

Church Policy Assessment **Some Important Questions**

- Does your church have a sexual misconduct and abuse response team?
- Are key church personnel aware of state laws for reporting sexual abuse?
- Have your staff members and church volunteers received proper training on sexual abuse? Is training provided on an ongoing basis?
- Is there at a minimum a draft of an agreement (Covenant of Grace) between the church and a sex offender that can be adapted should this situation arise?
- Is there a policy in place always requiring two or more adults present at all youth church functions?
- Are there support groups established or is counselling available for survivors of childhood sexual abuse?
- Is there an educational program on sexual abuse prevention for adult members (parents and families) of the church?



Informative Internet Sites

(We do not necessarily agree with all the views and opinions of these sites.)

www.hrw.org Human Rights Watch – “No Easy Answers”; 146-page comprehensive study on sex offender laws in the U.S.

www.esom.org Center for sex offender management. Great document containing myths and facts about sex offenders.

www.atsa.com Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers. Excellent resource for books, reports and links to other web sites.

www.sohopeful.org Family, citizens and professionals working together to reform Meagan’s Law. Great resource for current legislation issues and factual information regarding recidivism rates and related subjects.

www.gocities.com/advocate/issues Legal issues and court cases affecting sex offenders.

www.missingkids.com National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Provides resources for parents and guardians relating to child safety and where to report abuse.

www.stopitnow.org Graphic description of signs and behaviors. What to watch out for and how to get help.

Presentations and Consultations Available.

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SOOS

Sex Offender Sense



Sex Offenders In The Church

Sex Offender Boundaries

Appropriate Boundaries for the Sex Offender in Church

1. Be open and honest about your past behaviors with essential church personnel. Establish healthy relationships.
2. Obtain permission from your treatment provider and parole/probation officer before attending a church.
3. Do not engage in any church activity that involves minors. (Any person under the age of 18.)
4. Do not encourage or engage in any conversations with minors or victim-like individuals.
5. Remain in the presence of a church approved chaperone at all times.
6. If a minor approaches you, either at church or in a community setting, immediately remove yourself from the situation.
7. Avoid being unsupervised in the church or any church building when activities involving minors are in session.

To the Sex Offender

Remember: Only you are responsible for your actions and behaviors. Avoid all appearances of evil!

Church Boundaries

Appropriate Boundaries for the Church to Establish

1. Separate the sin from the sinner. Recognize all sex offenders do not have the same issues and do not present the same level of risk.



2. Recognize most sexual abuse occurs in a home. Whatever church policy is established for a sex offender may also affect a victim.
3. Before allowing an offender to participate in church activities, ask them to commit to a Covenant of Grace designed to help them avoid situations that put them at risk or being accused of re-offending.
4. Know a sex offender's terms of treatment and parole or probation. Confirm that sex offenders are compliant with all registration laws.
5. Require sex offenders to remain compliant with the church's Covenant of Grace agreement. Have clear consequences defined for failure to comply.

Church Policy

Guidelines for a Church Policy & Covenant of Grace



- The policy and covenant should encompass the previously mentioned boundaries.
- It should be tailored to the individual sex offender's needs based on their issues and level of risk.
- Should be sensitive to the feelings and needs of any present and past victims within the church body.
- Both the policy and the covenant agreements should be reviewed periodically and updated as required.

Recommended reading:

"A Time to Heal – Protecting Children & Ministering to Sex Offenders" by Reverend Debra W. Haffner, A LifeQuest Publication, 2005.