

A practical Child Protection training workbook



safe, valued, protected

This manual is a collection of material and ideas gathered from a variety of sources. We have sought to give credit to specific resources where possible. It is also the result of several years working at the 'coal face' of child protection in low resource settings.

A printed copy of this manual is offered at cost price to anyone working to advocate for children and to help teach others about the risks that children face in our world. A free soft copy is available from the email below.

Please feel free to copy, alter and use the material for your own use. *'Freely you have received, freely give'*.

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Introduction

This **Child Protection Workbook** draws from a variety of sources and practical field experience. It is aimed at equipping anyone working in low resource or traditional settings where there may not be a strong national child protection system.

Why does Child Protection matter? It matters because:

- ❖ Children raised in healthy, supportive environments are more likely to have better life outcomes: in physical health, mental health, academically and in their behaviour and social development¹.
- ❖ Children who have been abused or neglected often have poor social, behavioural and health outcomes immediately and later in life.
- ❖ A child of any age, sex, race, religion, and socioeconomic background can fall victim to child abuse and neglect. This means it affects all of us.
- ❖ We all want to prevent the suffering of children so that they will lead to a prosperous and healthy generation. Healthy children build a healthy nation. Each generation is the hope into the future.

Legal definitions

A child is defined as anyone under 18 years of age. There are many International Laws which lay out the rights of children and which present a positive picture of what can or should be done to protect them. For example, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child² describes how children have a right to survival, health, education, and to have their voices heard. But we know that the reality is that many children suffer and there is no practical help available. In an ideal situation there are enough police officers, social workers, child-friendly courts and free legal aid so that justice can be done. But we know that we don't live in an ideal situation. Therefore, children continue to be at risk of abuse and harm and for those who care about this, it can feel a helpless and hopeless situation.

Hope and action

This Workbook has been written to offer both hope and help! It relies on **you**, as an adult, caring enough to want to make a difference. The problems before us can be challenging. Making a difference requires effort, intentional action and a desire to make the right decisions in the situations you find yourself in.

There is usually no one single answer to complex problems! This training is designed to look at real-life scenarios and to work to find the best solution for that problem in that particular situation. It has been written to offer principles and practical steps that can increase awareness and generate discussion and hopefully reduce risk to children. Section One is a series of lesson plans to be used to train those working with children. Section Two contains additional for churches and Christian organisations covering principles, policies and case studies.

God's help

¹ Harvard Center for the Developing Child. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

² <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>

As Christians we are not left alone to fumble in the dark (John 8v12). The Bible helps us to base our decisions on values which can guide us. Additionally, we have the strength and courage that God gives through the Holy Spirit, who teaches, guides and directs us into all truth (John 14:15-27). He also gives us peace for our troubled hearts.

SECTION ONE

Guidelines for facilitators



Training in rural contexts

Please remember that you do not need special equipment or lots of money to teach well. You do not need a PowerPoint presentation or even electricity. Jesus taught by using simple examples from life or nature that were all around him. For example: 'look at the birds of the air...' or, 'a farmer went out to sow...'. So please see the opportunities of what you have and not the challenges of what you don't have.

When planning or preparing to do Child Safety and Protection training in rural or traditional environments, please consider these points:



- Do not treat uneducated people as though they are ignorant!
- Each person has life wisdom and experience to offer.
- Do not patronise or look down on people, show respect.
- Look at the values and normative culture of those you are talking to.
- Speak 'their' language; use local proverbs and practical examples.
- Leaders matter; don't side-line them- show respect and include them.
- Who are the influencers? Involve them.
- Don't shame people; don't make people or cultures look bad.
- Focus on community, generational blessings and family cohesiveness.
- Everyone wants to build their nation; children are a part of this
- Embrace collective wisdom; people make decisions by consensus
- Believe that people can identify their own problems and can work often out their own solutions.

General principles for teaching³

1. Prepare well. Do *not* think you can teach effectively by simply reading from the manual.
2. Pray as you prepare: ask yourself, 'how does this lesson touch my own heart?'
3. Use personal examples when it is relevant to explain a point.
4. Encourage participation from your listeners; ask questions and encourage questions.
5. Use your whole body to teach with enthusiasm and energy!
6. Plan the lesson to suit the time available.
7. Don't rush through the material- make it shorter if necessary and cover the rest of the material another time.

³ Teaching Creatively and Effectively, Mark Olander, 2014. Publish4all Kenya.

8. Feel free to just use one lesson as a stand-alone if that is all you have time for. Remember that this is a sacred task and God is on your side!



Lesson plans

Each lesson:

- can be shortened or lengthened depending on how much time you have.
- has a main **objective** so that you can be guided towards the main message.
- has a '**hook**' or teaser, to grab the attention and imagination of the group. If you have a different example, please use it.
- has **key points**, which are a summary of the content.
- finishes with a **prayer**. You can simply read it or pray your own prayer.

Key for symbols:

In the lesson plans you will see these symbols which indicate the kind of activity that should take place



Presenter teaching from the front of the class with everyone listening.



Pause and Think



Individual task



Small groups of 3 -5



Main group feedback

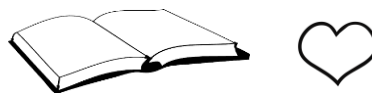
Lesson One: What does the Bible tell us about children?

(Supplies: a Bible, a heart shape cut from paper, paper and pencil for each person)

Objective: To give teachers and facilitators a basic understanding of what the Bible says to us about children and about child protection.

Key points: The Bible is full of practical ways of living. Before we can properly understand child protection, we must understand God's heart for children. For this, we will look at two places: the Bible and ourselves.

Hook: Hold up a Bible. Then hold up a paper heart shape. Put the heart inside the Bible. If we look in the Bible we will see God's heart for children.



Main Teaching

I am going to give you one minute to reflect. Think about the special children in your life. Who are they? Perhaps in your own family, or your neighbours, or the children in your church? What do you think of them? What do you want for them?



PAUSE for one minute.....



Individual activity: Time: 10 minutes.

Give everyone a paper and pencil

We all care about the children in our lives, and we want good things for them.

Draw a figure of a child in the centre of the paper and surround the child with things that represent a happy, safe, loving world for children. (for example, a home, trees, family, school, garden, church etc etc.) You can use pictures or words.

Then, share your picture with your neighbour: tell them what your picture means and what it represents for children.

Main group:



Who would like to share their picture with the group? 😊

The picture you drew likely includes ideas of happiness, security, food, play, church, school- the things you would give every child if you could.

You may not realise it, but your picture is a reflection of God's heart for children. Jesus said that even though we care about children very much and want to give them many wonderful things, God cares about them more than we ever could:

Listen to this from: Luke 11:11-12

“If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

This verse shows us that God is a good father, and he intends good for children and not harm.



Small group work: 15 mins

Let's think about what else the Bible says about children. Look at these verses and make a list of biblical ideas about children and God's heart for them. In your groups look at a verse each (*give each group a few verses*)

Matthew 18:6

Matthew 19:13-14

Jeremiah 1:5

Matthew 18:1-5

Psalms 139:13-16

Mark 9:35-37

2 Timothy 3:14-15

Matthew 21:15-16

Matthew 18:10

Psalms 127:3-5



Feedback from group work (here are examples of answers)

What does your verse say about God?

Matthew 18:6 The Bible says children are precious to God, he is their protector and will judge those who harm them.

Jeremiah 1:5 Jeremiah was set apart as a baby before he was born.

Psalms 139:13-16 God created and knows each child from inside the mother's womb.

2 Timothy 3:14-15 He desires to see us raise and establish each child to be wise unto salvation.

Matthew 18:10 Children have angels watching over them.

Matthew 19:13-14 God is protective of children and lovingly welcomes them and shows affection.

Mark 9:35-37 Jesus honoured children and gave them public value.

Matthew 21:15-16 God uses children as the best picture of faith. Children demonstrate the humility that God looks for in His disciples.

Psalms 127:3-5 God gives children as a gift, and they are a blessing, not a burden and not something to be used and exploited.

Conclusion

As we read these verses and others in the Bible, we begin to see that children are highly regarded in God's Kingdom, and God is serious about taking good care of them. He does not want to see a child suffer at the hand of corruption or abuse, and he will not look away when evil is done against his children. Incredibly, God asks us to help defend and care for his precious children.

Close in prayer: Father, thank you that you love and protect children and you have called us to do the same. Forgive us please for failing to play our part in caring for them. Help us in our teaching to learn how best to speak up for them. In Jesus Name. Amen.

Lesson Two: Childhood

(Supplies: something bitter eg lemon or vinegar, something sweet eg honey or sugar)

Objective: To reflect on our own childhood and how that shapes our own attitudes to children.

Key points: We need to be aware of what children need and to identify ways in which may be repeating the negative patterns of our own childhood

Bible verse: Luke 2:52 Jesus grew in stature and wisdom.

Hook: Question: do you think life is easier if you are a child or if you are an adult? Let's have a vote on that! (Easier/ Harder?) Anyone want to say why they voted that way?



Introduction:

Perhaps you made that decision based on your own experience. Think about your own childhood. (Show them the honey and lemon) Honey represents sweetness and joy 😊. Lemon represents bitterness and sorrow 😞.



Let's spend a few minutes thinking about a happy memory- maybe a time you felt safe or loved, maybe a special teacher who encouraged you. (2 mins) 😊

Now think about the hard memories- perhaps you were treated badly by your parent or other relatives. Perhaps you felt ashamed or afraid at school. Perhaps you were hungry a lot. (2 mins) 😞



Please share with another person one of your memories. Feedback to main group? From the whole group let's hear from two people: one happy and one bad memory (if people are comfortable sharing). *Listen with empathy and full attention.*



Here is another question: if you have a bad experience for example that you were beaten harshly as a child, has that made you want to be the same or different with your own children?

Why did we do that exercise? It's because we learn from our experiences. Sometimes we want to do the opposite of what happened to us and sometimes we do the same.

For example, here are two examples:

1. When Paul was a small child when he wet the bed and his father beat him. Paul now has children and when his son wets the bed, Paul is tempted to beat him but he remembers how afraid and sad he was, so he tries to be gentle. Paul is trying to be different from his own father.

2. When Mary was at primary school, the teachers laughed at her when she got an answer wrong. It made her unhappy and ashamed. Now Mary is a teacher and she laughs at the pupils when they make mistakes. Mary is repeating the same thing she experienced.

Question: What about you? When you think about the honey and lemon memories... What sorts of happy things do you repeat with children now? What sorts of hard things do you repeat with children? Write down some of your thoughts....

Prayer: Father help us to know your healing for the pains in our own lives so that we can bring hope and healing to others.

(Have a short break or sing a song to change gear)

Let's think about : what is a child?

Any ideas? What does it mean to be a child. The definition of a child is anyone under 18 years old.

Why do children need protecting more than adults? (because they are young, immature, dependent). But are all children the same? Is a five year old the same as a 10 year old? Or a 15 year old? (No)

Draw a line from 0-----18



Being a child is a long time of development! Remember a child is something that is always changing and growing. Luke 2:52 shows us that Jesus grew over time from a baby into an adult. Think about when Jesus was born- King Herod wanted to kill him. So his parents protected him and took him to Egypt.

A newborn baby has many needs such as (examples?)milk, warmth, comfort, bathing, interaction from the mother. Without these the baby will not grow physically or emotionally. Remember that babies learn by watching and knowing they are safe.

At age one, a baby is crawling or walking. What are the dangers now? (accidents, fires, choking)

What about age six? (being more independent, easily trusting strangers or people who might want to abuse them)

Age 13? Maybe internet, maybe sexual relationships that are harmful, exploring sexual things because they are curious.

Give examples of how children need to be protected at different stages of their lives. For example:

A baby cannot run away or get involved in drugs. But a baby can be hurt easily if it is dropped or shaken.

A seven year old might be deceived into going off with a person. But can also learn to avoid danger.

A 12 year old might be tempted to look at sexual movies or pornography.

Any other ideas?

Conclusion

We have to be aware of all the ways children are at risk at different times in their lives.

What do you want to do to try protect children now?.

Close in prayer: We thank you Lord that you were a baby. You needed adults to protect you. Please help us to be attentive to the needs of children at all stages of their development. Amen

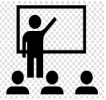
Lesson Three: What is Child Protection?

(supplies: A few big pieces of paper and colouring pencils or crayons)

Objective: to help us think about the fact that we protect and care for the things we value.

Key points: Children need protecting from harm through different stages of their lives.

Hook: if I am walking along the road and realise I have dropped a piece of scrap paper that I had in my pocket, will I run into the road after it? (Probably not) What if I dropped my phone? (Yes) What is the difference? We protect the things we care about.



Main Teaching

1. How do you protect your body from infection and injury? First of all, be aware of the risks.

For example- here are some risks in life where we naturally protect ourselves

malaria : you may use a bed net, or screens on your doors, or cover up at night

cutting your feet on glass: wear shoes, clean up glass and sharp objects

getting skin infections: wash your body, use soap

toothache: brush your teeth, avoid too much sugar, go to dentist

getting hit by a car or motorcycle: cross the road safely

suffering vomiting and diarrhoea: boil or filter water, wash fruit, cook food properly

2. What about how you protect your possessions? Again, be aware of the risks.

Who has a phone? Do you just leave it lying around? No! You look after it.

What about your purse or wallet? You know where it is!

If you have a house or room, you have a key, maybe even a wall or gate

3. Why do you care about your things? Because they are worth a lot to you.

Look again at the picture you made in the last session – there is a child in the middle.

Putting the child in the centre and caring about them is the start of child protection. Before we can successfully begin protecting children, we must have a clear vision of what we are protecting them *from*. You did not draw dangerous or harmful things in your picture because you know in your heart that children do not deserve to live that way. This only continues to reflect God's heart for children.

Ultimately, child protection is what happens when we understand God's heart for children.



(give 15 minutes in small groups to discuss) **Think about child protection.** What are some of the dangers and risks we are protecting children from? Think about all the dangers, for example, physical, mental, spiritual, sexual)



Group feedback : what do you think are the dangers to children?

(offer examples below to add to the group)

- Accidents: being burned by water, oil, milk, porridge- being hit by a car or bicycle- falling into a hole or out of a building- electrocution- choking- being cut or injured by glass or machinery
- Bad influences- other children, other older children, videos, internet, drugs, alcohol, drugs
- Abuse and exploitation- being beaten, being raped, being overworked, being tricked



Remember! That disabled children have particular needs and for many they will not develop physically or mentally with their age.

Optional fun activity! Work together in groups to come up with your own group poster for child protection. Be creative!

For example :

'Safe and happy children protected by adults'

Children in a circle of safety!



Let's see each other's posters!

We can think of many things children need to be protected from, but ultimately **child protection** is the effort to protect children from *all forms of abuse*.

Read Proverbs 31:8-9:

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

If we are parents or teachers, aunties or uncles, pastors or elders, we must do everything we can to protect children from evil. God has placed each of us in a position of authority over children, and we must be good stewards of our authority. The misuse of authority over children is the beginning of child abuse.

When child abuse does occur, child protection is the proper response to the abuse. Situations of abuse must be handled properly so children receive the help they need to recover.

Read Psalm 82:3-4:

“Vindicate the weak and the fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.”

Close in prayer: Father, thank you for your heart of justice for children. You fight for the oppressed, you lift up those who are cast down, you comfort the broken- hearted. Help us to stand in the gap for children and speak up for them. Give us courage we pray. Amen

Lesson Four: Children and their needs

(supplies: a corn kernel or a mango, or something with a seed, flip charts or paper. A bucket of water and a sponge)

Objective: to identify the specific needs children have and our responsibility to raise them in our communities to be a blessing.

Key points: Children are a blessing and a heritage. Psalm 127:3-5

Hook: Bring a kernel of corn. Or a mango. Ask: How many seeds in mango? (one) How many mangoes in a seed (hundreds). This shows how much potential is in one child.



Main Teaching

God has designed the world for children to be born as babies. He has given us children in our communities and our families. Children are born dependent on their caregivers to nurture and protect them. When we create a healthy environment for children they will grow up healthy and they will be productive citizens who are a blessing to the world. Remember when we talked about power. The weakest are at the most risk of exploitation. Disabled children and deaf children are at greatest risk of being abused.

Africa's children

Think about mangoes and if you go to the market and buy 10 mangoes but you come home and notice one is bad, what will you do? (throw the bad one out because it will ruin the others). We want to invest in children and ensure they are healthy and not allowed to go rotten.

Children are a heritage. Ps 127:3-5

We are investing in a new generation. Children are our future.

Do you know that 50% of Africa is under 18 years old? This means there is amazing potential for a transformation of the continent of Africa!

Example:

Explain that investing in something small brings a multiplication. You plant a seed, but it needs good soil and a good environment. Rain, sunshine, tilling. Takes time and

patience. You don't stamp on a seedling. Think about a child. In the same way, you nurture and protect a child.



Main group:

What are the differences between children and adults? Welcome answers from the group.

What are adults like?	What are children like?

Add your own answers later if nobody has mentioned them.

Adults: size, power, capacity to discern, less trusting, more aware, able to make own decisions, worry more about bills, responsibilities, authority, confidence.

Children: playful, believing, trusting, minds like sponges- they remember a lot and learn quickly (think about learning a language...who taught you to speak Kinyarwanda/Arabic/Kisukuma?nobody- they just picked it up before they could even walk. Children have brains like 'wet cement', all imprints....they copy what they see.

Demonstrate with a sponge and a bucket of water; this is how much a child absorbs as their brains learn so quickly. Whether it is good water or dirty water- it all goes in.

Needs of children

What do children need- physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually ?



Each group identify the needs of a child: use flip charts.

Intellectually

Socially

Physically

Emotionally/spiritually

Neglect

Each group has 10 min to write down ideas and ask a representative of the group to present.



Main group- ask for group feedback (here are some possible answers)

Intellectually: education, to ask questions, to learn, to be curious, to succeed, to have resources to learn.

Socially: to belong, be heard, contribute, have an identity/birth certificate, to know their heritage

Physically: good food, protein, water, to grow, safety, health, mosquito nets, clean water, sanitation, shelter, cleanliness

Emotionally: to be encouraged, affirmed, to feel safe, protected, to worship, to believe.



Please remember that disabled children and deaf children are at the greatest risk of being abused. WHY?

(answers: they cannot communicate well, they are taken care of by different people, they can't speak up and defend themselves, they are easily taken advantage of)

Conclusion: Children have special needs at different ages of their lives. They rely on adults to meet their needs so that they can grow and thrive.

Close in prayer: Heavenly Father. Please make us aware of what children need and may we invest in them so that they will grow in healthy ways. In Jesus Name. Amen.

Lesson Five: Power and Abuse of Power

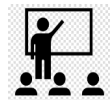
(supplies: sellotape, masking tape or a scarf)

Objective: look at this topic by reading the Bible story of Amnon and Tamar, and exploring how sexual abuse is always linked to an abuse of power.

Key points: we all play a part in using the power and authority we have to protect those who are silenced and need protecting.

Hook: ask for a volunteer. Cover their mouth with some tape or a scarf or cloth. Whisper in their ear a message to shout out to the group: "run away quickly there is a lion coming towards us!" See if they can give the message to the group! It is very hard to communicate without being able to speak. (remove tape)

Today we are talking about when people are silenced or told to stay silent



Main Teaching

Read 2 Samuel 13:1-21 or ask someone to read.

Tamar was the King's daughter. She was rich and privileged, but her life was ruined by the rape by her brother Amnon. Nobody acted to protect her to prevent it or to seek justice for her. Abuse can happen anywhere. It is always an exploitation of power over someone who is weaker.

What is Power? (wait for answers from the class...)

It is when one person or system has authority, influence or control over a weaker person or a subordinate.

Let's think about types of power: status, money, size, culture, tribe, position, class, education.

In your own culture what gives a person power or influence? Who is the sort of person everyone admires?

Please give examples.

(Possible answers): big personality, clothes or fashion, appearance, birthplace, profession, who your connections are, education, tribe,

For example: in Anna's church, one of the elders is a rich man who is big and tall. He also works for the government. Anna notices that all of the other elders and even the pastor seem to be a bit afraid of him.



Read the passage again 2 Sam 13:1-23 and in groups, look at these questions for discussion:

- Amon said he loved his sister Tamar so much that it made him sick. What do you think? Did he really love her? What is love?
- How would you describe Amnon's feelings for her? In v15 why does he suddenly hate her?
- She was raped behind closed doors. Do you think the people outside knew what was happening?
- Why do you think nobody intervened?
- What was the short term impact on Tamar and the long term impact on Tamar?



Think about power. In this story, who had power? What impact does power have on people? Think about the person who has power and the person who is under the instructions of the powerful.



Group work:

In this story there is Amnon, Jonadab, the servants, Tamar, Absalom and David. In groups let's take one of these people, and think about who sinned and what they could have done to prevent this thing from happening.

Give each group a name (Amnon, Jonadab, the servants, Tamar, Absalom and David)

And give them time to discuss the following questions:

- Did this person sin?
- What could they have done?
- Why did they do nothing?
- Give an example where you have acted in the same way?



Receive feedback from the main group.



Explain: in each of the following lessons we will look more at what the Bible tells us about how we can protect children.

Close in prayer. Father, help me use what power I have to raise others up. Please forgive us when we turn away from someone who needs our help. May we follow the example of Jesus who gave up everything out of love for the world. May we humble ourselves under your mighty hand that you may raise us up. Amen

Lesson Six: Child Abuse

(Supplies: small rock or stone; coin or banknote; print or write out scenarios)

Objective: to give an overview of Child Abuse and the different types.

Key Points: People treat children as just something to be used or abused. But children have rights under the law. Abuse is a sin and a crime. It harms children in life-long ways. God will judge anyone who harms a child. Love does its neighbour no harm. Romans 13v7. Colossians 3:12

Hook: Get a rock and put it on the floor and start kicking it and shouting at it. Have I done anything wrong? (No, because it is an object not a person). A rock has no feelings. But a child can see, hear, touch and feel. We are going to look at why people hurt children.

Main Teaching



Make a list of all the good and beautiful things in the world. (trees, families, celebrations, music, food, joy, colour, birds, nature etc.)

When God created the world it was without sin. It was peaceful, beautiful and good. Adam and Eve walked in the garden without clothes and without shame. Gen 2v25. They walked with God in the cool of the day. They ate anything they wanted Gen 1v29 but they were instructed not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil Gen 2v16.

Then as we read in Gen chapter 3, Adam and Eve listened to the deceitful serpent, and they disobeyed the Lord and they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is when evil entered into the world. Then their eyes were opened and they were suddenly ashamed and fearful. God drove them out of the garden and they were separated from him 3v24.

Since then, man has been separated from God.

List all of the bad and wrong things we see in the world. (war, hatred, violence, death, theft, adultery etc.)

God loves the world he has made. He made a plan to bring people back into a relationship of love with him. His plan was through his Son Jesus Christ. Rom 5v8. Jesus died for the sins of the world and carried the burden of punishment in His body on the cross. Every person is born into sin and chooses to sin, and that means every person needs to be forgiven by God and to be saved through faith in Christ.

Through Christ we can inherit the hope of eternal life. In heaven there will be no more pain or sorrow, or weeping or funerals or violence.

Example: Show a coin or banknote- how much is it worth? (answer: it says on the coin or note) does it matter if it is an old coin or a new one? If it is shiny and new or old and battered? Does the value change? NO.

Our value is in our humanity and the way we are made in His image. If someone is poor or rich or beautiful or plain, it does not alter the value.

Meanwhile as God's precious possessions, we live in this fallen and broken world. People continue to sin in various ways and one of these sins is the abuse of children. That is our topic for this series of teaching.

There are different types of abuse that children can suffer from.

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Sometimes these types of abuse come together. This is called polyvictimisation. If a child is suffering from physical abuse then it is likely they are suffering emotional abuse as well. After all it is not possible to beat a child without causing them emotional or psychological pain.



Small group work

Read these scenarios:

- Mary is 13 years old. When her older brother comes home from boarding school he has started coming into her bedroom every night and bothering her, fondling her body and lying on top of her. She is ashamed and feels dirty. She doesn't know what to do. What type of abuse do you think this is?
- Felix is eight and he attends your Sunday school. His mother died last year and his father remarried. He used to be a happy boy but recently he seems tired and sad. You notice his clothes are torn and dirty. When you try to talk to him he jumps and looks frightened. What do you think might be happening at home?
- Tabitha is 14 years old. She is disabled with cerebral palsy. She can't speak or walk. She lives with her mother. Her mother works at the market every day from morning til dark. Tabitha is left on the mat in the house, she doesn't eat or drink anything until her mother returns. What is this form of abuse called?



Main group- feedback from small groups: (answers)

Mary: this is sexual abuse by her brother

Felix: he seems to be suffering from neglect and maybe physical abuse

Tabitha: neglect, maybe emotional abuse



Question: what sort of abuse is happening in your community? What do you see?

How do you think this affects children?

Close in prayer: Oh dear Lord, have mercy on these children! Please send your help and your protection upon them! In Jesus Name! Amen.

Lesson Seven: Physical Abuse

(supplies: print off or write out scenarios for group work).

Objective: All discipline should be done to teach and guide. Physical abuse is not an act of love.

Key Points: Children need discipline, but they should not be harmed, and discipline should *not* be carried out in anger. Discipline must be done in love and for the good of the child. Physical abuse causes injury, fear and permanent scarring.

Hook: Bring something that is used to punish children- for example a stick, or branch or something used in your community. Hands up if you use physical punishment with children ? hands up who doesn't? Why? When you think about punishing children what do you think about these verses:

Romans 13:7 Love does its neighbour no harm. Gal 5v22,23 Fruit of the spirit is gentleness.



Main Teaching

Romans 13:7 says that love does not harm its neighbour. Many children are harmed by punishments that do damage to their bodies. Physical abuse is when the punishment is too severe and causes an injury.

Examples of physical abuse are: beating, whipping, hitting a child with a stick or weapon, causing an injury, overly-harsh discipline, hitting a child around the face or head or hands, kicking or punching a child in the body. Burning, tying up, choking, pushing into water.

Fact: Children need to understand what is right and wrong. Although parents have the responsibility to discipline their children, this does not mean it must involve physical punishment. There are many ways that a child can be disciplined in a constructive way which does not cause them fear and pain. When a child is physically punished then it must be in proportionate to their age and size and not done in anger. Children need to know that they know they are loved and cared for.

What does Scripture say?

Heb 12:10 A good father disciplines his children in love and for the child's good

Eph 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle

Eph 6:1-4. Children should obey and honour their parents, and parents should not frustrate their children.

Col 3:12 We should be clothed in kindness and compassion and patience.

1 Cor 13:4 Love is patient and kind.

Rom 13:10 Love does no harm to its neighbour



Small groups: 15 minutes. Discuss these questions.

- How were you punished by your own parents?
- Do you think that physical punishment is a good thing? Why or why not?
- When the Bible says spare the rod and spoil the child what does it mean?
- When the Bible says in your anger do not sin, what does this mean?
- What are the advantages of hitting a child? What are the disadvantages?
- Do you know the difference between hitting a child and abusing them? What is the difference?



Feedback from small groups



Main teaching One of the most often-quoted verses in terms of how we should discipline children is Proverbs 13:24, 'Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.' The verse is often used as a justification for the harsh physical punishment of children.

Read Psalm 23:4. What is the role of the shepherd's rod in this passage? (Your rod and your staff, they comfort me). The shepherd does not use the crook (his rod) to beat the sheep, rather to guide them and keep them on the right path, going in the right direction and sometimes to rescue them from danger. As parents, teachers or caregivers we have responsibility to equip our children with respect for authority, and to help them learn discipline. As adults it is our responsibility to guide and protect the children in our care. That does not mean controlling by threat of punishment. Pray together that we will understand how to guide, protect and care for children in Godly ways!

Here is a true story from Tanzania (with names changed).

Vedasto attended Mlimani Primary School. He was sent to the headmaster for being late every day this week for class. The headmaster took a stick and hit Vedasto five times. Vedasto fell against a brick wall and suffered a head injury and died. The head teacher told the police it was an accident. Vedasto's parents had no money to seek legal help. The head teacher is still at the school.





In small groups, take 15 minutes to think about the problems that may result from this.



what answers did you come up with?

- No justice for Vedasto and his family.
- Other pupils may feel scared.
- Other pupils are at risk.
- School has no way of controlling the pupils without using violence

In Africa, some children are regularly punished to the point of abuse. This can happen at home. This includes:

Kicking, beating, burning, holding underwater, strangulation, hitting around the head and hands.

- Do you have more examples?
- What effect does this have on children?

Emotionally: fear, worthlessness

Physically: bruising, pain, scarring, head injury

Why do you think people physically abuse children?

Cultural norm: doing it because everyone else does it

Stress: the parent or teacher has too much to do or think about- they have no patience left. They 'snap' and lash out.

For example: Baba Joseph has just lost his gardening job and he is worried and doesn't know how to feed his family. In the morning Joseph complains that there is no sugar for the tea. Joseph's dad loses his temper and takes the hot tea and pours it over Joseph.

Toxic substances: alcohol, or drugs make a person unable to understand what they are doing.

For example: Mary's mama often drinks local brew and gets drunk. When Mary comes home from school, sometimes mama throws things at her for no reason.

Ignorance: of how a child can be harmed through certain punishments.

For example: the teacher uses a thin branch to control the children in class. Sometimes she hits the children across the face. Last week she caused a nose bleed.

Cruelty: the adult intentionally wants to make the child suffer.

For example: Joel is nine years old. When his grandmother comes to stay, she uses a piece of wood to hit him on his knuckles.

Harm that is done to children

Hitting or beating children can cause harm to their bodies.

There is a growing knowledge that using violence to punish children is not helpful for them and it can be very dangerous especially when an adult is angry or drunk. Hitting children around the face or hands or head can cause permanent damage. It may be illegal in your country.

Hitting children hurts their hearts.

Causing pain leads to fear. Children cannot learn when they are afraid.

Hitting children causes them to hit other children

Children learn from what they see and experience.

Hitting children means they will obey to avoid pain

but it doesn't change their hearts.



Small group work: Look at these scenarios

1. You are in the church choir and you practise every Friday. There is a lady called Helen who always brings her seven year old step-daughter Felista. You notice that over the past few weeks Felista has cuts and bruises around her eyes.
 - What is going through your mind?
 - What could you do?
2. Your church runs a Bible club over the Easter break. There are 100 children and only five teachers. It is almost impossible to keep control and maintain discipline.
 - What can you do to make this a safe and happy place for both children and staff?
 - What are your options?
 - What action steps will you take?
3. You are a teacher. Dickson is six years old. He has been at school for a few months. He often gets beaten by his drunk father. His mother is dead. He is a shy boy who is quiet and not very confident. One morning you see him crying behind a tree. He says he is in pain. You notice blood on his shorts, and he has severe cuts and bruises on his body. His arm looks broken. He looks frightened and doesn't say who or give any more information.
 - Is this a problem? Why?
 - What are the causes of this problem?
 - What will happen if it doesn't stop?
 - How do you think Dickson feels?
 - What could help the situation to change?
 - As a tutor what should you do?



Feedback. Listen to everyone's answers and suggestions. Add more if necessary, see notes below:

1. You are in the church choir and you practise every Friday. There is a lady called Helen who always brings her seven year old step-daughter Felista. You notice that over the past few weeks Felista has cuts and bruises around her eyes. What is going through your mind? What could you do? *(perhaps her step mother is hurting her? Or it could be someone else. You could speak gently with Felista to ask her. If Felista tells you who is hitting her you could find a way to talk to the person or someone else in the family)*
2. Your church runs a Bible club over the Easter break. There are 100 children and only five teachers. It is almost impossible to keep control and maintain discipline. What can you do to make this a safe and happy place for both children and staff? What are your options? What action steps will you take? *(insist on more adults or older children to help; speak to the pastor; if you can't change it, ensure that all teachers are working together to lay down the rules and insist on the children being obedient; play games which involve everyone in teams; sing songs which have actions and keep the children occupied and use their energy up; don't shout- speak in a quieter firm voice; use a whistle to get their attention)*
3. You are a teacher. Dickson is six years old. He has been at school for a few months. He often gets beaten by his drunk father. His mother is dead. He is a shy boy who is quiet and not very confident. One morning you see him crying behind a tree. He says he is in pain. You notice blood on his shorts, and he has severe cuts and bruises on his body. His arm looks broken. He looks frightened and doesn't say who or give any more information. Is this a problem? Why? What are the causes of this problem? What will happen if it doesn't stop? How do you think Dickson feels? What could help the situation to change? As a tutor what should you do? *(this is a serious problem; speak kindly and gently with Dickson, sit him down and give him some tea or milk; ask him what happened; tell him you will need to take him to the hospital to check his arm; you may need to speak to police or a social worker first; do some research on the family background; what influence does the school have. Ensure you support Dickson with kindness and compassion)*



Conclusion: Some situations may seem impossible. If there is a good social work or child protection system then you must do what is required. But do not give up caring! There is always something we can do to make things safer. We need to use our creativity and intelligence to seek better ways of disciplining children. Make sure you know what resources are available in your community.

In the next lesson we will look at positive discipline.

Close in prayer: Lord thank you that your discipline those you love, but that you are also kind and gentle. Help us to help children who suffer with cruelty and fear in their lives. Amen

Lesson Eight: Healthy discipline of children

Objective: Children need discipline! But harsh punishments harm children. Proper discipline helps a child to grow and is for their benefit.

Key message: if you love something you take care of it, discipline it and help it to grow.

Bible verse: Hebrews 12:4-10 My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it.

Hook: Think about if you are a gardener trying to make your plants grow. Sometimes you have to cut away the dead leaves and branches so that the plant can grow and produce even more fruit or flowers. Is the gardener trying to harm the plant? No. he is making it grow and be more productive.



Main Teaching

Write the word 'discipline' on a flipchart paper. Ask participants to call out words that they connect with discipline—what does it mean? Explain that discipline comes from the same root word as 'disciple' and means to train and teach in order to produce specific character traits or behaviours. Many people mistakenly think of discipline only as punishment. Discipline actually includes a range of approaches that help develop positive characteristics and behaviours in a child.

Discipline is the way a child is trained and guided. It includes rules and admonition. Good parents discipline their children. A child who receives no discipline can feel unloved or uncared for. For example, when John comes home late from school nobody cares and nobody seems to even notice. His friend Brian has to be home before dark and if he is late his father punishes him by not allowing him to have sugar in his tea. Brian doesn't enjoy the punishment but he feels loved and cared for.

Case study: read to the group

David and Andrew are twins. They are eight years old. There is a baby sister. Dad gets angry a lot because he is worried about no money and his boss is very harsh. When dad comes home in the evening he shouts at their mum and sometimes he hits her. The baby cries a lot and this makes dad more angry. Last week David dropped the plates with food on and dad lost his temper. He took a stick and hit David hard across the head. David has a big bruise and a headache.

Ask for feedback from the group:



Small Group: in groups, please discuss these questions

- Why do you think dad hit David?
- Had David done anything wrong?
- Why do you think dad is so angry?
- What are the risks of his anger?



Feedback from the groups

In the situation of David and Andrew- what is the answer to the father's anger?
How could the problem be addressed?



What answers did you come up with? (there are no easy answers to this as each family is different. Perhaps someone else – a pastor or relative- could speak with the father and explain how dangerous it is to hit a child around the head).

Schools

In schools, students are sometimes beaten as a punishment. There are other ways of managing behaviour but they can take a lot of work to alter habits!

When confronting bad behaviour, a simple behaviour model, that is used consistently by teachers in the school, can be very effective.

Here's an example, have a quiet word with the child, give them a choice, give appropriate consequence if needed

Quiet Word:

Have a quiet word with the child asking the child why they are behaving in this way and explain to them the need for correction.

Choice: If the behaviour continues to be challenging give the child a choice. For example, say, "You have a choice. You can choose to change your behaviour or if not, there will be a consequence"

Consequence: Together as teachers you need to discuss what types of consequences you can use that follow the principles of love, respect and protection of children. Another important thing to remember to recognise when students behave well. Be specific when praising them so they know why they are being praised. For example, "Thank you David for sitting quietly and listening so well. You are following our classroom guidelines well."

Here is a good resource for schools <https://raisingvoices.org/resources/gst-positive-discipline-poster/>

- ❖ Discipline means to teach and train through rules and boundaries
 - ❖ Punishment is to inflict some sort of chastisement or penalty for the offence (for example, withdrawal of a privilege, or a physical outcome such as no food, or a stick)
 - ❖ All discipline and punishment should be with the aim of teaching a child to choose to do the right thing. Fear and pain are never good motivators towards changed behaviour.
 - ❖ Positive discipline and rewards encourage children to want to do the right thing and to want to succeed.
-

Close in prayer: Dear Lord, thank you that you discipline us for our own good, please help us to learn how to discipline children well without breaking their spirits or discouraging them. Give us wisdom and courage to stand for what is right. Amen

Lesson Nine: Emotional Abuse

Objective: to understand the long-term impact of invisible scars.

Key Points: Children's brains are soft and still growing. They remember what is said and how they felt. Today when we are talking about emotional abuse, we are talking about words that are said to a child which make an imprint that lasts many years.

Hook: Think about wet cement which is used when laying down a foundation of a building. What happens if someone walks across the wet cement? It leaves a footprint that always stays there. Children can be harmed for life by the words spoken to them when they are young.



Main Teaching

Emotional and Psychological Abuse

This includes language and accusations against a child by an adult which is humiliating and causes them shame and fear. Scapegoating a child to make them feel worthless; screaming and pointing in anger; ignoring or shunning a child for a specific reason; threatening them with harm or abandonment; bribing them and causing them to keep a secret about something.

Fact: emotional abuse is extremely harmful to children and can affect their mental, educational and physical development in many ways. When children undergo chronic mental stress their blood levels increase with stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. These stress hormones affect the body's immune system and cause sicknesses such as stomach ulcers, headaches, high blood pressure and infections.

What does Scripture say?

God welcomes children as they are and treats them gently. Mark 10:13-16

Wise people are self- controlled and do not react in anger. Prov 29:11, James 1:19

Words can hurt and words can heal. Proverbs 12:18

Wise people are full of mercy and good fruit. James 3:17

The fruit of the Spirit in our lives demonstrate kindness, goodness, patience, self-control. Gal 5:23

Remember what children need to thrive. Encouragement, affirmation, security, boundaries, consistency.

Emotional abuse is when a person causes harm to a child's soul, heart and mind because of the words they speak and the way they speak.

- This can be by humiliating a child: you are stupid, you are worthless, nobody loves you.
- By saying cruel things, like, I will throw you out of the house.
- By making threats, I will beat you, I will cut your hands off.
- By isolating them and ignoring them.

- By making a child the 'scapegoat' in the family. The child gets the blame for everything.
- Be laughing at them and making them feel ashamed.

Think about what the Bible says about the tongue. James 3v8 describes it as poison. James 3v 6. It is like fire. Is fire a good or bad thing?
It is like a sharp knife. Is a sharp knife a good or bad thing?
It depends on how you use it.



Group work:

- Talk about your own childhood and the ways that adults spoke to you and treated you.
- Give examples of positive and negative ways that you were treated.
- What is the impact of negative criticism?
- What is the impact of positive affirmation?



Conclusion:

Never underestimate the power of words. Think about children who you could encourage and affirm. What could you change today to improve the way you speak to children?

Close in prayer: Father please let me use words to bless others and build them up. Amen.

Lesson Ten: Neglect

Objective: to identify what different forms of neglect look like and the impact on children.

Key Points: Children are dependent on adults for their needs to be met.

Hook: Think about a person growing tomatoes in their garden. What kind of protection does the plant need? Shade from too much sun, good soil, no slugs or insects. If you just leave it, it will suffer damage from the environment.

Bible Verses: Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Cor 13:17



Main Teaching

A child is still growing and needs to be tended to like a young plant. Neglect is when a child suffers from a lack of basic needs due to lack of care. It is not the same as when a parent is so poor that they cannot provide. For example: Mama Josephine lives in a very hard situation; she has four children and her husband left her. She spends all day selling onions on the side of the road. The children only eat once a day. She always makes sure her children have eaten before she eats. Whenever she has money for eggs she gives them to her children. Is this neglect? No!.

Remember what we talked about before: what do children need?

Physically? good food, protein, water, to grow, safety, health, mosquito nets, clean water, sanitation, shelter, cleanliness.

Emotionally? to belong, to be encouraged, affirmed, to feel safe, protected

What does it mean to be a scapegoat?

Scapegoating: this is when a child is picked out and treated more negatively by the care giver. It can happen if the child has a disability, or maybe is not clever, or perhaps is a child who has been brought into the family (for example a step child or relative) or from a different clan or tribe. Scapegoating is discrimination against a child.





Group work:

David

David is 9 years old; he is one of your best students. His mother has died. He lives with his father. His father married last year. David's stepmother has four children. Since his father got married, David's personality has changed. His clothes are dirty. David has lost weight- he is looking thin and unhappy. His school marks are dropping. He has been stealing food from other students.

Questions to discuss:

- Is this a problem? Why?
- What are the causes of this problem?
- What will happen if it doesn't stop?
- How do you think David feels?
- What could help the situation to change?
- If David was a pupil in your school, what signs might indicate that there is a problem?

Conclusion: Listen to what the Bible says in Ecclesiastes 4v 1. 'I saw the tears of the oppressed, and they have no comforter, power was on the side of their oppressors and they have no comforter'. Child neglect is when the person who has power does nothing to help the child. Where can you identify this and speak on behalf of the oppressed child. How can you comfort them?

Close in prayer: Father, open our eyes to the sorrow and pain around us. help us to care. Help us to comfort others and seek ways to speak up for the oppressed. Amen

Lesson Eleven: Sexual abuse

(supplies, case studies printed or written out, one per group)

Objective: To raise awareness of the types of sexual abuse and to help children to seek help.

Key Points: Child sexual abuse is any sexual act or type of contact when a child is used or exploited for sexual purposes by an adult or an older child. It can be touch, non-touch, visual, or online.

Hook: Statistics show us that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused in their childhood. This means that in 100 girls that 25 are or will be sexually abused. And 16 boys out of 100. This is a real problem and it will affect many in this room from personal experience. Let us pray at the beginning of this session that our own hearts will be protected as we learn.



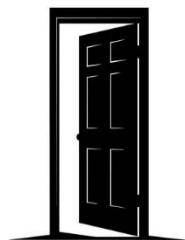
Main Teaching

Remember what we said about children and how they are quick to believe and trust. They need to be protected.

Sexual Abuse: is when someone exploits or takes advantage of a child. It is a choice that a person makes to abuse a child. It is not a random thing that happens. People make choices. Even when the devil is behind sin, it is still the choice of a person to act on their temptations. It is always wrong for a child to be abused. The child is not to blame.

Sexual abuse usually happens:

- In secret or in the dark
- Because nobody else is around
- Because the abuser has power over the child



Sexual Child Abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity with an adult or another child which includes:

- Physical touch: Physical contact (or penetration by penis, fingers, or any other body part or object) with a victim's clothed or unclothed genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or female breast; or causing a child to perform any of these acts.
- Rubbing, holding, or kissing the child for the purpose of sexual gratification.

- Visual: Indecent exposure; showing pornographic material or showing own genitals spying on a child for sexual reasons or making a child take their clothes off in order to film them or take a photo.
- Online Sexual Harm: Internet cafes or use of smart phone to watch or send sexual images or messages. WhatsApp, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, Telegram can be environments where sexual harm occurs.
- Verbal: speech which includes sexual threats, (whether in person, or online or social media), or any verbal expression with the intent to arouse or stimulate.

Sexual abuse of children is widespread and happens in every country and culture. The solutions are not always obvious and they are different depending on the situation. Having wisdom and courage means that we need to choose carefully what to do in order to help the child and not make the situation worse for them⁴.

Children who have been sexually abused may: 

- ☹ Blame themselves
- ☹ Feel hopeless, live with a sense of fear or dread
- ☹ Feel guilt and shame
- ☹ Hate their bodies
- ☹ Fear sexual intimacy when they are older
- ☹ Get involved in high-risk activities
- ☹ Lose hope
- ☹ Feel unloved or abandoned by God

Abuse is *always about the abuse of power by the offender* and loss of power by the victim. It is not the victim's fault! Think about a time where you were a child and felt like you had no power.

We are now going to look at some examples of children who suffered from lack of power which led to abuse.



Group work:

Each group receives a case study and has 30 minutes to discuss the questions. One person in each group will present the answers.

Please remember that there may not be one correct answer! All of the solutions depend on the context and remembering to do what is the best thing for the child in the circumstances. So feel free to give your opinions and try to work out what you would do if this was happening in your village, community, church or school”

Margaret

⁴ https://www.d2l.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/FINAL_D2L_5-STEPS-BOOKLET.pdf

Margaret lives with her mother. She is 12. Her uncle helps her with her school fees. When her uncle comes to town he stays in the home with Margaret and her mother. He drinks a lot of alcohol and when he drinks he gets too friendly with Margaret. Last time he came when Margaret's mother went out he called Margaret and told her to touch him in his private parts. He gave her 200 shillings. Margaret agreed because she didn't know what to do.

Uncle is coming again next week.

- Is this abuse? If so, what kind of abuse?
- What should Margaret do?
- Should she tell someone? Who could she tell?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of telling someone?
- If you were Margaret's friend what advice would you give her?

Peter

Peter is ten years old. He is an orphan who lives in Burundi. He lived with his grandmother until last year then she died. He lived on the street in Bujumbura for two months and then he got sick and lay begging on the side of the street under a blanket. He was noticed by Mrs John, who used to pass by daily. Mrs John was a kind woman. She could see that Peter was a clever boy. She enabled Peter to get a scholarship to the boarding school that she teaches at. Peter shares a dormitory room with six boys. Last night two older boys, Eric and Henry, grabbed Peter and forced him to lie on the floor on his stomach while they pulled his shorts & underwear down. Then they sat on him like they were riding a donkey. They laughed at him. The other boys watched. Eric told Peter they do this to all new boys. Eric told him that if he told anyone then they would poison his food. Peter is ashamed and frightened. When he was on the streets some older boys did bad things to him. He doesn't want to go back to the streets but now he is thinking he will run away.

- Why was Peter already in a weak position even before he joined the boarding school?
- Why do you think the boys chose Peter to do this thing to?
- Why do you think Eric and Henry are acting in this way? Why did the other boys just watch without telling anyone else?
- What should Peter do now?
- Should he tell somebody?
- Why might he decide not to tell anyone? Who could he tell?
- What other children might be at risk? If Peter tells Mrs John what should Mrs John do?
- What could the school do to reduce similar risks to children?

Gloria

Gloria is 13 years old, and she attends Sunshine School. She is a good student. She lives with her sister and her mother. Last week her tutor Mr Edwin asked her to stay after class by herself. He spoke very nicely to Gloria. He returned her homework and

she had very good marks. He gave her some money for a soda. Then he said, 'come close'. He touched her hair and her face and then rubbed her back. Gloria felt uncomfortable. Mr Edwin said, 'good students get good marks...and you want good marks, don't you?' He told her that he wanted to give her private tuition. He told her to come back next Tuesday for more private tuition.

- What has Mr Edwin done wrong?
- Why didn't Gloria tell him to stop?
- What should Gloria do now?
- If she tells her mother what can her mother do?
- Why is it wrong for Mr Edwin to offer her private tuition?
- What will happen if Gloria goes back as planned next Tuesday?
- What could Sunshine School do to protect students from exploitation?

Vincent

Vincent lives with his sisters, brothers and parents. His parents have a business in the town selling electronics. Vincent is 13. At Christmas Vincent's dad gave each child a smartphone so they could do research for their lessons and learn things. Vincent has discovered a lot of things on the internet. At night in bed he plays video games and goes on social media. He also watches videos of pornography. He knows what he is doing is wrong but he can't stop. He knows if he tells his dad, he will get his smartphone taken away.

- Is it a problem? Why?
- What should Vincent do?
- Who can he talk to?
- If he told you, how would you help him?
- Do you see the dangers of the internet?
- What others child protection dangers are there?
- What can we do to help young people with this problem?

Josephine

Josephine is seven years old. She lives with her father and brother. Her mother died last year. They live in a small house with two rooms. She sleeps in one bed with her brother Patrick. He is 15. Last month in the middle of the night her brother kissed Josephine on the mouth and put his tongue inside her mouth. Josephine told him to stop. Patrick said he was just dreaming. He told her not to tell anyone or he will say she is lying. Now he is touching her every night in her private areas. Josephine pretends she is asleep. She doesn't know what to do. She is ashamed and afraid.

- Is this a problem? Why?
- What are the causes of this problem?
- What will happen if it doesn't stop?
- How do you think Josephine feels?
- Why do you think her brother is doing this?
- What could help the situation to change?
- If Josephine was a pupil in your classroom, what signs might indicate that there is a problem?

- If Josephine tells a tutor, what should they do?



Feedback

Let's hear from the groups and see what answers you came up with? Make sure you find out why they made the decisions they did.

Key message: sometimes it can feel as though nothing can be done. But remember there is always something you can do. One very important thing is to tell the child who is being abused, 'this is not your fault'.

Let's revisit one of the case studies. Do you remember Peter from Bujumbura?

Peter decided to tell Mrs John about what happened with Eric and Henry. He was frightened of what she might say. But Mrs John listened well. She said to Peter 'I am so sorry this has happened to you' Please leave it with me. Mrs John went to speak to the matron of the dormitory. Matron decided that it would be better not to punish Eric and Henry because it would make it worse for Peter. She also knew that both Eric and Henry has been badly abused as children. She decided today was the day to put all the mattresses in the sunshine to clean them. Then she said that today was the day to rearrange all the dormitories so that the younger boys would be separated from the older boys. She told the boys this was to ensure the younger boys got enough sleep and went to bed early. Matron also decided to give a talk each month to the boys explaining the importance of treating each other with kindness and that bullying is not tolerated. She also put a 'suggestion box' in the dorm where anyone could put in a note anonymously if they wanted to say anything. Peter slept in a different dormitory that night and is happy to say on at school. Matron told him he could come to her anytime if he had any worries.



Think about these questions in your small groups:

- What do you think about this?
- Do you agree or disagree with what happened? Explain.
- What would you do differently? Why?
- Who were the important people who helped in this story?
- How was matron wise in the way she managed this?



Summing up

- Sexual abuse can happen in all kinds of ways: contact, non-contact, by an adult, by other children.

- Children are like the rest of us- they are not ‘little angels’ and they are subject to sinful behaviour. Be aware of the ways children can harm or abuse each other.
- When a child is beginning to make wrong decisions and get into pornography addiction, they need the support and help to change their path before it gets too far along the way.
- When a child is being abused, it is always wrong! It is never the fault of the victim.
- The solutions can be difficult, but you need to do the best you can without making it worse for the child.
- Try to make decisions in a small group of wise and kind people who understand how serious this is.
- Be sure you know what is available in your own community: 10 cell chairperson; social welfare; rape crisis; police gender desk; chief; local advocates.
- Use every opportunity to prevent abuse from happening. Make communities aware.
- Empower children to say Run, Yell! Tell! If they can.



Personal reflection

Five minutes:

Think about: secrecy, isolation and power – how can you help to reduce these?

What one thing can you begin to do to be part of the solution?

Close in prayer: Father, your light shines upon us and overcomes all the darkness. Please help us to bring our hearts before you in honesty and humility. Cleanse us from every sin. Help us to love darkness more than light, and to seek holiness for ourselves and our children. Protect your little ones by the power of your name. Amen

Lesson Twelve: Empowering Children

(supplies: five stones)

Objective: How to help children not to stay silent about danger. This is a lesson plan for adults to give to children about staying safe.

Hook: Do some exercises eg run on the spot! We don't need to run anywhere now but I am staying fit so I can run away if I need to without getting tired. Practice gets us ready.

Key points: Teach children before something happens. Help them to find safe people who can help them.



Main teaching

Do you remember the story of David and Goliath? Goliath was a giant. David was a young boy. Do you remember how David killed Goliath with a slingshot and a stone? How do you think David was able to kill Goliath so easily? If we read 1 Sam 17:34-35 we see that David has had lots of practice in killing lions and bears! He was so good at this that he was ready for Goliath.

Children, even though God loves us, there are many bad things in the world. We have to keep our eyes open to see any dangers. We have to be ready to run away and to defend ourselves. We have to make wise decisions when we see or hear something that might be harmful.

For example: Imagine someone asks you to do something that is wrong, like stealing.

- How can you do the right thing?
- What sort of things would make it hard to say no? (everyone else doing it, you want to belong, it's too hard to refuse)
- What would you do if you were tempted?

Another example: someone might ask you to do something that is not right, for example to ask you to touch them in their private areas, or to look at something on the internet that is wrong, like pornography.

- What sort of things make it hard to say No? (the person is threatening you, you don't know what to do or say, you are ashamed or embarrassed, you have already done it before and now it's hard to say no.

Remember David: he was a young boy but as a shepherd he practised skills that helped him to get better at conquering his fears and fighting evil. He chose to use the skills he had to beat God's enemy, Goliath.

If you are being pressured to do things that are sexual, remember that you are a child and it is always wrong-even if it's another child. Let's look at some skills you can practise that will help you in all sorts of situations..



Remember that David had five stones like these ones:

Each stone represents something to remember about safety

1. It is always wrong for anyone to hurt a child. Sometimes a person might try to touch you in your private areas, or make you touch them. This is wrong.
2. If anyone asks you to do something that is wrong, you can say NO!. Practice saying 'NO' together. What sort of things might someone ask you to do? (skip school, drink alcohol, steal, they might show you bad pictures on their phone, touch you). All shout 'NO' together. Anyone want to come here and demonstrate?
3. After you have said NO you must GO. Leave the place . Run away if you must.
4. TELL a safe person. A safe person is someone you can trust and you know will give you good advice. Who are the safe people in your life? Can you think of any? It might be your mother or father, it might be a teacher or a grandmother. Tell each other who your safe person/people are.
5. Don't keep it a secret.

Quick message: **NO, GO, TELL!**

Here is a story about Joshua

Joshua is 11 and lives with his family. He loves playing football in the big field near their home every Friday. The older boys hang around after the coach has gone home and they watch videos on their phones. Last week Joshua stayed there with them. The videos are of naked people dancing and kissing and doing things that make Joshua feel dirty and ashamed. He knows it's wrong but he is also curious and keeps thinking about what he saw.

- What advice would you give Joshua for when he goes to football practise this Friday? (he could leave early and not hang around/ he could close his eyes and turn away when they show him anything/ he could tell someone about it/ what else could he do?)

Here is a story about Mary

Mary is eight and lives with her grandmother and her brothers and sisters. She shares a bed with her brothers and sister. Her brother John is 14. He has started trying to kiss Mary at night. She hates it.

- Why do you think John is doing this?
- What will happen if nothing changes?
- What advice would you give Mary?

The Bible tells us that God is always with us, guiding and helping us.

Ps 32: 8. I will teach you in the way that you should go. I will counsel you and watch over you.

Close in prayer Dear Lord, thank you that you will always help me to do the right thing.
Please help me to be brave and to speak up in order to protect myself and others.
Amen

Lesson Thirteen: Disclosure

Objective: To know how to listen well if a child discloses abuse.

Key points: Being a person a child can talk to requires an open posture, not interrupting, body language, empathy.

Hook: Does anyone know what an example of a good listener is? What are some examples of good listening? Do a little example with a volunteer – they are telling you about what they did yesterday and you are distracted, looking elsewhere, on your phone.

What does it feel like when you are speaking but the person is not really listening to you? You feel disrespected, ignored, not valued.



Main Teaching

Disclosure is when a child tells someone about a secret or abuse that is going on. Why do you think it could be hard for a child to tell someone what is happening?

(shame, fear, don't know the words, afraid of consequences, don't really understand it is abuse or that it is wrong, fear they won't be believed)

When a child tries to tell you about something, it is very important to react well! If you respond with anger or disbelief the child will never talk to you about it again and the activity or the abuse will continue.

Listening to a disclosure:

- Watch for signs that a child wants to talk. (for example, hanging around, acting strangely...)
- When they begin to tell you they will tell you in slow sections.... Do not hurry them by saying , 'what is it??, speak up! Hurry up! I am late!'
- Stay calm, listen, be supportive.
- Do not get emotional
- Be kind, be comforting.
- Say 'thank you for telling me' I want to help you.
- Reassure them that they can always talk to you.
- Tell them you will have to share with someone else but that you will be discreet and confidential.



Small groups:

Do a demonstration of a child who is afraid and ashamed because someone showed her/him some pornographic videos on their phone. The child is trying to tell their parent. Act out a good example of a parent encouraging the child to talk in an understanding way.



What to do when a child has told you something ?

- Think about what the child has said
- What is the risk and where is the risk?
- What can be done now to stop this continuing?
- What does the child want to happen next? Consider this.
- If you intervene now, will it make it better for the child or worse?
- Who else can you talk to?
- Does this need to be reported to police or social welfare?
- What are the risks to the child if you report it?
- Should the parents be immediately involved? why or why not?
- Have a meeting with one or two other wise people who can help make the right decision.

Conclusion

Remember that **you** may be a child's safe person. Don't miss the opportunity to be available for them and to show your support.

Close in prayer. Father help me to be a refuge for children who are in danger.

SECTION TWO

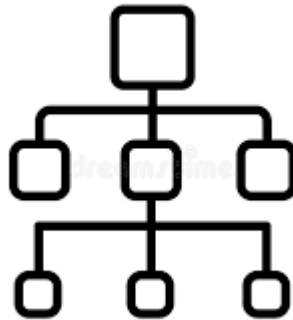
Using your voice to protect children

Influencing Leaders and Churches

You are working with children in a church, in Sunday school or small charity where you see that there is a problem, but you feel as though nobody cares, what can you do? How can you communicate well with your leaders to help create a safer and healthier place for children to flourish? If you are a leader or in a position of influence, how can you communicate that to people who are not interested?

Activity:

Draw a diagram to show the structure of your organisation. As you draw, think about all the people involved and where they fit



Who are the leaders? For example, Director, CEO, Bishop, Elders, Pastor, Board, Project director, headteacher

Who are the beneficiaries (the people you are helping), the decision makers, the people who clean, deliver goods, make tea. Where are the children.

Where do you fit? What is your role?

It isn't only positional power that matters. Sometimes people have power and influence without having a position.

What are the types of power you see?

Status, money, professional, personality, connections.

What is influence? Influence is the ability to persuade others.

Who are the influencers in your church, or ministry?

Women? Older people? The pastor's wife?

For example: Mr Edward is one of the most respected people in the church. Mr Edward is a retired headmaster. He is almost 80 years old. He used to be an elder but he doesn't have a role in the church anymore. But when Mr Edwards speaks everyone listens.

What about you? What influence do you have?

Who are the people who can help you to extend your voice?

For example: Rose is a house help for a Mrs Goma, a businesswoman. Rose is a faithful worker who is honest and reliable. Rose notices that the children next door are often badly beaten by their father who is a police officer. Rose feels as though she has no power to intervene. But one day she politely asks Mrs Goma for her advice. Mrs Goma said she would speak to the mother about what is happening.

In that example, why was Rose able to influence Mrs Goma? (she was a person of good character and trustworthy). Why was Mrs Goma able to do something? Because she has the confidence to get involved.

In churches of NGOs it is usually the leadership who have influence in bringing about change.

Why does it matter that your leaders are in agreement on the importance of protecting children?

- Because they are the ones whose authority counts.
- People are accountable to leadership
- They need to agree to the policies and rules and enforce them.
- They lead by example.

If you are in a Church or NGO then you should consider having a Policy and a Code of Conduct. Read the chapter on having a policy.

Child Protection in churches and NGOs

This section is for anyone working in a church or a non-governmental organisation (NGO) such as a children's home, youth project or children's charity. You can use it to educate yourself or to teach other leaders and children's workers.

Very often the children you are taking care of, leading or working with come from vulnerable situations. This means they are even more in need of support and protection.

Awareness

If you run a ministry or project which children come to, then you have a responsibility to make sure that children are not exposed to preventable harm or abuse.

For example: you run a weekly after-school club 3-6pm at the church compound. Sometimes there are 20 children, sometimes there are 50. Occasionally older boys come in and sit over behind the chicken sheds. You suspect they are showing the younger children unsuitable and inappropriate videos on their phones. You can't control what goes on outside the club time but you can set standards and rules for inside.



What sort of things could you do to address this situation?

Why should Christians care about protecting children?

If you are a Christian institution then you will have or should have a gospel perspective.

The gospel is **good news**. Protecting children is not a western idea. God's word is universal across all centuries, cultures and languages. Despite the challenges all around us, as Christians we are called to obey the principles in Scripture.

What does Scripture say about children and abuse?

- Children are fully human and made in God's image. Gen 1:28
- Children are gifts of God to us all. Ps 127:3
- Children are a sign of the Kingdom. Matthew 18:2-3
- The systems of the world are broken (Rom 8:22) and therefore sin is everywhere
- All have sinned (Rom 3:23) and even Christians are capable of sinning against children.
- Satan comes as a thief to destroy. John 10:10
- Satan is like a wolf dressed in sheep's clothing to deceive the church. Matthew 7:15
- Children are in need of special care and protection. Proverbs 31:8

- Anyone who causes a child to stumble will be subject to harsh judgement. Matthew 18:5-6
- The oppressed have no comforter because the oppressors have all the power. Ecc 4:1
- God works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. Ps 103:6
- We are subject to the authority and laws of our governments. Rom 13:1

We don't need to search for the Bible verses that talk about children. When we read the Scriptures, we need to remember that **children are people too**. This means that everything the Bible tells us about how to treat one another applies to children. For example, being gentle, kind, honest, humble and patient. Col 3:12

When we remember that God calls us to **act justly and love mercy**, this means that we have a biblical, moral and legal obligation to speak up, do what we can to prevent harm and to protect children. Micah 6:8

Hypocrisy

Being a hypocrite is when we say one thing and do another. We have high standards for others but we don't follow them ourselves. For example, we tell other people to fast and pray but we don't do it. Or we punish others for stealing but we steal.

Hypocrisy is something that made Jesus very angry and which caused him pain. He often looked at the religious leaders and was distressed by their hard hearts. You can read Mark 11 and 12 to see how Jesus challenged the hypocrites. Read Mark 12:38-40.



When we are thinking about protecting children, where do we find hypocrisy?

Here are some examples:

Helena sings every week in the church choir and often goes on tours around the country. Her children sit in church and watch her singing, "Jesus loves the little children!" But outside of church when they are at home, Helena is an angry woman and says cruel things to her children, with threats that she will throw them out of the home.

- Why is Helena acting in this way?
- Why do you think she is a different person at church from at home?
- How do you think her children feel?

Pastor William is a powerful preacher and knows his Bible very well. Everyone loves to listen to him and he sometimes does mission outreach in the town. But at home, he beats his wife and children. His wife Esther feels so ashamed that she can't tell anybody.

- What do you think about this situation?
- Have you seen this sort of hypocrisy in your church or community?
- Why do you think Esther feels ashamed?
- What advice would you give Pastor William?
- What advice would you give Esther?

Dickson is a church youth leader and also director of the national youth ministry RISE UP. He teaches and writes books about sexual purity and personal transformation. He has a team of young people that he mentors. The team visits other churches and is invited to events. Dickson invites the younger girls into his guesthouse room, gives them local brew and has sex with them.

- What do you think about this situation?
- Do you ever see examples like this?
- What is Dickson doing wrong?
- How is he able to escape detection?
- If you saw this happening, what would you do?
- What should the church leaders do?
- What rules do you think should be in place to prevent something like this?
- Give three examples of prevention.

The gospel transforms us

Remember, we are all learning, growing changing and by God's grace we are forgiven. BUT God has said that if we cherish sin in our hearts then He will not hear us. Each of those examples is a person who is repeating the same sin of hypocrisy without being challenged. They are using God's name and God's work as an excuse to be praised by others. But inside there is darkness and sin. Meanwhile, children are being hurt and abused. Read Mark 12:38-40 again. We cannot continue like this without being punished.

Being an advocate for children:

Proverbs 31:8 tells us to speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves. If we do this we can help prevent abuse to children?

We need to have courage to speak up when we see something wrong.

We need to encourage children to share their fears and to listen to them.

When the Bible talks about how we should treat each other we are reminded that how we treat children matters to God!

Preventing sexual abuse of children

Abuse is real in our churches and in Christian communities. If we deny this then we will not be able to help protect children.

Case study Miriam

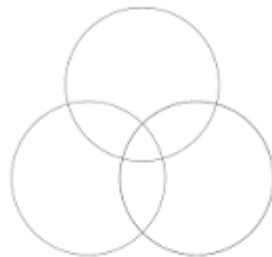
Miriam (age 13) cleans the church after the morning services. One of the elders called her into his office and asked her to bring him tea. He locked the door. Then he exposed his private parts to her and made her touch him. Miriam felt ashamed and guilty. She tried to refuse but he said she would lose her job. He said if she told anyone nobody would believe her.



- Why is it happening?
- Why can't Miriam tell anyone?
- What is your advice to Miriam?
- Do you have other examples of where this is happening?

Three things need to be in place for sexual abuse to occur.

Draw this diagram and label each circle



1. Abuser: Someone decides or is tempted to abuse a child
2. Victim: a child who cannot refuse or get away
3. Opportunity: a time and place where it can happen

The space in the middle where the three circles overlap is the dangerous space.

Abuser + victim + opportunity = dangerous risk that abuse will happen

Think about each circle:

Abuser: what sort of person abuses a child? It could be someone who looks very normal and very ordinary. Don't just trust them simply because they are a religious person.

Victim: a child who does not know how to refuse or run away, a child in need of a reward such as money or food.

Opportunity: a means of getting the child alone eg a secret place where they cannot be seen.

In order to reduce risk you must look at each of these circles! The easiest way to reduce risk is to prevent the opportunity. This means looking at the physical geography of your ministry or work. The Bible tells us that the sinful deeds are done in darkness where nobody can see. Eph 5: 11-12.

Now think about your own church or organisation.

- List the activities that take place.
- Which of these are for children or have children present?
- Is it easy for an adult to be alone with a child without being seen?
- Are there dark, secret places inside or outside?
- Do the office doors or rooms have windows in them so that you can see in?
- Where could children be easily targeted? For example, toilets.
- Are there activities where an adult is alone with a child where nobody can see them? For example, driving them home, or activities overnight?

The Bible tells us to walk in the light. So make sure that when you are working with children that nothing is done in secret. Ask yourself, "Is it possible for others to see me?"

Remember that secrecy, isolation and darkness are high risk and you should look at ways of avoid them and creating openness, visibility and accountability.

Here are some strategies that could help to increase transparency with children (these are just suggestions that may be helpful, but you may think of more):

- Anybody who needs to be alone with a child (for example first aid) should tell another adult where they are and for how long.
- Avoid being with a child alone in rooms with no windows.
- Keep doors open
- Keep curtains open.
- Aim to do children's activities in daylight hours.
- Meet in an open area for counselling, for example, a banda where people can see but not hear
- Have activities with more than one child- for example, tuition.
- If this is an intimate or medical treatment make sure the child's caregiver or guardian is present.
- Let the child sit closest to the door, so that they don't feel overwhelmed or trapped.
- Never go into a toilet alone with a child (unless it's a relative).
- Avoid doing anything where you could be accused of wrongdoing.

Here are some case studies:

Rachel is a new counsellor at Victory Church and she often works with young refugees. She has been given a room on the top floor of the church building and was told she could use it between 5pm and 8pm.

- What are the problems with this arrangement?
- What do you think Rachel should suggest to make this a safer arrangement?

Robert is one of the social workers at REUNITE Street Project. This project works to reconcile runaway children and young people with their families. He takes children on long journeys back to their villages. They often have to stay at a guesthouse overnight and in order to save money, Robert shares a room with the child.

- What are the possible problems which may arise?
- What do you think could be done to prevent any problems?

Joseph is a physiotherapist and he works at HOPE Centre for children with cerebral palsy and other disabilities. Families bring their children into the centre for exercises and massage. The two community workers, Lily and Stella also help. There is one big room for the children to play in and there is a small room where Joseph does his treatment.

- Why do you think that these children are even more vulnerable than other children who are not disabled.
- What should Joseph do to ensure that everything is above board? What should he avoid?

Writing a policy

What is a policy?

A policy is the spoken or unspoken rules of your church or NGO. These exist even if you don't call them a policy! For example, the church 'dress code'. Everyone at church knows that certain clothing is acceptable or unacceptable. Everyone knows what sort of clothes they should wear at a funeral or a wedding. Some churches have a financial policy, for example that all the money collected in the offering should be counted by two people. The policy might not actually be written down but everyone knows what the expectation is.



- Do you think policies should be written down?
- What is the advantage of a verbal policy? (for people who can't read well, easily communicated)
- What is the advantage of writing it down? (if you have new people always coming and going, it helps to be consistent; if you are relying on donor money this is usually a requirement)

A Child Protection policy outlines your commitment to keeping children safe. It includes your standard on who you will accept people for children's ministry, for example their character and reputation. It explains how anybody with a problem or concern about abuse can get help without being dismissed. Usually it gives the name of a person who is designated to be the Child Protection Coordinator.

Policies need to be kept up to date! A written policy that nobody reads, in a language that is not understood is useless! It is better not to have a policy than to have one which has no meaning.

If you are a small organisation and you think that the rules are communicated well already then you might decide to wait before you write a policy. BUT everyone should have a Code of Conduct!



Think about the Ten Commandments in Exodus 21. God gave the Israelites 10 rules to follow. Moses wrote them down. In a similar way, a Code of Conduct gives everyone clear instructions on what they must do and not do.

What is a Child Protection Code of Conduct?

- It is a written document
- It is clear about the rules and expectations
- It means that everyone knows what they are supposed to do to protect children.
- It is short and easy to understand

- Everyone can see it

Example of a code of conduct for a church

Hosanna Church

Hosanna Church is a beautiful and healthy place for children to grow and learn about Jesus. In order to keep them safe. These are our rules:

- *Adults are examples to children and should be role models for them.*
- *All forms of abuse are condemned in this church.*
- *It is prohibited for an adult to be alone with a child in a closed room. Keep doors open.*
- *It is not permitted for a man to counsel a girl without a woman present.*
- *On youth trips there must be adequate numbers to supervise youth.*
- *It is not permitted for a youth leader to sleep in the same bed as the youth.*
- *No sexual language or gestures or speech is permitted.*
- *All forms of intimate contact between an adult and a child are prohibited, for example, touching in private areas, stroking, kissing.*
- *It is not permitted for any Sunday school teachers to hit a child. All discipline needs should be referred to the parents.*
- *It is not acceptable for a Sunday school teacher or elder to shout at or humiliate a child. Instruct children firmly but with gentleness so that they are not afraid to learn.*

If you see any of the above, please pass on the information to Mrs Gloria Mugo who is responsible for Child Protection in this church and is available on this number: 0121 12345.



What do you think about this Code of Conduct? What do you like about it? How would you improve it?

Example of a child protection school policy

St Joseph's School in Mbunga District, Tanzania, decided to write a policy for their school. Read it and then discuss.

St Joseph's school motto: Together we can succeed!

Child Protection Statement

St Joseph's School aims to create safe and happy environment for children to learn. We believe investing in children means that we are investing in the future of our country. We want to develop confident, compassionate, engaged and active citizens. We want to encourage our students to have big dreams. We care about the students in our school and at home. A good home life helps children to thrive. Children need encouragement and support from both parents and teachers. St Joseph's expects that all parents will support this policy.

Statement of Expectations

1. Teachers

- *Teachers are role models to the pupils. They must demonstrate self-control, quiet authority and fairness.*
- *They must show students respect and kindness.*
- *They must use words to teach and encourage not to humiliate.*
- *There must be no hitting of a child across their head or face.*
- *There must be no sexual contact or any sexual communication with a pupil.*
- *A stick may only be used on the buttocks over clothing and no more than three times in one discipline.*
- *Any physical discipline will be recorded in the discipline book and reported to the headteacher by the end of the day.*

2. Students

- *Students are expected to act with politeness, respect and kindness to all people, especially younger pupils.*
- *Fighting, swearing, bullying or any inappropriate behaviour is forbidden and will be addressed with appropriate discipline.*
- *Any pupil with a concern can put a note in the suggestion box or go to the Child Welfare Coordinator.*

3. Parents

- *Parents are expected to support the school's values and to create a home environment that increases the child's learning capacity.*
- *This means adequate sleep and breakfast before school.*
- *The school will call in parents in the situation where a pupil is being overly chastised at home or seems to be suffering due to their home life.*

School environment

- *There will be a lesson each term on personal safety.*
- *There will be separate girls' and boys' toilets*
- *Only one child in the toilet at the same time.*
- *No teacher may be alone with a pupil with the door closed.*
- *All activities are open and transparent.*

Reports of abuse

The Child Welfare Coordinator will receive any concerns of abuse or harm or risk in the school. On receipt of the report, she/ he will gather a small committee of staff and assess the report.

Ask several questions to understand the seriousness of the concern and any additional risks.

Ask what, why, how, where, when, who? Get the whole story.

Document everything.

Options-depending on seriousness.:

Discipline of staff or child who has caused harm.

Address the risk that led to it- for example, are the above expectations not being met?

If a home issue, convene a meeting with parents.

Make plan of action and accountability.

You can seek advice from the gender desk at the police station or from social welfare.

If law has been broken, consider reporting to the police.

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Discuss:

- What do you like about this policy?
- What would you do to improve it?

Case Study: Brave Esther at Glory Church

Read this case study in a group and discuss after each part to see how one person can make a difference to children's safety.

Part one:

Esther teaches Sunday school at Glory Church. Every week there are about 50 children including babies and teens. There are two Sunday school teachers but sometimes there is an emergency and one of them doesn't turn up. The small children wander in and out of class. Their parents are in the church service. But some of the children come from the neighbourhood.

Last month in the rainy season an 18 month old child was found face down in the ditch outside the classroom. He nearly drowned but he got pulled out by one of the older children and he was alright in the end. Nobody seemed to care very much and just said 'Praise the Lord, God is protecting us'.

- What are all the different risks for children in this situation?
- What are the obstacles to change?
- What are the personal challenges for Esther?
- What can she do about it?

Part two:

Esther spoke with some of the other Sunday school teachers and they asked to talk with one of the elders, Eric who is also a parent of six children in the Sunday school. Together they had a meeting and spoke to the Pastor about the concerns. The Pastor said that the challenge is that many children from outside the church come to Sunday school but that this is also a blessing and a chance to be a witness to them. He said it would be best to have more teachers. He would announce it at church, and he did but very quickly between other notices.

A month later nothing has changed. Nobody offered to help with Sunday school. Esther is very frustrated. Last week, her co-teacher was sick and so Esther was on her own and 70 children came to Sunday school. She had to use a stick to control some of the children who weren't behaving. She knows this is not good but she can see no other way. She feels as though she is despairing.

- What do you think could happen if nothing changes?
- What can Esther do now?

Part three:

Esther prayed for help and wisdom. She then remembered another woman called Mary who sells roses on the corner. Mary attends a different church and so next time Esther passed by she stopped and asked her about the Sunday school there. Mary said that in three weeks they were having a special Child Protection training day being run by a local group. She invited Esther to attend. Esther went to the training day and she eagerly wrote down some good ideas. She spoke again to Elder Eric. He suggested she

share her ideas with Miriam the pastors' wife. Miriam suggested that on International Children's Day the mothers group could lead the whole service and Esther could share some of the things she had learned.

- What good things have happened since Esther prayed?

Part four:

In the service on International Children's Day, this is what Esther shared:

"Children are a heritage. Our country is being built by a new generation.

Just as we till the land and dig in order to plant corn, we must prepare a healthy environment for children.

Corn needs rain and sunshine. Not too much rain and not too much sunshine. Children need healthy discipline and warm love. They are like seedlings they must not be trampled on".

She challenged them to think about whether or not Glory Church is planting a harvest of healthy children. She shared how there are over 60 children in the church and many outside who are willing and eager to learn. But who will teach them?

She confessed she was weary and had begun to despair about Sunday school. She confessed she had lost her temper and used the branch too severely on some children. She asked the children for forgiveness.

Pastor Eric invited the Pastor to repeat a call for Sunday school teachers.

Miriam stood up and said she would lead the way and gather a Sunday school team who she would personally approach. She said, "we have been blind and deaf! We are responsible for the new generation, why are we ignoring these children God has given us?" Elder Eric said that he saw the need to keep the church compound safe and that he would personally put a fence around the ditch where it was most dangerous.

The Pastor asked the church to stand and repent. The children were asked to come forward and receive a blessing.

- What happened in the service which proved to be an effective way of communicating with the church and persuading them?
- Who had influence here?
- What can you see here which is rooted in a Biblical perspective?
- Which Scriptures back up what was said?

Further case study for discussion

George

George's mum died last year. George is seven years old. Now his dad has a new wife. She already has children. She is cruel to George when his dad isn't there. She tells him he is useless and stupid. She gives the other children good food but only gives George the leftovers.

- Is this abuse? What kind of abuse?
- How do you think George feels?
- What should George do?

Reflection

Read Mark 10:13-16

Jesus seemed to always find time for children and often used them as illustrations of the type of people believers should be. Therefore, he rebuked the disciples! He warned his followers not to despise children or to cause them to stumble. Children were valuable and were to be treated with love and care. So, he took them in his lap. It was a safe place for them. Why was the lap of Jesus a safe place?

First, because it was a place of protection. The disciples were rebuking the children and their parents. They were obviously annoyed and probably were frightening and threatening the little ones as they tried to push the children away from Jesus. This raises the question, "Have we made our churches, our congregations, and our schools places of protection from child abuse, for our children?"

Secondly, the lap of Jesus as a safe place, was a place of acceptance! Jesus did not relegate the children to a second-class status. No, instead he said, in verse 14: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them! That is welcome! That is acceptance! Are our churches welcoming and accepting of children? That is what a safe place is all about. Acceptance speaks to our emotional needs. A welcoming place reassures us that we are loved.

Thirdly, the lap of Jesus as a safe place, was a place of affirmation! Jesus said, in verse 14, "For the kingdom of God, belongs to such as these!" What was Jesus doing here? He was ascribing great value and worth to the children. The disciples did not see them as being valuable or having enough worth to come into the presence of Jesus. They thought only adults and the religious and society leaders had enough status to come to Jesus and to occupy his time. But when Jesus took them in his lap, it became a safe place that elevated their status. It affirmed their value and worth. And so, we must ask the question, "Are our churches and schools safe places that affirm the value and worth of our children?" How can a church affirm the value and worth of our children?"

from the book 'Safe!' By Dr Philip Morrison.

Further reading and resources

VIVA Network, Creating Safe Environments for Children. <http://learn.viva.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Creating-Safe-Environments-for-Children.pdf>

<https://raisingvoices.org/children/the-good-school-toolkit/>
