



# The Church's Role in Ending Child Abuse

## Adopt a robust child protection policy.

For more information, check out "The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide."

## Foster a culture of support for victims.

- Develop a referral list of organizations and therapists who specialize in sexual abuse prevention and treatment.
- Post signs throughout the church building about child abuse prevention and reporting procedures.
- Publicize the church's child protection policy to communicate that the church takes child protection seriously and does not tolerate abuse.
- Post contact info for church leaders who are available to answer any questions about child safety.
- Speak about abuse publicly and often.

## Support local child protection efforts.

Provide resources and assistance to your local Child Advocacy Center (CAC), CASA, and similar organizations.

## Build a support system for survivors.

The church could host support groups for survivors and assist families in finding and/or paying for licensed therapy. Your church may also designate a member of church leadership to minister to children and families affected by abuse. This person could (1) accompany the victims to interviews and court hearings, (2) be present and affirming, and (3) ask how the church can support them further.

## Host annual child protection trainings.

These trainings should be mandatory for church leadership, staff members, and volunteers – but it's a good idea to open them up to parents, too. These trainings can cover topics like:

- How to interact with a child who has disclosed abuse.
- Mandatory reporting procedures.
- Technology and internet safety.
- The contents of the church's child protection policy.
- Abuse indicators and the effects of trauma.



# Recommended Reading List

## For Children

- *God Made All Of Me: A Book To Help Children Protect Their Bodies* (Justin and Lindsey Holcomb)

## For Survivors

- *Rid of My Disgrace: Hope and Healing for Victims of Sexual Assault* (Justin and Lindsey Holcomb)
- *Is It My Fault?: Hope and Healing for Those Suffering Domestic Violence* (Justin and Lindsey Holcomb)
- *On the Threshold of Hope* (Diane Langberg)
- *Anatomy of the Soul: Surprising Connections between Neuroscience and Spiritual Practices That Can Transform Your Life and Relationships* (Curt Thompson)
- *Healing Is a Choice: 10 Decisions That Will Transform Your Life and 10 Lies That Can Prevent You From Making Them* (Stephen Arterburn)

## For Church Leaders & Counselors

- *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries* (Basyle Tchividjian and Shira Berkovits)
- *What the Bible Says to Abuse Survivors and Those Who Hurt Them* (Victor Vieth)
- *The Spiritual Impact of Sexual Abuse* (Diane Langberg)
- *Caring for Survivors of Sexual Abuse* (Basyle Tchividjian and Justin Holcomb)
- *Protecting Children From Abuse in the Church* (Basyle Tchividjian)
- *Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse* (Diane Langberg)

## For Everyone

- *Predators: Pedophiles, Rapists, And Other Sex Offenders* (Anna C. Salter)
- *On This Rock: A Call to Center the Christian Response to Child Abuse on the Life and Words of Jesus* (Victor Vieth)
- *The Long Journey Home: Understanding and Ministering to the Sexually Abused* (Andrew J. Schmutzer)
- *Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores* (Diane Langberg)

**Note:** Under WV Code §49-2-803, church employees and volunteers are mandated to report all reasonable suspicions of abuse to DHHR within 24 hours. Reporting to leadership DOES NOT fulfill your legal duty as a mandatory reporter. You MUST file a direct report by calling the WV Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 800-352-6513. In some cases, you must also call law enforcement.