



# Risk Management

Best Practices for VBS Safety  
Presented by Kevin Benta  
Director Property and Risk Management

CONNECTING  
 LIKE  
JESUS





# VBS Safety BIG Idea

CONNECTING  
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**JESUS**

CONNECTING  
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**JESUS**

Includes Managing Risks



“

Today's Theme Text

*“Train up a child in the way he should go [teaching him to seek God's wisdom and will for his abilities and talents], even when he is old he will not depart from it.” – Proverbs 22:6*





# Accidents/Incidents Can be Costly

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- Victims?
- Financial?
- Ministry?





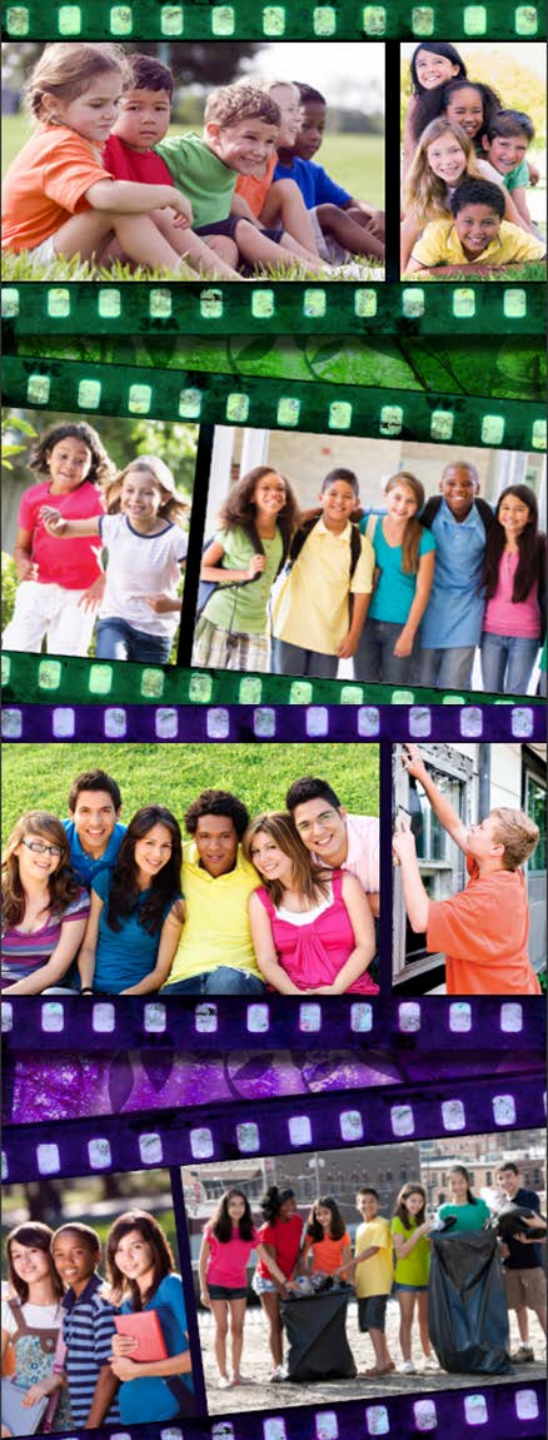
# VBS Safety BIG Idea

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## VBS Safety Goal

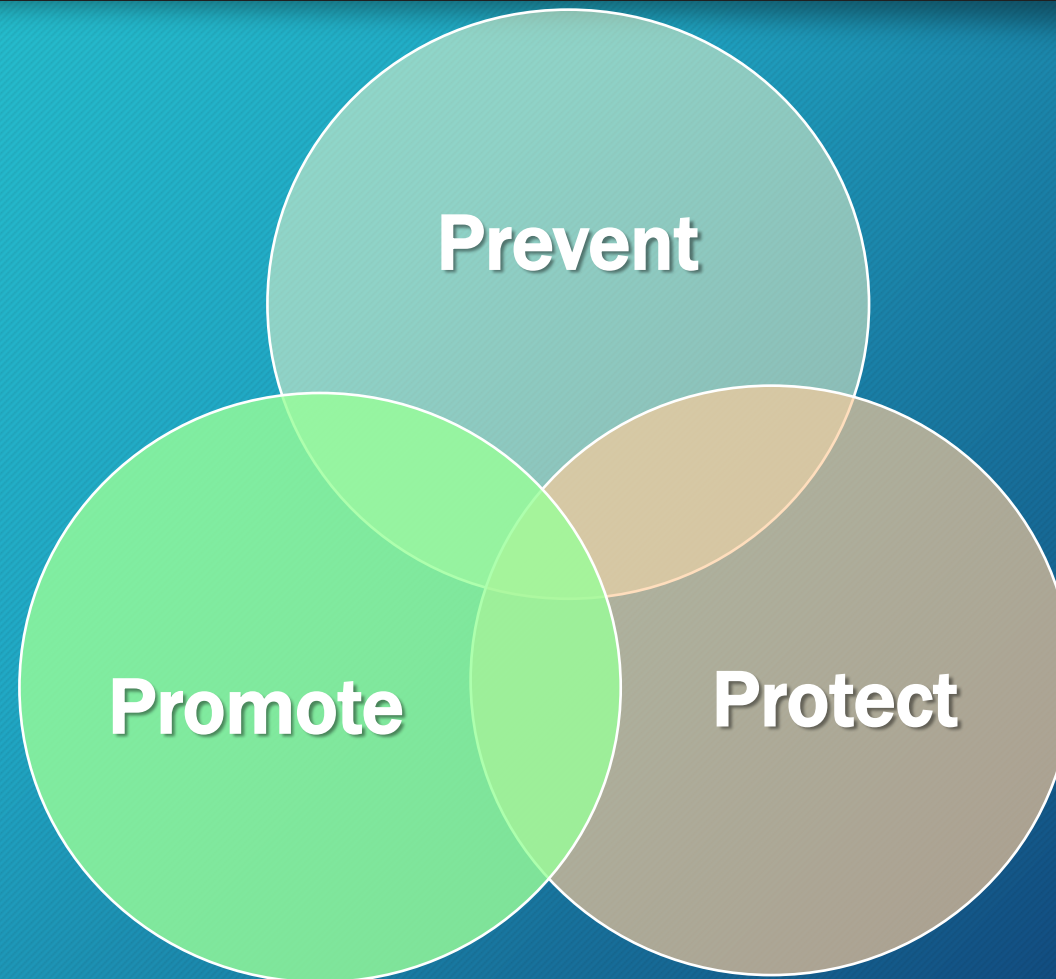
Create a fun and safe environment for the children attending our VBS programs by decreasing isolation and increasing accountability.



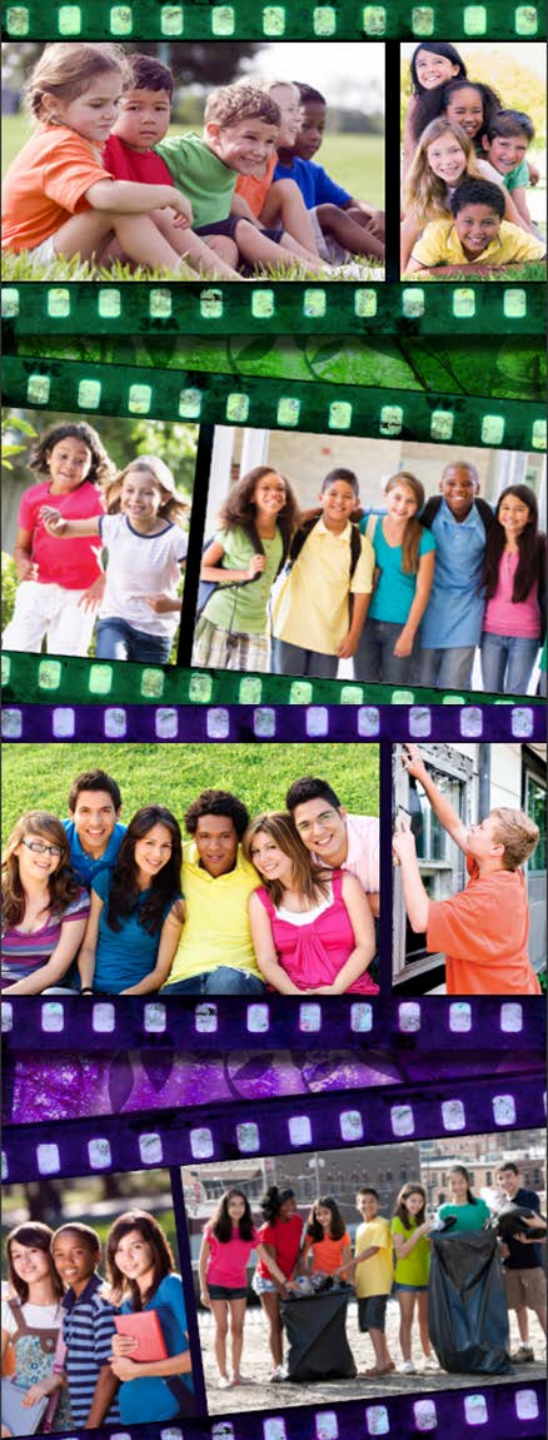


# Three Ps That Safeguard Your VBS Ministry

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# Safeguarding your VBS Ministry

CONNECTING  
**OLIVE**  
**JESUS**

Prevent





# Prevention

CONNECTING  
**LIKE**  
**JESUS**

**Premises**

**People**

**Policies**

**Practice**





# Prevention: Premises

CONNECTING  
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**JESUS**

Premises





# Access the Premises

CONNECTING  
**LIKE**  
**JESUS**







# Access the Premises

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**LIKE**  
**JESUS**

- Know your facility, e.g. offices, closets, empty rooms, bathrooms.
- Eliminate privacy. Make sure areas not being used in the facility are properly locked, limiting access by unauthorized individual
- Interior & exterior lighting
- Visual panels





# Access the Premises

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- Pay attention to décor placement
- Restrooms
- Location of AEDs and first aid kits
- Entry and exit points
- Outdoor play areas





# SLIP, TRIP, FALL QUICK CHECK

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**JESUS**

- **Clear Pathways:** All walkways, stairs, doorways and general spaces are clear from obstacles
- **Clear Signage:** Brightly colored floor markings or signage are present where there are uneven surfaces, elevation changes or known hazards that can't be removed
- **Adequate Lighting:** All walking areas are well lit, bright enough to identify potential obstacles and free of shadows





# SLIP, TRIP, FALL QUICK CHECK

CONNECTING  
**OLIVE**  
**JESUS**

- **Outdoor Surfaces:** All tripping hazards—such as cracks, potholes and surface irregularities—have been resolved from all sidewalks and parking lots, or flagged until they can be fixed
- **Stair Safety:** Any broken or loose areas of the stairs or handrails have been addressed and fixed
- **Program Equipment:** All equipment and belongings have been stored appropriately after programming and the floors are clear  
**Water & Wet Areas:** All spills and common wet areas are marked and cleaned up promptly





# SLIP, TRIP, FALL QUICK CHECK



- Staff Footwear: All staff are wearing appropriate non-slip, closed-toe footwear at all times
- Distraction Free: All staff are focused and aware of their surroundings when walking





# Emergency Planning

CONNECTING  
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**JESUS**







# Emergency Planning

CONNECTING  
**LIKE**  
**JESUS**

- Make sure volunteers are familiar with primary and secondary exit points and safe places within the building for other emergencies.
- Make sure volunteers know what the fire alarm sounds like and what to do if it sounds.
- Make sure leaders know where to take children when evacuating the building.
- Hold a fire drill with you volunteer team
- Hold a Missing child drill





# Emergency Planning

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- Parents should know where to meet kids. Develop a simple system to reconnect parents and children away from the building.





# Prevention: People

CONNECTING  
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**JESUS**

Premises

**People**





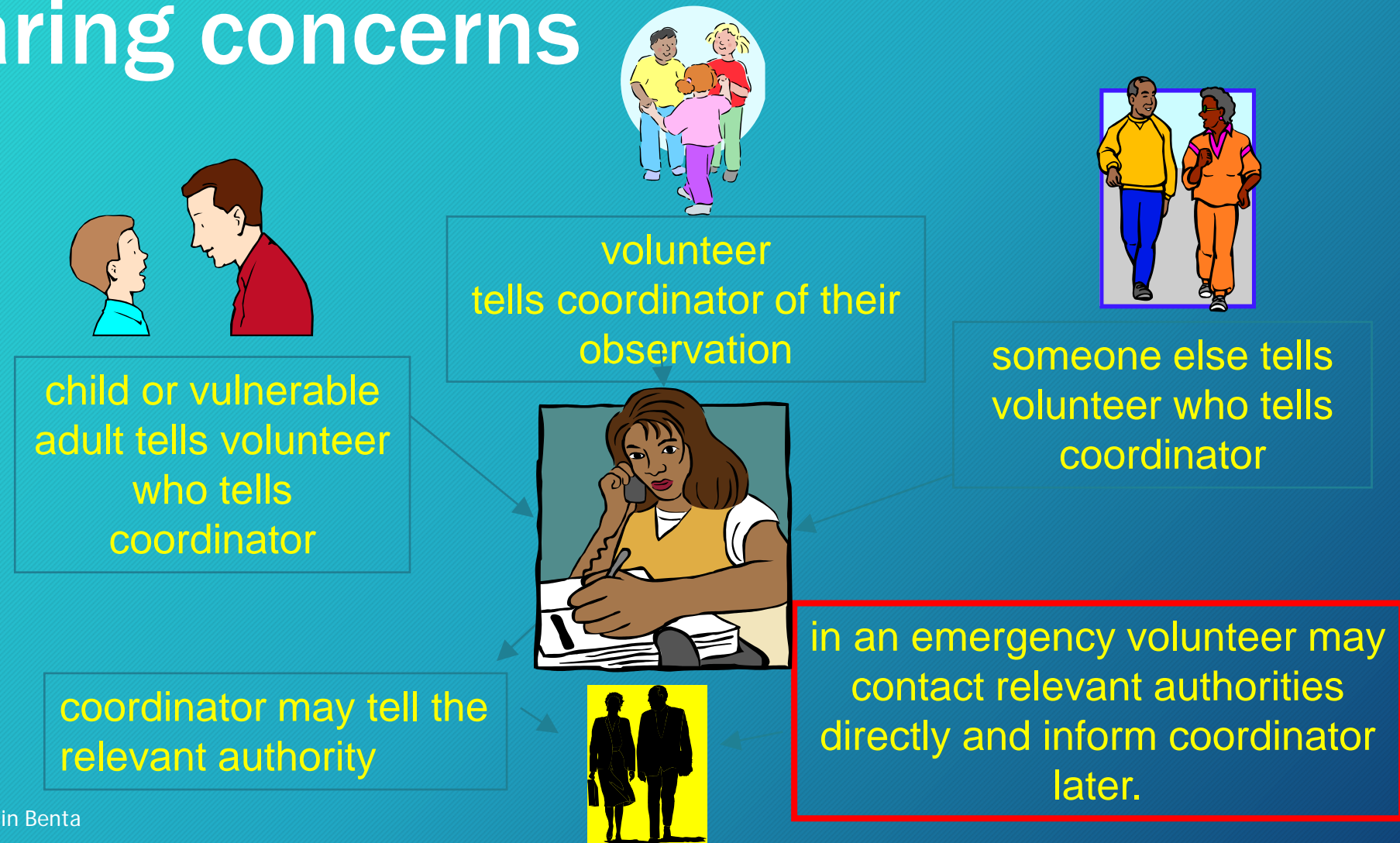
# Prevention: People

CONNECTING  
**LIKE**  
**JESUS**

- Make sure everyone knows their role
- Emphasize volunteer awareness; train them to recognise concerns
- Ensure everyone knows who to go to for support.



# Sharing concerns







# Prevention: People

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**JESUS**

- Designate one adult to be a safety officer for the week. This person could also serve as the onsite fire warden.
- Ensure we have certified first aiders scheduled each day.
- Have roving adult supervision monitoring the facility and parking lot areas during the VBS event.





# RECOMMENDED STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS

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- Hazardless Risk Activity 1:4
- High Risk Activity 1:8
- Low Risk Activity 1:10





# Behaviors that have led to false allegations

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- Meeting alone in isolated places
- Showing favoritism
- Engaging in physical contact that is misinterpreted
- Wearing provocative or revealing clothing
- Giving special gifts or secret gifts
- Discussing sexual activities or encouraging others to do so





# Behaviors that have led to false allegations

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- Commenting on children's bodies
- Shaming or belittling a child or any individual
- Failing to adhere to accepted standards for appropriate demonstrations of affection





# The Evening News Test

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**JESUS**

Teach the evening news test: Would I be OK with others seeing me behaving in this way on the evening news?





# Prevention: Policies

CONNECTING  
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**JESUS**

**Premises**

**People**

**Policies**





# Convicted teen killer Karla Homolka volunteering elementary school

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# Prevention: Policies

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- **Six Months Rule** - No adult will be considered for a volunteer leadership role in a church-sponsored ministry or activity until the volunteer has been known to the members of the local Seventh-day Adventist church for a minimum of **six (6) months**
- **Screening Procedure** - All volunteers shall provide the local Seventh-day Adventist Church a current Vulnerable Sector Check. A background check must be completed within the last 3 years to be considered current.





# Prevention: Policies

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- **Child Safety Training** - All volunteers shall be appropriately trained and background screened before they are allowed to supervise children
- **Age Requirement** - Any volunteer supervising minors must be at least 18 years of age
- **Two-Adult Rule** - Every volunteer should practice the “two-adult rule” during the activities of children and young people





# Prevention: Practice

CONNECTING  
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**JESUS**

**Premises**

**People**

**Policies**

**Practice**





# Volunteer Code of Conduct



All volunteers are expected to adhere to the following local church rules

1. Physical punishment of children is prohibited under any circumstance
2. Verbal abuse of children or telling jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children is unacceptable





# Volunteer Code of Conduct



3. Being alone with a child or young person should be avoided
4. Volunteers should not travel alone with a child or young person
5. Children and young people should not be permitted to remain on church property unless two adults are present
6. Volunteers should not engage in or tolerate any behavior – verbal, psychological or physical – that could be construed as bullying or abusive





# Volunteer Code of Conduct

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7. A disproportionate amount of time should not be spent with any particular child or group of children
8. Under no circumstances may volunteers give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children or young people
9. Only age-appropriate language, material on media products (such as camera phones, internet, video) and activities should be used when working with children and young people. (Sexually explicit or pornographic material is never acceptable.)





# Volunteer Code of Conduct

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10. Volunteers must not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind – including rough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay. (This should not prevent appropriate contact in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of a child.)





# Volunteer Code of Conduct

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11. Privacy for children should be respected at all times including the following:





# Volunteer Code of Conduct



- When young people are in locations such as changing areas, swimming pools, showers and restrooms
- Photographs of children or young people must never be taken while they are in changing areas (for example, in a locker room or bathing facility)
- Tasks of a personal nature (helping with toileting, washing or changing clothing) should not be carried out for children or young people





# The Evening News Test

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# Cyber Risk Management

Intellectual Property







# Intellectual property

- copyrights (literary, musical, dramatic, choreographic, pictorial or graphic, audiovisual, or architectural work, or a sound recording);
- trademarks (words, names, symbols, devices or any combination thereof used to identify and distinguish goods or services of one company from those sold by others).

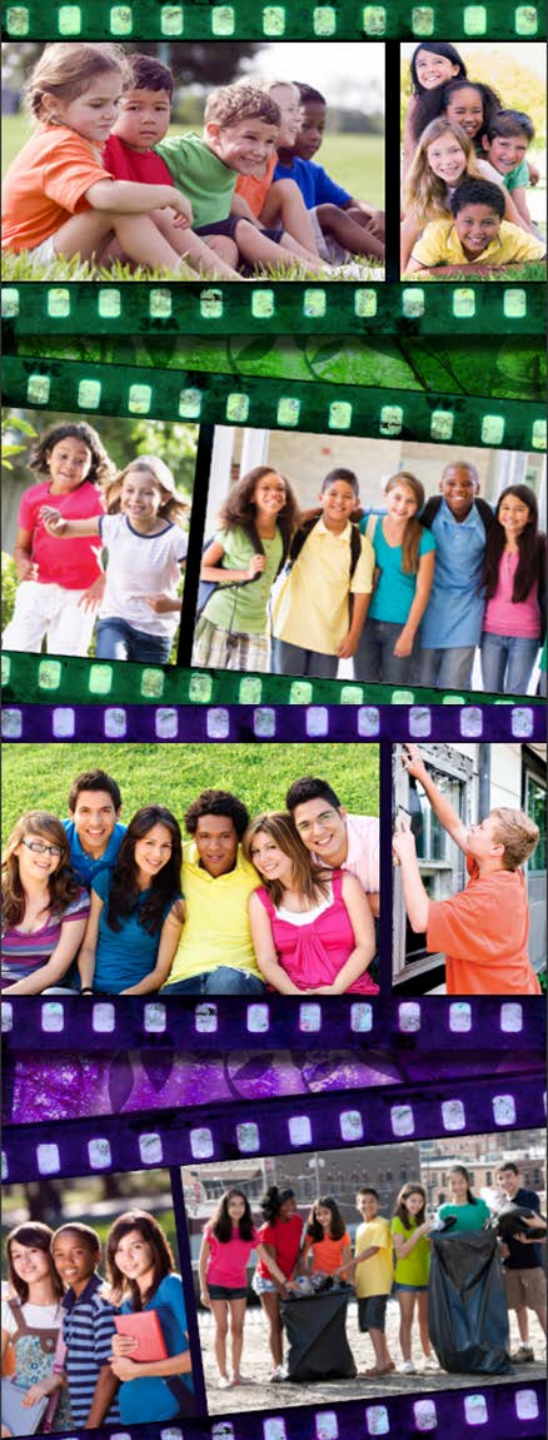




# Intellectual property

- Copyright infringement is perhaps the biggest problem on the Internet today regarding intellectual property.
- Avoid using any Internet content that does not have clear assertions about where it came from, the names of the authors and their affiliation. Avoid posting (republishing) audio or video clips that you have not carefully verified for copyright status and cleared with the owner.





# Safeguarding in the Church

CONNECTING  
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**JESUS**

Prevent

Protect





# Defined Check-in/Check-out Method



- Your method should record the child or youth's name, time of check-in/check-out and name of person who checked them in/out. Select a check-in/check-out method that works best for your ministry.





Before checking a child or youth into your ministry or activity, you need:

- A signed release from the guardian giving their child permission to attend.
- A signed medical release form including health and allergy information for the child, and giving you permission to provide emergency medical treatment for the child.
- Primary and secondary emergency contact information for the child.
- Names and contact information of the people authorized to pick up the child. Once checked in, only authorized people should be allowed to check the child or youth out.





# Field Trip Protocols

- Notify the parents or guardians well in advance of the field trip details including the location, activities, date, time of day, duration, and any special provisions needed (e.g., swimming suit, sunscreen, change of clothes, etc.). Including pictures or a brochure may provide parents with a clearer idea of the venue and help to prepare the children for a fun, safe adventure.
- Obtain emergency notification numbers and a signed permission slip from each participant for every field trip. Don't use the shortcut of trying to obtain this information during the registration process - circumstances and conditions change and you are flirting with trouble.





# Field Trip Protocols

- Require prior notification of any child's special needs or restrictions such as food sensitivities, required medications, allergies, restricted or prohibited activities, etc. Create an individual plan with the parents/guardians that will address all of these issues when the child is off-site.
- Designate multiple staff members or counselors who are familiar with assisting children in administering medications such as inhalers, epi-pens, and possibly blood-sugar monitoring in accordance with your state's laws. If so directed by the parent/guardian, the child should be given the option to carry their emergency medications.





# Field Trip Protocols



- Staff should have the information from the previous three bullet points for each child in their group
- Either don't allow off-site pick-up of children or check carefully the ID of anyone who picks up a child off-site against the approved pick-up list and closely follow sign-out documentation protocols.
- At least two staff members should know the exact location of the nearest medical facility.
- All staff should carry first aid packs on their person.





# Field Trip Protocols



- All staff should have cell phones or another way of communicating with one another or summoning assistance. Don't forget to share phone numbers.
- Provide distinctive identification for your kids such as bright tee shirts or caps. Leaders also should be easily identifiable. Staff name tags are permissible, but the children should not wear name tags because of the potential of sexual predators in public locations.
- Program leadership should renew familiarity with the layout, the restroom facilities, and any potential dangers. If the venue involves swimming, include an aquatic leadership staff person or lifeguard to help evaluate the site's lifeguarding vigilance and aquatic safety.





# Field Trip Protocols



- Clearly discuss appropriate behavior with both the children and parents/guardians – cover physical and behavioral boundaries and the consequences of disregarding them.
- If volunteers are accompanying the trip, be sure to clearly communicate with them their roles and responsibilities.





# Field Trip Protocols



- Increase vigilance and establish staff-to-child ratios at a level appropriate for the activity and location. Public restrooms and water activities demand increased levels of supervision.
- Count faces not just heads. Regularly determine that you have the right children, not just the right number of children.
- Use a buddy system with periodic checks to supplement staff supervision.
- Establish an easily locatable, highly visible meeting spot where children who become separated from the group should go and wait - take everyone there at the beginning of the day so it can be found if necessary





# School Bus Safety



## Before Boarding the Bus

- Set clear expectations regarding bus behavior which includes anti-bullying policies, physical and behavioral boundaries
- Create the rules, together, with the children and post them on the bus. A portable rule board can be made for those who rent buses infrequently.
- Communicate rules with parents/guardians and collect signed acknowledgement from children and parents/guardians
- Review rules periodically for daily transport of kids, and review rules prior to boarding the bus for infrequent use
- Ensure the driver knows the route and is solely focused on driving





# School Bus Safety

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## Boarding the Bus

- Keep a roster of the children in your care to ensure all children have entered the bus
- Greet each child by name as they enter, noticing body language and demeanor
- Seat children starting at the front of the bus, leaving no gaps
- Assign buddies and ensure children of similar ages are paired together
- After everyone is boarded, walk through the aisle checking each seat and acknowledging each child
- Position staff in the back of the last seat occupied and in the middle of the bus. If more than two staff, sprinkle additional staff throughout.
- Have staff and children give an “all clear” to the driver when everyone is seated and ready to roll





# School Bus Safety



## Exiting the Bus

- At least one staff member remains on the bus while kids exit. Preferably located behind campers.
- At least one staff member greets children as they get off the bus noticing body language and any change in behavior
- After all children have left the bus, walk up and down the aisle to ensure no child or property was left behind





# School Bus Safety



## Suggested Rules to Post on the Bus (not all encompassing)

- Always wear seatbelt (if applicable)
- Face forward with back against the seat at all times
- Objects should stay in backpacks or on laps
- Use appropriate and kind language at all times
- Keep hands and feet to yourself at all times
- No tolerance for bullying behavior—verbal, physical, cyber
- If you hear or see something that doesn't feel right—say something
- Follow expectations at all times





# School Bus Safety

CONNECTING  
**OLIVE**  
**JESUS**

## Staff Responsibilities on the Bus

- To eliminate distraction, use of cell phones should be used for emergency purposes only
- Listen to campers and their conversations to notice any unusual silence or inappropriate language
- Use hand signals to communicate with other staff on the bus
- Lead periodic buddy checks to assist with active supervision
- Lead or start cheers/chants with active hand motions to stay engaged and be aware of anyone who is not participating
- Redirect inappropriate behavior and conversations right when it is recognized
- Let children know you care about their safety and are actively participating





# Medical and Liability Release

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## Videography/Photography Release forms





# Medical

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**JESUS**

- Fast treatment of three common life-threatening medical conditions (i.e., asthma, allergies, & diabetes)
- Make your meeting place/event nut free or other things that may trigger allergic reaction
- Proper medication
- Consent to administer medication/treatment







# Medical

- The camp have a proper documented concussion protocol in place



# Ontario Conference Adventist Risk Management Department

## Accident Report Form

Location \_\_\_\_\_

1. Full name of person injured \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

2. Address \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

3. Name of Parent or Guardian (if a child injured) \_\_\_\_\_

4. When accident occurred: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

5. Place of accident: ☐ School building ☐ School grounds ☐ Elsewhere

Specific location \_\_\_\_\_

6. Description of accident: How did it happen? What was the person doing? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of witness \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Nature and extent of injury \_\_\_\_\_

9. Action taken:

Was first aid rendered? ☐ Yes ☐ No By whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Was the person taken to a doctor? ☐ Yes ☐ No Was person taken to hospital? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of hospital \_\_\_\_\_ Attending physician \_\_\_\_\_

Was spouse/parent/guardian notified? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If answer is No, state reason \_\_\_\_\_

10. Recommendations to assist in the prevention of future accidents of this type \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Specify any unsafe acts or conditions \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Name of person in charge when accident occurred \_\_\_\_\_

13. Is this accident disabling or resulting in time lost from work/school? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Illustrate by sketch if necessary (use back of page if you need more space) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date report prepared \_\_\_\_\_

Principal/Leader \_\_\_\_\_

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# Mandatory Reporting

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In Ontario, it is the law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

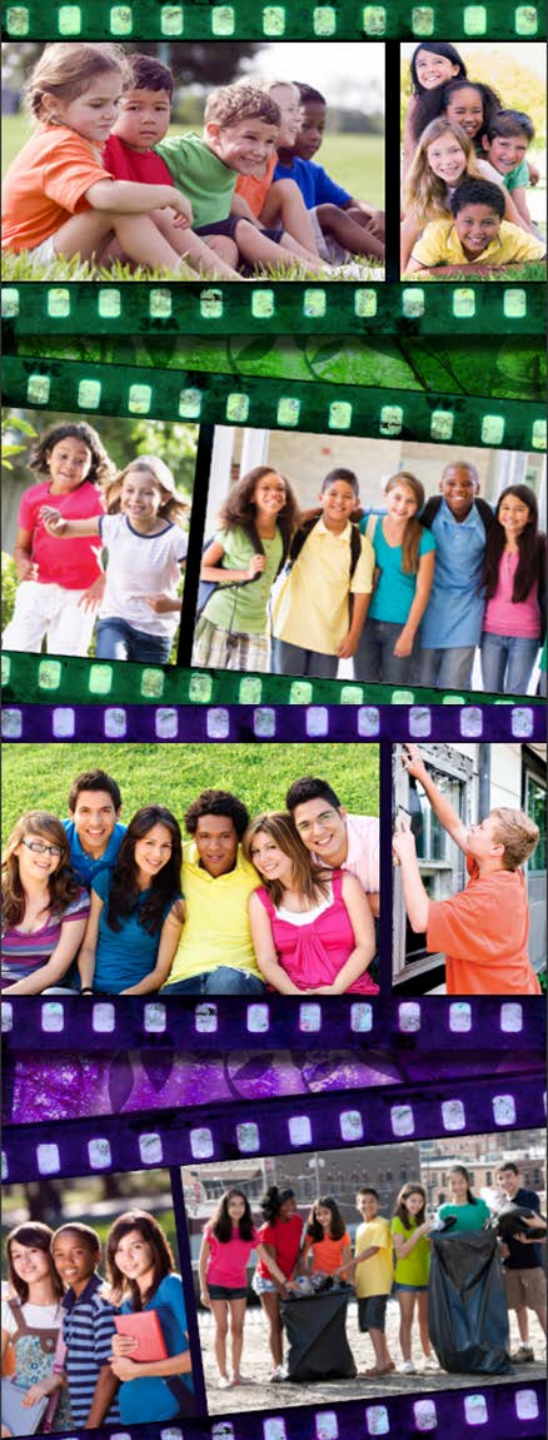




# Why children/vulnerable adults may not always tell. They may:

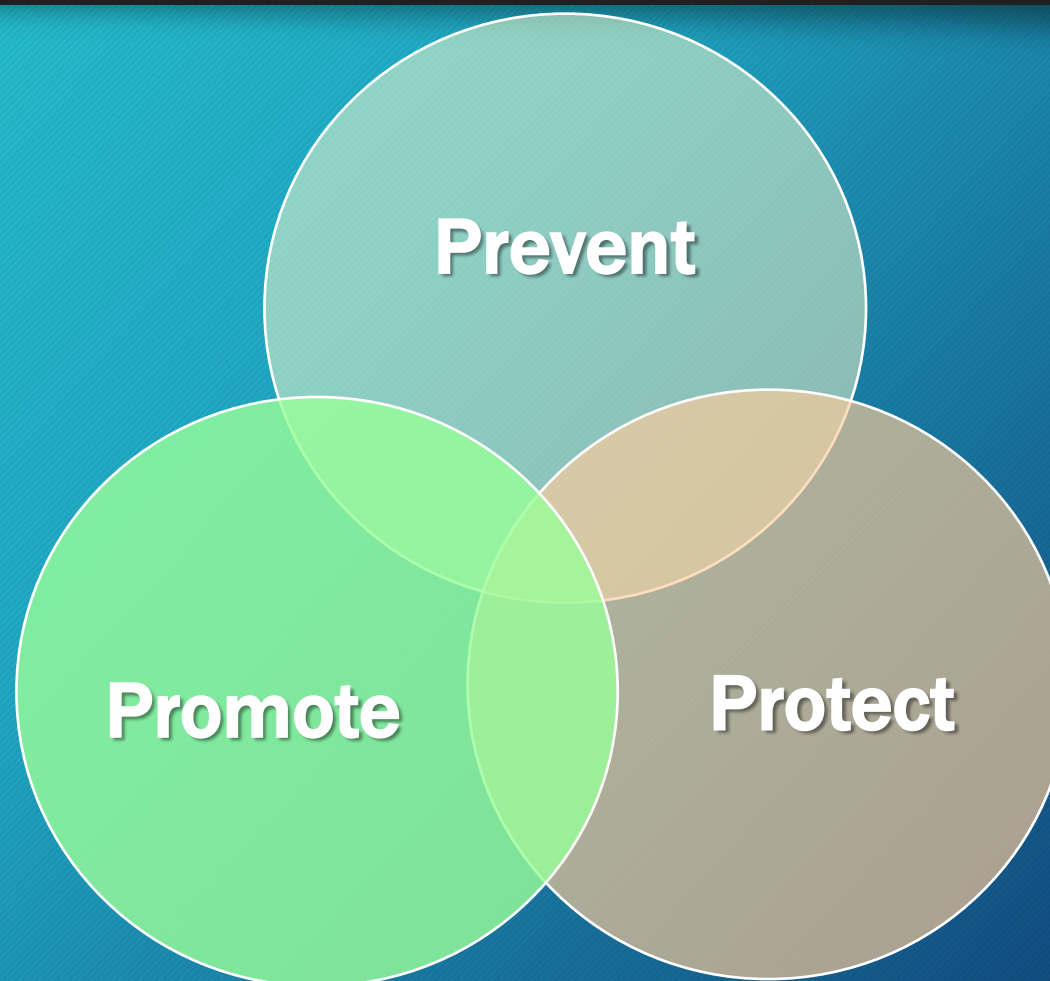
- Not know it is wrong
- Be unable to communicate
- Be too dependent on the perpetrator
- Have tried to tell before without success
- Be too scared of consequences
- Feel ashamed/guilty.





# Safeguarding in the Church

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# Policies That Protect



- S- Supervise minors at all times
- A- Appropriate verbal communication and physical behaviour.
- F- Follow the two-adult rule
- E- Engage, support, and supervise youth interactions
- K- Kids' privacy is to be respected
- I- Implement travel safety
- D- Discipline kids appropriately
- S- Screen volunteers





# VBS Safety BIG Idea

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**JESUS**

True Risk Management Begins  
with Compassion.



“

2 *“I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat.*



“

<sup>3</sup> *And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar.” Mark 8:2-3*





# Disclaimer

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**JESUS**

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