

## Respond



When a child expresses a concern:

**Listen** to the child – often a child will offer hints instead of disclosing actual abuse.

Ask follow up questions to

learn more about the situation. Open-ended follow up questions help reveal more about the concern. Closed-ended questions will provide specific information.

It is best to start with an open-ended question, such as “tell me more.”



**Reassure** the child that he or she is doing the right thing by telling another adult

**Protect** them from further contact with the accused. Assure the child you are doing everything you can to keep him or her safe

**Report** – Complete a Notice of Concern\* with the help of a supervisor and the Parish Youth Safety Adviser. The supervisor and PYSA will investigate, take action, and establish a follow up plan. There should always be three people “in the know” while making decisions, only one of whom is to be a parish priest or assistant. The notice will be sent to the Metropolitan. If abuse is involved, notify state authorities through the Childhelp National Abuse Hotline.

\*A Notice of Concern form can be found at the church office or on the GOA website

## St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

2418 W. Swann Avenue

Tampa, FL 33609

[www.stjohntpa.org](http://www.stjohntpa.org)

*Registration for Youth Workers is held twice each year. The first period allows Youth Workers to volunteer throughout the ecclesiastical year, which begins on September 1, and the second registration period only applies to winter and spring terms of that year.*

### First Registration:

June 1 – August 31

### Second Registration:

January 1 -- March 31

All Youth Workers who wish to participate in youth activities throughout the full ecclesiastical year must be registered before September 1. For simplicity, it is best to consider the start of Sunday School as the official “kick off” date for the church year. If you are not registered by September 1<sup>st</sup>, you will not be able to join children’s activities until registration begins on January 1<sup>st</sup> and your paperwork is completed and approved by the Metropolis of Atlanta. We will not be processing applications between registration periods.

Please complete our Youth Worker training and registration as requested. We cannot allow you to assume leadership positions or chaperon children’s activities if these basic standards are not met. It is our sincerest desire to protect your children from harm. Your cooperation is vital in us achieving this goal.

\*At St. John’s we expect ministry heads within **Choir, Altar boys, Parish Council, Ushers, and AHEPA youth programs as well as leaders of children’s activities** to comply with Youth Worker regulations .

## Let’s Keep our Children Safe at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church!



### Who is a Youth Worker?

It is You! If you want to be involved in a children’s ministry\*, you must become a Youth Worker. This applies to all youth event leaders, any participants over 18-years-of-age, and individuals who chaperon events, drive children other than their own, or participate in overnight activities.

According to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA) a Youth Worker is the only person eligible to participate in Youth Ministry Programs or Events.

In order to become a Youth Worker, a person must:

1. **Register or Reregister** (every year)
2. **Train** (complete online videos every year)
3. **Screen** (pass criminal & driving records check every two years)

# Here's Our Simple Formula for Success:

## *Monitor, Protect, Report, Respond*

### Monitor



A child can be hurt by someone they know and trust, by another child, or by an opportunistic stranger. As leaders in St. John, it is your job to create safe

environments by following basic guidelines when leading activities and events.

- Absolutely no cell phone use by chaperons while supervising children.
- Formal check in and check out procedures for both children and adults
- Limited number of entry and exit points
- Conduct formal, regular reviews of high risk areas such as bathrooms, empty rooms and external sites with public access.
- Rule of Three - avoid private, out-of-sight, one-on-one activities between adults and children and between **a child and another child alone**.
- Assign adults to chaperon free time; add adults when coordinating large groups or transitioning between events.
- Watch for inappropriate physical, verbal, or online communication between adults and children and between children of various ages.
- Create an easy method for identifying members during off site activities. (For example, same color tee shirts, custom lanyards.)

### Protect



- Know who is teasing whom
- Know which parents do not follow GOA Youth Worker rules
- Group children by no more than an age difference of three to four years
- Identify which children are at *high risk to abuse and to be abused* and watch for possible evidence.
- Enforce GOA Youth Worker policy among volunteers
- Stop, intercept, and interrupt any suspected violation immediately.
- Report incident to event administer; complete Notice of Concern\* if applicable

#### Adults Must:

- Use only Church authorized communication tools for contacting children.
- Establish and maintain clear physical, emotional, and personal boundaries with children.
- Avoid any appearance of impropriety by adhering to GOA guidelines: no gifts, no favorites, no verbal, physical or **electronic** interaction that could be considered abusive, suggestive, or inappropriate.

### Report

It is our job to protect the children within our care and it is also our duty to report any harm that they may be experiencing within our care or outside of it. This *duty* means we are Mandatory Reporters in the eyes of the law.



*Youth Workers must report to state authorities all instances of:*

- Abuse or Suspected Abuse of a Child or Youth
- Neglect or Suspect Neglect of a Child or Youth
- Any imminent dangers to the life of a Child or Youth.

How do Youth Workers file such a report?

The Childhelp National Abuse Hotline is available to answer your questions and help direct you to the appropriate state authorities. Call them at 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453).