



**The Western District
of The Alliance Canada**

Safeguarding in Small Churches

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WCD Operations: Safe Church Ministry



Safeguarding in Small Churches: Creative Solutions ([Plan to Protect blog](#))

Hall Monitors and Open Door Policies

Consider screening and training additional hall monitors. These volunteers, while not stationary in a classroom, would roam the church hallways, periodically checking in on each classroom, ensuring that the doors remain open and that a visible adult presence is always nearby. This added layer of accountability helps maintain a safer environment, even when only one screened and trained adult is able to be inside the classroom itself.

This approach has several benefits:

- Increases overall adult presence in the children's wing, deterring inappropriate behavior and providing quick access to help if ever needed.
- Allows flexibility in how volunteers are deployed, maximizing the impact of those who are available.
- Keeps volunteer requirements manageable for a small congregation.

One Screened and Trained Adult Per Classroom with a Hall Monitor

While best practice is always two adults in each room, an exception can be made in smaller church settings when hall monitors and open doors are utilized. In this scenario, each classroom would have at least one screened adult, and with the hall monitor's oversight, the church can meet the spirit of Plan to Protect® good practice, prioritizing both safety and feasibility.

Large Group and Breakouts: Maximizing Impact and Minimizing Risk

Another alternative was transitioning to a large group and breakouts model. Instead of splitting the children immediately into smaller classrooms, all the children would initially gather in a single, larger space for a time of teaching, worship, or storytelling. This model not only makes supervision easier—since more adults can be present in one space—but it also fosters a sense of unity and excitement among the children.

Once the large group session concludes, the children can be divided into smaller breakout groups (in the large room) for age-appropriate discussion and activities. Here, the breakout leaders apply the story or lesson to the children's real lives, based on their developmental level.

Conclusion: A Call to Creative Faithfulness

Safeguarding in small churches will always require creativity, flexibility, and a willingness to adapt. But with thoughtful planning, intentional recruitment, and a commitment to best (and good!) practices, even the smallest congregation can rise to the challenge.