

First Baptist Orange City

Children/Youth Worker Information Sheet

To: Applicants for Children/Youth Workers at First Baptist Orange City
From: Pastoral Staff and Deacons
Date: October 1, 2008

In order to provide a safe environment for the children in our church, we have adopted a policy to reduce the risk of child abuse. Every applicant for children/youth work in the church must be familiar with this policy and satisfactorily complete our screening procedures (note: children/youth work includes work not only with teenagers but also with infants and younger children, including service in the church nursery).

This risk reduction policy is motivated by several concerns. First, recognizing God's tender love and concern for children (see Luke 18:16), we want to do all that we can to protect our children from any kind of physical or sexual abuse. While we would like to believe that such abuse could never take place in a church, the fact is that many children are being abused within the Christian community every year. Our church is not immune to the effect of sin, and it would be presumptuous for us to assume that this problem could never occur in our body. Therefore, while we should strive to be as "innocent as doves" we must also be as "shrewd [prudent, sensible, and practically wise] as serpents" (Matt. 10:16). This should be especially true with regard to the children God has placed under our care.

Second, we want to protect our children/youth workers from being suspected or falsely accused of wrongful behavior toward a child. Such accusations can do a great deal of damage even to an innocent children/youth worker. Our procedures for maintaining a safe environment and admonishing inappropriate behavior are designed to prevent compromising situations in the first place and also to strengthen a children/youth worker's defense against false accusations.

Third, we want to protect our church from the scandal and trauma that an incident of abuse could bring upon our congregation. When someone accuses another person in the church of abuse, the entire body can be drawn into a painful and costly conflict. Divisions in the congregation can arise because of disagreements over how the abuse was allowed to occur and how the situation is being handled. Church leaders are distracted from important ministries. Legal charges can be filed that may result in a prolonged and expensive lawsuit. And if the news media learns of an abuse situation, it can draw all sorts of adverse publicity to the church. Obviously, these developments would wreck havoc on our ministry. As Proverbs 22:3 warns, "A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it."

Most importantly, we believe that this policy will help us to guard the honor and reputation of our Lord Jesus Christ. If a child in our church is harmed through a member's sin, some people will inevitably think less of the church and of our Lord. We are committed to doing everything in our power to prevent such dishonor from happening, and protecting our children from abuse is one way to do so.

Although the issue of child abuse is an unpleasant one, we believe that God can use our response to these concerns for good (see Romans 8:28-29). Instead of viewing the screening process as a "necessary evil," we see it as an opportunity to promote teamwork (1 Cor. 12:12-31), to demonstrate mutual submission (Eph. 5:21), and to get to know one another better. Through this process we want to learn more about your gifts, abilities and ministry goals, which will help us to encourage you in your work with the young people in our church (Heb. 10:24-25).

A few of the questions we ask in the screening process deal with unpleasant issues, such as the use of pornography and sexual misconduct. You may answer these questions either in writing or during a private interview with our Children/Youth Safety Team. One purpose of these questions is to screen out people who might behave inappropriately toward children. But there is an important additional benefit. God has used these questions to move some people to talk with a Pastor about painful past experiences or embarrassing sin problems, which has opened the way for pastoral counseling, leading to a new freedom in the Lord. These questions also have given parents an occasion to talk with their teenagers about early struggles with sexual morality and to help them change behaviors that would have eventually led to enormous grief. Thus, these questions not only help to protect our children from abuse but also promote an environment where people can admit and find loving assistance with their personal struggles.

With these thoughts in mind, we ask you to support this program to insure that our children/youth workers are well qualified for their ministry to the children of our church. If it is still your desire to apply for children/youth work, please fill out the accompanying application packet. Your completion of the following four steps in our screening process is an important part of this process. If you have any questions about this process, please feel free to talk with our Children/Youth Safety Team, pastoral staff or appropriate ministry leader.

1. Read the attached **Policy for Screening Children/Youth Workers** and the **Children/Youth Worker's Responsibilities** forms, which give an overview of the screening process and describe the procedures we follow to maintain a safe environment for children in our church. If you want to learn more about the problem of child abuse and the need for this type of screening, please go to the website at www.netgrace.org.
2. Sign page 6 of this document (keep pages 1-5 for your records) and complete the **First Baptist Orange City Children/Youth Worker Application** form and return it to the church office in a sealed envelope marked "Application for Children/Youth Work." If you prefer to answer any or all the questions on the form in person rather than in writing, we will be happy to arrange for you to have a private interview with our Children/Youth Safety Team.
3. Ask three people to provide you with references. References may complete a **Reference of Children/Youth Worker** form in writing, or they may be interviewed in person or by telephone by our Children/Youth Safety Team. In the latter case, you will have to give our Children/Youth Safety Team the forms that you have signed and that contain the references' names and telephone numbers.
4. Finally, when you are notified that the screening process is satisfactorily completed, you should talk with the appropriate ministry leader in which you would like to work to discuss how you might serve in that ministry.

Thank you for your cooperation in this process. We look forward to working with you as you use your gifts and talents to nurture the children God has placed under our care.

Policy for Screening Children/Youth Workers

Purpose: Recognizing God's tender love and concern for children (see Luke 18:16), we believe it is our responsibility to do all that is reasonably possible to protect the children of this church from being physically or sexually abused while they are under our care. It also is our responsibility to guard our children/youth workers from being falsely suspected or accused of wrongful behavior toward a child. To reduce the risk of these problems, we have adopted the following guidelines for screening and supervising all of our children/youth workers.

1. A "children/youth worker" is any individual who regularly supervises or has custody of minors in our church, such as a nursery attendant, Sunday School teacher or youth group leader or assistant.
2. All applicants for children/youth work shall complete the following screening process:
 - i. **Member/Six month rule:** In order to serve as a volunteer children/youth worker, applicants must have been in regular attendance for at least six months and be a member of the church.
 - ii. **Application form:** Applicants must complete an "Application for Children/Youth Work" form. If an applicant prefers, he or she may answer any or all of the questions on these forms through a private interview rather than in writing.
 - iii. **Personal References:** Applicants must also obtain satisfactory references from at least three people who are not relatives or employers. References may complete a "Reference for Children/Youth Worker" form in writing, or they may be interviewed by a member of the Children/Youth Safety Team in person or by telephone.
 - iv. **Background Investigation:** A background investigation shall be conducted on all applicants for paid staff positions, and on any other applicant at the discretion of the Children/Youth Safety Team. This investigation may include: (1) contacting churches or other organizations where the applicant has served; (2) contacting employers from whom the applicant worked within the past five years; and (3) requesting a criminal record check in this state and, if feasible, in states where the applicant has lived during the past five years.
 - v. **Interview:** All applicants will be personally interviewed by the Children/Youth Safety Team to discuss their gifts and abilities and to review the policies and responsibilities of the Child/Youth Worker. All information acquired during the screening process will be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed to others outside the Children/Youth Safety Team unless the pastoral staff or Children/Youth Safety Team deems that limited disclosure is necessary to protect a child from possible harm.
3. Once the Applicant is approved by the Children/Youth Safety Team, they will also need to talk with the appropriate leader of the children/youth ministry in which they wish to be involved to discuss their gifts and qualifications, and to decide how the applicant might serve in that ministry.
4. Final approval to work with children/youth shall be made by the pastor(s) or designated authority and the Children/Youth Safety Team. Approval to work in a particular children/youth ministry shall be made by the leader of that ministry.

Children/Youth Worker's Responsibilities

1. Procedures for maintaining a safe environment:
 - a. All children/youth workers should pray regularly for the children in our church, thanking God for the privilege of ministering to them and asking him to protect them from any kind of harm. Workers should also pray that God would give them wisdom and discernment so that they will be sensitive to ways to help and protect the children.
 - b. All children/youth workers must read this policy statement, especially the sections describing signs of abuse and children/youth workers' responsibility to report inappropriate behavior. This policy statement shall be made readily available to all children/youth workers.
 - c. All children/youth workers must notify the appropriate ministry leader or a member of the pastoral staff or Children/Youth Safety Team if any of the information provided in the application or during the screening process changes or if they feel they can no longer uphold their responsibilities and adhere to these policies.
 - d. Whenever practicable, children/youth workers will work together in teams of at least two people.
2. Responsibility of children/youth workers to admonish or report inappropriate behavior:
 - a. There are two problems that children/youth workers should watch for:
 - (i) Behavior by anyone in this church, especially a children/youth worker, that indicates that he or she may be inclined to abuse, molest or otherwise harm any child, especially one under the care of this church.
 - (ii) Indications that a child under the care of this church is being abused, molested, neglected or otherwise harmed, whether by someone in this church or outside this church.
 - b. Admonishing and reporting inappropriate behavior by a children/youth worker:
 - (i) If you observe a children/youth worker (or another member of the church) talking or acting in a manner that seems to be innocent but might appear to others to be inappropriate, you should privately admonish that person and encourage him or her to exercise greater care in words and actions (see Matthew 18:15).
 - (ii) If you observe a children/youth worker (or another member of the church) talking or acting in a manner that gives rise to a reasonable suspicion of improper involvement with a child, or of the potential for improper involvement with a child, you should promptly report your concern to the pastoral staff or appropriate ministry leader, who will look into the matter and take appropriate corrective measures.
 - c. Behaviors to watch for in adults working with children:
 - (i) Inappropriate comments about sexual matters, especially about or in the presence of children.
 - (ii) Use of pornography, including inclination toward sexually explicit television shows, movies, books or magazines.
 - (iii) Excessive and inappropriate attention to a particular child, especially if it involves an effort to be alone with the child.
 - d. Reporting actual or suspected abuse or neglect of a child:
 - (i) Any suspected child abuse or neglect should be immediately reported to one of the pastoral staff or appropriate ministry leader. Any known child abuse or neglect is to be reported to the Department of Children and Families at the first opportunity. Should a children/youth worker voluntarily make a report to civil authorities, the law provides that he or she will be immune to civil or criminal liability, provided the report was made in good faith and without malicious purpose.

- (ii) No single indicator of abuse or neglect is necessarily cause for alarm, but it may be cause to observe a given person or situation more closely. When multiple indicators appear together, however, it is appropriate to discuss the situation with someone else in the church or, in urgent cases, to make an actual report to the civil authorities.
- (iii) Indications of physical abuse: child reports injury by others; unexplained bruises, welts, lacerations, burns, fractures, abdominal injuries or human bites; child is unusually wary of physical contact with adults, demonstrates extremes in behavior or seems frightened of parents or caretaker.
- (iv) Indications of sexual abuse: child reports abuse by others; had difficulty walking or sitting; torn, stained or bloody underclothing; complaints of pain or itching in genital area; bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal area; unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters; or other unusual and excessive behaviors inappropriate for a child of that age.
- (v) Reporting abuse can precipitate severe consequences to a family, so it should never be done casually or thoughtlessly, and certainly not for malicious purposes. At the same time, failing to report abuse can have severe consequences to a child at risk. Therefore, if you have reasonable cause to suspect abuse, you should talk with one of the pastoral staff or appropriate ministry leaders to see what steps could and should be taken to protect the child and help the family. When time and circumstances permit, talk first with one of the pastoral staff or appropriate ministry leaders who will help you to decide what steps are appropriate and, if necessary, who else to contact.

First Baptist Orange City
Application for Children/Youth Workers at First Baptist Orange City

I have read and agree to abide by the policies and procedures as stated in the **Children/Youth Worker Information Sheet, Policy for Screening Children/Youth Workers, and Children/Youth Worker's Responsibilities.**

Signature _____

Date _____

(Please keep pages 1-5 for your records)

First Baptist Orange City Children/Youth Worker Application

The following questions are used to help our church provide a safe, loving, and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs. If you prefer not to answer any of these questions in writing, you may leave them blank, and a representative of the Children/Youth Safety Team will talk with you personally and privately. A parent or guardian may complete this form for any applicant who is 16 years old or younger.

Full legal name (include any other names used previously):

Date _____

General Information

1. Please list all churches you have regularly attended during the past three years (give church name address(es), city, state and dates attended; use extra paper if necessary).

2. Please list all employers from the past three years (give company name, supervisor's name, telephone number and dates worked; use extra paper if necessary).

3. Please described all previous work involving youth, paid or volunteer, in this church or elsewhere (give dates, names of churches or organizations, types of work, names of supervisors; use extra paper if necessary).

Confidential Information

(This information is confidential and will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.)

Answering “yes” to any of the following questions will not necessarily disqualify you for youth work. A member of the pastoral staff or Children/Youth Safety Team may talk with you in private, however, to see whether you need any pastoral assistance regarding the matter and to learn whether that issue has a bearing on your ability to work with youth.

1. Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a crime (other than minor traffic violations)?
 No Yes (if yes, please explain the nature of the offense and dates, using extra paper if necessary)

2. Have you deliberately and repeatedly viewed pornography in the past three years? This includes reading, watching, listening to or in any other way using pornographic material, including books, magazines, television shows, movies, Internet programs or telephone services.
 No Yes

3. Do you use or have you recently used any illegal drugs? No Yes

4. Do you heavily use, abuse or have an addiction to alcohol? No Yes

5. Have you ever touched a child in a sexual manner? (Do not include child-to-child contact that occurred more than ten years ago). No Yes

6. Have you ever been reported to any local, state or federal authority for the abuse or neglect of any person? (if yes, please explain the nature of the complaint, the results and dates on the back of this page)

Consent to Release of Information

Having made application for youth work at First Baptist Orange City and desiring the church to be informed as to my past record and character, I authorize any persons, references, employers, churches or organizations with whom I have had contact to release to the church any information they may have regarding my record, character and fitness for youth work. I also authorize this church, at its discretion, to contact any law enforcement or social service agency to determine whether I have ever been charged with or convicted of a crime, and I authorize such agencies to release such information to the church. I release the church, its agents, and all persons, organizations and agencies from liability for any damage that may result from exchanging such information, and I understand the church reserves the right to withhold any such information provided.

Full legal name _____

Maiden name _____

Date of Birth _____ Male _____ Female _____

Address _____

Social Security No. _____ Driver's License No. _____

Commitment

Should my application for youth work be accepted, I agree to be bound by this church's Constitution, Bylaws and policies for youth workers. I also agree to refrain from any unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

Signature _____

Date _____

A photocopy of this authorization shall have the same effect as the original.

For office Use Only

Member attending six months	___ Yes ___ No	Personal interview satisfactory	___ Yes ___ n/a
Application form satisfactory	___ Yes ___ No	Former church record satisfactory	___ Yes ___ n/a
Personal references (3) satisfactory	___ Yes ___ No	Employment records satisfactory	___ Yes ___ n/a
Public notice satisfactory	___ Yes ___ No	Criminal record check satisfactory	___ Yes ___ n/a

Approved for children/youth work by _____ on _____, 20__

Disapproved for children/youth work by _____ on _____, 20__

Reference for Youth Worker

Instructions to applicant for youth work: Sign the statement of release below and give this form to three references (not employers or relatives, and preferably people who have supervised your previous work with youth). Ask them to complete and return it directly to the church office. Please provide each reference with a stamped envelope, addressed to the church, and marked "Youth Worker Reference, Confidential."

Statement of Release to the Reference: Having made application for youth work at First Baptist Orange City, and desiring the church to be informed as to my past record and character, I authorize you to release to the church any information you may have regarding my record, character and fitness for youth work. I release you from liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such information to the church, and I waive any right that I may have to inspect any such information provided on my behalf.

Name of Applicant (printed) _____

Signature _____

*Note: "youth work" means any activity that involves the regular supervision or custody of minors, including serving as a nursery attendant, Sunday School teacher or youth group leader or assistant.

Name of reference _____ Phone # _____

1. How long have you known the applicant?

2. In what capacity have you known the applicant?

3. How well do you know the applicant?

_____ very well _____ well _____ casually _____ little _____ very little

4. Describe the applicant's gifts, experience or abilities for youth work (use back if necessary):

5. To the best of your knowledge, has the applicant ever been involved in any kind of conduct or activity that indicates that he or she might mistreat, molest or abuse a child?

_____ No _____ Yes (If yes, please explain; use back if necessary).

6. What is your overall recommendation?

_____ I recommend the applicant for youth work.

_____ I believe the applicant is unsuited for youth work.

7. Please feel free to provide additional information on a separate sheet of paper. Thank you for your assistance.

Signature _____ Date _____

NOTE TO THE REFERENCE:

Please seal this form in the envelope provided and return it to the church office.

For office use only

Completed by named reference and returned to church on _____

Completed by _____ on _____, 20____ by telephone personal visit

Reference for Youth Worker

Instructions to applicant for youth work: Sign the statement of release below and give this form to three references (not employers or relatives, and preferably people who have supervised your previous work with youth). Ask them to complete and return it directly to the church office. Please provide each reference with a stamped envelope, addressed to the church, and marked "Youth Worker Reference, Confidential."

Statement of Release to the Reference: Having made application for youth work at First Baptist Orange City, and desiring the church to be informed as to my past record and character, I authorize you to release to the church any information you may have regarding my record, character and fitness for youth work. I release you from liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such information to the church, and I waive any right that I may have to inspect any such information provided on my behalf.

Name of Applicant (printed) _____

Signature _____

*Note: "youth work" means any activity that involves the regular supervision or custody of minors, including serving as a nursery attendant, Sunday School teacher or youth group leader or assistant.

Name of reference _____ Phone # _____

1. How long have you known the applicant?

2. In what capacity have you known the applicant?

3. How well do you know the applicant?

_____ very well _____ well _____ casually _____ little _____ very little

4. Describe the applicant's gifts, experience or abilities for youth work (use back if necessary):

5. To the best of your knowledge, has the applicant ever been involved in any kind of conduct or activity that indicates that he or she might mistreat, molest or abuse a child?

_____ No _____ Yes (If yes, please explain; use back if necessary).

6. What is your overall recommendation?

_____ I recommend the applicant for youth work.

_____ I believe the applicant is unsuited for youth work.

7. Please feel free to provide additional information on a separate sheet of paper. Thank you for your assistance.

Signature _____ Date _____

NOTE TO THE REFERENCE:

Please seal this form in the envelope provided and return it to the church office.

For office use only

Completed by named reference and returned to church on _____

Completed by _____ on _____, 20____ by telephone personal visit

Reference for Youth Worker

Instructions to applicant for youth work: Sign the statement of release below and give this form to three references (not employers or relatives, and preferably people who have supervised your previous work with youth). Ask them to complete and return it directly to the church office. Please provide each reference with a stamped envelope, addressed to the church, and marked "Youth Worker Reference, Confidential."

Statement of Release to the Reference: Having made application for youth work at First Baptist Orange City, and desiring the church to be informed as to my past record and character, I authorize you to release to the church any information you may have regarding my record, character and fitness for youth work. I release you from liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such information to the church, and I waive any right that I may have to inspect any such information provided on my behalf.

Name of Applicant (printed) _____

Signature _____

*Note: "youth work" means any activity that involves the regular supervision or custody of minors, including serving as a nursery attendant, Sunday School teacher or youth group leader or assistant.

Name of reference _____ Phone # _____

1. How long have you known the applicant?

2. In what capacity have you known the applicant?

3. How well do you know the applicant?

_____ very well _____ well _____ casually _____ little _____ very little

4. Describe the applicant's gifts, experience or abilities for youth work (use back if necessary):

5. To the best of your knowledge, has the applicant ever been involved in any kind of conduct or activity that indicates that he or she might mistreat, molest or abuse a child?

_____ No _____ Yes (If yes, please explain; use back if necessary).

6. What is your overall recommendation?

_____ I recommend the applicant for youth work.

_____ I believe the applicant is unsuited for youth work.

7. Please feel free to provide additional information on a separate sheet of paper. Thank you for your assistance.

Signature _____ Date _____

NOTE TO THE REFERENCE:

Please seal this form in the envelope provided and return it to the church office.

For office use only

Completed by named reference and returned to church on _____

Completed by _____ on _____, 20____ by telephone personal visit