

# Kid Safe

A Program to Protect  
Children & Teens

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Our Family Ministry Team has developed a comprehensive policy designed to ensure the physical, spiritual and emotional well being and safety of all children, teenagers and family ministry volunteers who participate in the life of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC).

“Kid Safe” is designed to eliminate opportunities for abuse and other improprieties by placing barriers to abuse within family ministry programs and activities. Though no policy comes with a 100 percent guarantee, our ultimate goal is to remain worthy of the trust that parents place in us to care for their kids.

Though Kid Safe is primarily designed to provide for the safety of our children and teens, it also provides healthy, Biblical boundaries that will protect adults who serve in family ministry. It covers the screening and training of volunteers, as well as how and when to report suspected cases of child abuse and the protocol for following up on such concerns.

***Please note that the development of “Kid Safe” is a purely proactive step; though there have been some accusations of improprieties at churches, we are in no way responding to an accusation(s) within CELC.***

You will find a copy of Kid Safe in this packet. We are asking each person in our faith community to:

1. Please read Kid Safe thoroughly. Our staff and Council have unanimously endorsed these guidelines. If you have questions about Kid Safe, please feel free to contact anyone on the Family Ministry Team.
2. Please fill out the Family Ministry Servant Safety Questionnaire and return it to Laura North. We are asking **everyone** to fill out this form so we have it on file in case we need extra volunteers for the children or teens (even on a one-time basis).

For some among us, this is totally new territory, and it may make us somewhat uncomfortable. However, we would not be moving forward with Kid Safe if we did not believe that such a policy would ensure that CELC continues to be a place of safety and security for the children and teenagers who enter our doors.

Thank you for reading this letter. Again, please read Kid Safe and return the questionnaire to Laura North at your earliest convenience.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Marv

# Kid Safe

## A Program to Protect Children

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bethesda - Chevy Chase

### Guiding Scriptures

***“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’” (Matthew 19:14)***

***“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” (3 John 1:4)***

***“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:5-9)***

### Overarching Goal

To ensure the safety and physical, spiritual and emotional well being of our children, teens, volunteers and leaders in Family Ministry.

### Family Ministry Mission

***Building stronger families in Christ Jesus ...***

- Reaching out with the love of Jesus (evangelism)
- Connecting with other believers (fellowship)
- Growing in faith (discipleship)
- Using our God-given gifts in ministry to others (service)
- Falling more deeply in love with Jesus Christ (worship)

***... Developing families of faith.***

## Introduction

The goal of CELC's Family Ministry is to partner with parents as they raise their children to love and serve Jesus Christ. Our desire is to walk alongside parents in this most important responsibility by equipping them to be their children's primary faith teachers and by providing opportunities for families to live out God's five purposes for the church (evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and worship).

In order to communicate to families the wonder and extravagance of God's love, we must first exhibit it. One of the most important ways to do this is to be a place of safety and security where children, teens and adults alike are free to explore and discover who God is and experience His protection and provision.

***"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1)***

***"For he orders his angels to protect you wherever you go ... The LORD says, 'I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue them and honor them. I will satisfy them with a long life and give them my salvation.'" (Psalm 91:11, 14-16)***

Unfortunately, the world can be a dangerous place for children. Child abuse, which may be simply defined as any form of cruelty to a child's physical, moral or mental well-being, happens in all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and religious groups. In 2003 there were more than 2.9 million reports of possible maltreatment of children. A survey published in 1999 showed that the actual incidence of abuse and neglect is about three times greater than the number reported to authorities. The effects of child abuse in any form are devastating and far reaching, and can lead to difficulty in maintaining relationships and a distorted view of God.

\*\*\* We know this is a sensitive issue for many people. If during the reading or presentation of this material you feel the need to speak with someone, please feel free to call on any of the staff or a member of the Family Ministry team.

## **Specific Goals for Kid Safe**

1. To protect the children and teens entrusted to our care and the ministry leaders and volunteers who work with them; to ensure that CELC is a safe and healthy environment for Family Ministry.
2. To maintain the trust that parents place in Family Ministry to care for their children.
3. To establish appropriate boundaries between children, teens and the adults who minister to them.
4. To educate those who minister to children and teens about the dangers and signs of child abuse, and to ensure proper reporting of suspected cases.

## **Child Abuse Awareness**

So that CELC is a safe and healthy place, we will take an open and proactive approach to ensuring the safety and protection of the young people and leaders/volunteers in Family Ministry. We will require all who minister to children or teens to participate in Kid Safe at levels appropriate to their level of serving. We will use Kid Safe as a vehicle for educating and engaging the congregation in the protection of young people everywhere.

The Family Ministry team will be responsible for revisiting and updating, if necessary, our Kid Safe policy every five years.

# Kid Safe

## Screening and Training of Volunteers

Anyone who wants to serve in CELC's Family Ministry must meet the following requirements:

**1. A personal, committed and growing relationship with Jesus Christ.**

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment." (Matthew 22:37-38)*

**2. A passion for children, teens and/or parents.**

*"And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:39)*

*"Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him." (Psalm 127:3)*

**3. No history of abuse or inappropriate behavior toward children, teens or other adults.**

*"Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'" (Matthew 19:14)*

*"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John 13:34)*

**4. Completion of the Kid Safe Servant Safety Questionnaire, including the supply of two character references (which will be contacted on a random basis) and the willingness to submit to a background check.**

**5. Kid Safe training at a level appropriate to his/her level of serving:**

- a. "Read and Sign" format for those who occasionally serve in Family Ministry.
- b. Kid Safe training and completion of the Kid Safe Family Ministry Leadership Application for those who regularly serve in Family Ministry.

Note: All information given in the Family Ministry Servant Safety Questionnaire and gathered in reference/background checks will be kept confidential by the committee assigned to keep track of such information.

## **Boundaries for Safety and Healthy Relationships**

All who serve in CELC's Family Ministry must use good common sense and adhere to the following boundaries to ensure CELC is a place of safety and healthy relationships:

**1. Open door policy** – Our intention is that there always will be two adults present when ministering to children or teens. At times, however, this is impossible. If it is not possible for two adults to be present in a room with children or teens, the window in the door must be uncovered or the door must be open.

If you are in a remote area of the building where no other adults are around, please go to a more public spot.

**2. Diaper changes** – Two leaders/volunteers must be present when diaper changes occur or the door to the room must be open.

**3. Bathroom procedures** – Children age 5 or younger must be escorted to the bathroom. If two leaders/volunteers are present in the bathroom, the door may remain closed. If not, the door from the bathroom to the hall must be left open.

Allow the child as much privacy as possible. Assist the child with only those things he/she is unable to do alone. To avoid questions or concern in the future, make sure to tell the child's parent(s) that you assisted the child in the bathroom.

**4. Physical Displays of Affection** – Appropriate touches are important means of demonstrating our love and concern for young people in Family Ministry, but the following boundaries must be followed:

- a. No touching or tickling under clothing;
- b. Be cautious when roughhousing; make sure you are in a public area with other adults present.
- c. Appropriate touches include: touch on the shoulder; short hug – side hugs if possible; a sign of the cross on the forehead; high five or handshake.

**5. Special activities** – When Family Ministry leaders/volunteers organize activities outside the normal Family Ministry calendar, they must notify the parents or legal guardian of all children/teens who participate.

Examples of when notification would be required:

- A youth leader is going to attend a teen's soccer game and wants to take him for a burger afterward.
- A Sunday school teacher is going to take a child in his class out for ice cream to celebrate his birthday.

**6. Contacting children and teens** – Family Ministry leaders/volunteers acting in their capacity as Family Ministry leaders/volunteers may not contact a child or teen directly unless expressly given permission by the parent on the child's Health History and Permission form.

When calling a child at home, Family Ministry leaders/volunteers should first speak to the parent or caregiver to explain why he or she is calling. When calling a teen at home, Family Ministry leaders/volunteers should touch base with a parent or caregiver if one is available.

**7. Driving children or teens** – All drivers of children and teens on Family Ministry outings/trips must be age 18 or older. Drivers of 12-passenger vans or larger vehicles must be 25 years or older and must be approved by Charity First, the church's insurance carrier. (Charity First may be reached at 415-536-8560.)

Whenever possible, two adults should be present when driving children or teens to Family Ministry meetings or activities. Family Ministry leaders/volunteers acting in their capacity as Family Ministry leaders/volunteers may not be alone in a vehicle with a child or teen unless expressly given permission by the parent.

### **Boundaries for Retreats and Overnight Activities**

All who serve in CELC's Family Ministry must use good common sense and adhere to the following boundaries to ensure CELC is a place of safety and healthy relationships:

- 1. Permission** – Written parental permission must be obtained for each child or teen prior to the trip.
- 2. Chaperones** – At least two adults (and at least one for each gender of child or teen attending) must be present at any overnight activity.
- 3. Facilities** – Separate sleeping and changing areas must be designated for girls and boys and off limits to members of the opposite sex. No socializing, raiding or peeping in windows will be tolerated in these areas.
- 4. Rooming** – One adult and one child or youth may not sleep alone in a room together unless they are related or the child/teen's parent or guardian gives permission.

## **When to Report Suspected Cases of Child Abuse**

Reporting suspected cases of child abuse is an important part of our prevention program. A report must be made **immediately**:

1. If you witness someone abusing a child.
2. If a child tells you that he or she has been abused.
3. If you see physical evidence that a child has been abused. This may include: an unusual number, pattern or location of bruises, cuts, burns or scars; missing hair; injuries or unusual redness around the genitals (in cases of infants); conflicting stories about how injuries occurred.

## **CELC Procedures for Handling Suspected Child Abuse**

1. Immediately contact and report your concerns to the Minister of Children and Families.
2. If suspicion seems warranted, the Minister of Children and Families must immediately report the concerns to the proper authorities (see below). He or she may consult the Pastor during this time.
3. After reporting the concerns to the proper authorities, the Minister of Children and Families must alert the Pastor and Council President. Considerations should be made as to when to contact the church's lawyer and insurance company. Whenever possible, accusations of child abuse will be kept confidential among the church staff and necessary leadership until the investigation concludes.
4. Next, the Minister of Children and Families must contact the parent(s) and/or legal guardian. If the parent(s) and/or guardian are also the accused, see step No. 5.
5. Next, the person who originally reported the suspected abuse and the Minister of Children and Families must lovingly confront the accused. The accused must be suspended from all Family Ministry leadership and activities until the investigation concludes.

The church staff and leadership shall take all reasonable steps to reach out to both the child/teen and the accused, as well as to their families, to provide love, grace and support throughout the difficult situation.

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse to the Authorities**

Code of Maryland Regulations, Section 07.02.07 requires reporting child abuse or neglect in the following manner:

1. An individual shall immediately report suspected child abuse or neglect to the local department of social services, or report the suspected incident to a local law enforcement agency.

2. Health practitioners, educators, human service workers, and police officers are ***required to report, both orally and in writing***, any suspected child abuse or neglect, with oral report being made immediately and the written report being made within 48 hours of the contact which disclosed the suspected abuse or neglect.

3. A report shall include:

- The name and home address of the child and the parent or other individual responsible for the care of the child;
- The present location of the child;
- The age of the child;
- The names and ages of other children in the home;
- The nature and extent of injuries or sexual abuse or neglect of the child, including any information known to the individual making the report of previous possible physical or sexual abuse or neglect;
- The information available to the individual reporting which might aid in establishing the cause of the injury or neglect; or about the identity of the individual or individuals responsible for abuse or neglect.
- If reporting abuse or neglect of a child involving mental injury, a description of the substantial impairment of the child's mental or psychological ability to function that was observed and identified, and why it is believed to be attributable to an act of maltreatment or omission of proper care and attention.

4. An employee of a local department of social services who receives a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, shall report the information to the protective services unit within the local department at once so as to initiate prompt handling of the report of suspected child abuse or neglect.

<http://www.dhr.state.md.us/cps/report.htm>

## **Mandated Reporters**

Maryland Law requires every health practitioner, educator, human service worker, or police officer to report suspected child abuse and neglect, it does NOT

require proof that abuse or neglect has occurred before reporting. Incidents are to be reported as soon as they are suspected. ***Waiting for proof may involve grave risk to the child and impede services to the family.*** Proof may be long in coming, witnesses to child abuse and neglect are rare, and the child's testimony may be disbelieved or inadmissible. Health practitioners and social workers, among others, who knowingly fail to report suspected abuse of a child may be subject to professional sanctions by their licensing boards. For those who do report, the law provides protection for persons who make "good faith" reports are immune from civil liability and criminal penalty.

<http://www.dhr.state.md.us/cps/mandated.htm>

### **Where to Report Suspected Child Abuse**

Montgomery County – (240) 777-4417 (24 hours)

Prince George's County – (301) 909-2450; (301) 699-8605 (after hours)

(For information in other counties: <http://www.dhr.state.md.us/cps/address.htm>)

Virginia – (800) 552-7096; (804) 786-8536 (outside the state).

D.C. – (202) 671-7233 (24 hours)

<http://www.dhr.state.md.us/cps/where.htm>

### **Appendix – Definitions**

Code of Maryland regulations, section 07.02.07 defines child abuse and child neglect in the following manner: <http://www.dhr.state.md.us/cps/abuse.htm>

**Child abuse** means physical injury, not necessarily visible, of a child, under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed.

**Child neglect** means the failure to give proper care and attention to a child including the leaving of a child unattended under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk of harm.

**Sexual abuse** means an act or acts involving sexual molestation or exploitation, whether physical injuries are sustained or not.

**Mental injury** means the observable, identifiable, and substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function.

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# Kid Safe Servant Safety Questionnaire

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bethesda –Chevy Chase

*“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’” (Matthew 19:14)*

This questionnaire is a confidential part of a process to help the church provide a safe, nurturing Christian environment for our children, teens and families. Persons responsible for the supervision and care of our children are in a special position of trust and confidence. Therefore, everyone who works with children, teens and families must have completed this questionnaire.

## **Personal Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Have you ever filled out this questionnaire for CELC?         | Yes | No |
| a. If no, please complete the questionnaire.                     |     |    |
| b. If yes, when did you last filled it out? _____                |     |    |
| Have any answers changed since then? _____                       | Yes | No |
| i. If no, answer questions # 8 and 9.                            |     |    |
| ii. If yes or you are unsure, please complete the questionnaire. |     |    |

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|--|-------------------|------------------|
| <b>Have you at any time ever:</b>  | <b><u>Yes</u></b> | <b><u>No</u></b> |
| 2. Been arrested for any reason?   | _____             | _____            |
| 3. Been convicted of, or pleaded no contest, to any crime?                     | _____             | _____            |
| 4. Engaged in or been accused of any child molestation, exploitation or abuse? | _____             | _____            |

- |  |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|
| <b>Are you aware of:</b>   |       |       |
| 5. Having any traits or tendencies that could pose any threat to children, teens or others?          | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question you being |       |       |

entrusted with the supervision, guidance or care of children, teens or families?	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
7. Any reason why you should not work with children, teens or others?	_____	_____
	_____	_____

**If the answer to any of these questions is “yes,” please explain in detail:**

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8. Are you willing to have a background check done?      Yes                  No

9. Please include names of people who are not relatives or your employees and who have known you for at least one year. These will be kept confidential and checked on a random basis.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

I verify that the answers I have provided on this questionnaire are true and accurate to the best of my ability.

I give Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) permission to contact the references I have provided. I have read and I understand and I agree to abide by CELC’s Kid Safe policy.

I also state that I have not been convicted of a crime involving sexual abuse or misconduct or resigned from or been terminated from any position for reasons relating to sexual abuse or misconduct.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

If under age 18, a parent signature is required.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Kid Safe Family Ministry Leadership Application

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bethesda –Chevy Chase

*“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’” (Matthew 19:14)*

This application is a confidential, mandatory part of a process to help the church provide a safe, nurturing Christian environment for our children, teens and families. Persons responsible for the supervision and care of our children are in a special position of trust and confidence. Therefore, everyone who works with children, teens and families must complete this questionnaire.

This application must be filled out in conjunction with the Kid Safe Family Ministry Servant Safety Questionnaire.

## **Personal Information** (Please attach a photocopy of your driver’s license.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

Driver’s License # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

## **Church or Family Ministry Experience**

Please list the names and addresses of churches you have attended on a regular basis for the past 5 years:

Please tell us about any work you have done with children, teens or families over the past 5 years. Please also include the church or organization’s name, address, a contact name and phone number, and the dates or service.

Please tell us about any gifts, training, education, etc., that you could offer that would enrich the lives of our children, teens and families.

Please tell us how you would like to serve our children, teens and families, including special interests or passions.

**Covenant**

I verify that the answers I have provided on this questionnaire are true and accurate to the best of my ability.

I accept the responsibility to nurture the Christian faith and well-being of the children, teens and families of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) and to care for them as Christ cares for me. I ... “will tend the flock of God that is in my charge, exercising the oversight ... willingly, as God would have me do it ...” (1 Peter 5:2)

I agree to submit to the authority of the CELC Council and staff in all matters of Family Ministry.

I have read and I understand and I agree to abide by CELC’s Kid Safe policy.

I also state that I have not been convicted of a crime involving sexual abuse or misconduct or resigned from or been terminated from any position for reasons relating to sexual abuse or misconduct.

I do hereby authorize CELC to conduct any background checks deemed necessary for the safeguarding of children, teens and families at CELC.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

If under age 18, a parent signature is required.  
Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_