



Safe Sanctuaries Basic Training PowerPoint Script

Slide 1: Ask participants to introduce themselves: Name; where they serve/area of ministry

Slide 2: Safe Sanctuaries is a “Kingdom” issue. We are being a faithful church by being mindful of how we do ministry together. Offer a prayer, to include: We give thanks for this time to gather in Christian Community for accountability and growth. We seek clarity on how to serve God’s children, all God’s children, with compassion and sensitivity. Help us to lay aside other concerns during our time together, and be totally present. Guide our conversation as we focus on the issue of being a “Safe” haven, a “Safe Sanctuary” for those who are lost, broken, seeking, or hurt.

Slide 3: Ask each participant or table group to create a statement/definition of what is “Safe Sanctuaries”

Slide 4: We are called to open our doors to everyone, including strangers whom we have never met. We do not know their backgrounds/histories, where they have been, what they have done, etc. We are called to be church to everyone!

Slide 5: Read the Leader’s part. Ask participants to read the response. Remind participants this is what we agree to do when we respond during the Covenant of Baptism.

Slide 6: Safe Sanctuaries is not just a policy. Safe Sanctuaries is a way of doing ministry, a lens through which we see everything a church does. We strive to do the best we can in all that we do. Safe Sanctuaries is named after the book, *Safe Sanctuaries*, by Joy Melton. Rev. Melton (a clergy and attorney) provides this resource of best practices to address abuse in churches, and ways to prevent abuse. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state “children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional, and sexual exploitation and abuse” (§ 162C)

Slide 7: Pass out copies of “Eight Common Myths of Child Abuse” by Dr. Anna Salter, PHD
More information and resources by Dr. Anna Salter are in the NCCUMC- Media Center.

Slide 8: Myth 1: Normal-appearing, well educated, middle-class people don't molest children.

- Myth 2: People are too quick to believe an abuser is guilty, even if there is no supporting evidence.
- Myth 3: Child molesters molest indiscriminately.
- Myth 4: Children who are being abused would immediately tell their parents.

Slide 9: Myth 5: Children who are being abused will show physical evidence of abuse.

- Myth 6: Hundreds of innocent men and women have been falsely accused and sent to prison for molesting children.
- Myth 7: If asked about abuse, children tend to exaggerate and are prone to making false accusations.
- Myth 8: By using repeated interviews, therapists or police can easily implant false memories and cause false accusations among children of any age.

Slide 10: Reports of abuse or neglect are frequently in the news. It can no longer be said that churches are immune to abuse. Helping churches understand the problems of abuse, and providing information for churches, create an important foundation for being a “Safe Sanctuaries” church.

Slide 11: Types of Abuse.

- Physical abuse: Deliberately aggressive or violent behavior that results in bodily harm.
- Emotional abuse: Spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty.
- Neglect: Endangerment of health, safety, welfare through negligence.

Slide 12: Types of Abuse.

- Sexual abuse: Sexual contact without consent.
- Spiritual abuse: Attempt to exert power and control using religion, faith, or beliefs.
- Financial abuse and exploitation: Control over another's ability to access, acquire, use, or maintain control of economic resources, funds, property, or assets.

Slide 13: Types of Abuse.

- Elder/Caregiver Abuse: Causing harm or serious risk of damage to a vulnerable adult.
- Domestic Violence: Pattern of abusive behavior used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner or family member.

Slide 14: Educating the congregation about protecting children, youth, and vulnerable adults is very important. They need to feel ownership in the process. Some of the basic procedures include:

- KNOW YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH. Know who they are and where they are.
- When going on a trip, give the parents advance notice and full information regarding the event, and provide permission slips to complete.
- When transitioning from one place to another, count the children and youth to make sure you have everyone.

Slide 15: Make sure you have a Check-In/Check-Out Procedure for children's programs. This procedure ensures children are picked up by authorized persons and teacher/worker has adequate information such as allergies and emergency contacts, to provide the child with proper care.

Providing CPR/First Aid training for church workers with children/youth/vulnerable adults is a basic step to assure the safety of children/youth/vulnerable adults.

All workers with children/youth/vulnerable adults (paid, volunteer, part time, full time) should be required to attend a training that outlines the church's Safe Sanctuaries policy.

Slide 16: Read slide. Employ the Sex Offenders Registry and pay attention to background checks. Educate the congregation about Safe Sanctuaries. Visit, and listen, to homebound members. Listen, really listen, to what children, youth, and vulnerable adults are saying. Be aware of abrupt changes in behavior.

Slide 17: Be aware of evidence of abuse.

- Physical signs—bruises, burns, unexplainable injuries, hostile or destructive behavior
- Emotional signs—depression, withdrawal, lack of self-esteem, eating disorders
- Neglect—inappropriate dress for climate, poor hygiene, chronic hunger, untreated medical conditions, unsanitary living conditions

Slide 18: Evidence of abuse:

- Sexual abuse—advanced sexual knowledge, promiscuous behavior, difficulty walking or sitting, torn or stained underwear
- Spiritual abuse—disruptions of memory or consciousness, mistrust, flashbacks, fear of clergy
- Financial abuse—unauthorized cashing checks, forging signature, improper use of guardianship, conservatorship, or power of attorney

Slide 19: The 2 adult rule requires no fewer than 2 adults present at all times during any church-sponsored program or event involving children/youth/vulnerable adults. The 2 adults must be unrelated. This greatly reduces the possibility of an incident of abuse. An adult “roamer” may be used to check rooms and halls. All workers with youth or children should attend an annual orientation in which they are informed of church policies, procedures, steps for reporting an incident, details of the state laws regarding definitions of child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse and requirements when it is discovered. Training volunteers, paid staff, part time or full time is very important, not just on Safe Sanctuaries, but how ministries can be done in a Safe Sanctuaries way.

Slide 20: Each room should have a door with a window in it or a half door. A half door offers protection against children wandering outside and allows for visual access.

- Always use ministry areas that are visually accessible to prevent potential abusers from doing harm.
- Every local church must have adequate property and liability insurance for the scope of its ministry.
- Know your volunteers. Volunteers should participate in the ministries of the church for at least 6 months prior to serving
- Background checks are required for all staff and volunteers. This is a standard screening procedure.

Slide 21: Safety Tips for using the internet:

- If you take pictures of persons, you need permission to use them on the internet.
- Do not use names of children/youth/vulnerable adults, show nametags, show school names (i.e. on a piece of clothing)
- If you post photos of yourself, family members or friends, alter the picture so the identifying information cannot be seen.
- If you join a social network site page, only accept online friends who are actually your friends in person.
- NEVER RESPOND TO E-MAILS, IM'S OR TEXT MESSAGES FROM STRANGERS.
- Never put anything online that you would be embarrassed for others to see.

Slide 22: How does Safe sanctuaries work best? When everyone in the congregation knows about it! Educate the congregation.

Slide 23: Beginning the Safe Sanctuaries process

Slide 24: Develop a Safe Sanctuaries Team. Read slide.

Slide 25: Evaluate current practices. (see sample on slide)

Slide 26: Develop new policies and guidelines. (see information in Safe Sanctuaries book) You can personalize these forms for you church- but be careful not to change the basic information.

Slide 27: Develop a Response Plan.

Slide 28: Immediately complete an Abuse Reporting form with date and description of witnessed abuse. (see Report of Child Abuse Form available on NCCUMC Safe Sanctuaries website)

Slide 29: If the alleged abuser is in a leadership position, immediately remove him/her from that position during the investigation. This is the number one step.

Slide 30: What Happens If (When) suspected abuse is by a staff person other than the senior pastor or a church member? Report to the Senior Pastor. Remember to have documented allegation on file from observer/original reporter. The documentation from the original reporter is crucial.

Slide 31: The pastor will report immediately to:

- The District Superintendent (919-779-9435 and ask for the D.S.'s number)
- Dir. of Communications at the Conference Office (919-278-2436)
- Trustees Chairperson (for insurance purposes)
- Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Chairperson
- Department of Social Services (find local phone # and publish for your congregation) or the Sherriff's Department (find local phone # and publish for your congregation). NC is a mandatory reporting state.
- If a minor, contact the parents/guardians
- Church's insurance company

Slide 32: What Happens If (When) suspected abuse is by the senior pastor? Report to the District Superintendent 919-779-9435 (ask for the D.S.'s. phone number). Remember to have documented allegation on file from observer/original reporter. The observer/original reporter must record the allegation for reporting.

Slide 33: The DS will report immediately to:

- Dir. of Communications at the Conference Office
- SPRC of Church
- Department of Social Services (of the county where the church is located) or the Sherriff's Department (of the county where the church is located)
- (NC is a mandatory reporting state)
- If a minor, contact the parents/guardians
- Church's insurance company

Slide 34: The documentation must be thorough and clear. Keep these documents in a safe, secure place.

Slide 35: Let the authorities handle the investigation. The accurate and thorough documentation is the church's responsibility. However, the church does not investigate.

Slide 36: The SPRC Chair will speak on behalf of the church to the Dir. Of Communications. This person will work in cooperation with Dir. of Communications at the NC Conference office. This is so important for the investigation part of the procedure.

Slide 37: Protect the alleged victim and alleged abuser from public speculation. Be pastoral; be the church. Confidentiality is critical.

Slide 38: If a registered sex-offender attends worship at your church, you could confidentially assign a "mentor." Make sure, through the Sherriff's office, that the offender does not have a restraining order against him/her.

Slide 39: Handling the Safe Sanctuaries Screening Process.

Slide 40: It is recommended to begin this process at the beginning of each ministry cycle (this varies from church to church).

Slide 41: Recruit. Remember to have clear job descriptions. Remember the 6-month rule. Volunteers need to be active for at least 6 months in the mission and ministry of the church. We often get so excited about new folks- and we forget that we don't REALLY know them very well. Don't put them or the church at risk.

Slide 42: Determine who needs to complete which forms. Those who are new to the ministries of your church must complete all forms: Samples of recommended forms can be found in the book Safe Sanctuaries by Joy Melton or Safer Sanctuaries. Volunteer Application. Remember to check references and document findings. Covenant Form. Background Search Release Form. Forms should be renewed every three years.

Be diligent in recruiting appropriate volunteers and in the recruiting process
Frustration or abuse can be manifested when personal issues become overwhelming.
The situation for people may change, so be cautious.

Slide 43: What to do with the forms. Read over the applications. Complete the reference checks. Know your volunteers. Email the Background Search Release Form to the background search company of choice. The results will be emailed back to you.

For more information, please go to the NCC Safe Sanctuaries page and click on Background Checks.
<https://nccumc.org/christian-formation/safe-sanctuaries-children-youth-vulnerable-adults/>

Slide 44: Background search considerations when assessing results:

- Sex offense – do not allow to serve in ministry with children, youth or vulnerable adults
- DUI – for current or multiple offenses, do not allow to drive for church ministries
- Credit issues – do not allow to handle church monies

Slide 45: The completed forms must be kept in a locked cabinet with access only to those managing the files. Be sure that sensitive information is safe from misuse that can lead to identity theft or other problems. If file has been inactive (ie: no longer a volunteer, resigned, moved, died) for over three years, the records must be properly and safely disposed (shredding is suggested).

Slide 46: Train all workers every year within each ministry area. This is NOT just a "Safe Sanctuaries" training, but a training on how your particular ministry works in a Safe Sanctuaries way. Things change from year to year. Changes must be incorporated into each year's training.

Slide 47: Discuss available resources. Encourage participants to frequently visit our NCC Safe Sanctuaries webpage for information including:

- Sample Policies
- Church Safety and Security
- Ministry with Registered Sex Offenders
- Insurance
- Background Checks
- How to Request Help from the Safe Sanctuaries Team
- Media Center Resources
- Sexual Misconduct Hotline
- Reporting Abuse and Neglect
- The NC Conference Safe Sanctuaries Policy is also available on the webpage

Slide 48: Take time to discuss any questions participants might have, especially regarding your church's policy. If you need further assistance, please contact the NC Conference Safe Sanctuaries Team.
Thank participants for their ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults

Slide 49: Read Covenant Prayer together:

I am no longer my own, but yours.

Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;

put me to doing, put me to suffering;

let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,

exalted for you or brought low for you;

let me be full, let me be empty;

let me have all things, let me have nothing;

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

you are mine and I am yours. So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.

Amen.