

# SAC: A Safe Place



## ***South Abbotsford Church***

Room for Life

...Room to Connect

...Room to Reach

...Room to Grow

We have a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a secure environment for children participating in church programs that are under the auspices and authority of the church. Child abuse is a criminal act as well as a violation of human conscience and dignity. It is a violation of God's moral law within the trusted context of relationship. It is criminal behavior that causes emotional, physical and spiritual trauma to victims, and has destructive consequences for abusers. The devastating effects on the credibility of the church ministry and the name of Christ make it essential that SAC take all appropriate steps to prevent abusive incidences from occurring.

# Introduction

## The Spiritual and Moral Responsibility of the Church

*Everyone who teaches, helps or cares for children and/or youth under the auspices of SAC is required to follow the guidelines and procedures as defined in this document. The Church Board has reviewed and adopted them as official policy.*

*This plan is designed to assist church leaders in their recruiting of volunteers and, to the greatest extent possible, provide for the safety of the children served by these volunteers.*

The gospel of Mark records that when people brought little children to Jesus, He took them in his arms, put His hands on them and blessed them. As a church, it is our desire to bring children to Jesus, too.

In the church, we recognize that we are a reflection of God's love to those in our care and we take our responsibility to them seriously. In our ministry to children/youth we must follow carefully what the scriptures teach:

1. Avoid every kind of evil (1 Thess. 5:22)
2. But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, of any kind of impurity, of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. (Eph. 5:3)
3. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. (Matt. 18-17)

*These guidelines are therefore set forth to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which we can bring children and youth to the Savior. We view ourselves as partners with parents, seeking to provide quality care and instruction in our ministry to the family. All of our guidelines are designed to protect and promote growth in God for each child, youth and adult involved.*

# **Chapter 1**

## **Understanding the Need**

### **Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse**

SAC has a mandate to minister to individuals, families, adults, youth and children. In that context, SAC stresses the sanctity of human life and the importance and worth of each individual as a child of God.

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and society. In response to this trend, it is our commitment to provide reasonable protective care to all preschoolers, children and youth.

Although SAC has been fortunate in never having any substantiated incidents of child abuse or molestation happen in the church, we recognize that formal guidelines and procedures will help prevent the opportunity for abuse to arise in the future.

Children readily place their faith in adults who care for them. It is our responsibility as a church to safeguard that trust. Childhood innocence is a gift that we must plan to protect within our church.

### **It Can Happen in Any Church**

Incidents of molestation can occur in any church – including ours. Churches have traditionally accepted the services of anyone expressing an interest in working as a volunteer with children or youth. Churches are by nature trusting and unsuspecting institutions. Asking sensitive questions of those who are giving their time and talent can be seen as distasteful by church leaders. No one wants to offend potential workers, especially longtime

church members with a history of good service. These qualities can make a church susceptible to incidents of child molestation.

There are few topics that create more emotion than that of child abuse, especially if it is sexual in nature.

### **Impact**

A single incident of child molestation can devastate a church and divide the congregation. Members become outraged and bewildered. Parents question whether their own children have been victimized. The viability of the church's youth and children's programs is jeopardized. And church leaders face blame and guilt for allowing the incident to happen.

*Ed begins attending First Church. After a few weeks, he volunteers to work with the youth group. Church staff members do not know Ed, but they are delighted to have another worker. He is put to work immediately. The youth group has an overnight activity a few months later. Following the activity, two minors report that they were sexually molested by Ed. The parents of one of the minors contact a lawyer, and a \$3 million lawsuit is brought against Ed, the church and the church board. The parents claim that the church (and the church board) acted negligently by not doing any background investigation before using Ed as a volunteer worker.*

Such incidents often result in massive media attention, sometimes on a national scale. Television stations conduct live interviews from church property on the evening news. Front page stories hit the local paper. Community residents begin to associate the church with the incident of molestation. But far more tragic is the emotional trauma to the victim and the victim's family, and the enormous potential legal liability the church faces. If a trial

ensues, the issue stays alive in the media for months, sometimes even years.

In making sure SAC is a safer place, we will be:

- a) Safeguarding preschoolers, children and youth of our church from abuse.
- b) Protecting the church staff and volunteer workers from potential allegations of sexual abuse.
- c) Limiting the extent of legal risk and liability due to any such sexual abuse.

## Chapter 2

### Understanding Child Abuse

#### Definition

“**Child Abuse**” is defined as follows:

- ✓ It can be physical, emotional or sexual.
- ✓ All child abuse involves the misuse of power.
- ✓ Misuse of power takes place when people take advantage of the authority or power they have over vulnerable people.
- ✓ Vulnerable people include adults with physical or mental disabilities and children/youth. (everyone under 19 years old)

**Physical Abuse** is using physical force or action that results, or could result, in injury to a child or youth. It is more than reasonable discipline. Sometimes injury is caused by over-discipline. Injuring a child or youth is not acceptable, regardless of differing cultural standards on discipline.

In 97% of reported cases of physical abuse, parents are the perpetrators (Wolfe).\*

The perpetrator of physical abuse is approximately 1.5 times more likely to be male than female (Wolfe).\*

\*Wolfe, David. *Child Abuse. Implications for Child Development and Psychopathology*. Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1987. P.20.

**Emotional Abuse** is a pattern of hurting a child's feelings to the point of damaging their self-respect. It includes verbal attacks on the child, insults, humiliation or rejection. A child or youth who is emotionally harmed may demonstrate severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, self-destructive or aggressive behavior.

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when a child or youth is used by somebody else for sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual activity between children or youth may also be sexual abuse if older or more powerful children or youth take sexual advantage of those who are younger or less powerful.

*The Law Reform Committee of Canada defines child sexual abuse as "Exposure of the child to sexual stimulation inappropriate for his age and role – the sexual exploitation of a child who is not developed mentally, capable of understanding or resisting the contact; or a child or adolescent who may be psychologically or socially dependent upon the perpetrator."*

**Child sexual abuse includes behaviour that involves touching and non-touching aspects.**

Types of abuse that involve touching include:

- ✓ Fondling
- ✓ Oral, genital and anal penetration
- ✓ Intercourse
- ✓ Forcible rape

Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include:

- ✓ Verbal comments
- ✓ Pornographic videos
- ✓ Obscene phone calls
- ✓ Exhibitionism

- ✓ Allowing children to witness sexual activity

## **Symptoms of Abuse and Molestation**

Church workers and staff should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as to behavioural and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. A one-time event would not necessarily constitute a potential abuse case; sudden unexplained changes, however, would warrant investigation. Some of the more common signs are summarized below:

### Physical signs may include:

- ✓ Lacerations and bruises
- ✓ Nightmares
- ✓ Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- ✓ Difficulty with urination
- ✓ Discomfort when sitting
- ✓ Torn or bloody underclothing
- ✓ Venereal disease

### Behavioral signs may include:

- ✓ Anxiety when approaching church or nursery area
- ✓ Nervous or hostile behaviour toward adults
- ✓ Sexual self-consciousness
- ✓ “Acting out” sexual behaviour
- ✓ Withdrawal from church activities and friends

### Verbal signs may include the following statements:

- ✓ I don't like (*names a particular person*)
- ✓ (*Particular person*) does things to me when we're alone
- ✓ I don't like to be alone with (*particular person*)
- ✓ (*Particular person*) fooled around with me

## The Effects of Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse robs children of their childhood and can potentially scar its young victims for life. Too often in the past, the effects of abuse were minimized or dismissed. Children were viewed as being resilient. Recent research has shown that children can suffer significant pain from even a single abusive incident. Church members must be aware of the pain from even a single abusive incident, and must be aware of the pain and long term suffering that can accompany such abuse. Abused children can display a wide range of negative symptoms in the aftermath of abuse. Abuse can result in abnormal fears, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), aggressive behaviour, sexual “acting out”, depression, diffused sexual identity, and poor self-esteem. (Ksendall-Tackett, Williams, and Finkelhor, 1991) The incidence of sexually transmitted disease is also a possible outcome.

*“The personal violation of child sexual abuse causes the victim to experience many losses...including loss of childhood memories, loss of healthy social contact, loss of the opportunity to learn, loss of bodily integrity, loss of identity and self-esteem, loss of trust, loss of sexual maturity, and loss of self-determination. All of these personal violations mean that victims of child sexual abuse lose the child’s right to a normal childhood. In adulthood it may also mean the loss of the capacity to appreciate sexual intimacy as nurturing, holy and loving.” (The Report of the Winter Commission, 1990, Vol.1, p.118)*

The degree of damage depends upon several factors including the intensity, duration and frequency of the abuse. In addition, the relationship of the perpetrator to the child matters. If the abuser is a known and trusted authority figure in the child’s life, the degree of impact increases dramatically.

Consequences of child sexual abuse can plague victims into adulthood. Outcome studies of adult survivors of child sexual abuse suggest the following effects: sexual dysfunction, eating disorders, substance abuse, promiscuity, disassociation from emotions, and possible perpetration of sexual abuse on others. When church leaders, pastors, and respected congregational workers perpetrate the abuse, lifelong religious confusion and deep feelings of enmity toward God and the church can occur.

### **The Profile of a Child Molester**

Who is the typical child molester? Some church leaders assume that molesters are “strangers wearing trench coats” or “dirty old men.” These stereotypes not only are inaccurate, but they dangerously contribute to a false sense of security. Researchers in the field of child sexual abuse currently indicate that no one profile fits the various perpetrators of abuse. Church leaders can become preoccupied screening stereotypes, while not suspecting the real molester could be an active adult or teen in the church.

*Bob sat dejectedly before the church board. His broad shoulders slumped as he tearfully retold his story. Bob has been sexually molesting his thirteen year old daughter for the last two years. This activity may have gone undetected except that Bob tried to abuse his daughter's girlfriend while chaperoning a Sunday School activity. The young girl reported the incident to her parents and Bob was apprehended. The church leaders hearing this confession sat in disbelief. How could Bob, a successful businessman, husband, father of three children, and respected church worker commit such actions?*

#### **Consider the following:**

-Over eighty percent of the time, the abuser is someone known to the victim.

-Most abuse takes place within the context of an ongoing relationship. The usual offender is between the ages of 20 – 30 years.

-20% of sex offenders begin their activity before the age of 18. Child abusers often are married and have children.

If abuse occurs in our church, a respected member will most likely be the molester. Emphasis upon “stranger danger” will leave our church ill prepared. While it’s uncomfortable even to consider this, the most likely assailants include Sunday School teachers, religious educators, nursery or preschool workers, teachers in a church operated school, camp counselors, scout leaders, “concerned” adults who volunteer to transport children to church, and clergy. Trusted adults – male or female – can easily mislead children and most incidents of child sexual abuse take place in the context of an ongoing relationship between the abuser and the child.

## Chapter 3

### The Church's Legal Vulnerability

#### Why Churches are Susceptible

Churches have unique features that can make them susceptible to incidents of child molestation. This risk increases dramatically for overnight activities.

Access: Child molesters are attracted to an institution in which they have immediate access to potential victims in an atmosphere of complete trust.

Need: Most churches struggle to get adequate help for children and youth programs. Recruiting nursery workers, for example, can become an unending effort. Turnover among volunteer workers is also high. A willing volunteer worker provides welcome relief.

Churches need to understand the extent of their liability. Churches are not “guarantors” of the safety and well-being of children. They are not absolutely liable for every injury that occurs on their premises or in the course of their activities. Generally, they are responsible only for those injuries that result from their negligence. Victims of molestation who have sued a church often allege that the church was negligent in not adequately screening applicants or for not providing adequate supervision.

#### The Civil and Legal Liability of the Church

Increasingly and often more dramatically, the church and its personnel (i.e. staff, directors, officers and ministers) are being held accountable for the acts of individual abusers within the

church even though neither the church, nor its leaders were aware of the abuse or condoned it. Churches are being sued in Civil Courts for damages sustained by victims and their families. Those victims and their families are attempting to hold churches accountable by alleging that:

- ✓ The church is vicariously liable for those acts of its personnel, be they paid staff or volunteer staff, regardless of whether the church was itself negligent or even knew of the abuse.
- ✓ The church was negligent in its hiring or accepting personnel, whether paid or volunteer, and
- ✓ The church was negligent in the supervising or monitoring of its personnel or membership.

*(Church and the Law Update, June 1994)*

## Chapter 4

### Child Protection Procedures

#### SAC is committed to the following:

1. We will screen all paid employees, including ministerial staff, and volunteers who work with preschoolers, children or youth.

*“Is screening important? Ask any member of a church in which an incident of sexual abuse has occurred.”*

(Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church)

2. We will check references and do criminal record checks on all our workers, for any position involving work with preschoolers, children or youth. Anyone with criminal abuse violations will not be allowed to work with children or youth.

3. We will train all of our staff who work with preschoolers, children or youth, both paid and volunteer, to understand the nature of child sexual abuse, how to carry out our policies to prevent sexual abuse including our clearly defined reporting procedures for suspected incidents.

4. We take seriously, our policies to prevent sexual abuse and will see that they are enforced.

5. All workers will sign the Ministry Covenant, agreeing to comply with church policies and guidelines.

6. We have adopted a basic “Two-Adult” rule. Such a rule says that two adults should be present during any children’s activity. This rule reduces the risk of child molestation, and also reduces the risk of false accusations of molestation by individuals seeking a quick legal settlement.

7. We will follow the “Six Month” rule. Volunteers will be permitted to work with preschoolers, children or youth only after they have been adherents/members of SAC for a period of six months. Such a policy gives the church an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants and volunteers, and will help to repel persons seeking immediate access to children. (This provision may be waived where the person is transferring in from another church and has a letter of recommendation signed by the pastor of that church)

**These safeguards are not only to protect our children, but also our workers**

*Robert and Beth were startled to discover blood on the underpants on their two year old son, Timothy, after arriving home from church. Robert immediately concluded that Timothy had been molested while in the nursery. He quickly drove back to the church and found Pastor Reynolds still visiting with some members. Pastor Reynolds was stunned by the allegation. Last year the church had implemented thorough screening procedures and policies to prevent sexual molestation. He and Robert contacted Sally who was in charge of the nursery that Sunday. Sally explained that the two-adult rule was carefully followed and at no time was Timothy or any of the other children in the nursery ever left alone with one attendant. According to Sally, no abuse occurred. The allegation caused her great emotional distress. Later a medical examination revealed that Timothy's bleeding was caused by a skin problem. No molestation had occurred. Everyone was greatly relieved. Sally was thankful she had followed the two-adult rule. What if only one worker had been in the nursery that morning? What if the medical test was inconclusive? It's not hard to see that a charge of abuse can*

*take on a life of its own. The resulting emotional environment becomes intense and painful.*

### **Child Security**

1. All ministry leaders working with the children must wear a name tag or approved clothing which identifies them accordingly.
2. The names and addresses of parents and children must be carefully maintained.
3. Parents of nursery-aged children will be provided with an I.D. # at the time the child is brought to the nursery. The child will be released only to the bearer of that I.D. #. The parent must provide in writing, any special needs of their child.
4. Programs for preschool aged children must provide a sign-in sheet. An accurate sign-in procedure would include each child's name, parent's name and parent's location during that period of time. Space will be provided for parents to list any special needs. Preschool children should not be received into the classroom until properly signed in. Security precautions are to be taken for all children admitted to preschool/nursery programs. A child will be released to a parent or representative only on the basis of a signature, security number, identification card or in the case of a nursery child, the bearer of the I.D.#.
5. Children are never to be dropped off in the nursery or classroom without a teacher/caregiver present. If only one teacher/caregiver is present, the door must be left open. Doors are to be supervised so that children are not able to exit alone and/or a parent cannot take them from the room without a worker's assistance.
6. Parents are not to enter the nursery or classroom when picking up their child unless requested to do so. This better enables the

child-care staff to maintain order and provide the level of security that parents would expect.

## **Washroom Guidelines**

Parents are to be encouraged to take their children to visit the washroom prior to each class or service. This recommendation is to be communicated to parents at the beginning of each new school year, and throughout the year to newcomers.

### **1. Nursery Children**

As a general rule, staff in the nursery will not be expected to change diapers. However in the event that this becomes necessary the following rules will apply:

- ✓ Diaper changing must always take place in such a way that another nursery worker can easily see the child that is being changed, as well as the other children and workers in the room.
- ✓ Children must be 12 years of age or older, with appropriate training before being permitted to change infant's diapers.

### **2. Preschool Children**

- ✓ For preschool children, two adults will escort a group of children to the washroom. Where we do not have two adults available to take children to the washroom, hallway or safety monitors (preferably female) will be appointed to assist with washroom and security duties.
- ✓ If just one child must go to the washroom, the adult volunteer should escort the child to the washroom and prop the outside door open. The volunteer should then remain outside the washroom door and

wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the classroom. The volunteer should call the child's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary.

- ✓ Never be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom and never go into a washroom cubicle with a child and shut the door.
- ✓ When preschool children need assistance in the washroom, an adult may enter the washroom cubicle to assist only when a second adult is within visual contact. If this is not possible, inform another adult when taking a child to the washroom and when returning.
- ✓ A second adult must be within visual contact. If this is not possible, inform another adult when taking a child to the washroom and when returning.
- ✓ In light of the fact that most abusers are male, and for the protection of our male volunteers, it would be wise for men to avoid assisting boys or girls of any age in the washrooms. We suggest that only women assist children in the washrooms.

### **3. Grade 1-6 and Youth**

- ✓ A child seven years of age and younger should not be sent to the washroom alone, but should be accompanied by an adult volunteer worker.
- ✓ For children seven years of age and under, the adult volunteer should escort the child to the washroom, and prop the door open to make sure that everything is in order. The volunteer should then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the classroom.
- ✓ The volunteer should call the child's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary.

- ✓ Never go into a washroom cubicle with a child/youth and shut the door.

## **Health and Safety Guidelines**

### **A. Sick Children**

A child, who is ill and could therefore expose other children and workers to illness, should not be received into the nursery. Some signs of illness are unusual fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, inflamed mouth and throat. Any child with a known communicable disease should not be received into the nursery or a classroom.

### **B. Emergencies**

SAC workers are not to give or apply any medication. If a child needs medicating, the parent must give it. No medication will be left in the classroom or with a worker or child. In extreme cases (i.e. peanut allergies, ventilators, etc.) arrangements should be made with written instructions and permission of the child's parent. SAC is a Children's Ministry "peanut free" area.

### **C. Procedures for Dealing with Cuts or Injuries Involving Blood**

- ✓ Separate the injured child from the other children. Isolate the area where any blood may have dropped on carpet, toys, etc. Apply first aid measures and send someone to locate the parents.
- ✓ If other children have had contact with any of the blood from the cut or injury, their parents should be informed.
- ✓ Put on latex gloves (available in the first-aid kit) and bandage the injury, avoiding contact with mouth, ears and eyes.

- ✓ Carefully wipe up all blood and bloody bandages and remove to a secure, inaccessible waste removal receptacle.
- ✓ Any blood on the floor or toys must be washed away using a solution of one part bleach to ten parts water.
- ✓ Remove and properly dispose of latex gloves. Wash carefully with sterilizing soap (available in first-aid kit).

#### **D. Cleanliness**

- ✓ Sanitize the child care areas weekly. Regularly clean all surfaces, toys, tables, trays, bedding, bibs and doors. Place used toys in a bin marked for washing and clean them each week.

#### **Classroom Staffing and Supervision Guidelines**

Workers should always conduct themselves in a Godly manner, being an example of obedience, respect and honesty to those in their care.

#### **Personnel**

Programs that involve children and youth must always include adequate supervisory personnel. Supervision should also be maintained before and after the event until all children are in the custody of their parents or legal guardians.

#### ***The Danger:***

*In one church the elementary grade Sunday School class frequently dismissed before the adult class. While the parents remain in class, the children often run freely around church property. One Sunday, two ten year old boys sexually molest an unsupervised eight year old girl in a vacant classroom.*

Our desire is to provide a safe, loving classroom where the child feels comfortable and learning can take place. Therefore we recommend the following guidelines:

### **A. Two Leaders**

As a general rule, there is to be a minimum of two leaders in any room with children, except in the event of an emergency situation. Smaller classes could use high school students or have parents help out on a rotational basis. A temporary alternative to the two adult guideline is the open door policy.

*Stan, the youth pastor wants to meet with each member of the youth group to get to know them better. He requests that the church reimburse his expenses to take each student out for a coke. The board approves the request, but instructs Stan that two students must be present at each meeting and that he should not meet with any student alone, unless the parental permission rule, as described below, is followed.*

*Randy, an adult member of First Church, volunteers to pick up a 10-year old boy on his way to church each week. The boy lives with his mother who is delighted to have a "father figure" express an interest in her son. This arrangement presents not only a risk of molestation, but also of false charges. It should be discouraged, unless a second adult is present with Randy every time the boy is picked up.*

### **B. Obtain Parental Permission**

What about situations where an adult has a legitimate reason to be alone with a child? Church staff or volunteer workers must obtain the consent of the child's parent or guardian before going out alone with that child, or spending time with the child in an unsupervised situation. Workers must also notify an appropriate church leader

of such meetings in advance. Children must also have parental permission for involvement in church sponsored field trips or overnight events.

*Recently, drugs were discovered in the possession of a fourteen year old male member of the youth group while he was at school. Stan, the youth pastor, offers to pick him up after school on Tuesday with the hope of providing the boy adult support. This conduct violates the parental permission rule. Stan must first gain permission from the student's parents before a private meeting can occur. He should also notify the senior pastor of his intentions in advance.*

### **C. Open Doors**

When it is necessary that only one adult leader be in a closed room with children (e.g. leader leaves room to take children to the washroom; a small class where there is one teacher for a classroom of 3 children), the door of that room should remain open. We have recommended that the class rooms have windows or window doors that will allow ministry supervisors to look in occasionally without interrupting the teaching process.

### **D. Age Expectation**

In large churches, where parents may not know the volunteer, it is important to have at least one volunteer who is 18 years of age or older. In some cases where volunteers and parents are known to each other, volunteers between the ages of 12 and 18 may supervise a group of children. When these younger volunteers are used, the open door policy is to be enforced.

## **E. Preschool Classes**

All preschool rooms are to be staffed with at least one female adult worker to better facilitate observance of the washroom guidelines.

## **F. Supervisory Staff**

The supervisory staff should make regular visits to the classroom to make sure the class is properly staffed and supervised.

### **Proper Display of Affection**

Touch is an essential responsibility in nurturing lives. Volunteers need to be aware of, and sensitive to, differences in sexual development, cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities, and special needs. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love:

#### **A. Appropriate Touch**

**Love and caring can be expressed in the following appropriate ways, by:**

- ✓ Bending down to the child's eye level and speaking kindly; listening to him or her carefully.
- ✓ Taking a child's hand and leading him or her to an activity.
- ✓ Putting an arm around the shoulder of a child who needs quieting or comforting.
- ✓ Taking both of the child's hands as you say, "You did such a good job!" (or "I'm so glad to see you. We've missed you!" etc.)

- ✓ Patting a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him or her.
- ✓ Holding a child by the shoulders or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behaviour.
- ✓ Gently holding a child's chin to help him or her focus on what you are saying (important for children with attention deficit disorder).
- ✓ Holding a preschool child who is crying.

## **B. Inappropriate Touch**

### **You must avoid:**

- ✓ Kissing a child, coaxing a child to kiss you, extended hugging and tickling.
- ✓ Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child with toileting as outlined preciously).
- ✓ Carrying older children or having them sit on your lap.
- ✓ Being alone with a child.

## **Special Events and Overnight Policies**

Teachers are encouraged to have special class activities in their homes, plan social activities and involve their pupils in field trips and service projects. The following precautions need to be taken with these activities.

### **A. Field Trips and Special Events**

- ✓ Activities conducted away from the church property should be pre-approved by the church leadership.
- ✓ Parents should be notified at least one week prior to the outing.

- ✓ Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating in field trips and special events.
- ✓ All trips and outings must be supervised by a minimum of two approved, unrelated adult leaders.
- ✓ When the transporting of children is involved in an activity, all drivers must have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance. The number of persons per car must never exceed the number of seat belts.

## **B. Overnight Events**

Church sponsored overnight activities may be permitted as long as the following guidelines are met:

- ✓ All overnight activities must be pre-approved by the church leadership.
- ✓ Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating in overnight events.
- ✓ All overnight activities should have a minimum ratio of one leader for every five children (minimum of two leaders at all times. When only two leaders are required, they must be unrelated). Each leader should have an assigned group of children for whom they will be responsible during the overnight event. All supervising adults must be approved volunteers.

