# **Pastoral Ethics for VAUMC Licensing School – 2022**

*Christian Ethics*

“Ethics, in the original understanding of the term, is basically about the positive goals and directions we all set for our lives. Ethics is about how we try to become good people and shape for ourselves a life that is worth living. For Christians, that effort cannot be separated from what we believe about God and about our relationship with God. Faith and ethics are inextricably linked, though not always in the simple way that we think when we try to please God by being good.”

- Robin Lovin, *Christian Ethics; An Essential Guide (*Abingdon Press, 2000) Pg 7.

*“Christian ethics*is ethics with a Christian orientation and biblical perspective which addresses the whole person and his or her needs. It is grounded in norms that refer directly to the biblical perspective and particularly to the person of Jesus Christ. It distinguishes itself by the recurrent all-encompassing themes of love, justice, concern for one's neighbor, the disadvantaged; grace and forgiveness (forgiving and even loving the enemy); the sinfulness of human nature; the powerlessness of an unaided human being to do the ethical task; the question of salvation and healing from, not just immoral and unethical choices, but ultimately from sin, evil, and death.

Christian ethics is also implicit in its affirmation of a Creator-God who is the source of morality, who sets the requirements for ethical compliance for His created beings, and who is also the Forgiver and Enabler in our human striving for obedient conformity to His commands.”

* John B. Wong “Ethics for 21st Century Clergy”, *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors* (Sept, 2003) pg. 20-23

*Pastoral Ethics*

Pastoral Ethics is “characterized by virtue, duty, and responsibility.”

* Richard M Gula, *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry* (Pilgrim Press, 1996) pg. 6

**WHAT IS ABUSE? \***

Abuse is an act by parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust that is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child’s physical or mental health or welfare.

* **Physical Abuse:** physical injury, threat of injury or creation of danger, risk of death or impairment. Examples: asphyxiation, bone fracture, head injury, burns, scalding, poisoning, welts, cuts, bruises, internal injury, dislocation, stabbing wound.
* **Physical Neglect**: failure to provide food, appropriate clothing, shelter or supervision for a child if that child’s health or safety is endangered. May be chronic or a one-time critical occurrence.
* **Sexual Abuse**: Any act defined in the *Code of Virginia* that is committed, or allowed to be committed, on a child by his/her parent or other person responsible for the child’s care. Examples: sexual exploitation, sexual molestation, intercourse/sodomy, or exposure to pornographic material
* **Medical Neglect**: failure obtain and/or follow through with a regimen of medical, mental, or dental care for a condition, which if untreated could result in illness or developmental delays.
* **Failure to thrive**: A syndrome of infancy or early childhood that is characterized by growth failure, signs of severe malnutrition, and variable degrees of developmental retardation. Children are considered to be in this category only when the syndrome is diagnosed by a physician and is caused by non-organic factors.
* **Mental Abuse/Neglect**: A pattern of acts or omissions by the caregiver that results in harm to a child’s psychological or emotional health or development.
* **Educational Neglect**: The failure of the child’s caretaker to ensure that the child attends school or an approved alternative program of study
* **Bizarre Punishment**: Any actions in which the caregiver uses eccentric, irrational, or grossly inappropriate procedures of devices to modify the child’s behavior.
* From Virginia Conference Protection Policies, Rev. 5/24/13

Safe Sanctuary Training Quiz

What age is someone considered an adult in Safe Sanctuaries?

* 18
* 21
* 25
* 16

How many adults are required to be in a space or sight line?

* 1
* 2
* 3
* 4

Safe Sanctuary is designed to protect who?

* Students
* Volunteers
* Students and Volunteers

What type of abuse is not mentioned?

* Verbal abuse
* Animal abuse
* Sexual abuse
* Physical abuse

In case of an incident who should talk to the media?

* Me
* My Friends
* Church Staff
* The Pastor
* Other

St. Luke's UMC Kilgore, TX. 2020  
https://stlukeskilgore.org/s/

**UMC Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

This Parent Consent Form gives permission for my child to participate in any activities on or off campus and sponsored by UMC. (All portions of this form shall be completed before the child is registered for the event).

Name of **CHILD**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Main Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of **PARENT**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Student’s Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

My child has the following physical condition that may require special attention:

□ Diabetes □ Hyperventilation □ Seizures □ Allergies □ Other

Please specify allergies: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

□ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Does your child require any special accommodations or have special accessibility needs?

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(A Ministry Leader will contact you to discuss these needs.)

**Medical Treatment Release, Liability Release, and Photograph Release**

I hereby authorize event staff to obtain and give consent for medical treatment for my child for such injury or illness that may occur during the year and hereby hold the ministry staff and their representatives harmless in the exercise of this authority.

I give permission for my child to be transported in vehicles operated by the adults in whose care the minor has been entrusted while attending and participating in this ministry.

It is my understanding that the above-named participant will be covered by my personal medical insurance. The ministry provides limited/supplemental medical payment coverage for injuries arising out of the event activities which is payable in excess of any other collectible insurance. Payments of any medical injuries not covered by my insurance or the ministry limited/supplemental medical insurance will be paid by me.

□ I give permission for photographs of my child taken during the year to be used at the discretion of UMC and the Ministries leadership wherever deemed appropriate.

□ I do not give permission for photographs of my child taken during the year

Name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (***Attach Copy of both sides of your Insurance Card)***

**Accident Report Form**

Use this form to make a report of an accident that occurred to a child or youth while attending a UMC sponsored activity.

Today’s Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time of Accident: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Location of Accident: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of child or youth injured: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of child’s or youth’s parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date and time parents contacted about accident: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of person(s) who witnessed the accident:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Describe accident: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Condition of child or youth, including the nature and extent of the injury: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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First aid or other care provided after accident: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of person making report:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_

Printed name of person making report: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**#1 Case Study**: **Sexual Ethics**

**A Story of Abuse within the Church**

(Based on a true story published in the Washington Post, April 2, 2011

A youth director at a large suburban church privately deceptively convinced several girls in the youth group that he was in love with them, saying to each that he wanted to marry her, convincing them to keep their relationship secret, and then gradually increasing sexual contact with each girl, stealing private moments as they grew older. He quoted scripture to each girl, convincing them that the relationship was ok.

When one of the girl’s parent became aware of and reported what was happening to her daughter to Child Protective Services, the youth director was publicly accused and forced to resign. He pleaded guilty to abusing that girl and charged guilty of contributing to the delinquency of a minor. However, nether public agents nor the church officials asked sufficient questions. The remaining girls who were involved remained silent, fearing disapproval. Some members of the church community were vocal in support of the youth director in court. They loaned him money, and suggested that the young girl seduced him.

The youth director moved to a different state.

Five years later, a new associate pastor, sensing malaise and divisiveness in the congregation, sought to correct the damage. It was only then that the church community began to learn the full story of what was happening in the lives of their youth five years earlier.

Who was the abuser(s) in that story?

Who contributed to the abuse?

Who were the victims?

Who protected the victims?

Who interfered with efforts to protect the victims?

Who suffered?

Who participated in healing?

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**#2 Case Study: Volunteers**

**Group Exercise**

Look at the two screening scenarios below and decide as a group whether you would allow the person to serve in ministry or not. Explain why your group reached its conclusions.

Scenario 1: David is a young adult hoping to volunteer for the church’s children ministry. His background check revealed no criminal charges. In his volunteer application, you notice that he has volunteered at several community organizations that work with children but only for short periods of time. For references, David has listed his elderly neighbor, his sister in another state, and his co-worker at the job he just started. In his volunteer interview, he says he never really gets angry and that he doesn’t believe in discipline for children. In his experience, kindness and positivity always help the child be better. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Scenario 2: Ben is a young adult who has been going to the church for 2 years and now says he would like to help with the church’s youth ministry. Ben’s background check reveals that he had a number of shoplifting charges 4 years ago. In his volunteer application, Ben doesn’t list any experience with teenagers but has been volunteering at the local food bank for the past 3 years. For references, Ben has listed the food bank coordinator, his former track coach, and his neighbor whose children he sometimes watches. In his interview, Ben says that when he gets angry, he takes deep breaths and then asks how to fix the problem. He isn’t sure how he would discipline teenagers but would go along with whatever the youth minister said to do.

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**#3 Case Study – Counseling regarding Medical/Bio Ethics**

“How would you apply pastoral ethics to solve the dilemma?

Mom Maureen is 79 years old. She has been comatose for six weeks following a stroke, leaving no advance directive as to nutritional care for her, and has been on tubes since the stroke. She has an estate valued at $2 million. She has three children—Bob, Doug, and Fay. You are the pastor of her eldest son Bob, who is also an elder in your church. Bob wants to have the tube discontinued immediately and says the money could instead be better used for your church programs. Doug only comes to your church once in a while. He has' never been close to Mom and is indecisive. He and his sister Fay are very close. Fay vehemently objects to discontinuing the feeding tube. She has a special bond with Mom, ever since Mom took care of her during her prolonged illness as a teenager. She wants to have everything done for Mom and could not stand to see her "starved to death." Fay, a Christian, is not a member of your church but is familiar with Christian beliefs. She says since Mom has $2 million in assets, they could well afford an intermediate health facility after her discharge from the hospital. Expected cost would be at least $6,000 a month, barring any complications. Doctors have said Mom could linger on for a long, long time since her heart, lungs, and kidneys are in good shape. You have seen Mom Maureen three times now—her condition remains the same. The hospital bills are mounting even though she has Medicare. The family wants to have a conference with you, the pastor, so they can tell the doctor to continue or discontinue the feeding tube, without which Mom would die in a few days.

Based on the information given here and assuming that biblical rationale can be marshaled to support either continuance or discontinuance of the feeding tube, what would you do?”

* John B. Wong “Ethics for 21st Century Clergy”, *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors* (Sept, 2003) pg. 23

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**#4 Case Study - Telling the Truth in Evangelism and Mission**

One of your friends, Jan, works as a fundraising director for ChristianVision, a Christian aid and relief organization that provides food and medical supplies to droughtridden parts of sub-Saharan Africa. You are always impressed by the great advertising appeals Jan has put together. In fact, you have cut out one of these ads and taped it to your refrigerator so that you will remember to send in a donation. In the center of the ad is a picture of small African girl, perhaps five years old, trying to smile in a very uncertain way. Above the picture are the words, “She’s all alone now” and below the picture are the words “Who will help Meera?” A few days later, you are thumbing your way through a Christian magazine and notice a picture of the same little girl. This time, however, the picture says, “Help Dina get the education her parents are too poor to give her. You can make a difference, one life at a time. Call ChristianVision today.” Needless to say, you do call ChristianVision and ask Jan to explain to you how this one little girl can have two different names, live in two different countries and have two very different kinds of problems. Jan explains with embarrassment that Meera and Dina are actually made-up names and that their stories are each a composite of different people’s experiences, creatively compiled at the head office in Chicago on the basis of various project reports sent in from seven African countries.

* Pastoral Ethics Case Studies - Early Christian Spirituality and Spiritual Direction, didymus.org

Is there an ethical issue regarding truthfulness, deception or misrepresentation here? What do you say? What do you do, if anything?

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**#5 - Ethics in Sermon Preparation and Preaching** (Lay person perspective)

Sometimes when you have free time on a Saturday, you skim the Internet for sermons on the biblical text that will be read and studied in the next day’s Sunday service. One Sunday you recognize that the preacher at your church has taken one of these Internet sermons and is using it almost word for word, even taking over the Internet sermon’s personal anecdotes and presenting them as if they were events that had happened to himself and his own family! As members of the congregations leave the church, you hear a number of them congratulate the preacher on the fine, inspiring sermon he has preached and he accepts their praise. When you confront the preacher privately about this, he admits that he had found the sermon on the Internet, that he does this on a regular basis and doesn’t see any problem with this practice. Indignantly, he responds, “You laypeople just don’t understand what a pastor’s life is like! There’s never enough time to get everything done and you’ve just got to make some choices about how you’re going to deal with it! Better a sermon off the Internet than some garbage I threw together late Saturday night!”

* Pastoral Ethics Case Studies - Early Christian Spirituality and Spiritual Direction, didymus.org

What is the ethical dilemma here? What do you say or do, if anything?

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**#7 – OUR OWN CASE STUDIES**

**SMALL GROUP EXERCISE**

* Break up into teams of 4-5
* Create a realistic scenario with an ethical component. (can be real, but hide the names and location)
* Each team present the polemic and ask the other teams how would they respond?
* Lastly the originating team offers their consensus of how to respond.