



Surround the Child with Love

A toolkit for the faith community to recognize Child
Abuse Prevention Month.

Prepared by the Faith and Family Violence Prevention Committee

CONTENTS

- I. Inserts for Bulletins
- II. Newsletter Articles
- III. Worship Ideas
- IV. Blue Ribbons
- V. Volunteer Opportunities
- VI. Offering Opportunities
- VII. Displays
- VIII. Minutes for Mission
- IX. Parents Corner
- X. Involvement of children and youth
- XI. Resources

Why should the faith community recognize Child Abuse Awareness Month?

Each year in our community 8-13 children are killed by adults who are supposed to care for them. Over 10,000 cases of child abuse are investigated each year. And we fear that there are thousands more cases of child abuse that go unidentified each year.

Child abuse is a signal to the community and to the congregation that help is needed for the family and for the child. No one wants to see a child hurt or to know that a child lives in fear and pain.

The faith community has traditionally been the place to provide guidance, strength, and comfort to those who are in pain. Child abuse is certainly one of the greatest sources of pain to those who are most vulnerable.

This toolkit provides suggestions for ways that a congregation can both highlight the severity and sorrow of child abuse and lift up the healthy ways to “Surround the child with love.”

This kit was compiled by The Faith and Family Violence Prevention Committee. This committee is an interdenominational and interfaith committee composed of persons working in both congregations and in the field of family violence. The committee works under the auspices of the Injury Prevention Center of Greater Dallas, a not for profit agency.

Bulletin Inserts

Some congregations have chosen to put a weekly reminder in the bulletin. Below are some ideas that have been used.

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, you have a moral and legal responsibility to report it. PLEASE call 911 or 1-800-252-5400.

Report Child
Abuse and Neglect
Call
1-800-252-5400

The Worst Thing You Can Do
For A Neglected Child Is...Nothing.
We all suffer when a child is abused and
Neglected.
Report abuse or neglect
And be a part of the solution.
DOING NOTHING can make a difference.

Child Abuse is Everybody's Business
If you suspect child abuse or neglect, call the abuse hotline
Anytime
1-800-252-5400
or
911

It's the Law!

**Failure to report suspected child abuse is a Class B misdemeanor
Punishable by a fine up to \$2,500 or imprisonment up to 180 days
or both.**

Newsletter Articles

A series of articles in the newsletter will give the opportunity to give members of the congregation information about child abuse and about surrounding children with love. Included are four ideas for possible newsletter items. Perhaps you can do one a week for a month or do a whole newsletter issue on this topic

1) Highlight a person in the congregation who works with children. This might be someone who works in the congregation with children in religious studies or in after school programs. Or perhaps you want to highlight the volunteer work in the community that members do to help children have a better life. Talk about the importance of children being surrounded by adults that they can trust. We know that a child who has consistent, loving, and trustworthy adults in their life is resilient and can thrive even if they have experienced many sorrows and much pain.

2) Research whether your denomination has taken an official stand on child abuse issues. Many denominations have published papers or official documents decrying child abuse and calling the church to respond. An article can educate your congregation on this official stand of the church.

3) Describe an agency or program that works with children or that works to strengthen families. If the congregation is not already involved with such an agency contact one of the following:

Child Abuse Prevention Center
Dallas Children's Advocacy Center 214-818-2600
Family Outreach of East Dallas 214-321-6292
Family Outreach of Garland 972-205-2900
Family Outreach of North Dallas 972-245-2500
Avance

4) Interview children of the congregation about what it means to feel loved and safe. Have the children describe times they know they are loved. Have them talk about what their experience is like being part of the faith community. It would be great to hear from different ages of children and youth

WORSHIP MATERIALS

Enclosed are materials that can be used to address the issue of pain, abuse, and recovery. The materials can be used in a regular worship service or a special service of mourning or healing.

Calls To Worship And Invocations

Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls.

--Matthew 11:28-29

God, our comfort and guide, we gather together as a growing family needing your love and support. We ask that you will nurture us and transform our lives that we might nurture one another into the fullness of your holy family.

Let the children come to me; do not hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.

--Mark 10:13-16

Oh God, our eternal parent, we adore thee, whose name is love, whose nature is compassion, whose presence is joy, whose word is truth, whose spirit is goodness, whose holiness is beauty, whose will is peace, whose service is perfect freedom, and in knowledge of whom stands eternal life.

If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also, if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

--John 12:26

Beloved and loving God: We come as your children, open to your love, grateful for your nurture, seeking your guidance. As brothers and sisters in Christ, help us to serve you faithfully by serving your children who know the pain of violence and rejection. With your Holy Spirit, comfort us and strengthen us as we worship you this day. Remain with us as we live out the coming week as your family and heirs.

God of endless love,
ever caring, ever strong:
your only Son
was delivered into the hands of the wicked,
yet healed us with the blood of his cross.

May the gentle Jesus
join to his own suffering,
the pains of those abused
by priests who have betrayed your love,
and servants of your Church,
whose sin has brought us shame.

May Christ hear the cries of those abused,
may he quell their restless fears with faith in your protection,
their doubt, with confidence in your love,
and all rage with trust in your healing mercy.

Grant all Shepherds of his Church
the compassion to protect his lambs,
the strength to guide his flock,
and the wisdom to model their lives
on Christ, the Good Shepherd.

God of justice and compassion,
protect all children from abuse,
and deliver us from hate.
May we seek only justice and truth,
and truth in your unending mercy.

We ask this through the same Christ, our Lord.

That Mother Mary would intercede for who have been hurt by child abuse, let us pray,
“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord...”

That God our Father would deliver us from all evil and keep us all in his care, let us pray
“Our Father, who art in heaven...”