



E-Quipped for Prevention

Special Edition - August 21, 2009

ELCA Churchwide Assembly

Ideas, resources, and training for
Cherish Our Children Leaders

"Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" Preventing Sexual Exploitation Highlights

- ✚ We are called therefore to be trustworthy in our human sexuality and to build social institutions and practices where trust and trustworthy relationships can thrive. (pg. 2)
- ✚ Victims of sexual violation must be able to rely on public institutions for intervention in troubled relationships. They must be able to expect protection when their trust in an individual has been abused. (pg. 13)
- ✚ Safety within and outside the family is of overriding importance because the damage done to children and youth through sexual abuse or molestation can be remarkably deep and lasting. (pg. 13)
- ✚ This church supports the prosecution of any individual who commits a sexual crime against a minor, including people in leadership positions in the church. (pg. 13)
- ✚ The ELCA also recognizes that congregations and other ministry sites must continue in their efforts to be safe places for children and youth. (pg. 14)
- ✚ This church strongly reaffirms its 2001 message, "Commercial Sexual Exploitation," which states: "Sexual exploitation in any situation, either personally or commercially, inside or outside legally contracted marriage, is sinful because it is destructive of God's good gift [of sexuality] and human integrity." This message notes that this is especially true with respect to the demonic harm sexual exploitation visits on children and youth. (pg. 14)
- ✚ The ELCA regards the over-exposure of emotionally maturing children and teens to adult sexuality as a failing on the part of adults and society. It challenges all individuals and institutions in society to fulfill their responsibility to protect and nurture children and youth and provide for their appropriate development. Congregations should offer opportunities for adults to express these concerns and explore solutions together. (pg. 14)
- ✚ The widespread electronic availability of violent and degrading pornography threatens children and youth as well as adults. How to address this problem is one of the most important child protection issues of our time, and our church will be an active participant

in this important conversation. (pg. 14)

✝ This church ... will oppose all forms of sexual exploitation within and outside this church. Justice for women in church and society must continue to be an important dimension of Lutheran concern and action. (pg. 17)

✝ ... [the church] will attend to the particular needs of children and the families of those with actual or perceived differences in sexual orientation or gender identity because they are especially vulnerable to verbal, physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological, and sexual abuse. (pg. 17)

✝ The sexual body is never to be used as an object for commercial purposes, and this church will speak against the public idolatry of pleasure, freedom, and wealth that undergirds such practices. Especially deplorable is the billion-dollar global sex market and the economic systems that thrive on it, both in the United States and abroad. (pg. 17-18)

✝ The ELCA opposes the sale and purchase of pornography. It also objects to commercial and technological efforts to sell sex, including mass media and commercial marketing, since these negatively impact individuals and society in significant ways. (pg. 18)

✝ This church will respond in situations where business and corporate enterprises seek profit through disrespectful treatment of the human body. This church will work with public and private institutions to create structures, policies, and practices of accountability to support social norms of protection. These include codes of practice that protect society, especially children and the most vulnerable, from the misuse and abuse of sexuality for profit. (pg. 18)

Cherish Our Children

Cherish Our Children is a national Lutheran ministry of prayer, education, relationship-building, and action to prevent child sexual exploitation.

You are invited to give financially to support this ministry. Gifts from Thrivent members may be matched through the GivingPlus program. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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