**Protect the Children!**

Our church has devoted a great portion of our resources to the spiritual training of children. Parents entrust their children to our schools and church organizations with the expectation that we are as concerned about their spiritual safety. With all the exposure of cases of sexual assault, it’s obvious that church leaders need to step up and protect children and young people among us. Every church / Christian school needs to offer abuse prevention training to those who work with children. For that reason, WELS Special Ministries team Freedom for the Captives has developed, "**Standing up for Children: A Christian Response to Child Abuse and Neglect**."

We are very excited about the quality and the content of this class. It is a video-based training, taught by experts Mr. Victor Vieth, founder and national director emeritus of Gundersen National Child Protection Training Center and Prof. John Schuetze, WELS seminary professor and counselor.

The training consists of four videos which can be watched online.

The length of the videos is:

Session 1:  1 hour and 34 minutes (Policies and Pastoral Care)

Session 2: 22 minutes (Recognizing Signs of Physical Abuse and Exposure to Violence)

Session 3: 31 minutes (Emotional Abuse and Neglect)

Session 4: 44 minutes  (Biblical Basis and Support)

There are quizzes for each of the videos.  If you watch the videos and pass the quizzes, you will receive a certificate that you have completed training.  People who have taken similar training elsewhere have told us that the content of this training course is excellent.

These videos have been designed for a training setting, and not for general use in a Sunday Bible class. People who have experienced abuse need to be aware that they may find these videos difficult to watch. For a conference, faculty inservice or other group training, the videos could be shown to the assembled staff, and then each attendee given the “key” to take the online quiz.  Those who successfully complete the quizzes would receive certification through the website.  A grant from the Antioch Foundation has made it possible for Mr. Vieth to appear personally at select larger conferences to do the training in person.

The training is available at **WELS.net University** <[http://wnu.wels.net/](http://wnu.wels.net/%20)> but must be accessed with an “enrollment key.” The key remains the same for all trainees – but each trainee will have to set up their own WELS.net University account, in order to take the quizzes and receive individual certification.

To request the enrollment key and instructions to take the course, or to request that Mr. Vieth present at your conference, please email [freedom@wels.net](mailto:freedom@wels.net)

            1. Your name and phone number

            2. Name of church where you are a member

            3. Whether you are a pastor, teacher, staff minister, or church member

            4. Whether you intend to take the training personally, or use it with a group (indicate which group)

Besides training leaders and volunteers, we also recommend that everyone with access to children should have a background check, and read and sign an up-to-date child protection policy.

When churches start conversations about abuse, it is not uncommon for Christians who suffered abuse to seek help.  Our Freedom for the Captives website <<https://www.freedomforcaptives.com/>> offers survivors a rich supply of spiritual resources and other useful information.  Congregations and schools will find guidance on abuse prevention policies and other helpful resources on the website.

The mission of WELS Freedom for the Captives is “Equipping the Body of Christ to protect children and empower survivors.” We hope you’ll find our resources helpful and healing.  Please share the website information with others!