



Creating safer places. Together

SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY

2023



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“It made safeguarding sound everyday and accessible for people in the church, not a big scary or threatening thing, just a normal part of what we do, which is exactly how it should be.”

“It was a powerful service, and many people took part. It contributed and reinforced to the culture we want to create! We can’t thank you enough. So powerful!”

Safeguarding Sunday 2022 participant.

WHY SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY?

Your Church is unique. It is a place where anyone can come and feel welcomed, loved, and part of a community. But with that openness comes responsibility, especially towards safeguarding vulnerable people.

It’s easy to think that abuse and neglect don’t happen in our churches. But the sad truth is that they can and do happen. In some cases, failure to safeguard people from abuse has had devastating and long-lasting consequences on people’s lives.

Thanks to the many brave people who have experienced such abuse and spoken out about it, we are now much more aware of the risks. Today, many churches are working hard to get these things right and safeguarding is now a familiar word to most people who work and volunteer in Christian ministry.

However, to truly create places that are safer for all, we need to create open cultures where abuse has nowhere to hide. To do this you need to ensure everyone in your church is aware of the part they each have to play in supporting the safeguarding arrangements you have in place and to be alert to the risks of abuse both from within and outside the church. Safeguarding Sunday will help you do that.

It’s not just about making a statement. It’s your chance to consider the journey your own church or denomination is on with safeguarding. You can reflect on where you may have got things wrong in the past and think about how you are supporting those who have been hurt or harmed.

It’s your chance to highlight all the good work being done behind the scenes and to show your church and your community that you are committed to protecting vulnerable people and creating safer cultures and communities for all both now and in the future.

CHURCHES WHO TAKE PART IN SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY SEE:

- GREATER positive awareness and understanding of safeguarding among church members.
- An INCREASE in the number of people feeling able to talk about their abuse for the first time.
- MORE volunteers coming forward for safeguarding roles and to help with children’s/youth work.
- An INCREASED number of people completing safeguarding training and criminal record checks.
- And the number of Safeguarding Leads feeling supported in their role by the church is BIGGER!

HOW TO INCLUDE SAFEGUARDING IN YOUR SERVICE

“We had people come and talk to us about historic abuse which they had never disclosed to anyone. The Sunday focus, they said, helped them feel supported.”

Whatever the tradition or style of your church, if you have just a few minutes or can dedicate a whole service, with a bit of thought and planning you can show how safeguarding is an important part of the Christian message of justice and hope. This pack will help you do it.

Whether it's including a prayer, preaching a sermon, or showing one of our animations, planning your service is simple.

1. Set the date

Safeguarding Sunday will be observed this year on 19 November 2023. On this Sunday thousands of churches from across the UK will be marking this event together. It would be great if your church could join us.

Don't panic though if you can't do this date. The more time you can dedicate to safeguarding in a service, the greater the impact will be for your church so if it has to be on a different day, that's okay. Find a date that works for you.

Once you've agreed a date, work backwards to plan what you need to do and by when.

2. Decide what to do

Think about what you want to do and what it is you want people to take away most from your service. Is it a greater general awareness of safeguarding or an understanding of the theological or scriptural basis for it? An important goal should be for everyone to know who they can go to with any questions or concerns and that they will be taken seriously.

Think about how much time you have and the ages of those who will be there. This will determine what activities you might do, who else you may need to involve in your planning, and how much preparation you will need.

You can use the activity suggestions in this pack as a guide or come up with your own ideas. Make sure you allow plenty of time to order or print any materials and resources.

Download resources at:

thirtyoneeight.org/downloads

3. Publicise your event

Tell people what's happening in advance. This is especially important for anyone affected by issues of abuse as this may be triggering for them. Think about who needs to know internally – your leadership, workers and volunteer teams, congregation or church members. You could include something in your regular notice sheet or newsletter in the run up to the event.

Think externally too – can you include something on your website or social media, or in your denominational communications? You may also want to consider engaging with your local press or media to show your community how your church is taking safeguarding seriously.

Use our communication toolkit to help you do this.

That's it!



ACTIVITY IDEAS

Download a range of resources and materials to use in your service – prayers, hymn and song suggestions, sermon notes, videos and animations, which can be adapted to suit your church's style. These are a guide to inspire you as you think about how you'll deliver key messages.

thirtyoneeight.org/downloads

Whatever activities you choose it's important to include a definition or explanation of what safeguarding is, so people understand the term and what it is you're talking about. It's not just about children. Some people may understand it, but lots won't. Use our example definitions and prompt questions to help you do this.

“My safeguarding officer felt particularly affirmed, and it was probably the first time she'd been publicly prayed for in church like that.”



I ONLY HAVE A FEW MINUTES...

Include a prayer in your prayer time or intercessions

As Christians one of the most important things we can do is pray. Take a few minutes to pray for all those working with children, young people, and adults in your church. Pray for your Safeguarding Lead and all those involved in making your church a safer place. You could invite your workers to come forward to be prayed for as a team, inviting your congregation to pray for their various needs and the challenges they face. Use our prayer resources as a guide.

Show one of our films or animations

Use one of our short animations or films in your service to help communicate safeguarding in an engaging and family friendly way. These are useful for effectively communicating some of the key messages and need little explanation, although can also be used as an introduction to a talk or other activity.

Identify safe people to speak to

Let people know who your Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding team are and how people can contact them. Ask them to come to the front or display an image of them so people can recognise them. Let people know that they are safe people they can go to.

A moment of lament or reflection

You might feel it appropriate to hold a moment of silent reflection or lament as a sign of solidarity and respect for those who have been hurt or harmed. You could say a few words, read a short psalm or just observe a minute of silence.

Use some of the scripture readings

Include one or more of the bible readings you can find on our downloads page that connects with the theme of protecting vulnerable people. You could use these as basis for your sermon or talk, to open your time of worship, or as prompt for quiet meditation or reflection. You could use Proverbs 31:8 as a way of thinking about the biblical mandate to speak out for others.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

I HAVE ABOUT 10 MINS...

Invite your Safeguarding Lead to explain their role

You could do this interview style by asking questions, or ask them to give a talk about their work. If they're feeling brave you could invite people to ask questions!

This could be an opportunity to find out about: Why their role is so crucial, what's involved, and how they contribute to keeping people safe. It's good for people to be able to put a face to a name and explain how people can contact them or raise concerns if they need to. You could also find out a little about their background, experience and what motivates them to do the role.

Do a short talk about some of the things you have in place

Most people won't know what safeguarding arrangements you have in place. Explaining these to people will reassure them and help them understand and better support you. You could share about your safeguarding policy – why it's necessary and where people can access it. You could talk about your safer recruitment processes and why you have training etc.

Do your church activities need safeguarding?

Talk about some of the activities your church does that require you to have safeguarding in place. You could invite people to come up with suggestions or make a list. Some of these – including your regular Sunday service – might surprise people.

I HAVE ABOUT 20 MINS...

Take time to pray

Use the prayers in this pack to lead your prayers on a theme of protecting vulnerable people. This doesn't just have to be people in your church but could include people who are vulnerable or voiceless in any setting. You could ask a member of your safeguarding team or children's work to share some of their prayer needs or include any needs from your local community. You could include prayers for people involved in social work, police, education, and welfare.

Sing the safeguarding hymn

Use the safeguarding hymn as part of your sung worship. Written by Ally Barrett, this hymn is a prayer to bless and affirm the huge number of people involved in safeguarding and creating safer places.

Explain why you have a policy and what it's for

Letting people know that you have a safeguarding policy and why, demonstrates that you take safeguarding seriously. You could invite a member of the leadership team to explain how it impacts the work you do and what it includes. Don't forget to let people know where they can see a copy if they want to.

Read together the safeguarding pledge

Read together the safeguarding pledge as part of your commitment to create safer places. Safeguarding is not just a job for the leadership, youth team or Safeguarding Lead but for everyone. Saying this pledge together recognises the role everyone has to play in this, and highlights some of the ways everyone can help.



ACTIVITY IDEAS

I HAVE THE WHOLE SERVICE...

Use our service plan or liturgy suggestions

Use our service plan or liturgy for children and families we've made just for Safeguarding Sunday. This includes prayers, readings and responses that you can use to structure your service.

Use our safeguarding song list

Use our hymn and song list, available on our downloads page, to include the theme of protecting vulnerable people in your sung worship. These are only suggestions and they'll be lots more that you could include so that every part of your worship links to the theme of Safeguarding Sunday.

Children's talk

Use our talk notes to do a talk for children on the theme of speaking up. You could purchase our Raise your Roar with Roarry pack from our online shop to help you do this.

Preach on the theme of protecting vulnerable people

Throughout the Bible we're given hundreds of examples of God's heart for vulnerable people and the expectations he places upon communities and societies in how we should respond and treat people who are vulnerable or voiceless.

Use our ready made preaching notes to base a sermon or deliver a message on the theme of safer places.

Home/study groups


Want to delve a bit deeper into the theology of safeguarding or consider what it means to create safe and healthy cultures? Use our discussion guide for groups in your home or study group to do this.



PREPARATION CHECKLIST

“One visitor was overwhelmed by the realisation that God really cares for them as an individual, something which was brought home by hearing what safeguarding means in a church context.”

We've put together a list of things to help you as you plan and prepare for your event.

 It's important to be aware that this event may be triggering for people with lived experience of abuse, and may prompt questions, concerns, or disclosures of abuse, so make sure you think about the impact of what you will be sharing.

Make sure people know who they can speak to about any concerns and where they can get support to address issues that may arise. In addition to any denominational or Diocesan support, our confidential independent safeguarding advice helpline is available to offer guidance Monday–Friday, 9–5pm on 0303 003 11 11.



Before the event

- Get the date for your service in your church diary or calendar ASAP.
- Make sure your Safeguarding Lead is involved in your planning.
- Notify your congregation or group in advance that you will be holding a Safeguarding Sunday event.
- Check that your safeguarding policy is up-to-date and that people know where and how to access it.
- Check that safeguarding information is prominently displayed at your premises and on your website including details of who to contact with any concerns.
- Check that your volunteer and staff team are aware of your current safeguarding policy know where to access it, and are up to date with their training.
- Do people know how to respond and report concerns if they arise on or after the event?

On the day

- Make sure you have people available who have received training in how to respond to abuse.
- Make sure anyone serving or volunteering on the day of the event especially in any pastoral or prayer related roles are aware.
- If using any printed resources make sure you have these ready to hand and people know what to do with them.

After the event

- Schedule time after the event for yourself and those involved in running and participating in the event to reflect and feed back. What worked well? Did you feel the key messages were effectively communicated? Did the event raise any issues or highlight any gaps? What could you improve upon next time?
- Send out the feedback survey to find out what people learned.
- Complete our participant survey so we know how we can make this event better in future.



SAVE THE DATE!

Safeguarding Sunday will be back in 2024.
Sunday 17 November 2024.

Trusted for over 45 years,

Thirtyone:eight is the UK's only award-winning independent Christian safeguarding charity which helps individuals, organisations, charities, faith and community groups to protect vulnerable people from abuse. Join us.

Call us **0303 003 1111**
email us **info@thirtyoneeight.org**
or visit **thirtyoneeight.org**
follow us **@thirtyoneeight**

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