension date/time: _____ Notes of suspension: _____

5. Call to parent(s)/guardian(s), spoke to: _____

Date/time: _____ Notes: _____

6. Call to Child Protective Services Agency, spoke to: _____

Appendix N (2 of 2)

Date/time: _____ Notes: _____

7. Call to law enforcement agency, spoke to: _____

Date/time: _____ Notes: _____

8. Notify the Pastor (if Director of a program is filling this out) _____

Date/time: _____ Notes: _____

9. Pastor to Notify District Superintendent _____

Date/time: _____ Notes: _____

10. Pastor to notify Insurance Company _____

Date/time: _____ Notes: _____

11. Pastor to notify Church Legal Counsel _____

Date/time: _____ Notes: _____

12. Other contacts:

Name/date/notes: _____

Name/date/notes: _____

Name of person completing this form: _____ Date: _____

Appendix O -Children & Youth

DISCIPLINE

a. Maintaining a Positive Environment

Maintaining a positive environment (classroom, practice, Sunday school, UMYF, etc.) will encourage good behavior by the students and improve the learning process. As the teacher or leader in the learning environment, you should seek to find the most positive way of speaking and working with the young people in your care. Keeping your voice on a level tone goes a long way in keeping the noise level in the classroom to an appropriate level. The louder you talk, the louder the noise level will be. Always find as many positive ways to acknowledge the students in your care as possible.

i. Appropriate Discipline – A well-designed and managed program contributes to good behavior by:

- limiting the number of children in a classroom
- having adequate staff
- discouraging competition
- encouraging children to express feelings and to be empathetic
- developing and discussing rules of conduct.

The purpose for setting disciplinary guidelines is to enable children to develop internal control mechanisms that foster growth and promote societal values.

Children must be trained in basic rules of conduct.

ii. Age-Level Characteristics – Knowing what is appropriate for each age level enhances learning. Each level has its own unique characteristics, which, when they are acknowledged and planned for, produce more learning and fewer discipline problems. Here are some sample ideas; more can be found in curriculum resources and educational textbooks.

Ages 3-6:

Moral Development: Preschoolers are very “Me” oriented. They are the center of their own worlds. Their entire view of right and wrong – along with their faith – is based upon what influential models (such as parents and teachers) tell them.

Cognitive Level: Preschoolers’ play is symbolic of real life.

Ages 6-8:

Moral Development: For younger children, the moral code is “an eye for an eye.” If they are pinched, they pinch back. Personal values are rooted in a “law and order” approach. Things that benefit young children are almost always seen as right, whereas harmful things are almost always viewed as wrong. The world, like their faith, is black and white.

Cognitive Level: Young children think in concrete terms about the ideas and concepts they are learning. They need help understanding symbolic or abstract ideas.

Ages 9-12:

Moral Development: Children at this age begin to see shades of gray in their world. They question authority more and understand that individual values can impact the lives of others. They also begin to understand that doing “wrong things” means more than just “getting into trouble” or facing punishment from parents or teachers. Faith becomes a working, personal faith.

Cognitive Level: Older children continue to think in concrete terms, although by the end of childhood they can more readily understand abstract concepts.

Ages 13-15:

Moral Development: Adolescence is a time of accelerated moral development. Youth begin to face complex moral questions. Often, they feel a great deal of struggle between what their family has taught and what peers are telling them. A strong sense of right and wrong develops, but deciding which to do puts them in constant dilemmas. Youth of this age are vulnerable to predators because they are so willing to follow those who will affirm them. Status and self-identity in relation to peer groups are major issues.

Cognitive Development: At this age youth begin to think in more abstract terms and the desire to explore concepts and ideas accelerates. Questioning of concepts and ideals is common.

Ages 16-18:

Moral Development: These years see the continued struggle between the moral codes learned in childhood and the moral codes of the peer group. Rebellion can lead to choices that place these youth in serious circumstances.

Cognitive Development: The ability to think abstractly is strong, though sometimes set aside to accommodate the peer group. Individual creativity blossoms with encouragement.

iii. Suggested steps to follow...

- a. If a child or youth is behaving inappropriately, the leader or worker will tell the child specifically what he/she is doing that is not acceptable and state the expected behavior, e.g., "We do not throw blocks. We use blocks for building."
- b. If measure #1 is not effective, the child or youth will be guided to another activity.
- c. If the inappropriate behavior continues, the child or youth may be placed at a table to work alone away from the other students.
- d. If the child or youth's disruptive behavior continues after these steps have been taken, the child or youth may be taken to the Pastor or the primary leader for the activity and left under his/her supervision (with others around), or parents may be contacted.

iv. Guidelines:

- a. No physical punishment or verbal abuse, e.g., ridicule, are to be used at any time.
- b. If isolating the child or youth within the classroom or removal from the room becomes necessary, the situation should be discussed with the parents or guardian as soon as possible

v. Discipline While on Trips

a. Create a Covenant (Appendix M)

In order to make events safe and most beneficial for everyone involved, guidelines must be followed. Children, youth, adults, and parents are encouraged to sign a covenant outlining the actions that will be taken by the adult leaders attending the event if set guidelines are broken. These policies are important for all who are members or guests of the event to follow and understand. A sample covenant can be found in the appendix.

b. Suggested Guidelines to Follow to Help Reinforce Positive Behavior

- a. Warning for first infraction, unless a major infraction.
- b. Child or youth will be escorted for a time by an adult chaperone.
- c. Child or youth will call home to conference with a parent.
- d. Child or youth will be sent home at parent's expense.
- e. Child or youth will not be allowed on next outing.

Appendix P – Adult and Children Safe Sanctuary Training

A. A Model for Training Adult Workers

Implementing a comprehensive strategy for the prevention of child abuse in a local church cannot be done without a substantial amount of education being provided for the workers of children and youth, the parents of children and youth, the congregation, and the children and youth themselves. This model is designed to be used with your church's workers with children and youth, but you may easily modify it for use with other groups. This model is designed to be used as a two to three-hour workshop and can be offered either twice during one calendar year or once a year for all volunteers and paid employees. Take into consideration the volunteer base within your own organization (Sunday School teachers, coaches, Youth workers, mentors, etc.) to evaluate how often your educational component will be offered.

Lesson 1.

A. Opening Worship

1. Prayer of Petition – Gracious and most merciful God, you have brought us together in witness to your love of all children. Open our hearts and minds in this moment and prepare us to receive your message. Show us your will and fill us to overflowing with courage to face the reality of child abuse. Give us energy and dedication enough to make this, your church, a holy and hallowed place where all your children may be safe and secure as they grow in faith and in their knowledge of your presence in their lives! Amen.
2. Scripture – Luke 9:46-48
“An argument arose among them as to which one of them was the greatest. But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts, took a little child and put it by his side, and said to them, “Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest.” NRSV
3. Devotion – You may begin by recalling the baptismal ritual for children, reminding the participants of the pledge made by the congregation at each child's baptism (The United Methodist Hymnal, pages 34-35 and 40.)
 - a. Will you nurture these children (persons) in Christ's holy church, that by your teaching and example they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, to profess their faith openly, and lead a Christian life?
I will.
 - b. Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and include these [children] persons now before you in your care?
With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround these [children] persons with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their trust of God, and be found faithful in their service to others.

We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life. Acknowledge and list the many ways your congregation lives out this pledge through its current ministries with children. Conclude by introducing the child abuse prevention strategy as the newest component of your church's ministries with children and youth.

4. Closing Prayer – Follow with a time where participants of the workshop call the names of children and youth aloud, dedicating their safety and spiritual welfare to God. You may begin by saying: “Most Holy God. Hear the names of those we hold most dear.” And end by saying, “We consecrate these children and youth to your loving care and guidance. Amen.”

B. Introducing Information

1. Current Occurrences - Set the stage here for the substance of the event by introducing recent news reports from your own community’s newspapers or television broadcasts related to incidents of child abuse in any locations and institutions. Also in this section, present the material related to any current litigation involving the church and claims of child abuse. Or, you may view a short film detailing the current state of children and issues of abuse. (Over ten (10) helpful videos are offered through the Memphis Conference Office. Call 731-664-8480 or go online to www.memphis-umc.org. They are also listed in Section IX, page 27 of the Conference “Child/Youth Abuse Prevention & Protection Policy.”)

2. Current Statistics - Pass out copied statistical information from this resource (found below) or from other sources available to you and go over their contents with the class. Work the math on a chalkboard or news print to show how two million annual incidents finally translate into one incident of abuse every fifteen seconds. When child abuse occurs in our own neighborhoods, it gets our attention and sometimes serves as a catalyst in a way that nameless and faceless children, counted in statistics cannot. However, it is important to be familiar with a few statistics:

- The National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect reports that there are more than two million incidents of physical abuse and/or neglect per year in the USA. That amounts to 30 out of every 1,000 children.
- Studies have estimated that 1 out of 3 girls is sexually abused before the age of 18. Similarly, studies indicate that 1 out of 7 boys have been sexually abused before the age of 18. Even more frightening is that these numbers may be underestimated since many children are reluctant to report abuse.

Have the participants identify the factors that make children vulnerable to abusers. If time allows, you may also use a video here to illustrate the concepts you have just addressed.

3. But what about church? - Follow this general discussion with the idea of how difficult an issue child abuse in the church is for most people to face. Anxiety over this issue is to be expected – even as we hear the statistics and learn how to deal with possible abuse in our own congregation. **NO ONE WANTS TO THINK IT WILL HAPPEN IN THEIR OWN CHURCH.** Use the following ideas to lead discussion concerning the apprehensions of the class.

- We don’t want to make it harder to get new leaders or discourage current leaders from volunteering or seeking employment with our congregation.
- The whole issue of child abuse may bring up memories of abuse that may have occurred in our own childhood.
- Child abuse in churches does happen with devastating consequences for the victim and the church.
- This training will give you (volunteers/paid staff persons) the tools to make our church environment as safe as possible for those we love.

4. So where do we start?

- a. Definitions of terms: (See the Conference Prevention Policy, Section II, page 1)
 - i. Child Abuse

- ii. Physical Abuse
- iii. Sexual Abuse
- iv. Emotional Abuse
- v. Neglect

Pause and ask for questions or comments.

b. Standards: (See the Conference Prevention Policy, Section III, page 2)

i. Criteria

- 1. Minimum Age
- 2. 6 Month Rule
- 3. Policy Instruction
- 4. Screening Procedures (see the Conference Prevention Policy, Section IV, page 9)

ii. Responsibilities

- 1. Two Adult Rule
- 2. Adult/Child Ratio
- 3. Rooming
- 4. Transportation
- 5. Mentoring
- 6. Counseling
- 7. Interpersonal Boundaries
- 8. Visiting at Youth and Children's Workers Home
- 9. Discipline
- 10. Open Door Policy

Pause and ask for questions or comments.

5. What is our church policy?

Read through your own congregation's policy closely with the group, being sure to address any questions or concerns of volunteers and paid staff.

6. How do I report? What are my personal responsibilities?

(See the Conference Prevention Policy, Section VII, page 16)

a. Legal Responsibilities

b. Written Reports (See Conference Prevention Policy, Appendix N)

c. Chain of Command: To Whom Shall the Report Be Filed (See Conference Prevention Policy, Section VII, page 16)

Pause and ask for questions or comments.

7. Take the end of your time for filling out applications (See Conference Prevention Policy, Appendices A- L) and attendance documentation.

Lesson 2.

A. Opening Worship

- 1. Prayer for Children, Youth and Teachers
- 2. Scripture Reading - Matthew 19:14, "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'" NIV
- 3. Brief devotion

Invite the participants to pray responsively with you by saying, after each sentence prayer, "We welcome the Children!"

Leader: O God, by our presence here today,

People: We welcome the children!

Leader: O God, by our promise in Holy Baptism,

People: We welcome the children!

Leader: O God, by our commitment to keeping this place holy and safe in every way,

People: We welcome the children!

Leader: O God, give us wisdom, strength and courage enough to show the world that,

People: We welcome the

children! All: Amen.

B. Introductory Information

For this second lesson, this section should include the following:

1. Explanation of Child Abuse – Who are the abusers? How does it happen?
2. Reasons we address this in our congregation.
 - a. It says to children and youth that your congregation deeply cares for the totality of their lives.
 - b. It says to the community (church and neighborhood) that your congregation takes seriously the protection of children and youth.
 - c. It says to all the volunteers and staff that your congregation is trying to eliminate any false allegations by always protecting them.
 - d. More and more insurance companies are requiring such policies. This gives you a starting place to fulfill their requirements.
 - e. A thorough policy will deter persons who engage in undesirable behavior when they hear of your policies.
3. Overview of our own church policy.
Stop here for questions and concerns.

C. Maintaining A Positive Environment for Youth and Children

1. Adult/Child Ratios (See the Conference Prevention Policy, Section III, Part B, #2, page 3)
2. Discipline (See the Conference Prevention Policy, Section III, Part B, #9, page 7)
 - a. Age Level Characteristics
 - b. What to expect in the classroom
 - c. Appropriate Discipline – how our church supports its volunteers/paid staff
 - d. Appropriate Behavior for Teachers/Leaders
 - e. Appropriate Boundaries for Teachers/Leaders
 - i. Counseling (See Conference Prevention Policy, Section III, Part B, #6, page 6)
 - ii. Interpersonal Boundaries (See Conference Prevention Policy, Section III, Part B, #7, page 7)
 - iii. Visiting at Youth and Children's Workers Home (See Conference Prevention Policy, Section III, Part B, #8, page 7)
 - f. Overnight/Camping Rules (See Conference Prevention Policy, Section III, Part B, #3, page 5)
 - g. Transportation (See Conference Prevention Policy, Section III, Part B, #4, page 5)
Stop here for questions and concerns.

D. What are we doing to keep our children and workers safe?

Present Policies and Procedures followed in your congregation or on the Conference level.

1. Screening (See Conference Prevention Policy, Section IV, page 9)
2. Training (See Conference Prevention Policy, Section III, Part A, #3, page 2)
3. Reporting (See Conference Prevention Policy, Section VII, page 16)

E. Take the end of this time to allow new employees/volunteers to fill out appropriate forms (See Conference Prevention Policy, Appendices A-G, I-L) and attendance documentation.

Children's Component.

A. Arrival Fun

Before the children arrive, prepare tables for arrival activity: copy one page of the art activity "Children's Project Page" (Appendix P) for each child. Older children may trace and cut pieces from construction paper and then write the words themselves. Younger children may use crayons or markers to color white paper already copied. You may also pre-cut pieces for younger children before class time. Complete one project page and use later in the lesson to talk with the children about safety.

B. Bible Story Time

Have the children sit in a circle and do the following:

Open the Bible to the Gospel of Luke and read the following text: Luke 18:15-17.

Then say: Let me tell you this story again. People everywhere were bringing their children to Jesus so that he could touch them. Maybe, this meant that he would hug them or place his hand on their head. Jesus loves children very much! But, his followers, the disciples were worried that too many children and their parents were crowding Jesus. They said to the people, "Stop! Leave Jesus alone! Do not bring so many children to see him!" But, Jesus called to the people, telling them to, "let the little children come..." Then, he told everyone around that children were some of the most special people in God's kingdom. In fact, he said everyone should look at the children to see how to behave!

I know that Jesus sees every one of you as very special!

Can you think of things you do when you want people to know that you care very much for them? (Encourage the children to answer.)

Then say: I am thinking that one of the things I do for someone I love is to help keep them safe! Do you know that our church has some special rules that do just that? Our church leaders took a lot of time to think of ways of taking care of you. Then, they wrote them on paper and showed them to everyone! That's how much your church family loves you!

This morning, I want to share some of these rules with you. I also want you to help me think of things we can do in our own class so that we can care for each other.

C. Live God's Word

Gather the children around tables or on the floor to work on their projects. If all of the children have not completed their cutting or coloring, finish these now. Be sure to allow plenty of time as you speak for the children to draw and share their pictures with the group.

Use your completed project page as a visual resource while talking with the children. You may complete your project with yellow construction paper or poster board. You may also use felt pieces if a felt board is available for your use.

Say: We will use this picture of the sun today to talk about all the ways we can be safe while we are at church. I

will ask you to help me put the sun together as we talk.

Our large center circle is you! When we do your projects, you can draw your own picture here and write your name. See how I drew my own picture here? See how I wrote my own name?

(Show the children the large center circle by laying it on the floor or placing it on a felt board.)

Our pictures will be in the center because Jesus loves us very much and so does our church family! Around the outside, we will place the rays of our sun. Each ray will be a way in which our church surrounds us with safety.

The first ray is for adults. You may draw your favorite adults here. Be sure, though, to include at least two adults because our first safety rule is to always be with more than one adult when you are in Sunday School or church.

The second ray is for the person who brings you to church. Draw this person on your paper. When you are not in Sunday School or in another children's group, you must always stay with this person. Sharing worship with them is very special! It is also really important to let them know where you are at all times!

The third ray is for you. Draw yourself here doing your favorite thing at church. Now, draw at least one other person doing your favorite thing with you. Always be sure you are with another person when you are walking from place to place or going to the bathroom. How much more fun we can have when we have someone to talk with!

The fourth ray is for someone outside your family you really trust. Draw this person on your fourth ray. This is someone who you can tell anything! Our fourth safety rule is to remember this person and, if you should ever have something you need to tell them, find them right away! This person will always listen to your words.

The fifth ray is for your words. You may draw a really big mouth here. Isn't that funny? Or, you may want to write some of your favorite words. This rule is very important. Always use your words to say what you feel. For instance, if one of your friends does something you don't like, say, "Please stop. I don't like what you are doing!" Say it once. If the friend does not stop, then, say the words louder. Would you like to practice with me? (Pick a phrase or a word and practice with the group.) You may also use your words with adults when they do something that may hurt you or make you sad. Remember, you get to pick what happens to you and your words are a very important tool!

The last ray is your car or van or truck. Draw on your ray the vehicle that brings you to church. Our last safety rule is to only get in your own car when you are leaving church! Always be sure that your own special people are driving. And, always be careful in the parking lot because lots of cars are moving around!

Now that we've completed all the pieces of our sun, let's use the paper and glue or tape on the table to put them together. You may tape the pieces together, punch a hole and hang

them as a mobile or glue or tape the pieces to a larger piece of paper and display on the wall. (Give the children time to assemble their projects.) How beautiful they are!

Say: Now, let's go over them one more time so that we can remember our safety rules. (Encourage the children to point to the appropriate places on their projects as you speak.)

1. Always stay with more than one adult when in Sunday School or Church.
2. When you are not in Sunday School or in another children's group, stay with the person who brought you to church. Always let this person know where you are.
3. Always share your time in Sunday School or in other places in the building with at least one friend.
4. Know a person outside your family you really trust and talk with.
5. Always use your words!
6. Always go home in your own car, with your own special people driving. Now, you

know how to be as safe as possible at church! You are terrific!

D. Snack Time

If you have time and space for a snack, buy plain sugar cookies and canned icing. You may want to color the icing yellow. Help the children decorate their own "sun" cookies and add sprinkles or star shapes before eating. You may also provide yellow lemonade. Star shaped crackers and yellow cheese will also work to complete your "sun" theme for the day.

E. Worship Time

Gather the children in the story area and read them the Bible verse again.

Say: Every one of you is so special to Jesus and to your church

family. We love you! Have the children hold hands and read the

following prayer:

Dearest Jesus, thank you so much for giving us the tools to keep ourselves safe and watch out for others. We know how special you think we are! We love you, too! Amen.

Appendix Q -Prevention Policy Board

Implementation: Prevention Policy Checklist

A. An Ongoing “Prevention Policy Board” to oversee implementation of this policy shall be nominated by the SPPRC (or Church Council) and elected at the annual Charge Conference

1. Possible Members shall include the following
 - a. Pastor
 - b. Staff Parish Pastor Relations Committee Member (SPPRC) Chairman
 - c. Trustees Member
 - d. Director of Midtown Montessori School
 - e. Representatives from groups that engage in ministry with children and youth
 - g. Lay Leader
2. See “Prevention Policy Board Duties” for specifics, Section VI, page 15

A. The Board shall meet at least twice once per calendar year.

B. The Board shall report directly to the Church Council.

C. Education:

1. Formally educate all volunteers and employees annually.
 - a. This might mean that multiple training sessions will need to occur in order to reach all persons, especially seasonal volunteers/staff (sport coaches, Vacation Bible School teachers, new staff, etc.)
 - b. See “Educational Component” for two (2) years of training programs. (Section VIII, page 18)
- c. Suggested persons to teach training sessions:
 - i. Call the Department of Children Services and ask for a Social Worker or Counselor.
 - ii. Look within your congregation for a counselor, principal, social worker, etc.
2. Educate all children and youth.
 - i. See “Educational Component” for “Children” and for “Youth” (Section VIII, page 18)
3. Informally educate our congregation annually about the contents of the policy and why it is necessary.
 - a. Use the church newsletter, web-site, send an annual letter, etc.
 - b. When new members join the church (in their orientation session).
 - c. During Child Abuse Prevention Month (in April each year).
 - d. In any promotional materials children and youth brochure or resource packet made available to Sunday schools, choirs, weekday schools, fellowship groups, parents, youth groups, etc.
- D. Ensure policy compliance of with the policy.
- E. Be available to answer questions about the policy.
- F. Grant any exceptions to the policy, in appropriate circumstances.
- G. Review and renew the policy annually or as needed.
- H. Evaluate Board functions.
- I. Assist, with investigations, when called upon.
- J. Stay up to date with insurance.

1. Check church's liability coverage each time policy is changed
2. Make sure all employees and volunteers are protected in the coverage.
3. Work with insurance agent and attorney to review coverage.
 - i. Keep a detailed folder of all efforts your church makes in the area of reducing the risk of child abuse.
4. Does your insurance require background checks, yearly training, etc.?
- k. Know the child intervention resources in your area and make that information available to your church. Appropriate Agencies can be found at the at the Child Advocacy Center website:
<https://www.memphiscac.org/HelpfulLinks.aspx#shelbycounty>
 1. Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline 901-543-7120
 2. National Child Abuse Hotline at 800-422-4453 (24 hours a day) and ask for your county's number

A. COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FORM [Staff only Form Appendix A]

An application/information gathering form should be required on all potential staff persons seeking employment and kept on file.

An application should include the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Phone Number
- Emergency Contact Person
- Gifts, Skills, Relevant Training
- Education
- 3 References (Not immediate family)
- Church Membership (Including how long a member)
- Pastor's Name & Phone Number
- Why the Person wants to serve in this position
- When they are available

You should not ask for information about marital status or handicapping conditions as stated in Federal/ State discrimination guidelines. We should also be sensitive to age and sex discrimination guidelines; however, adequate information may be requested to insure compliance with this policy's minimum standards.

B. CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW WITH APPLICANTS [Staff only- Form Appendix C]

An interview must be conducted. The following tips should aide the interview process.

1. Prepare a list of questions. In doing so, read the application and note areas for exploration.
2. It aids the interview process if specific questions are used so that the questions are standard for all applicants
 - see attached sample questions. [Appendix C]
3. Be aware of red flags. These "flags" are indicators of issues which must be explored further in order for you to be assured that all information is collected concerning a prospective employee/volunteer. Some of these "flags" might include:
 - a. Many addresses over a short period of time. SPPRC GUIDELINES
 This could indicate that a person is trying to be anonymous. But it could also indicate that they were a college student who moved a lot to keep rent low.

b. Wants to work with only one age group.

If someone would like to work with only one specific age group, it could indicate that person has targeted that age group for molestation. Or, it could mean that is the age group for which they are trained, and that experience has shown they do not work well with other ages. Also, be aware of young adults who seem overly committed to one age group. For example, someone who simultaneously leads a scout troop, coaches little league, serves as a Big Brother and now wants to teach Sunday School may be neglecting their own age appropriate peer relationships, in order to cultivate potential victims.

c. Does not want/need/like close supervision.

The interview may indicate that the person does not like to be closely supervised. This might raise questions about motivation for applying for this work.

4. The interviewer needs to be able to explore issues as they arise during the interview and depart from the set of prepared questions to do so.

5. Orientation, on-site certification, and personal supervisory experience of an applicant may substitute for an interview if adequate documentation is in the applicant's file.

Certification of *Safe Sanctuary Training*
Trinity United Methodist Church

This document certifies that I, (NAME) _____, have had training on Trinity's *Safe Sanctuary* Policies and Procedures by the following method(s): (**Initial** the statement or statements that fit your situation.)

_____ I have personally read the policy and procedure document for *Safe Sanctuary* and have had all questions answered to my satisfaction. After reading, I completed the *Safe Sanctuary* Policy and Procedure training certificate.

_____ I have attended a training that covered the important points as indicated in the *Safe Sanctuary* Policy and Procedure document that was conducted by a Staff Pastor Parish Relations committee member and the pastor.

Further, my signature below certifies that I understand and will follow all policies and procedures outlined and that I acknowledge that my failure to report "*any act committed by a person in a position of trust (parent, caregiver, church member, pastor, or other) which harms or threatens to damage a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, including physical, spiritual, or mental health*" can result in arrest and conviction of a crime.

Signature

Date

SAFE SANCTUARY AND THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This section addresses the ministry challenges that have arisen and will continue to arise as we face and embrace the changing face of ministry in the 21st century technological age. And as technology has been easy to access and use in every aspect of our lives, the Staff-Pastor Parish Relations Committee has included this discussion and policy statement in the Safe Sanctuary Policy. We include all staff, members, and volunteers who attend or minister at Trinity UMC to be guided and given direction in being faithful to the witness of Jesus Christ, even as we live out our lives in an ever-changing world.

Ethics are the moral principles that give shape to the way we conduct ourselves as individuals and groups of people. As Christians, ethics serve as guiding principles that give shape to the way we engage with and use technology in our personal and ministry settings that honor and glorify Christ. Our lives are a response and reflection of God's goodness. So, as members of God's church, we commit "with God's help to so order our lives after the example of Christ, that we will surround each baptized person with steadfast love, so that they may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal." ¹

Two of the biggest problems facing the church today in the area of technology are (1) online sexualized behavior; and (2) the use and abuse of pornography found online. Both of these stem from a third problem, which is inappropriate personal and interpersonal boundaries. Boundary-crossing can be as simple as the tone and character of our e-mails and actions shifting from professional and business-oriented information sharing to more personal and informal sharing. It is easy to forget that our written words are just as powerful.

TERMS DESCRIBING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

As we look more closely into boundary crossing, it is important to examine several words and phrases that we often use when we begin to engage in any conversation about sexual ethics. These definitions also apply to the use of technology, both offline and online.

- **Sexual misconduct** is any unwanted sexual or gender-directed behavior by either a layperson or a clergy person within a ministerial relationship.
- **Sexual harassment** is a form of sexual misconduct and is any unwanted sexual or gender-directed behavior that is so severe or pervasive that it alters the conditions of employment or volunteer work or unreasonably interferes with the employee or volunteer's performance by creating a hostile, offensive environment. Sexual harassment can include unwanted sexual jokes, repeated advances, touching, or comment that insult and/or degrade or sexually exploit women, men, elderly persons, or youth.

- **Sexual abuse** – a form of sexual misconduct that occurs when a person within a ministerial role engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, coworker, or volunteer. With regard to social media, it includes sexual exhibitionism or any display of sexual visuals or pornography.
- **Sexualized behavior** is any behavior that communicates sexual interest and/or content. Examples include but are not limited to displaying sexually aggressive visualized materials, use of pornography in church programs on or within church property, making sexual comments or innuendos about one's own or another person's body online or by means of any social media, or any behavior or words that are unwanted by the recipient or witness.

Social Media Use Policy for Employees

Social networking is quickly becoming integrated into everyday life. Electronic tools aid us in communication, relationships, and information sharing in ways that were never before conceived as possible. The use of social media and networking often also causes lines to blur between work, personal life, and church relationships. In general, what you do in your personal time is a personal decision. However, activities during or outside of work that are shared via social media may have adverse effects on your job performance, leadership ability, and witness of Jesus Christ, and need to be considered carefully. By simply identifying yourself as an employee of Trinity United Methodist Church, either directly or as a part of your user profile, you are creating perceptions about what it means to be a part of Trinity UMC.

As such, this policy is offered to provide official guidelines for social media use for all employees of Trinity UMC. It is the expectation that all who participated in social media use will understand and follow these guidelines.

As a child of God, a member of the church universal, and as an employment of Trinity United Methodist Church, I covenant and agree to use Facebook and other similar social media in ways that bring honor to God and show respect for self and for all others who might view my posts.

In particular, I covenant to (*initial in the space provided after you have read and agreed to each bulleted item*):

- Recognize and respect that my behaviors and actions online are also a reflection of how other Christians and people associated with Trinity United Methodist Church may be portrayed. _____
- Recognize that all my posted words, images, and links are reflections on me individually, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and as an employee of Trinity United Methodist Church. Recognizing this, I will refrain from posting anything regarding inappropriate conduct, such as drug or alcohol use or any item that contains profanity, degrading humor of any kind, ethnic or racial slurs, personal insults, obscenity, vulgarity, nudity, or pornography. _____
- Obey the laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and copyright and fair use of proprietary or confidential information. _____
- Work within my assigned ministry to establish appropriate boundaries, especially as related to building relationships online with children, youth, parents, and other constituents of Trinity United Methodist Church. _____
- Be very careful not to be a hindrance or cause harm to the staff, pastors, members, or ministries of Trinity United Methodist Church. _____

- Speak respectfully in my online posts and communications of and to all persons; and I will refrain from negative or disrespectful posts, as well as posts on objectionable or inflammatory topics. _____
- Respect confidentiality and personal privacy. In the event I receive confidential or private information regarding a person or family involved in Trinity United Methodist Church, I will not disseminate that information without receiving direct express consent and permission to do so. _____
- Respect differences, appreciate diversity of opinions, and speak and conduct myself in a professional and ethical manner at all times. _____
- Remember that everything I post online is discoverable and can be seen and shared for a very long time. _____
- Seek advice from my ministry team leader before posting anything if I have even a small doubt about the reasonableness of the post. _____
- Regularly monitor the amount of time I spend on social media, the ways in which I am utilizing social media, and its effects on my ministry and service in Christ's name. _____

Signed: _____
 (Employee)

Date: _____

(Each item above is to be initialed by the employee. The signed and dated document will be retained in the employee's record.)

Social Media Use Policy for Volunteers

Social networking is quickly becoming integrated into everyday life. Electronic tools aid us in communication, relationships, and information sharing in ways that were never before conceived as possible. The use of social media and networking often also causes lines to blur between work, personal life, and church relationships. In general, what you do in your personal time is a personal decision. However, activities during or outside of volunteer work that are shared via social media may have adverse effects on your job performance, leadership ability, and witness of Jesus Christ, and need to be considered carefully. By simply identifying yourself as a volunteer of Trinity United Methodist Church, either directly or as a part of your user profile, you are creating perceptions about what it means to be a part of Trinity UMC.

As such, this policy is offered to provide official guidelines for social media use for all volunteers of Trinity UMC. It is the expectation that all who participated in social media use will understand and follow these guidelines.

As a child of God, a member of the church universal, and as a volunteer of Trinity United Methodist Church, I covenant and agree to use Facebook and other similar social media in ways that bring honor to God and show respect for self and for all others who might view my posts.

In particular, I covenant to (*initial in the space provided after you have read and agreed to each bulleted item*):

- Recognize and respect that my behaviors and actions online are also a reflection of how other Christians and people associated with Trinity United Methodist Church may be portrayed. _____
- Recognize that all my posted words, images, and links are reflections on me individually, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and as a volunteer of Trinity United Methodist Church. Recognizing this, I will refrain from posting anything regarding inappropriate conduct, such as drug or alcohol use or any item that contains profanity, degrading humor of any kind, ethnic or racial slurs, personal insults, obscenity, vulgarity, nudity, or pornography. _____
- Obey the laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and copyright and fair use of proprietary or confidential information. _____
- Work within my assigned ministry to establish appropriate boundaries, especially as related to building relationships online with children, youth, parents, and other constituents of Trinity United Methodist Church. _____
- Be very careful not to be a hindrance or cause harm to the staff, pastors, members, or ministries of Trinity United Methodist Church. _____

- Speak respectfully in my online posts and communications of and to all persons; and I will refrain from negative or disrespectful posts, as well as posts on objectionable or inflammatory topics. _____
- Respect confidentiality and personal privacy. In the event I receive confidential or private information regarding a person or family involved in Trinity United Methodist Church, I will not disseminate that information without receiving direct express consent and permission to do so. _____
- Respect differences, appreciate diversity of opinions, and speak and conduct myself in a faithful and ethical manner at all times. _____
- Remember that everything I post online is discoverable and can be seen and shared for a very long time. _____
- Seek advice from my ministry team leader before posting anything if I have even a small doubt about the reasonableness of the post. _____
- Regularly monitor the amount of time I spend on social media, the ways in which I am utilizing social media, and its effects on my ministry and service in Christ's name. _____

Signed: _____
 (Employee)

Date: _____

(Each item above is to be initialed by the volunteer. The signed and dated document will be retained in the volunteer's record.)

YOUTH MINISTRY LEADERSHIP COVENANT

As a leader in youth ministry, you are called to exhibit the highest of Christian values and serve in ways that honor Christ. Students in your care and charge are seeking and searching. They are hungry to discover even more fully what it means to be a Christ-follower. Your examples of servant leadership, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, self-control, patience, and love will serve as signposts throughout their journey. This covenant is created to encourage your God-giftedness, your unique talents, and your leadership, while also helping you to establish and maintain appropriate and healthy relationships with the youth of our community.

Teamwork always takes precedence over individualism. The goal is community for everyone involved.

You can nurture disciples only as much as you offer yourself as a disciple. Gifted leaders have a passion for God and a desire to share God's love.

Youth will seek you out for advice, personal sharing, and direction. It is important that you respect the confidentiality with which something is shared, unless you are required by law to share information you have been given.

It is the expectation that, as a leader, your life will reflect a high level of personal and moral integrity.

While it is not prohibited for youth leaders to date one another, it does create an interesting dynamic, especially when a breakup occurs. If you date another youth leader, you are asked to use discretion and Christlike judgment. It is absolutely prohibited for a youth leader to date or engage in any sexualized behavior with a youth. Sexual misconduct of any type will not be tolerated.

All of us face situations of fear, frustration, and loss in our lives. You are asked to refrain from sharing with youth information pertaining to your personal life issues. You are also asked to use careful and judicious judgment in sharing any past experiences of poor judgment or behavior as a teaching tool.

While it is most appropriate to be friendly to youth at youth group, in the community, and in the church, it is not appropriate to begin a friendship with youth that will spill over into fraternization outside of sponsored youth activities. Again, it is expressly prohibited for youth leaders to date youth. Maintaining appropriate boundaries with youth is an acknowledgement of the power differential that is implicit in your role as a leader. These boundaries will help you gain their respect and will enhance your ability and effectiveness in disciplining or counseling them.

As a child of God, a member of the church universal, and as an employee/volunteer of Trinity United Methodist Church, I covenant and agree to (*initial in the space provided after you have read and agreed to each bulleted item*):

- Not abuse alcohol or drugs in any inappropriate or illegal manner, engage in sexual immorality, or participate in the sharing of music that contains language or messages that others may find offensive. _____
- Work as a team and submit myself and my will to the assigned leader of any particular mission, event or activity. _____
- Attend to my own spiritual growth through prayer, Bible study, worship, and participation in the community of faith. _____
- Display exemplary moral character and integrity through my participation in online social media, the appropriate use of my cell phone and other mobile devices, and my engagement with others utilizing these devices. I will abstain from and encourage youth to abstain from sexting, cyberbullying, online harassment, and any type of internet intimidation. _____
- Engage with youth and fellow leaders in ways that allow us to build one another up, rather than demoralize, criticize, or demean. This includes the games we play and the jokes we share. _____
- Be mindful and respectful of the safe spaces I create for youth.
 - I will avoid being alone with any youth behind closed doors, in a vehicle, or in any place where other adults are not present. _____
 - I will seek to encourage relationships and conversations in places of community that foster confidentiality, safety, and respect. _____
- Respect and hold sacred the confidential information youth might share with me. However, I also covenant to operate within the boundaries of the law and will break confidences if legally required to do so. _____
 - I will establish healthy boundaries in my interactions with youth and other youth leaders. This includes dating and sharing personal experiences and friendships beyond the youth group or counseling relationship. _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____

(Each item above is to be initialed by the youth minister. The signed and dated document will be retained in the youth minister's record.)

AUTHORIZATION FORM FOR PHOTO AND VIDEO USAGE

I, _____ (printed name of parent or legal guardian), authorize Trinity United Methodist Church to *(please initial in the space provided after each bulleted item that you authorize)*:

- Take pictures of my child to be posted inside the church. _____
- Take pictures of my child for use in printed publications and on the church's website and social media accounts. _____
- Include my child in videos that will be used for internal church purposes only (worship, internal communication, and invitation). _____
- Include my child in videos that will be used on the church's website, social media, and YouTube accounts. _____

Signed: _____
(Parent or Legal Guardian)

Date: _____

(Retain this signed and dated document in the child's file.)

PASTORAL MINISTRY COVENANT REGARDING THE USE OF FACEBOOK AND OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

As a child of God, a member of the church universal, and a clergy person in Trinity United Methodist Church, I covenant to use Facebook and other social media in ways that bring honor to God and show respect for self and for all others who might view my postings on Facebook and other social media.

In particular, I covenant to *(initial in the space provided after you have read and agreed to each bulleted item)*:

- Be cognizant of all that I post (in writing, images, and links) and its reflection on me as a Christian and a leader in the church. _____
- Recognize and respect that my behaviors and actions are also a reflection on those who are the connectional system of The United Methodist Church.
- Be mindful of the ways in which I offer personal information and how that affects my role and identity as a clergy leader and witness of Jesus Christ. _____
- Take extra precautions to observe appropriate boundaries in my engagement in relationships online, both pastoral and personal. _____
 - With youth and children, this means _____
 - In establishing “friendships” with members of the congregation, this means _____
- Take extra care not to be a hindrance to or cause harm to the pastor or the ministries of any church and congregation I have previously served. _____
 - I will not speak negatively or disparagingly about the current pastor or staff or the leadership they provide. _____
 - I will absolve myself of all pastoral responsibility and authority regarding any congregation I have previously served. _____
 - I will seek permission of the pastor currently appointed before officiating at weddings, funerals, baptisms, or in any formal leadership capacity related to members of former congregations. _____
- Recognize and respect the privilege of utilizing social media as a tool for ministry. As such, I will regularly monitor the amount of time I spend on social media, the ways in which I am utilizing it, and its effects on my ministry and service in Christ’s name. _____

Signed: _____
(Clergy person)

Date: _____