

Are We Protecting Our Youth Ministry?

12 question checklist to assess the safeguards you have in place.

by Karen Arneson

Use the following checklist to gauge how your church is doing at protecting youth in its ministry.

HOW ARE WE DOING	YES	NO	WORKING ON THIS
Have all youth ministry workers been trained in supervision of youth?			
Are annual training sessions required of all youth ministry workers?			
Has our church obtained sexual misconduct liability insurance or added specific youth activities as a rider to our liability insurance?			
Do we have a written policy on sexual misconduct?			
If yes, does it include a definition of sexual misconduct?			
Does it include standards of conduct for those involved with our youth?			
Is there a clearly defined procedure for dealing with misconduct?			
Has an attorney reviewed our policy?			
Do all youth ministry leaders and workers have an application and authorization to conduct a background check on file?			
Have background checks been completed on all youth ministry workers?			
Is there written record of reference checks for all youth ministry workers?			
Have written supervision guidelines been established?			

As a young, newly married couple, my husband and I worked with a small group of teens through our church. Barely older than the kids we worked with, I remember our struggle to maintain boundaries. I particularly remember one girl who came from an unchurched family. She made no secret of the crush she developed on my husband.

Looking back, I recognize the risk we naively assumed. The only instruction we had from church leadership was to befriend the teens, and provide spiritual instruction and some form of entertainment. No one thought about written policies and procedures to safeguard the ministry and those involved. We were on our own. That was more than thirty years ago.

Times have changed and today's youth worker needs to be more aware than ever of the risks involved in ministry.