



# FAQ

## about the Safe Church Core Curriculum Program

### **What is Safe Church Core Curriculum?**

A dynamic process that works with a group (cluster) of congregations or a single church for seven to nine months to help shift congregational culture to proactive engagement of all adults to protect children from sexual harm – not only at church, but in the communities where we live, work, play and go to school. There are five meetings throughout the process.

### **Is it part of any particular denomination?**

No. It was created by our director Linda Crockett, who started developing the work at Samaritan Counseling Center in Lancaster, PA. Our work has now developed and expanded into our new organization, Safe Communities. We are committed to work ecumenically with various traditions in a community, joining people of faith in a common vision of protecting children from sexual harm.

### **What distinguishes Safe Church from various child protection programs offered by denominations or insurance companies?**

It is integrated into a national social movement to end the child sexual abuse that impacts one in four girls, and one in six boys, before age 18. Safe Church calls and equips people of faith to participate in the larger social movement, which includes secular organizations. Most child protection programs consist of generic “boiler plate” policies and a few hours of training for those who work with children. While policies and training are important they are insufficient to keep children safe, and are typically focused on avoiding legal liability. These pro-forma policies and training manuals become “dry bones” that sit on a shelf after a few years!

### **Why engage congregations in movement building?**

By calling on common Christian values and using Biblical narratives, we can inspire people of faith to become proactive in preventing child sexual abuse in their churches, AND their communities. People of faith were key in past social movements (ending slavery, civil rights, etc.). When faith grounds a commitment to social change, significant ‘staying power’ is available for the hard work it will take to end child sexual abuse.

### **How will this benefit my church?**

Safe Church facilitators, along with participants, form a learning community to inspire, encourage and challenge each other as they move through the process. Each meeting is a blend of deep education about sexual, and other forms of abuse, plus interactive policy making using our template culled from national best practices. The policy will contain thoughtful, in-depth guidelines for safe ministry for children and youth. The policy will also address how staff, pastors and volunteers will respond to suspected, alleged or disclosed child abuse. Prevention is also key piece of our policy development.

**[WWW.SAFECOMMUNITIESPA.ORG](http://WWW.SAFECOMMUNITIESPA.ORG)**

**[FACEBOOK/INSTAGRAM - SAFECOMMUNITIES](https://www.facebook.com/safecommunities)**

**[INFO@SAFECOMMUNITIESPA.ORG](mailto:INFO@SAFECOMMUNITIESPA.ORG) - 717-560-9989**



# FAQ

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### What is included in the process?

You will learn about the key issues related to child sexual abuse, and other forms of child abuse as defined by state law. This includes learning about indicators of various types of abuse; appropriate responses when abuse is suspected or disclosed; how children are engaged by sexual offenders and convinced not to tell; what to do if a known sexual offender wants to attend your church; child on child sexual abuse, and how child sexual abuse impacts adult survivors and how to support them.

Speakers from the community, such as adult survivors of sexual abuse, counselors, parents of sexually abused children, Child Protection workers, and others are invited to speak at meetings.

Staff and volunteers working with children come together at the end of the process for a half day training to learn about your new or revised policies and how to keep kids safe. Education is a priority so that it is not only about protection of children within the church, but also about making the church a safe place where children can disclose abuse that has occurred in other settings.

Children are empowered to recognize inappropriate actions through Circle of Grace, a Christian Safe Environment curriculum. These lessons teach healthy boundaries to children and are provided to each participating church. The curriculum is on a CD and is designed for children from Pre- K to Senior High.

### How do I get my congregation on board?

We would be happy to meet one on one with the leadership of your church to discuss the Safe Church Core Curriculum. We find that in-person conversations help to ease any hesitancy about our program. Once you've decided you're interested, the first step is to complete the Safe Church contact form to let us know a little bit about your congregation. Then you would decide who would be your representatives from your church. Contact Deb Helt at [dhelt@safecommunitiespa.org](mailto:dhelt@safecommunitiespa.org) with any questions!

### SAFE CHURCH IS A PROGRAM OF:



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