

# What is

## Safe Sanctuaries

Refers to the way our congregations keep children, youth and impaired adults and the people who work with them safe and free from abuse, neglect and exploitation while they are in the church's care. A Safe Sanctuary Policy is the specific document outlining the policies and procedures a church adopts and follows to achieve this promise of protection and safety.



*"Whomever welcomes a child  
welcomes me."  
Matthew 18:5*

## Rationale & Resources

# Our Commitment

The Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church pledges to conduct the ministry of Jesus Christ in ways that promote the physical and emotional safety and spiritual growth of our children, youth and our workers with children and youth. In all of our ministries with children and youth, our congregations are committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each child and youth will be *"surrounded by steadfast love . . . established in the faith and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal."*

(Baptismal Covenant II, *United Methodist Book of Worship*, p. 96)



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## Why do we need Safe Sanctuaries?



### 1. It's Biblical.

But Jesus called for them and said, "Let the little come to me and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." Luke 18:16

### 2. It's covenantal.

From our United Methodist Baptismal Covenant *"With God's help we will so order our lives after the example of Christ, that these children surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal."*

Our church is a community of faith – a safe haven and sanctuary where children and youth should be confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal.

### 3. It's good stewardship.

Safe Sanctuaries protects the Church's assets for mission and ministry. Settlements for millions of dollars have been rendered across the country for children, youth and vulnerable adults who have been harmed by abuse while in the care of a church.

### 4. It's the right thing to do – WWJD?

It is our responsibility to make our churches a safe place for children, youth and impaired adults (adults who are unable to speak up for, defend or advocate for themselves), and the leaders who work with them. Safe Sanctuaries protects both children and volunteers

## Where can I go for more information?



Three people in our Arkansas Conference Office are specifically designated to answer your Safe Sanctuary questions and offer assistance in writing policies, and training staff and volunteers.

#### **Pam Snider**

Children's Ministries  
[pam.snider@arumc.org](mailto:pam.snider@arumc.org)

#### **Michelle Moore**

Youth and Camping Ministries  
[michelle.moore@arumc.org](mailto:michelle.moore@arumc.org)

#### **Karen Swales** (Springdale First UMC)

[karen.swales@arumc.org](mailto:karen.swales@arumc.org) has received specialized training from Discipleship Ministries in Safe Sanctuaries and is available to answer questions and assist congregations.

You can also contact your District Children's Coordinator listed at  
<http://kidz.arumc.org/connect/about/>

#### **Information Online**

Our national connection, Discipleship Ministries, has a wealth of online information.  
<http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/safe-sanctuaries>.  
They also offer a series of training videos for your information and use.  
<http://tinyurl.com/znz558m>

The Arkansas Conference websites have information as well. Notably, these resources are specific to the state of Arkansas.

## Book Recommendation

If you could purchase only one book about Safe Sanctuaries®, this is it.

**Safe Sanctuaries®: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth**, Joy Thornburg Melton (Author)  
ISBN-13: 978-0881775433

This book includes everything your church needs to know about policies and procedures for protecting children, youth and impaired adults. The author is an attorney and United Methodist Deacon.

This book can be found at  
Cokesbury.com or Amazon.com.

## Awareness Resources for Children and Youth

We have developed three posters that can be displayed in classrooms and hallways of your church building. These posters may be found at:

<http://kidz.arumc.org/safe-sanctuaries/safe-sanctuaries-posters/>

We also endorse the United Methodist human sexuality curriculum *Created by God* as well as train and certify GBG leaders. For more information about *Created by God*, go to:

<http://kidz.arumc.org/curriculum/created-by-god/>