

Safeguarding God's Children Training for Youth Volunteers Under the age of 18

Safeguarding God's Children was developed to train adults to recognize and prevent sexual abuse of children. We are aware that some of the information contained in the *Safeguarding God's Children* program does not apply to or is inappropriate for youth under the age of 18. However, we also know that many of our ministries utilize volunteers that are minors, and we must help them understand how to maintain a safe environment for the children in their care.

Therefore, we have modified our Safeguarding policies to eliminate the requirement that youth under the age of 18 take the online training modules. Instead, we now require that the adult leaders in charge of any events that utilize volunteers under the age of 18 include fundamental Safeguarding principles and practices in their volunteer training in accordance with the following guidelines. (**Note:** all documents referenced below can be found on the Safe Church page of the diocesan website, <http://www.epiwl.org/safe-church/>.)

- 1) The adult in charge of the event in which youth under 18 are volunteering must be fully trained and certified according to diocesan *Safeguarding* policies.
- 2) Volunteers under the age of 18 must be directly supervised by adults over the age of 21 who are physically present during all activities.
- 3) The adult in charge of the event in which youth under 18 are volunteering is in charge of training these youth volunteers in Safe Church practices.
- 4) At a minimum, the following topics must be covered in the staff training for volunteers under 18 who volunteer for any youth event in the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana. The adult in charge of the event in which youth under 18 are volunteering may cover additional material if needed.
 - a) Diocese of Western Louisiana's *Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse: ANNOTATED VERSION FOR TRAINING VOLUNTEERS UNDER THE AGE OF 18*
 - i) Event leader should be familiar enough with these policies to explain them to the youth volunteers.
 - ii) Event leader should cover all of the highlighted and annotated sections of the *Policies* document.
 - b) Mandatory Reporting: *Recognizing And Reporting Abuse Of Children And Youth: ANNOTATED VERSION FOR TRAINING VOLUNTEERS UNDER THE AGE OF 18*
 - i) Event leader should be familiar enough with these policies to explain them to the youth volunteers.
 - ii) Event leader should cover all of the highlighted and annotated sections of the *Abuse and Neglect* document.
 - c) *Guidelines For Appropriate Demonstrations Of Affection*
 - i) Event leader should discuss the entire document with the youth volunteers.
- 5) Each youth participant must sign the *Code Of Conduct For Volunteers Under The Age Of 18 Who Work With Other Children And Youth*. The event leader must turn these forms in to the Safe Church Minister at the organization sponsoring the event.