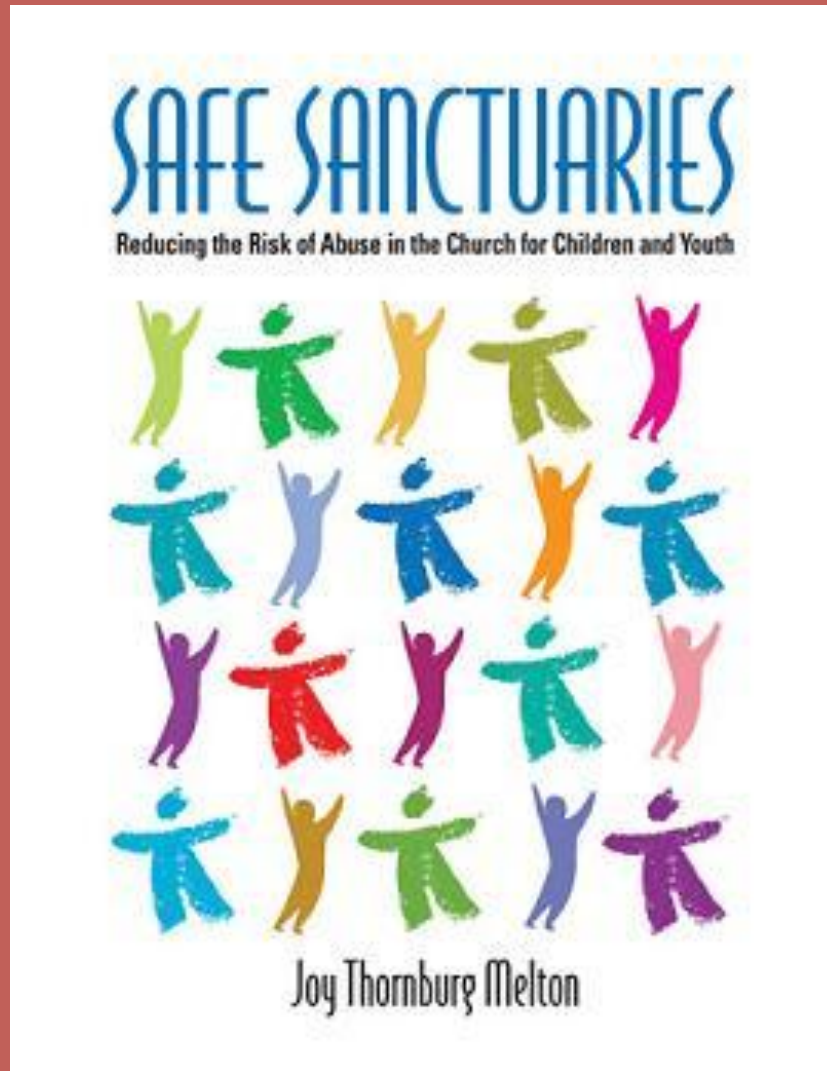



Safe Sanctuaries- May 22, 2010



Opening Prayer

 Gracious and most merciful God, you have brought us together in witness to your love of all children. Open our hearts and minds in our time together—that we may learn from one another and hear what you may say to us. 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



Safe Sanctuaries

May 22, 2010

Reminder:

Safe Sanctuaries is an overt expression of a congregation in making a congregation a safe place where children and youth may experience the abiding love of God and fellowship within the community of faith.



Introduction

Who am I?

- Ordained Elder in the NCNY Annual Conference
- Pastor, Auburn UMC
- Chair of the NCNY Safe Sanctuaries Team

What was I asked to do?

- We think it may be helpful to have some discussion around creative ways Christian Education programs can effectively put the policies into practice, even in the smallest congregations.



A Few Questions?????

- How many of your churches have a SS Policy?
- How many of you were involved in the process of creating your policies and implementing them?
- How did it go?



Education

- Whether you're just starting or have been practicing SS for a while—a reminder never hurts!
- Remind your church leaders (unfortunately sometimes the pastor) of why having a SS policy is important
 - Church Council
 - Education Team Meetings
 - Bible Study focused on SS
 - Worship-preaching
 - Know your policy and share it. Send it out to parents each year so they know how the church is ensuring the child's safety.
 - Newsletter articles//or even a SS newsletter!



Education continued...

Share Scary Statistics



- Review these statistics:
- $3,000,000$ divided by $365 = 8,219$
children and youth abused each day
- $8,219$ divided by $24 = 342$
children and youth abused each hour
- 342 divided by $60 = 5.7$
children and youth abused each minute



Nuts and Bolts

 Note: It is extremely helpful if you have a SS team leader!!





Background checks/Reference Checks

-  Put it in the budget.
-  Delegate responsibilities. If you have 30 volunteers to train that mean \$ and 60 phone calls.



Nuts and Bolts continued...

Trainings for local church volunteers/staff

-  Offer several options to train volunteers annually.
-  Put together a Power Point presentation to help train.
-  Know your Policy well!
-  Train a few people in your church to lead training sessions...so you're not the only one having fun!





Nuts and Bolts continued...

- 2 person rule and the use of roamer.
 - 2 person rule is best...but not always easy. A roamer can be an invaluable in cases where you have several SS classes and limited teachers. A roamer allows for some freedom without compromising the safety of the children.



Nuts and Bolts continued...

Open Door Counseling

-  With youth or adults always have the door open/ajar and let someone know that you are with a youth or adult.
-  If a youth needs to speak privately be sure to let another adult know you are talking to the youth and have them roam. No secrecy.



Nuts and Bolts continued...

NO ONE ON ONE!

- This is a great rule to always keep in mind. **Always** have two adults in the building.



Checking sex offender registry

- Anyone can do this---at home or at church. Encourage your SS team and parents to do this on a regular basis.
- If you do have a Registered Sex Offender in your church you must respond and set up safeguards that will ensure the safety of the children. See SS book-excellent.



Nuts and Bolts continued...

Windows in all classroom doors

-  Invite a group of men/women from the church to work with the Trustees to make alterations if needed.
-  \$\$\$\$ This can be pricey if you have to pay for labor. The glass and moldings can add up too. Check to see who in your congregation might be able to donate time and labor.



Going On To Perfection

- It's a process—don't make it too hard.
- The basics are very do-able. You can of course go above and beyond if you choose.
- The important thing here is not to get so legalistic that ministry is compromised.



Be Creative

- It is likely that you will not be able to make all of the improvements to your physical facility at one time.
- You may need to create a ranking of these improvements in terms of highest risk to children and begin there.
- It may take you several years to accomplish all the projects.
 - For example, you might budget for one project a year.
 - You might consider asking persons to donate to these projects, ask volunteers to fund the cost of their own clearances, or conduct a comprehensive “Safe Sanctuaries” fundraising campaign emphasizing the need to make your church a safe and welcoming place for all of God’s children.



CELEBRATE!!!



Celebrate!!

- ❏ Designate a worship service each year to celebrate Safe Sanctuaries.
- ❏ Create banners, involve children and youth, use special music, recognize SS team members, and express gratitude to the congregation
- ❏ Make sure people know your at church that complies with SS by putting it on your website and worship bulletins and bulletin boards.
- ❏ Order of worship, SS book, pg. 157-158



YOUR IDEAS

- What is working in your church?
- What do you need help with?
 - There are several individuals that have been trained to come to your church and help you.
 - Please start with the Joy Melton book and online resources as they are quite comprehensive.



Great Resources

- *Safe Sanctuaries Anniversary Edition: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth* by Joy Melton
- General Board of Discipleship
http://www.gbod.org/site/c.nhLRJ2PMKsG/b.5598111/k.A248/Safe_Sanctuaries.htm
- North Central NY
<http://www.ncnyumc.org/SafeSanctuaries/>
- Sex offender Registry
http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us/nsor/search_index.htm
- Central PA
<http://www.safesanctuaries.org/index.html>

