

18 ways churches can fight sexual assault in 2018

by [Ruth Everhart](#) in the [December 20, 2017](#) issue



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Read the main article, "[A pastor's #MeToo story](#)."

1. Maintain and update safe church child protection policies.
2. Require all leaders to take boundary training, even non-ordained leaders.
3. Post domestic violence and sexual violence hotline numbers in church restrooms.
4. Teach the warning signs of domestic abuse and abuse of children in the church newsletter or bulletin.
5. Intentionally use the words *sexual violence* in the liturgy—for example, in a prayer of confession.
6. Use the hashtag #MeToo on the church's outdoor sign.
7. Take a special offering for a local domestic violence shelter.

8. Hang posters in April for Sexual Assault Awareness Month and in October for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
9. Plan education classes on these issues during April and October.
10. Educate the congregation about the grooming behaviors of predators.
11. Invite a victims' advocate to lead an adult education class or series.
12. Focus education about sexual violence on justice, rather than healing.
13. Have various groups sponsor a #MeToo night.
14. Preach a sermon or series on biblical texts of terror, such as Tamar's story.
15. Put women in high-level positions in leadership.
16. Speak about sex from the pulpit in a frank and forthright manner without using code words or making inappropriate jokes.
17. Have the leaders create a no-tolerance statement and post it beside the church's mission statement: *If any abuse occurs within the fellowship of this church, we will prosecute to the fullest extent of the law no matter who the offender might be.*
18. Pull the skeletons out of the church closet and prosecute the offenders.

A version of this article appears in the December 20 print edition under the title "18 ways churches can change their culture in 2018."