

# Congregational Self-Assessment

Name of Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation is lay led \_\_\_ (Check if YES)

Congregation has fewer than 101 members \_\_\_ (Check if YES)

Congregation does not have children or youth or religious education program \_\_\_ (Check if YES)

Complete this form to assess how your congregation meets the best practice criteria for a safer congregation. \*\* items are considered best practice for all congregations. Items that do not have \*\* may not apply to lay led, congregations with fewer than 101 members, and/or congregations that do not have children and youth in the congregation. (Notes for these congregations on meeting the criteria are included.) Congregations must meet 75% of the applicable criteria to receive the best practice seal. For congregations that have professional staff, more than 101 members, and religious education programs for children and youth, this will require having policies or procedures on at least 14 of the 18 best practices.

More information about each criteria, including links for more information, can be found **here**.

When at least 75% of the criteria are met, submit this form electronically with an uploaded copy of the congregation's safety policy and the contact information as indicated at the bottom of the page. Forms may also be sent by mail to Safer Congregations Program, Religious Institute, 21 Charles Street, Suite 140, Westport, CT 06880 with a copy of the congregation's safety policy. Please allow one month for processing.

CRITERIA	YES	NO	IN PROCESS	PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT	NOT APPLICABLE
1. <b>**Board and clergy commitment to "sexually safer congregation".</b>					
2. <b>**Designated committee, with responsibility for sexual safety policies and implementation</b> In a congregation of fewer than 101 members, Board of Directors may explicitly have this responsibility.					
3. <b>**Written sexually safer congregation policy that is well publicized to congregation and reviewed/updated at least every other year</b>					
4. <b>**Sexual harassment policies for employees, volunteers, congregants, and youth</b>					
5. <b>**Code of conduct related to sexual and romantic relationships for religious</b>					

<p><b>professionals known, including how to address concerns about professional misconduct to appropriate bodies</b></p>					
<p><b>6. Clergy and other professional staff have had training on sexual misconduct prevention, handling sexual attractions and appropriate boundaries for their profession, and how to offer pastoral responses to disclosure of past and present abuse</b> Not applicable to lay led congregations</p>					
<p><b>7. **Education on abuse prevention awareness in context of positive sexuality education for children, youth, and parents/guardians at least every other year</b> In a small congregation that does not have families with children, an every other year program for adults on sexual safety meets the criteria</p>					
<p><b>8. **Screening forms, references, background checks, and annually signed ethics policies for all staff and if applicable for all volunteers who work with children, youth, disabled persons, elders, and other vulnerable adults</b> In a small congregation asking permission of all volunteers to do background checks and then conducting random checks on a specified number each year plus any screening form that raises concerns meets criteria, unless state law requires them for all who work with children.</p>					
<p><b>9. **All staff and volunteers who work with children, youth, disabled persons, elders, and other vulnerable adults receive training on signs of sex abuse, sex abuse prevention, and reporting procedures</b></p>					
<p><b>10. **Requirement for two unrelated adults to be present as teachers/volunteers for all activities with children and youth such as religious education, youth religious education, youth group, bible study, children and youth choirs</b> Small congregations with only one adult religious education volunteer per class: Policy should address holding sessions with children and youth only in spaces observable by other unrelated adults who periodically monitor rooms. The language related to unrelated adults and/or observable spaces should be included in policies even if there are currently no children in the congregation as membership may change</p>					
<p><b>11. **Teens under 18 acting as religious educators or group leaders with children must</b></p>					

<p><b>work with at least an adult, and be screened and educated on abuse prevention like other volunteers; teenagers who babysit for congregation events must always work in groups of two or more and must be on an approved list of babysitters (and supervised by adults)</b></p> <p>In small congregations, the language related to adolescent volunteers and babysitters should be included in policies even if there are currently no children or youth in the congregation as membership may change</p>					
<p><b>12. Spaces for counseling and education for sessions with children and youth are easily observable by others</b></p> <p>Not applicable if congregation doesn't have children or youth</p>					
<p><b>13. Safety guidelines for overnights such as activities as mission trips, driving, and conferences that involve youth and adults, including guidance on sleeping arrangements and expectations related to sexual behaviors.</b></p> <p>Not applicable if no youth in congregation</p>					
<p><b>14. Youth group guidelines on romantic and sexual relationships, physical displays of affection, exclusive relationships within the youth group</b></p> <p>Not applicable if no youth in congregation</p>					
<p><b>15. **Written policy on use of church computers/other technology and social media for clergy, staff, volunteers, etc.</b></p>					
<p><b>16. **Written policy for addressing person with history of offenses wanting to attend or an allegation of a sexual offense committed by a current congregant, including statement on grounds for possible exclusion of a person with a history of sex offenses</b></p>					
<p><b>17. **Specific mention in written policy on how to include in congregational life an adolescent or child who has sexually abused another child</b></p> <p>Small congregations without families with children or youth: Policy should specifically address that members who have children or adolescent relatives visiting the congregation who have had a history of sexually abusing or assaulting a child or youth must be supervised and in company of that adult at all times</p>					
<p><b>18. **Sexual safety and abuse prevention is part of ongoing commitment of congregation</b></p>					

# of YES applicable criteria fulfilled

Form approved by Board of Trustees and Senior Clergy

Upload Congregation Safe Policy \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBMIT When**  
**Minimum of 75%**  
**of Applicable**  
**Criteria Are Met**