



Never Too Safe

Protecting Our Children at Church

From ACS Technologies,
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for 25 Years

by Lauren Hunter

In the past, most people didn't worry about security issues at churches. Many of us think of our churches as probably some of the safest places there are. Maybe it's because throughout history, churches have been safe havens during wartimes; or maybe it's because we think God "lives" at church, so nothing bad can happen there. Well, times have changed and so have churches. Gone are the days when we can simply rely on "good faith" to preserve the security of our children in the church nursery, Sunday school, or youth room.

Over the years, technology has been introduced to churches to manage membership, financial data, volunteers, and pretty much every other aspect of church life. Now, with security becoming an increasing concern in our society today, software solutions are being created for churches with children in mind.

"We think that churches are immune to security issues, but they are not," comments Dean Stone, pastor of children for CrossPointe Church in Norman, Okla. "Problems can arise from negligence in screening and completing background checks, and even from accidental problems that seem harmless, but turn out to be bigger issues."

Stone had been looking to improve the church's security measures surrounding the new 24,000 square foot children's center that was recently completed at CrossPointe and found that implementing a check in/check out procedure would be one of the best ways for his church to help secure the large number of children that visit the church on Sunday mornings.

"Just one problem can destroy a church—it only takes one snafu. These days, churches can be sued and found negligent for not supervising as they should have," Stone notes. "It all starts with valuing children. This is what Jesus stood for and is the basis of our ministry."

Stone spent many hours looking for top-notch security programs for churches and found that with church software, it's best to use a product that integrates with a church's membership management software in order to achieve maximum usability and efficiency. Since CrossPointe had been ACS users for several years, they looked again to ACS for their security software. ACS Checkpoint had been recently released to market and was a perfect match for what Stone was looking for.

"I'd been really looking to find a top notch check in/check out program. There are other programs out there that do what this program does, but they don't integrate with ACS. ACS Checkpoint does it all and integrates with ACS, which makes life much easier by allowing us to have access to our membership records at every check in/check out workstation," Stone remarks.

CrossPointe has implemented three manned and three unmanned computer checkpoint stations in its children's center. Each station has a label printer and prints out badges with security codes for identification matching. Each person will also have key fobs that will be scanned in addition to the security labels.

CrossPointe has set up a procedure whereby children four years old and older check in at one of the computer kiosks located in the children's center's main entrance. A name tag for each child is then printed out, as well as a parent security label. Upon retrieving one's child, parents must show the parent security label to check out their child.

Children three years old and younger, check in at the welcome center and are issued a name tag; parents are issued a parent security label and given a pager. The pager number is printed out along with a security code on the labels for quick scanning and identification.

"These security measures will provide ultimate peace and security for our parents—anytime and anywhere," states Stone.

All aspects of this security system can be customized to each church's needs. Churches can print out child's name, date, session info, or parent/pager number with ease. It's also possible to post attendance immediately for each child as they check in. Special notes can be entered at time of check in to be included on their badge such as allergy information, or special diet requests. Lastly, real-time reports can be generated showing who has checked in/out by class or activity.

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"This security system is stellar. We're going to have an airtight system. It's almost fool-proof," says Stone.

By implementing a system to ensure all the children's security within his church, CrossPointe has taken a huge step in setting up security measures to make sure all kids are safe, all the time. Of course, prayer is still the number one way that CrossPointe "secures" its members, but today churches can never be too safe and must take the necessary human steps to cover all its bases.

For more about security issues for children at church, or for details on ACS Checkpoint, email solutions@acstechnologies.com or visit www.acstechnologies.com.

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