

April Child Protection Month 2016



Prayer for the Protection of Children

- Leader: God, you bless us with children, in our church, in our families, and in our community.
- People: We give you thanks for young lives, full of hope and promise.**
- Leader: Let nothing harm your precious children, God.
- People: Make us protectors of our precious children, Lord.**
- Leader: May our church be a place of safety for all who are in our care.
- People: May it be a place of healing and hope for those who have experienced abuse or neglect.**
- Leader: God, we place our children under the shelter of your wings,
- People: And you entrust us with their protection.**
- Leader: Loving God, give us grace to be faithful in this work.
- All: Amen**



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Empowering and equipping faith communities to keep children and youth safe in their homes, churches, and communities.

When We *Don't* Talk About It

When I preach or teach about the protection of children, someone invariably asks, “Why do we have to talk about that?”

Two recent experiences underscored for me the importance of “talking about it” and of the child protection work of Dove’s Nest.

A couple of months ago, the pastor of two small churches in our rural area was suddenly arrested and extradited to another state. He faced ten felony charges related to the sexual abuse of a girl in his previous congregation. Although he had left that church under a cloud of suspicion, the news came as a complete shock to both of his current congregations. They were left grieving the loss of their shepherd and, at the same time, wondering if he might have offended in our community.

How could such a thing happen? We certainly need to talk about it.

This morning Rachel came into the church office. “Pastor, please pray for my sister, Ann. Our family tries to talk with her about faith, but she won’t listen. She is seventy-one years old and doesn’t want anything to do with God.”

I promised I would pray for Ann. But then I asked, “Why do you suppose she is so closed to God?”

“When we were teenagers, we went to a church conference. One of the ministers there tried to do things with her. Of course, I didn’t find out until many years later. She was afraid to tell anyone. Who would have believed her?”

Nearly sixty years have passed, and Ann is still closed to God. How might her life have been different if church was a place where she could “talk about it”?

Written by David Orr, pastor of St. John’s United Church of Christ in Holgate, Ohio, and a Dove’s Nest board member.

Join Dove's Nest in talking about it. We're ready to grow awareness and offer healing.

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