



# Module F1: Faithfulness in Service

‘Faithfulness in Service’ is a code for personal behavior and the practice of personal ministry by clergy and church workers. The code was adopted by the Anglican Church of Australia in 2004 and is part of the Safe Church Communities Program in the Anglican Diocese of Tasmania. This booklet has been developed to help parishes and organisations understand and commit to the code so that church communities are safe and healthy places for everyone. The code is separately available in booklet form or on the website [www.anglicantas.org.au](http://www.anglicantas.org.au)

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## Module F1: Faithfulness in Service

This module is designed to help you to gain an understanding of the Code of Ethics ***Faithfulness in Service***, (FIS), adopted by the Diocese of Tasmania as the aspirational and educational code for all clergy and church workers.

- It presents clear and specific standards for clergy and church workers and reflects a national approach.
- It is a code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry.
- It is a voluntary code, in that it is binding, not by force of a statute, but because in the exercise of God's calling to ministry you choose to comply with it.

At the end of this module you will be able to:

- ✓ Define the key terms used in FIS;
- ✓ Understand the scope of issues and situations covered by FIS;
- ✓ Articulate standards which apply to key behaviours; and
- ✓ Use FIS to address specific situations.

### **Acknowledgement:**

The content of the section on Power in Relationships has been taken from the ChurchSafe Training Supplement, available from the ChurchSafe website.

*ChurchSafe* workshops combine *ChildSafe Team Member Training (Using the Team Member Pocket Guide)* with this workshop supplement covering:

1. Awareness training in duty of care to all age groups in churches.
2. Protection of the vulnerable, of whatever age.
3. Issues around positional power in leadership.

This extension to the standard *ChildSafe* training provides a 'whole of church' safety focus. The target audience for *ChurchSafe* workshops is all pastors, wardens, elders, church boards, deacons, key church leaders (those who make policy decisions in churches), ministry coordinators, team leaders and *all* team members of children and youth ministry.

## Why have a Code of Ethics

A single Code of Ethics provides:

- Common definitions;
- Common goals; and
- A sense of community.

Did Jesus refer to a Code of Ethics?

- In his teachings he frequently set out the standards by which he wished us to live;
- He was consistent in what he taught; and
- He lived what he taught.

What are the merits of having a Code of Ethics?

- To build safe and healthy communities;
- To create a place where integrity is honoured and accountability is practised;
- To create communities where forgiveness encourages healing and does not conceal misconduct;
- To help us recognise that personal behaviour in the practice of pastoral ministry has consequences, whether positive or negative;
- To provide a guide in developing ministries, policies and practices;
- To provide direction in professional development and training in ethical and moral behaviour; and
- To provide guidance in addressing ethical and moral issues.

Make sure that you have a copy of *Faithfulness in Service* with you as you progress through this module. It can be downloaded from:

<https://bit.ly/2wuWRPq>

**Read FIS page 4**

## Key Terms

### *Read pages 5 through 9 of FIS – Key Terms*

It is important to understand these key terms, noting that some have different meanings in common use. Sometimes people choose to use a term such as '**harassment**' because to them it sounds a gentler term than, say '**bullying**', perhaps thinking that minimises the seriousness of the (mis) behaviour. We have to be alert to all behaviours which are inappropriate or simply wrong.

Can you think of someone in your church whom you would regard as a lay '**church worker**' but who would not fall under the definition of 'church worker' in FIS? (p 6)

Can you think of examples of behaviours which you consider would come under the definition of '**grooming**'? (pp 6-7 & 16-17)

Can you think of an example of a behaviour which you consider would come under the definition of '**spiritual abuse**'? (pp 5, 9 & 16)

#### **Question 1**

Deliberately excluding someone from their peer group is a form of bullying.

True          False

## Putting the Code into practice

### *Read FIS page 10 – Putting the Code into Practice*

The Code covers five areas of behaviour:

1. Pastoral Relationships
2. Children
3. Personal Behaviour
4. Sexual Conduct
5. Financial Integrity

For each area of behaviour, the Code sets out:

- a. Preamble – background information to the particular section
- b. Standards for clergy and church workers – the broad parameters
- c. Guidelines – specific help to ensure standards are observed or met

#### **Question 2**

It is not appropriate to penalize a church worker because of any action taken in good faith under this Code.

True          False

## Pastoral Relationships

### *Read FIS pages 11 through 14 – Pastoral Relationships*

The first of the five sections dealing with specific areas of behaviour covers **pastoral relationships**.

#### *Power in Relationships*

With the relationships of roles, positions and offices comes power. Good pastoral relationships require an understanding of the dangers of the imbalance in power which roles create. This in turn creates a duty of care for you as a church worker, to ensure that the weaker party in a pastoral relationship is not hurt or discriminated against.

Not all power is bad! Power can be used for good or evil. But all relationships contain power. The power relationship between two parties may be even, with each having an equal *voice*. Or, as in the case of relationships between adults and children, the power balance is unequal. The power balance in relationships is impacted by:

1. SIZE
2. EXPERIENCE
3. KNOWLEDGE
4. POSITION



#### *Positional Power*

This relates to the authority an organisation (church) gives its leaders so that they might be effective. 'Ministers, like other helping professionals, have a constant stream of people seeking their assistance on the most intimate of matters. By virtue of their office [position], they have access to the deepest fears, longings and pains of their parishioners. People in such a vulnerable situation have a diminished ability to refuse the advances of the more powerful person.'*(Breaking the Silence, Anglicare, 1997)*

Unfortunately, ‘churches have regarded harm perpetrated by leaders as a ‘sin issue’, rather than an abuse of ‘positional power” (*Creating Safe Spaces*, Baptist Union NSW, 2003). This is a mistake, especially when those who abuse power are suspended for a short period and then given another power position without addressing this issue of the abuse of power.

What positions in society give people power over others?

What could be an example of the abuse of positional power in one of the following relationships?

- Parent – Child
- Teacher – Student
- Youth Leader – Young Person
- Clergy – Church Member

Churches need to ensure that all those given positions of power/authority exercise leadership appropriately.

### **Boundaries**

This diagram may be helpful in explaining how boundaries work (adapted from *Breaking the Silence* 3rd Ed, 2005).

#### **Non-offender**

Discovers boundary on approaching or that they have overstepped a boundary and makes a deliberate correction.

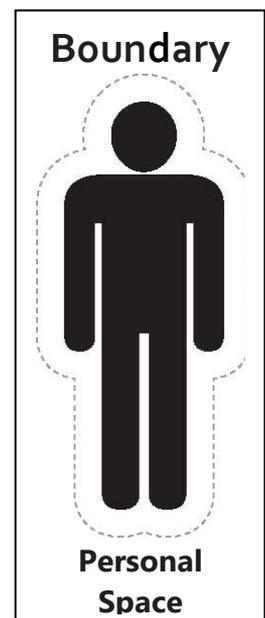
#### **Wanderer**

Approaches boundary obliquely and engages in inappropriate (e.g. sexualised) behaviour without boundary awareness.

NB: Education can achieve good results with first time wanderers.

#### **Predator**

Heads straight for a boundary and crosses it without hesitation. Their aim is to break down a person’s boundaries.



Therefore, one of the key aspects to be aware of is the need to establish boundaries and clear lines of accountability.

1. Can you think of people in your church or agency who ought not to be your principal pastoral carer because such a relationship would breach this Code, and why it would?
2. Can you think of people in your church or agency for whose pastoral care you ought not to accept responsibility because such a relationship would breach this Code, and why it would?
3. Can you think of changes to the design/layout of your church or agency offices which may be necessary, or may have been already made, to ensure pastoral interviews are, and are seen to be, conducted in a way which reflects best practice?

### **Question 3**

If the relationship between a pastoral carer and the person being cared for begins to develop a romantic dimension, the carer should, as a rule, make alternative arrangements for the care of the other person.

True          False

Relationships between leaders and those whom they lead are relationships of *unequal power*.

Spiritually (and emotionally) abusive leaders and/or systems use these unequal power relationships to oppress the smaller, weaker person. They exert their power and position to cause the smaller or weaker person to do their will. Even where no abuse has occurred, the unequal power relationship has, and often does, lead to powerlessness amongst vulnerable people. By this, we mean that they feel as though they have no say in decisions made about them - decisions that will impact on them. They have no *voice*. The leaders carry all the power.

Not providing or allowing for people to have a voice in the decision-making process is often easier because it saves time to simply deliver a prepared program, one that we have either written or purchased. For example, this can be seen in the operation of some children's/young people's programs offered in churches and also in programs for the elderly and vulnerable people. We have limited time and resources, and it is easier to tell them what they will be doing.

It is easy to defend our behaviour as biblical, or as having the people's best interests at heart - after all, those in charge know best. Children and vulnerable people have traditionally had little or no say, or voice, in the decisions about the parts of the Bible they wish to study, or the types of activities they would like to do.

The first way to ensure that our churches are protecting people emotionally is to ensure that they have a voice concerning what happens to them; that they are allowed to express their opinions and ideas in an environment where these will be valued and actually implemented. This applies even to small children. They have valid emotions, ideas and opinions. We need to give voice to these. In short, giving children, young people and the vulnerable a say in decisions that impact them gives them a voice, and in turn, creates safe emotional environments for them.

Simply, we need to be sensible in giving children, young people and the vulnerable 'voice'. Giving them a voice does not mean giving total control to them, nor does it mean giving too much responsibility, responsibility for which they are not yet ready. This is neither safe nor sensible. Rather, we give people *significant* and *actual* voice in the decision-making process in line with age and spiritual development. For example a coordinator or leader working with pre-schoolers may ask the group which game they would like to play, whereas in a church group of committed young people, they may actually choose the content of the Bible studies for the term. Giving people a voice is about providing them with the opportunity to participate as responsible and powerful members of society rather than disempowered persons who are vulnerable to abusive behaviours.

What might it mean to give people a voice in your ministry?

## Children

### **Read FIS pages 15 through 23 inclusive - Children**

It is no accident that this section is the biggest of the five sections covering different areas. Children are most precious, and very vulnerable. Jesus had strong words to say about those who fail to care for children.

(Matthew 18:6)

Note the distinction between 'authority' and 'power' in the Preamble at 5.5, and the reminder that either can be misused by adults in their treatment of children.

Note, too, the signs and symptoms of child abuse set out in the guidelines at 5.17 and the characteristics of sexual offenders in 5.18. Widespread familiarity with these signs and characteristics is one of the more effective measures to prevent abuse of children in our community.

Consider each of the following scenarios and jot down the first two or three key steps you feel you should take:

1. An applicant for a position of children's worker presents a *Curriculum Vita* covering his work since leaving university ten years earlier, except for two of the earlier years.
2. As an Anglican Camp Director, you are considering using a private company to provide kayaking experience to the campers.
3. A child in a youth group alleges that he was sexually abused by an uncle six years earlier.
4. A Youth Worker seeks the permission of the Parish Council, of which you are a member, to conduct an overnight bushwalk for the church youth group.

**Question 4**

If a child in your care discloses abuse, the child's parents should always be the first to be informed.

True      False

**Question 5**

Physical contact between children and adult church workers is sometimes appropriate.

True      False

**Question 6**

Children who are victims of sexual abuse by adults often feel responsible for attracting the abuse but the adult is always responsible.

True      False

## Personal Behaviour

### *Read FIS pages 24 through 26 – Personal Behaviour*

If this looks to you like an expanded version of the Ten Commandments, that is not surprising. However, the list of 'Do not's!' here is a selective list, drawing attention to key areas of behaviour which are known to be common temptations in Christian ministry today. A key understanding is the concept of accountability, coupled with integrity. FIS codifies the need to be consistent, thoughtful and transparent in our dealings with one another, as we model life in Christ.

Some questions to consider:

1. Is a calling to Christian ministry ever a justification for neglect of family responsibilities?
2. If you had the task of disciplining another church worker, how would you prepare yourself and what dangers would you strive to avoid?

#### **Question 7**

Clergy and Church Workers may, in certain circumstances, be justified in disobeying a law.

True          False

## Sexual Conduct

### ***Read FIS page 27 – Sexual Conduct***

This is one area of personal behaviour where the standards understood by Christians to be God's way are constantly undermined by what is presented as 'normal' and 'acceptable' on television and in other purveyors of popular culture. It is also, sadly, an area where past misbehaviour by a few has had an enormously adverse impact on the witness of the church. The wording at 7.4 is perhaps unfamiliar but is taken from the Offences Canon of the national church and therefore included for consistency.

Take a moment to reflect on the Christian standard of sexual purity described in Ephesians 5:3-5, "*But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity...because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person...has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*" (NIV). How far is this standard from what is represented as acceptable in certain quarters of our community?

#### **Question 8**

The position of the church in respect of sexual activity is for clergy and church workers to maintain chastity when single and faithfulness when married.

True      False

## Financial Integrity

***Read FIS pages 28 through 29 – Financial Integrity***

The church as a human organisation conducts its business with due transparency and integrity. The handling of money and proper dealing with employment matters are two areas where great care must be taken, not only to do the right thing but to be seen to be doing the right thing. Those with responsibility in these areas need an awareness of risk and the knowledge to minimise that risk.

Consider the list of measures at 8.13. Does any one of these nine measures strike you as more important than the other eight?

### **Question 9**

A substantial gift offered to you by a person for whom you have pastoral responsibility should not be accepted in any circumstances.

True          False

## **ANSWERS**

### **Question 1 Answer - True**

Bullying means the repeated seeking out or targeting of a person to cause them distress and humiliation or to exploit them. It includes:

- **Exclusion from a peer group;**
- Intimidation; and
- Exploitation. Page 5 FIS

### **Question 2 Answer - True**

Section 3.8 on page 10 of FIS states:

You are not to penalise, discriminate or take action against other clergy or church workers because of any action taken in good faith under this Code.

### **Question 3 Answer - True**

Section 4.18, page 12 states:

Pastoral relationships can legitimately develop into romantic relationships. If this begins to happen:

- Acknowledge to yourself that your personal interest and pastoral relationship are at risk of becoming confused;
- Tell the other person that your relationship is changing and becoming romantic;
- Disclose the nature of the relationship to a supervisor or colleague to ensure accountability and avoid misunderstanding; and
- Where practicable:
  - Disclose to a supervisor or colleague any proposed alternative arrangements for an ongoing individual personal ministry;
  - Make alternative arrangements for ongoing individual personal ministry; and
  - Cease providing individual personal ministry to the person.

### **Question 4 Answer - False**

Only discuss the disclosure with the appropriate persons in authority. Maintain confidentiality. Section 5.172 on page 17

### **Question 5 Answer - True**

In general physical contact- excluding circumstances such as immediate physical danger or medical emergency- should be initiated by the child or

occur with their permission. When you make physical contact with a child, be very careful that you respect the child's feelings and their privacy.

Ensure that any physical contact you have with a child is of a non-sexual nature and appropriate to the situation. Sections 5.44 & 5.45, pp 21 & 22

### **Question 6 Answer - True**

Due to the inherent imbalance of power children are incapable of giving valid consent to abuse. Section 5.6, page 15

### **Question 7 Answer - True**

You are to observe the law, other than any law that:

Is contrary to the Holy Scriptures;

Unjustly prohibits the practice of religion; or

Prohibits civil disobedience.

Section 6.14, page 24.

### **Question 8 Answer - True**

Sexuality is a gift from God and integral to human nature. It is appropriate for clergy and church workers to value this gift, taking responsibility for their sexual conduct by maintaining chastity in singleness and faithfulness in marriage. Section 7.2, page 27

### **Question 9 Answer - False**

If you are offered or receive a gift, whether monetary or otherwise, from someone with whom you have pastoral relationship, you should:

- Establish for whom the gift is intended and exercise discretion as to whether the gift should be personally accepted;

Consider:

- The size of the gift;
- The intentions and circumstances of the giver;
- The risk of your integrity being compromised; and
- Whether acceptance of the gift would cause scandal and embarrassment if known publicly;
- If it is substantial, disclose the offer or receipt to a colleague; and
- If there is any uncertainty of the gift's appropriateness, seek advice from a supervisor or a colleague.

Section 8.14, page 29