

## EXTRACTS OF PUBLICATIONS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ON COMBATTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (1981-2019)

***Awake!* 8 February 1981**

**“Incest—The Hidden Crime”, pp. 16-19**

Printed copies:  
7,800,000 in 34 languages

“An adult committing incest with a child betrays selfishness. He shows no concern at all for the welfare of the child. ...

Also available online at:  
<https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/g19810208/incest/>

One incest victim recommended teaching children at an early age that certain parts of their bodies are not for others to play with. ... Then, if anything resembling molestation should occur, the child can immediately tell mother or father. ...

Handling incest has not proved easy. It is a secret crime.” (p. 17)

***Awake!* 22 June 1982**

**“The New Morality—Its effect on children”, pp. 3-12**

Printed copies:  
8,200,000 in 47 languages

**Rape at Home:** “Incest is probably the most selfish and reprehensible kind of child abuse. It is a grotesque violation of the child’s trust and dependency. ...

Also available online at:  
<https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/101982441>

[T]he Bible views it as a crime worthy of the death penalty.” (p. 10)

***The Watchtower*  
1 October 1983**

**“Help for the Victims of Incest”, pp. 27-30**

Printed copies:  
10,050,000 in 102 languages

“Studies in the United States suggest that one in five girls and one in ten boys suffer sexual molestation before they grow up. In most cases, the crime is committed by someone the young victim knows, and in many cases it is incestuous. Reports from other countries tell a similar story.” (p. 27)

Also available online at:  
<https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/w19831001/help-for-victim-of-incest/>

“[I]ncest ‘is selfish and reprehensible ... and a grotesque violation of a child’s trust and dependency.’” (p. 28)

“Helping victims of emotional trauma is not easy. It cannot be handled in a few minutes in a crowded Kingdom Hall. It takes patience, love, kindness, repeated efforts and, especially, time. There are no miracle cures.” (p. 30)

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**Awake! 22 January 1985**

Printed copies:  
9,800,000 in 54 languages

Also available online at:  
<https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/g19850122>

**“Child Molesting—You Can Protect Your Child”, pp. 1-10**

**Child Molesting—‘Who Would Do a Thing Like That?’:** “[I]n most cases children are molested by people they know and trust. ...

However, children do have one very strong defence. What is that? Their parents. ...” (pp. 4-5)

**Child Molesting—You Can Protect Your Child:** “The first line of defence is to avoid situations that leave our children vulnerable. ...

[T]he more we can keep our children under our own supervision, the less opportunity molesters will have to get at them. ...

[C]hildren usually have a natural sense of what is fit and proper. We have to reinforce this instinct, tell them that they should obey it even if an adult tells them differently. A simple and determined ‘No, I don’t want you to do that!’ is often enough to deter a molester. ...

[Parents should explain to their child] the parts of their body that other people should not touch. ... ‘Nobody should touch you there, even if it is a schoolteacher or a policeman. Not even Mummy or Daddy should touch you there. And a doctor should only touch you there if Mummy or Daddy is with you!’ (pp. 6-9)

**If the Worst Should Happen:** “However, if molestation—and especially incest—is discovered to have occurred, two things must be done immediately:

**First**, the child—and other children too—must be protected from any further abuse. This must be done, whatever the cost. ...

**Second**, the child must be given a lot of love and emotional support. Parents must make it very clear that the little victim is not to blame. The crime and anything that happens as a result of it—even if a close relative goes to prison—is not her (or his) fault. But that reassurance will have to be given many times, so that the victim comes to believe it—and to believe that the parents believe it too!” (p. 8)

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**Awake! 22 December 1986**

Printed copies:  
10,480,000 in 53 languages

Also available online at:

<https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/p-e/101986921>

**“Pornography—Why Resist It?”, pp. 3-11**

**The Pornography Plague—The Threat Is Real:** “[I]n the more than 40 child-sexual abuse cases [one police department] investigated ... pornographic photos were found to be present in every case.” (p. 6)

**The Pornography Plague—Resist It!**: “[P]ornography is based upon God-dishonouring *lies*, wicked misrepresentations as to sex, women, and children. .... [G]enuine Christians who wish to maintain a clear relationship with their heavenly Father cannot have anything to do with pornography!” [Emphasis in original.] (p. 9)

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**Awake! 8 October 1991**

Printed copies:  
12,980,000 in 64 languages

Also available online at:

<https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/g19911008/adult-victims-child-abuse/>

**“Healing the Wounds of Child Abuse”, pp. 1-11**

**The Innocent Victim of Child Abuse:** “Far from being a rare act of deviant behavior, then, childhood sexual abuse is a widespread affliction, one that cuts across all social, economic, religious, and racial lines.” (p. 3)

**The Secret Wounds of Child Abuse:** “[It is] an overwhelming, damaging, and humiliating assault on a child’s mind, soul, and body ... The abuse invades every facet of one’s existence.’ ...

... The abuser betrays the child’s trust; he robs her of any semblance of safety, privacy, or self-respect and uses her as a mere object for his own self-gratification. ...

Childhood abuse has thus been called ‘the ultimate betrayal.’” (pp. 4- 5)

**“A Time to Heal”:** “[S]ome who are extremely distressed may decide to seek the help of a qualified physician, counsellor, or mental-health professional. In any case, a trusted friend, a marriage mate, family members, or Christian overseers who will listen with empathy and respect can also be valuable allies.” (p. 9)

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**Awake! 8 March 1993**

Printed copies:  
13,240,000 in 67 languages

Also available online at:

<https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/p-e/101993163>

**“How to Cope With Rape”, pp. 8-11**

**If You Are Raped:** “Call the police as soon as you are able to. Counselors recommend reporting for your safety and for the safety of other women. Reporting is not the same as prosecuting, but if you choose to prosecute later, your case will be weakened by a delayed report.” (p. 9)

**Give Her Support:** “If the rape happened recently, friends can help the victim get medical help and can offer a safe place to stay. Encourage her to report the rape, but let her make the decisions. She has just come from a situation where she was stripped of all control. Allow her to take some of that control back by letting her choose what to do next.” (p. 10)

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**Awake! 8 October 1993**

Printed copies:  
13,240,000 in 67 languages

Also available online at:

<https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/g19931008/child-abuse-danger/>

**“Protect Your Children!”, pp. 3-13**

**Your Child Is in Danger:** “The molestation of children is an ugly reality ... ‘[i]t affects more of us than cancer, more of us than heart disease ...’” (p. 3)

**How Can We Protect Our Children?:** “In the vast majority of cases ... the abuser is a person the child knows and trusts. ... Many are quite religious, respected, and well liked in the community. ...

... Don’t let your children be ‘ideal victims.’ Educate them about sex. ...

Abuse prevention can be taught early. When you teach children to name such body parts as the vagina, the breasts, the anus, the penis, tell them that these places are good, they are special—but they are private. ‘Other people are not allowed to handle them—not even Mommy or Daddy—and not even a doctor unless Mommy or Daddy is there or has said it is OK.’

... Children thus need to know that some grown-ups do bad things and that not even a child has to obey *anyone* who tells him or her to do something wrong.

[T]each children to fend off displays of affection that are inappropriate or that make them feel uncomfortable. ...

... Show the child how to say no through words and clear, firm body language. Remember, abusers often test how children respond to subtle advances. So a child must be taught to resist firmly and say, ‘I’m telling on you.’

... Do not limit such training to a onetime talk. Children need much repetition.” (pp. 6-7)

**If Your Child Is Abused:** “Some legal experts advise reporting the abuse to the authorities as soon as possible. In some lands the legal system may require this. ...

What, though, when the abuser is one’s own beloved mate? ... Emotional ties, and even financial dependency, can be overwhelmingly strong. The wronged wife may also realize that taking action could cost her husband his family, his job, his reputation. The hard truth is, though, that he may just be reaping what he has sown. (Galatians 6:7) Innocent children, on the other hand, stand to lose much more if they are not believed and protected. Their whole future is at stake. They do not have the resources that adults have. Trauma can scar and shape them adversely for life. They are the ones who need and deserve tender treatment.” [Footnote omitted.] (p. 9)

**Prevention in the Home:** “Isolation, rigidity, and obsessive secrecy—these unhealthy, unscriptural attitudes are trademarks of the abusive household. ... Create a home atmosphere that is emotionally safe for children. Home should be a place where they feel built up, where they feel free to open their hearts and speak freely.” (p. 12)

See also, “Consoling Adult Survivors of Childhood Trauma”. (p. 14)

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***The Secret of Family Happiness, 1996***

Printed copies:  
78,389,587 in 185 languages

Also available online at:

<https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/The-Secret-of-Family-Happiness/Train-Your-Child-From-Infancy/>

**“Train Your Child From Infancy”, Chapter 5, pp. 51-63**

“One ugly threat that has grown in recent years is sexual molestation of children. ... Tragically, the majority of these children are molested in their own home by people they know and trust. But children should have a strong defense in their parents. ...

[A] major preventive step is to educate the child, even when he is still young. ... Knowledge ... that some grown-ups do bad things and that a young person does not have to obey when people suggest inappropriate acts. (Compare Daniel 1:4, 8; 3:16-18.) Do not limit such instruction to a onetime talk. Most young children need to have a lesson repeated before they remember it well. As children grow a little older, a father would lovingly respect his daughter’s right to privacy, and a mother her son’s—thus reinforcing a child’s sense of what is proper. And, of course, one of the best safeguards against abuse is close supervision by you as parents.” (p. 62, paras. 25-26)

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***The Watchtower*  
1 January 1997**

Printed copies:  
20,980,000 in 125 languages

Also available online at:

<https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1997003>

**“Let Us Abhor What Is Wicked”, pp. 26-29**

“For a man who was a child molester before he was baptized, there may be another consequence. ... [H]e would not qualify for congregation privileges.” (p. 27)

“What if a baptized adult Christian sexually molests a child? ... Depending on the law of the land where he lives, the molester may well have to serve a prison term or face other sanctions from the State. The congregation will not protect him from this.” (p. 28)

“The innocence of a child includes a complete lack of experience. Most children are open, eager to please, and thus vulnerable to abuse by a scheming adult whom they know and trust. Therefore, the congregation has a responsibility before Jehovah to protect its children.” (p. 29)

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***Awake!* 8 April 1997**

Printed copies:  
18,350,000 in 82 languages

Also available online at:

<https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/101997244>

**“Sexual Exploitation of Children—A Worldwide Problem”, pp. 11-15**

“[C]hildren should also be warned about—and urged to report to the authorities—any person making improper advances toward them, including people they know.” (p. 14)



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**Learn From the Great Teacher, 2003**

Printed copies:  
39,746,022 in 141 languages

Also available online at:  
<https://www.jw.org/en/publications/books/learn-from-great-teacher-jesus/how-jesus-was-protected/>

**“How Jesus Was Protected”, Chapter 32, pp. 167-171**

“So just as Jesus needed protection, you also need to be protected from grown-ups—and even from other children—who may try to have sex with you. ...

How can you protect your body from people who do bad things like this?— First of all, do not let anybody play with your sex organs. If someone tries to do this, say firmly in a loud voice: “*Stop that! I’m going to tell on you!*” And if that person says that what happened is your fault, don’t believe that. It is not true. Just go and tell on him no matter who it is! You should do so even if he says that what you are doing together is a secret just between you and him. Even if that person promises you nice presents or makes scary threats, you should get away from him and tell on him anyway.” [Emphasis in original.] (pp. 170-171)

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**Awake! October 2007**

Printed copies:  
34,267,000 in 81 languages

Also available online at:  
<https://www.jw.org/en/publications/magazines/g200710>

**“Keep Your Children Safe!”, pp. 3-11**

**“How to Protect Your Children”:** “The primary responsibility for protecting children against abuse belongs to parents, not to children. So educating parents comes before educating children. ... Then, as your second basic step in protecting him, do not hold back from teaching him about this important subject.” (p. 4)

“Melissa says: ‘We started early, with naming the body parts. We used real words, not baby words, to show them that there is nothing funny or shameful about any part of their body. ...’ Instruction about abuse follows naturally. Many parents simply tell their children that the parts of their body that a bathing suit covers are private and special.” (p. 7)

“Your child’s education should include a balanced view of obedience. Teaching a child to obey is an important and difficult lesson. (Colossians 3:20) However, such lessons can go too far. If a child is taught that he must *always* obey *any* adult, regardless of the circumstances, he is vulnerable to abuse. Molesters are quick to notice when children are overly compliant. Wise parents teach their children that obedience is relative.” (p. 7)

“[G]ive your child some simple actions to take in case someone tries to take advantage of him when you are not there. ... Help your child act out brief scenarios so that he feels confident to refuse loudly, get away quickly, and report to you whatever has happened. A child who seems to understand the training thoroughly may easily forget it within a few weeks or months. So repeat this training regularly.” (p. 8)

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**The Watchtower**  
**1 October 2008**

Printed copies:  
 37,100,000 in 169 languages

Also available online at:  
<https://www.jw.org/en/publications/magazines/wp20081001/How-to-Be-a-Good-Father/>

**“How to Be a Good Father”, pp. 18-21**

**“Children Need to Be Protected”:** “A father needs to prepare and train his children for the dangers they may face in this abusive world. Do your children know what to do in case someone tries to take advantage of them when you are not present? Your children need to know the proper and improper use of their private body parts. Kelvin comments: “I never left this training to others, not even their teachers. I felt that it was my personal responsibility to teach my children about sex and the danger of child molesters.” (p. 21)

**The Watchtower**  
**1 November 2010**

Printed copies:  
 39,601,000 in 182 languages

Also available online at:  
<https://www.jw.org/en/publications/magazines/wp20101101/talk-to-your-children-about-sex/>

**“Keys to Family Happiness—Talk to Your Children About Sex”, pp. 12-14**

“[I]t is crucial that you personally talk to your children about sex. ... [S]tart educating your children while they are still quite young. ... Focus on teaching the proper names of the sex organs, and emphasize that no one should touch these organs. ... Train your child to respond firmly if anyone attempts to play with his or her sex organs. For example, you might teach your child to say: “*Stop that! I’m going to tell on you!*” Assure your child that telling is always appropriate—even if the person promises gifts or makes threats.” (pp. 12-13)

**Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work, Vol. 1, 2011**

Printed copies:  
 18,381,635 in 65 languages

Also available online at:  
<https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/Questions-Young-People-Ask-Answers-That-Work-Volume-1/Sex-Morals-and-Love/How-Can-I-Protect-Myself-From-Sexual-Predators/>

**“How can I protect myself from sexual predators?”, Chapter 32, pp. 228-234**

“Sexual abuse at the hands of a neighbor, friend, or family member is disturbingly common today. ... While no precaution guarantees your safety, there is much you can do to protect yourself. Consider the following tips: ...

**Be willing to speak up.** There’s nothing wrong with firmly stating, “Don’t do that!” or “Take your hand off me!” ...

**Be cautious while online.** Never give out personal information or post photos that identify your whereabouts. If you receive a sexually explicit message, usually the best reply is *no* reply. A wall of silence renders most online predators powerless.” (pp. 229-230)

“... How can you deal with the guilt that often torments those who have been sexually abused?

[T]ry to keep foremost in mind that if you were raped, *you were not a willing participant*. ... Talking to a trusted confidant about what happened can in time help you to come to terms with the rape and gain relief from your distressing emotions.” [Emphasis in original.] (pp. 231-233)

“Sometimes victims of abuse are subject to severe depression. In such a case, it might be wise to consult a physician.” [Emphasis in original.] (p. 234)

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**JW.ORG, Bible Questions Answered, 2015, online**

Available in 107 languages at:

<https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/parents-teach-children-about-sex/>

**“How Can Parents Teach Their Children About Sex?”**

“How to protect your child from sexual predators.

**Educate yourself.** Learn how a typical abuser operates.—Proverbs 18:15; see chapter 32 of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 1.

**Stay involved in your child’s life.** Don’t just put him in someone’s care without determining if that person is trustworthy, and do not allow your child to be “let on the loose.”—Proverbs 29:15.

**Teach a balanced view of obedience.** Children need to learn to obey their parents. (Colossians 3:20) Yet, if you teach your child that he must always obey any adult, you make him vulnerable to abuse. Christian parents can say to their child, “If anybody tells you to do something that God says is wrong, don’t do it.”—Acts 5:29.

**Practice simple protective steps.** Help your child to learn what to do in case someone tries to take advantage of him or her when you’re not there. Acting out brief scenarios can give your child the confidence to say “Stop that! I’m going to tell on you!” and to get away quickly. You may need to remind “your children over and over again,” since they can easily forget.—Deuteronomy 6:7, *Contemporary English Version* [Emphasis in original.]

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**JW Broadcasting, July 2015, online**

Available in 81 languages at:

[https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/#en/mediaitems/StudioTalks/pub-jwban\\_201507\\_2\\_VIDEO](https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/#en/mediaitems/StudioTalks/pub-jwban_201507_2_VIDEO)

**Anthony Morris III: “We Protect Our Children”**

“[T]o take advantage of innocent young ones is *absolutely despicable!* As a religious organization, we have taken a decisive stand against such behaviour. It is our fervent desire to protect children from any kind of abuse. Our policy as an organization is that one professing to be a victim, or his parents, should never be discouraged from reporting the incident to the appropriate authorities. ... As the awareness of child abuse became more and more known, we published a landmark *Awake!* magazine over 30 years ago! It was the issue of June 22, 1982 ... it is clear that over the decades protecting children from abuse is a top priority for this organization. We are proud of our reputation in this regard. And we look forward to the time in God’s new world when no one, young or old, will ever again be a victim of abuse. Since the latter part of our discussion has addressed what Jehovah’s organization has done to protect children from predators, it gives me great pleasure to release at this time another animated video in the series *Become Jehovah’s Friend*. It is entitled, ‘Protect Your Children’.”



**JW.ORG, *Become Jehovah's Friend*, July 2015, online**

Available in 236 languages at:  
<https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/children/become-jehovahs-friend/videos/protect-your-children/>

### **Lesson 17: "Protect Your Children"**

"[Dad] Children, Jehovah wants you to be happy and keep you safe, but some people want to do bad things to you. So Jehovah gives you a conscience. It's like an alarm system that helps you to know right from wrong. It will protect you from danger. So Mommy and I will help you test your alarm system. Ready? What if someone tells you something that makes you feel uncomfortable or scares you? What do you do?"

[Caleb] I'm not sure, but that's weird. "Stop!"

[Dad] Very good. Tell them to stop it, and you tell Mommy and Daddy. No matter what someone tells you, never keep a secret from us.

[Mom] What if they ask you to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable?

[Sophia] I would say, "No!"

[Mom] You're right, you should say, "No!" and walk away.

[Dad] What if they try to touch you where they shouldn't?

[Caleb] I wouldn't let them! I'd get out of there!

[Mom] Good, Caleb. Even if it's an adult you know and trust, you should say, "No!" and run away. And you should yell, "Stop doing that! I'm gonna tell on you."

[Dad, Mom, Sophia, Caleb] Stop doing that! I'm gonna tell on you.

[Dad] The world can be a scary place, but you are never alone. Remember, you have your conscience, your mom and dad who love you, and you have Jehovah."

**JW.ORG, *Young People Ask*, 2015, online**

Available in 98 languages at:  
<https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/teenagers/ask/sexual-assault-recovery/>

### **"What Should I Know About Sexual Assault?—Part 2: Recovery"**

"Many victims of sexual abuse are deeply ashamed about what happened. They may even feel responsible for it. .... If you feel that way about your situation, consider the following:

... Children tend to trust adults and to be naive about the tactics of corrupt people, which can make a child vulnerable. ...

Talking to a trusted adult about the abuse can help you get relief."

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**“Don’t Give Up” 2017 Regional Convention of Jehovah’s Witnesses**

Attended by 13,558,594 persons at 5,380 conventions in 389 languages worldwide

**Talk No. 26: “Build a House That Will Endure—Safeguard Your Children From ‘What is Evil’”**

“Jehovah’s Witnesses abhor child sexual abuse.

Parents need to take all reasonable steps to protect their children from potential dangers. [Read Proverbs 22:3]

In the majority of cases of child sexual abuse, the perpetrator was someone the child knew and trusted.

While not becoming overly suspicious, shrewd parents are alert to the following potential dangers.

- (1) Someone singles out your child for special attention with gifts or offers free babysitting or private outings with your child
- (2) Someone is overly physical with your child, perhaps through excessive displays of affection, playful wrestling, or inappropriate tickling
- (3) A relative has unsupervised access to younger siblings, stepchildren, cousins, nieces, nephews, or grandchildren
- (4) Your child has association with others in places that are beyond your vision, such as on a school bus, in the backseat of a vehicle, at sleepovers and social gatherings, in auxiliary rooms and restrooms of meeting places, and at recreational areas, such as playgrounds and swimming pools
- (5) Your child has unsupervised use of the Internet or social networks.

Use discernment and good judgment to recognize potential dangers and safeguard your children from harm.

Parents have a God-given responsibility to teach their children what the Bible says about proper sexual conduct.

... Cultural background and upbringing may make it difficult to discuss sexual matters with one’s child; nevertheless, responsible Christian parents will do so.

Convey age-appropriate information to your children, not as one “talk” during their teen years, but as ongoing short discussions that gradually add to their knowledge (Deuteronomy 6:7).”

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***The Watchtower*—Study Edition, February 2019**

Printed copies:  
10,295,097 in 340 languages

Also available online at:  
<https://www.jw.org/en/publications/magazines/watchtower-study-february-2019/love-justice-ancient-israel/>

More than 18,683,834  
copies downloaded as of 30  
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**“Love and Justice in Ancient Israel”, Study Article 9**

“The [Mosaic] Law specifically protected those who could not protect themselves ... Jehovah showed tender personal interest in the most vulnerable in the community. And he held those who mistreated them to account.” (pp. 24-25, para. 22)

“The Law also protected family members from sex crimes by forbidding all forms of incest. (Lev. 18:6-30) Unlike the people of the nations surrounding Israel, who tolerated or even condoned this practice, Jehovah’s people were to view this type of crime as Jehovah did—as a detestable act.” (p. 25, para. 23)

“The next article in this series [*The Watchtower*, May 2019] will discuss ... the role that love and justice play in the Christian congregation.” (p. 25, para. 26)

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***The Watchtower*—Study Edition, May 2019**

Printed copies:  
10,026,634 in 344 languages

Also available online at:  
<https://www.jw.org/en/publications/magazines/watchtower-study-may-2019/love-justice-christian-congregation/>

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**“Love and Justice in the Christian Congregation”, Study Article 18**

“What is the role of elders in handling cases of serious wrongdoing? Their role is different from that of judges and elders under the Law that God gave Israel. Under that Law, appointed men handled not only spiritual matters but also civil and criminal cases. But under the law of the Christ, the elders’ role is to handle the spiritual aspects of the wrongdoing. They recognize that the secular authorities have the God-given responsibility to handle civil and criminal cases. That includes the authority to impose such penalties as fines or imprisonments.—Rom. 13:1-4.

How do elders handle the spiritual aspects of serious wrongdoing? They use the Scriptures to weigh matters and make decisions. They keep in mind that love is the foundation of the law of the Christ. Love moves the elders to consider: What needs to be done to help any in the congregation who have been victims of the wrongdoing? Regarding the wrongdoer, love moves the elders to consider: Is he repentant? Can we help him to regain his spiritual health?

How thankful we are to be under the law of the Christ! When all of us work hard to obey it, we help to make our congregation a place where each individual can feel loved, valued, and safe. Still, we are living in a world where “wicked men” have advanced “from bad to worse.” (2 Tim. 3:13) We must not let down our guard. How can the Christian congregation reflect God’s justice when dealing with child sexual abuse? The next article will answer that question.” (p. 7, paras. 23-25)

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**The Watchtower—Study Edition, May 2019**

Printed copies:

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Also available online at:

<https://www.jw.org/en/publications/magazines/watchtower-study-may-2019/love-justice-face-of-wickedness/>

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September 2021

**“Love and Justice in the Face of Wickedness”, Study Article 19**

“Child abuse is a grave sin.

***A sin against the victim.*** It is a sin to inflict unjust pain and suffering on others. ...

***A sin against the congregation.*** When someone who is a part of the congregation becomes guilty of child abuse, he brings reproach on the congregation. ...

***A sin against the secular authorities.*** ... If someone in the congregation becomes guilty of violating a criminal law, such as by committing child abuse, he is sinning against the secular authorities. ...

***Above all, a sin against God.***” [Emphasis in original; footnote omitted.] (p. 9, paras. 5-8)

“Elders assure victims and their parents and others with knowledge of the matter that they are free to report an allegation of abuse to the secular authorities. But what if the report is about someone who is a part of the congregation and the matter then becomes known in the community? Should the Christian who reported it feel that he has brought reproach on God’s name? No. The abuser is the one who brings reproach on God’s name.” (pp. 10-11, para. 14)

“What can you do to protect your children from abuse?

First, ***educate yourself about abuse.*** Learn about the kind of individuals who abuse children and the tactics they use to deceive them. ... Remember that in most cases, the abuser is someone the child already knows and trusts.

Second, ***maintain good communication with your children ...*** Remember that children are often reluctant to report abuse. They may fear that they will not be believed, or they may have been threatened by the abuser to keep the abuse secret. If you sense that something is wrong, kindly draw them out with questions and then patiently listen to their answers.

Third, ***educate your children.*** Share with them age-appropriate information about sex. Teach them what to say and do if someone tries to touch them in an inappropriate way. ...—See the box ‘Educate Yourself and Your Children.’” [Emphasis in original.] (p. 13, paras. 19-22)

**The Watchtower—Study Edition, May 2019**

Printed copies:  
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Also available online at:

<https://www.jw.org/en/publications/magazines/watchtower-study-may-2019/comfort-victims-of-abuse/>

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September 2021

**“Providing Comfort for Victims of Abuse”, Study Article 20**

**“Who can provide comfort?** ... Are elders the only ones who can give comfort to victims of abuse? No. All of us have a responsibility to ‘keep comforting one another.’ (1 Thess. 4:18) Mature Christian sisters can be especially encouraging to sisters in need of comfort.” (p. 16, para. 11)

**“How Can We Offer Comfort?** ... If we want to offer comfort to victims of abuse, we may need first to help them feel safe.” (p. 17, para. 14)

“Let us consider five Scriptural ways in which we may offer comfort.

**Offer practical help.** ... Sometimes a simple act of practical kindness can do a great deal of good. Perhaps a meal, a modest gift, or a thoughtful card would assure a downhearted brother or sister of our love and concern. ...

**Make distressed ones feel safe and comfortable.** ... If we want to offer comfort to victims of abuse, we may need first to help them feel safe. For instance, elders should keep in mind that a distressed sister may feel safer and more comfortable having a cup of tea in a relaxed setting at home than she would in a Kingdom Hall conference room. Another might feel the opposite.

**Be a good listener.** The Bible offers this clear advice: “Everyone must be quick to listen, slow to speak.” (Jas. 1:19) Are we good listeners? ... How can we show sympathy and tender compassion—which are expressions of love—while listening? At times, a few tactful, warm words may show how we feel. ... Be careful, though, to remain ‘slow to speak.’ Do not interrupt to give advice or to correct the person’s thinking. And be patient! ...

**Pray earnestly with the one in pain.** ... If we want to comfort such a person, we may offer a prayer with that one, using his or her name. We may express to Jehovah how dear the downhearted one is to us and to the congregation. We may ask Jehovah to soothe and comfort that precious sheep of his. ...

**Choose words that heal and console.** Think before you speak. Thoughtless words can hurt. Kind words can heal. ...

Past abuse may have convinced some that they are dirty, worthless, or unloved—even unlovable. What a terrible lie! So use the Scriptures to remind them of their true value in Jehovah’s eyes. (See the box ‘Comfort From the Scriptures.’) [Emphasis in original.] (pp. 17-19, paras. 12-20)



### List of publications

1. *Awake!*, 8 February 1981, “Incest—The Hidden Crime”, pp. 16-19
2. *Awake!*, 22 June 1982, “The New Morality—Its effect on children”, pp. 3-12
3. *The Watchtower*, 1 October 1983, “Help for the Victims of Incest”, pp. 27-30
4. *Awake!*, 22 January 1985, “Child Molesting—You Can Protect Your Child”, pp. 3-10
5. *Awake!*, 22 December 1986, “Pornography—Why Resist It?”, pp. 3-11
6. *Awake!*, 8 October 1991, “Healing the Wounds of Child Abuse”, pp. 3-11
7. *Awake!*, 8 March 1993, “How to Cope with Rape”, pp. 8-11
8. *Awake!*, 8 October 1993, “Protect Your Children!”, pp. 3-14
9. *The Secret of Family Happiness*, 1996, “Train Your Child From Infancy”, 1996, Chapter 5, pp. 51-63
10. *The Watchtower*, 1 January 1997, “Let Us Abhor What Is Wicked”, pp. 26-29
11. *Awake!*, 8 April 1997, “Sexual Exploitation of Children—A Worldwide Problem”, pp. 11-15
12. *Learn From the Great Teacher*, 2003, “How Jesus Was Protected”, Chapter 32, pp. 167-171
13. *Awake!*, October 2007, “Keep Your Children Safe!”, pp. 3-11
14. *The Watchtower*, 1 October 2008, “How to Be a Good Father”, pp. 18-21
15. *The Watchtower*, 1 November 2010, “Keys to Family Happiness—Talk to Your Children About Sex”, pp. 12-14
16. *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Vol. 1, 2011, “How can I protect myself from sexual predators?”, Chapter 32, pp. 228-234
17. JW.ORG, *Bible Questions Answered*, “How Can Parents Teach Their Children About Sex?”, 2015, online
18. JW Broadcasting, Anthony Morris III: “We Protect Our Children”, July 2015, online
19. JW.ORG, *Become Jehovah’s Friend*, Lesson 17: “Protect Your Children”, July 2015, online
20. JW.ORG, *Young People Ask*, “What Should I Know About Sexual Assault?—Part 2: Recovery”, 2015, online
21. “Don’t Give Up” 2017 Regional Convention of Jehovah’s Witnesses, Talk 26: “Build a House That Will Endure—Safeguard Your Children From ‘What is Evil’”
22. *The Watchtower—Study Edition*, February 2019, “Love and Justice in Ancient Israel”, Study Article 9
23. *The Watchtower—Study Edition*, May 2019, “Love and Justice in the Christian Congregation”, Study Article 18; “Love and Justice in the Face of Wickedness”, Study Article 19; and “Providing Comfort for Victims of Abuse”, Study Article 20