

Old St. Paul's Lost Child Scenario

Setting: Christmas Dinner Theater, 30 minutes after the start of the event. Attendance is 75 people including 20 children. The Fire Door between the Family Life Center and the Sunday School Wing is blocked open. No SST team was assigned to the Dinner Theater, however 8 members of the SST are in attendance, with 1 standing watch on the front door of the family life center. The weather outside is 45 degrees, overcast and dark.

Event: A female visitor approaches the Pastor and announces that her child has disappeared inside the facility and she cannot find him. The Pastor notifies a SST member and the Pastor and the SST member question the person to determine child's description and last known location.

Event Actions:

- A SST member/leader calls for all SST to assemble at the Family Life Center Kitchen by radio.
- The event, child description and a search plan is communicated to the SST team.
- The SST starts the search in Family Life Center with 2 teams searching the lower level Sunday school wing and fellowship hall.
- An additional team starts a search of upper level Sunday School Wing and Fellowship Hall.
- The SST teams search all rooms, cabinets and storage locations inside the facility. After 15 minutes of searching, the SST determines that the child is not inside the building.
- SST members obtain flashlights from security office and start a search of the outside areas including the parking lot, grounds and cars.
- Radio communications between SST members determine areas clear as they are searched. All yard areas, dark side of sanctuary, parking lot, playground and area around bus parking are cleared as search continues.
- The SST expands search area to include storage garage and rental house yard.
- A Newton Police Cruiser pulls into parking lot and asked a SST member if we are missing a child. The SST member confirms that Security Team is searching for a child, who is sitting in the backseat of police cruiser.
- The Newton Police officer saw the child in the graveyard near the Columbarium and picked him up.
- The SST and Newton Police escort child to his Mother inside the Family Life Center.
- The Search is terminated when the child is Located.

Results of Action:

- The child is located and returned to mother unharmed.
- The SST leader & Child's mother question him on how he left the facility and where he went.

Aftermath:

- The blocked open fire door between Family Life Center and Sunday School Wing caused the event. The child left through this door and exited building through Sunday school wing outside door.
- Young children can travel greater distances than would be expected. The child saw a dog in the graveyard and he crossed Conover-Startown road to play with the dog.
- The child may have been seen early in the event if the SST had manned the cameras for this scheduled church event.

Facts & Liability:

- No doors should be blocked open in the OSP facility. A mindset change is required.
- The SST needs an assigned Team on duty at all major church events. This is a team leadership responsibility.
- The SST did not have enough flashlights for all searchers. Only 4 flashlights were on hand.
- Cameras surveillance should be maintained for any event at OSP.
- The SST should send at least 1 person to search outer fringes of church property for missing children events
- No liability for OSP since missing child was found unharmed.