Safeguarding

Training Youth Leaders* in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas

Start Here

Safeguarding training for Youth Leaders provides the information that Youth Leaders need to support adults in creating safe ministry spaces for children and youth. It also helps equip them to advocate for themselves and others. The following guide covers the policies that they need to know and follow.

This guide contains two tracks. Both tracks comply with our Safeguarding policies. You may choose either one.

Track One: Online Course (includes policy review, Ten Rules to Follow, video and quiz)

The Safeguarding and Formation Offices teamed up to make an online course (Training Youth Leaders in the Diocese of Texas) that covers creating a culture of belonging. This includes how to set health boundaries, what abuse and sexual abuse are, and reporting. You may have participants complete the course individually or as a group. It's always best practice to follow up with participants prior to the start of ministry work. A quick review of the 10 Rules to Follow is an easy way to reinforce the policies and expectations of Youth Leaders.

Track Two: Live Conversation Training (in-person with or without video)

If you would rather not use the online course with your group, you may continue to use the script and review quiz provided in this guide. You may even decide to use a combination of the script along with the video Youth Helper Training. The video has built in discussion prompts, that allow you to pause and lead conversations during and/or after the video.

Note that the Diocese is no longer using the "Meet Sam" video for older youth, since the new video contains information about grooming.

Although this guide offers a "script" for your use, you may wish to substitute your own words to convey the same information. Remember that sexual abuse is perpetrated by children and youth, not only by adults, so it is important that Youth Leaders learn to watch out for problematic behaviors, no matter who commits them.

Although it may feel uncomfortable to speak frankly with Youth Leaders about this subject, it's very important that they understand not only the rules but also what sexual abuse is and how much damage it causes. These materials are designed to be used by youth and children's ministry leaders (who are Qualified Adults under the Safeguarding Policies) to train Youth Leaders, regardless of whether such leaders are authorized Safeguarding Trainers. Of course, authorized Trainers may conduct the training for Youth Leaders if they are able to communicate effectively with youth. At least two Qualified Adults should be present for the training.

**Note, the Safeguarding Office is transitioning from using the phrase "Youth Helper" to "Youth Leader". Recorded materials may still have the "Helper" language.*

Who Needs this Training?

The diocesan *Safeguarding Policies: The Protection of Children, Youth, and Adults* require Youth Leaders to be screened and trained prior to serving in ministry. A **youth** is defined as anyone who is at least 12 years old, but not yet 18 years old, and anyone who is 18 years old or older and still in high school.

- Prior to training, youth must be screened by completing a personal interview, an application, and reference checks. Sample forms
- Youth Leaders are required to receive this training annually.

Before You Train

1. Review the Safeguarding Policies, this training guide, and if you will be training Youth Leaders who are 16 or older, preview the video Youth Helper Training. If you have questions, contact the Safeguarding Office.
2. Notify aspiring Youth Leaders and their parents of the upcoming training and the nature of its contents, inviting any of them to share with you in advance any concerns they may have about a youth participant having difficulty with the material. Depending on the response, you may wish to offer individual training to a participant or invite a parent to attend the training with the participant.
3. Familiarize yourself with the Youth Leader Safety Quiz in this guide. (Participants may complete this individually in the online course or together as a group).
4. Print or create an Attendance Sheet (sample on page 9 of this guide).

During Training

1. After greeting the participants and thanking them for their willingness to be Youth Leaders, etc., address the fact that they may be aware of stories of actual sexual abuse. Then say, “Those stories are very important, too important to share during a training like this one. If you have a story that you want to share, please come to me after the training so that we can have a conversation.”
2. Watch for signs of distress amongst participants during training. If anyone becomes upset or anxious during training, be sure to check in with them afterwards to see if they are ok or need to speak with someone.

After Training

1. Complete the Attendance Sheet, noting whether each participant completed one or both parts of the training.
2. Give the Attendance Sheet to the Safeguarding Records Administrator (SRA) of your congregation, school, or organization. The Attendance Sheet must be retained as proof of training.
3. If you have received information from a participant that makes you suspect that a Safeguarding policy violation has taken place in your organization or that child abuse or

neglect has occurred (even if unrelated to your organization), make a report as set out in the policies or email report@epicenter.org

Other Resources

If your youth will be leading a small group as part of their ministry, you may also want them to watch the Small Group Leader training video.

Track One: Online Course Training Youth Leaders

Course: Safeguarding for Training Youth Leaders in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas

I. Introduction
    A. Introducing the role youth will play
    B. Creating a culture of belonging
II. Safeguarding helps create a culture of belonging
    A. Boundary setting
    B. Abuse prevention and reporting
        a. Defining abuse
        b. Defining sexual abuse
        c. Explaining how abusers work
        d. What to do if you see inappropriate behavior
    C. Ten Rules to Follow
    D. Youth Leader Safety Quiz

Length of Training Session

Course, Video, Quiz, 30-35 minutes.

Track Two: Live Conversation (*in-person with or without video*)

Video: Youth Leader Training

I. Introduction
    A. Introduce the role youth will play
    B. Discuss creating a culture of belonging
    C. Define sexual abuse
    D. Explain how we keep children and youth safe from sexual abuse
    E. Share video
II. Training the Rules (policy review)
    A. Ten Rules to Follow
    B. Reporting
    C. Youth Leader Safety Quiz

I. Introduction: Live Conversation Training - script

A. Introduce the role the Youth Leaders will play

When you are asked to be a youth leader, you are being asked to help adults create safe, welcoming places for younger kids to learn about God and what it means to be part of a community where we love one another the way that Jesus taught us to love.

As a youth leader, being a leader is different from being a participant. You will have a different set of expectations and obligations. Your primary responsibility is to help in the particular ways assigned to you by the adult leaders. Of course, we want you to have fun while you are helping, but your focus has to be on your responsibilities. One of your responsibilities will be to help keep the kids in the program safe from sexual abuse.

B. Discuss creating a culture of belonging

Part of the work of ministry is the work of creating a culture of belonging. That is, creating a culture where everyone in the community feels a part of the whole. As a leader you can help create this kind of culture. A culture of belonging looks like connection, warm welcome, friendship, laughing together, building relationships, and building bridges. A culture of *othering* looks like disconnection, exclusion, cliques, laughing at others, breaking relationships, and building walls.

Tell me about a time when someone treated you like you belonged? Have you ever had an experience of othering?

Safeguarding helps create a culture of belonging because it means we take responsibility for caring for ourselves and for one another. This includes learning healthy boundaries, including what kind of verbal and physical behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate. The most extreme inappropriate behaviors can be considered abuse. As a leader, we help prevent abuse in our communities by understanding what abuse is, what we can do to prevent it, and how to report it if we see it happen. There are many kinds of abuse, including verbal and physical, but today we will be focusing on sexual abuse.

C. Explain sexual abuse

Generally, sexual abuse is when an adult or another child involves a child in sexual activity. When we say “children” or “kids” in this training, we mean anyone who is under 18 and/or also an 18-year-old who is still in high school. So, we mean both little children and youth. YOU are considered a child under the rules and so are the kids you will be helping to lead in the program.

Sexual activity can involve touching, like touching a child’s private parts, asking a child to touch one’s own private parts, or having sexual intercourse, but it also includes other sexual activity, like making comments about a child’s body, showing one’s private parts to a child, showing nude pictures or videos to a child, telling a child a dirty joke, or showing them a text of a sexual nature.

People who sexually abuse children feel good when they abuse a child, but it is very harmful to the child. It can cause damage that affects the child for the rest of their life. Sexual abuse is the opposite of keeping a child safe. We call people who intentionally harm children in this way "predators."

If you think an adult or another youth has involved you in sexual activity, it's very important that you tell your parents or another adult that you trust, so that the adults in your life can make sure that the abuse stops, and you are kept safe. As a leader in this program, it's also important to tell an adult leader if you know or suspect that another child is being harmed in the same way.

If for any reason you become upset because we are talking about sexual abuse, let me or the other adult in the room know so that we can make sure that you have a safe place to talk about what is making you upset.

D. Explain how we keep children safe from sexual abuse.

The way we keep kids safe at church/VBS, etc. is by having rules about what behavior is okay and what behavior is not okay. Some of these behaviors aren't bad in themselves, like tickling and wrestling, but we don't allow them at church/VBS, etc. because we can't tell if the person doing them means harm or not. We know that predators use behaviors like this to get children used to being touched and make adults think the behavior is okay. Predators work to get kids and adults to trust them and will test the rules to see if anyone stops their behavior. Remember that leaders who care about children's safety will follow the rules so that it's easier to spot adults or youth who are predators.

We also have rules about not being alone with a child and not allowing children to be alone in a room without adult supervision. Sexual abuse most often happens when no one else is around to see or stop it.

It's extremely important that as youth leaders, you follow all the rules. It's important because the kids in the program will look up to you, even if some kids are close to your age. You will set the example for them of how to treat the other children and even the adults in the program. It's also important that you follow the rules so that the people who DON'T follow the rules will stand out. Therefore, youth leaders will know to tell an adult if someone is breaking the rules that are meant to keep them safe. Finally, the rules are meant to keep you safe too, not only from predators but from anyone who may mistakenly think that you mean harm to a child.

E. Play the video: Youth Leader Training
(optional)

II. Training the Rules

A. Ten Rules to Follow

1. **The most important rule is that we don't allow sexual activity of any kind at church/VBS, etc.**
    - Don't do anything with a child that we've described as sexual activity. That includes sexual touching, saying sexual things, or sharing sexual pictures, videos, or texts.
    - If you see an adult touching a child's private parts or showing a child inappropriate pictures, videos, or texts or his or her own private parts, or if you hear an adult saying sexual things to a child, tell an adult in the program immediately. All sexual activity between an adult and a child is harmful and must be stopped. It is sexual abuse.
    - If you see sexual activity of any kind between children, it's also important that you tell an adult immediately, even though not all sexual activity between children is harmful. Children are naturally curious about their bodies and sexuality. Sometimes young children play games that include sexual activity, like showing their private parts to each other. When the children are the same age and size, that sort of sexual activity is usually age-appropriate curiosity, but sometimes it isn't. Fortunately, you don't need to know the difference. Your job as leaders is to tell an adult so that the activity can be stopped in an appropriate way, without frightening the children or making them feel ashamed.

2. **We don't allow some forms of touching that predators use to get children used to being touched, even if the same behavior may be okay in other situations.**
    - No tickling, wrestling, piggybacks, backrubs, or bear hugs by any adult or youth leader or between children where one child is substantially older and bigger than the other.
    - Don't put children in your lap if they are older than three years old and only put a child under three years old if the child has asked to sit in your lap. Even if the child is related to you, it's important to model safe behavior in this environment.
    - If you see this kind of touching by an adult, youth leader, or older/bigger child, tell another adult immediately.

3. **Don't touch a child who doesn't like being touched, unless it's necessary to keep the child safe** (like holding a young child's hand when crossing the street). In a minute, we'll talk about ways to touch children that are appropriate, but even that sort of touching isn't okay if the child doesn't want it. Your job is to help the kids in the program feel safe. Touching a child who doesn't like being touched does not make that child feel safe.

   How would you recognize if a child is uncomfortable? (Use role play to help youth leaders understand if someone is uncomfortable without using words.)

4. **Don't encourage a child to keep secrets from his or her parents or to break any rules, either the rules of the program or of the child's parents.** A predator may get a child to break rules so that the predator can convince a child that if the child tells on the predator, the child will also be in trouble. An example is if the predator gets a child to drink a beer or look at nude pictures even though the child knows it's against the rules. Secrets are different from surprises. A surprise is like a special art project the child will give to the parents at the end of the program. Asking a child to keep secrets is another way that predators get control over their victims.

5. **Don't play favorites with a child or give special presents to a child.** Predators do these things to make the child think they are in a special relationship. A child will then be unwilling to get the predator in trouble by telling an adult about the predator's sexual activity.

6. **Don't be alone with a child, especially in the bathroom or behind a closed door.** The adult leaders will know that it's not permitted to send a youth leader alone with a child to the bathroom, so if an adult leader asks you to do this, it's okay to remind the leader that it's against the rules. Never take a child to the bathroom without first telling an adult.

   If you are in the bathroom with a very young child who needs help, be sure to leave the stall door open (if there is a stall) or the bathroom door open, if there isn't a stall. A very young child may also need help changing clothes, like changing into a swimming suit for a water activity. It's okay to help a young child in this way if it is part of your job and if other adult leaders and youth leaders are present.

7. **Don't bully a child or allow one child to bully another, especially an older or larger child to a younger or smaller one.** Bullying sometimes goes hand in hand with sexual abuse.

8. **Don't take pictures of the children in the program or share or post any pictures of children in the program.** Parents must give permission for their children to be photographed. You don't know which children are not allowed to be photographed. Most especially, never take or post pictures of children who are undressed or partially undressed.

9. **DO be affectionate to the children in the program.** Unless a child doesn't want to be touched, it's a good thing to touch them on the arms or shoulders, give them a brief hug around the shoulder, give them high fives, or hold their hands during games or prayers. It's also important that you speak in ways that are friendly and respectful so that the children feel safe and loved.

10. **DO give your full attention to the children and to the particular job you have been given.** Remember that your job includes keeping the children safe**.** If, instead of paying attention to the children, you pay attention to your friends or your cell

phone, you may miss seeing or hearing something very important that may harm a child.

B. Reporting

Report what you see. (List the names of adults available for reporting.)

If you see sexual abuse or any of these rules being broken, tell an adult leader in the program. If you aren't sure about what you have seen or heard, it's always better to tell and let the adult decide. Of course, if it's an adult who is breaking the rule, be sure to tell a different adult.

It's also important that you not talk about what you have seen with the other children in the program or gossip about it with your friends. If, however, you hear from another child or youth that a rule has been broken, you must tell an adult what you have heard, even if it's a friend who has broken the rule. **Remember that your job is to help keep the children in the program safe.**

C. Youth Leader Safety Quiz

The quiz is intended to test comprehension in a nonjudgmental way. As the trainer, you can decide whether to do this worksheet as a group or pass it out. If you choose the latter, be sure to go over the right answers together in a way that elicits responses from each participant. Be sure to encourage the youth to ask questions.

After the Training

Give the Attendance Sheet to the Safeguarding Records Administrator (SRA) of your congregation, school, or organization. This will be retained as proof of training.

Youth Leader Training

Attendance Sheet

Trainer's Name* _____ **Date** _____

Trainer's Title _____

Church/School/Organization _____

Participant Name	Date of Birth	Part One (check box)	Part Two 16 and older (check box)

Training Notes:

*Trainer may be a youth ministry leader that's current with all Safeguarding requirements.

Youth Leader Safety Quiz

1. **Your primary job as a youth leader is**

    a. To have fun with kids your own age
    b. To catch up on social media
    c. To help keep the kids in the program safe.

2. **What is sexual abuse?** Circle all the correct answers.

    a. Touching a child's private parts or asking a child to touch one's own private parts.
    b. Telling sexual jokes to a child.
    c. Giving a child a quick hug around the shoulders.
    d. Any sexual activity between an adult and a child or between a youth and a young child.
    e. Allowing a two-year-old to crawl into your lap.

3. **When you see two young children "playing doctor" and giggling about touching private parts, what should you do?**

    a. Giggle and get your friends to come and see what's so cute.
    b. Take a picture to post online.
    c. Invite the children back into the planned activity and then tell an adult what you saw.
    d. Yell at the children to frighten them into never doing that again.

4. **Which of the following are important rules to follow?** Circle all the correct answers.

    a. Never be alone with a child.
    b. Never touch a child's hands or shoulders.
    c. Hug a child, even when the child keeps pulling away.
    d. Never show a child pictures or a video of naked people.
    e. Never take, share, or post pictures of children in the program.
    f. Don't take a child to the bathroom alone.
    g. Don't bully a child or let a child bully another child, especially one who is younger or smaller.

5. **Why don't we allow you to tickle, wrestle with, or give piggyback rides to children in the program?**

    a. Those behaviors are sexual abuse.
    b. Predators sometimes use those behaviors to get children used to being touched.
    c. If you're not careful, you may hurt a child unintentionally.

6. **If you see something between an adult and a child that may be sexual activity, but you aren't sure, what should you do?**

    a. Nothing.
    b. Ask the adult who is with the child if the behavior is okay.
    c. Immediately tell a different adult what you saw.

7. **If you see one of the youth leaders alone with a child, away from the activities of the program, what should you do?**

    a. Nothing, because only adults need to follow the rules to keep children safe from sexual abuse.
    b. Nothing, because only adults sexually abuse children.
    c. Remind the youth leader and the child that they need to rejoin the group, and then tell an adult what you saw.

8. **One of the adult leaders or the parent of a child in the program is touching you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable. What should you do?** Circle all the right answers.

    a. Nothing, because you're a youth leader and the rules are only meant to protect the children in the program.
    b. Nothing, because you may hurt the adult's feelings if you say anything.
    c. Nothing, because you should just wait to see if they do it again.
    d. Tell them to stop and tell an adult that you trust.
    e. Get away as soon as you can and tell an adult that you trust.
    f. Keep it a secret from your parents.

9. **Why do we have these safety rules?** Circle all the right answers.

    a. They make it easier to spot people who intend harm to children.
    b. We want to make sure that you don't have any fun as a youth leader.
    c. We want our church/VBS, etc. to be places where children and youth are safe and feel loved.
    d. Touching children is always a bad thing.
    e. Most people are bad and wish to hurt children.
    f. Sexual abuse is very harmful to children.

10. **Why is it important that you know and follow these safety rules?** Circle all the right answers.

    a. You are a role model for the younger youth and children in the program.
    b. You may see or hear something important that an adult doesn't.
    c. The rules keep you safe as well as the children in the program.