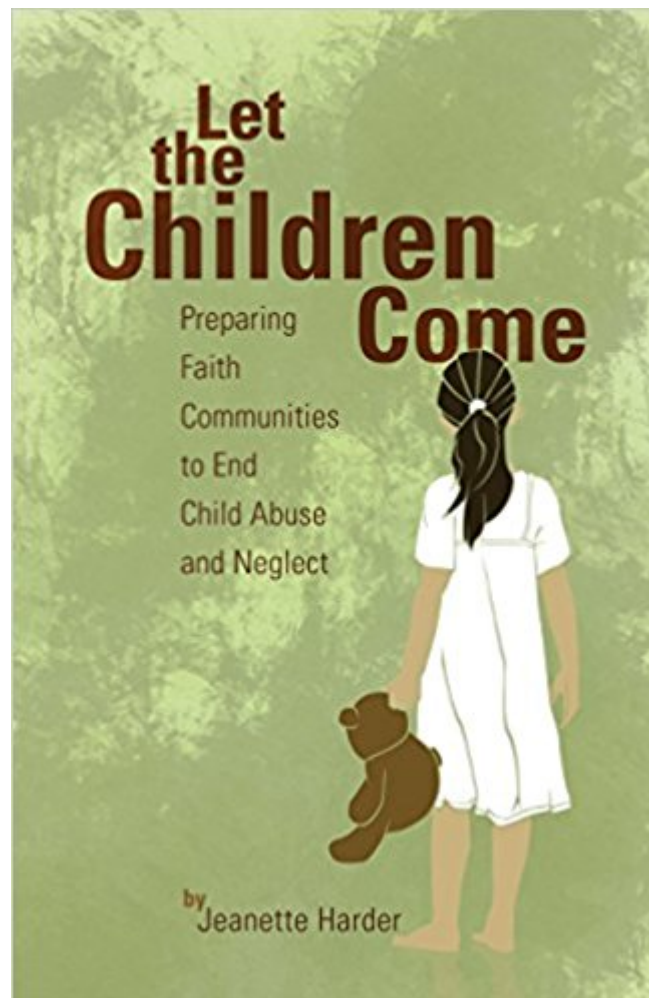




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# **Let The Children Come: Preparing Faith Communities To End Child Abuse And Neglect**



## Synopsis

Are children safe at your church? Have you taken any precautions to ensure they won't be abused? Do you know for certain that volunteers who work with children don't have criminal backgrounds? If you aren't sure how to answer those questions, you need *Let the Children Come*, by Jeanette Harder, who teaches social work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Through *Let the Children Come* churches and/or ministries can learn how to create procedures and policies to keep children safe from abuse, and to help families break the cycle of abuse.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sadly, children are being hurt and killed every day through abuse and neglect. While the church would like to believe that 'it doesn't happen here,' research and experience tell us that it does. Members of our faith communities need training to recognize the signs of abuse and to know how to respond. Faith communities need to be reminded of their role in protecting children, strengthening families, and ending child abuse and neglect. --Jeanette Harder

In clear, readable, and quite practical terms, Harder provides fundamental resources for understanding and taking seriously our responsibility to protect our children. --David A. Sherwood, Editor-in-Chief, *Social Work & Christianity*

Weaving biblical texts, social research, and stories, *Let the Children Come* arrives at a compelling conclusion: the faith community must respond to child abuse . . . there is no excuse for every church not to own a copy and to share it with staff, volunteers, and parents. --Beth A. Swagman, Director of Safe Church Ministry for Christian Reformed Church in NA

Jeanette Harder is on faculty at the Grace Abbott School of Social Work at the University of Nebraska of Omaha, where she teaches graduate and undergraduate courses. She and her husband, Stan, are members of First Mennonite Church in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Let the Children Come is a great resource for any faith community, but it would serve your own personal library just as well. Harder's writing is accessible, and helps the reader understand where child abuse/neglect is today, and also gives the reader realistic ways to act. At the end of every chapter are useful questions to ask of ourselves and of the communities we participate in. It's designed for group study, complete with substantial appendices full of helpful tools for further information, discussion, and action. Harder doesn't just gloss over a general definition of child abuse/neglect, she breaks down the various types of abuse and identifying factors, so that the reader feels informed and prepared to respond. And, she manages to do this in a unintimidating manner, which is hard to do with this particular topic. Harder helps the reader understand that child abuse/neglect happens for reasons that make sense (I didn't say it's justifiable; I'm saying it's easy to understand why). And because the reasons make sense, it makes it less threatening to intervene. If the most likely victim of abuse is a young girl neglected, by her single, over-worked, under-supported, under-resourced mother; then suddenly, the ways to help seem clear and practical. Why not help the mother find good childcare so that she can work? Or give her the number of a local organization she can call to set up childcare? I think most people have this idea that an abuser is a pedophile lurking in an unmarked van outside our child's school, and while it's happened, it's very rare. This is not a situation so big and out of our control that we can't find practical and useful ways to act. This book is an excellent, holistic choice for individuals. But, it was created for, and therefore very useful for, groups like Sunday school classes, small groups, and families. If there are any MOPs leaders/members reading- this would be perfect for a reading/discussion book for concerned Christian mothers of young children. I highly recommend this book.

"Let the Children Come" is an excellent source for any person who cares about the children of the world. Harder's writing style is welcoming and easy for any reader to pick up and enjoy. Her professional experience and personal Christian faith gives her insight to child abuse prevention. The book combines the history and types of child abuse and neglect, stories about the severity and reality of child abuse, biblical texts, and methods faith communities can use to prevent and end the

maltreatment of children. A great number of people do not know how to report child abuse and when to speak up, but Harder outlines signs and symptoms, as well as appropriate strategies for any member of the church. Although she gears it towards the role of faith communities, this text can be useful to any person who has interaction with children. Many people look at their church and the friendly faces of the congregation that they see every week and think to themselves, "My friends would never abuse a child." or "This doesn't happen in my church." However, the reality is that child abuse and neglect happens everywhere and it is our role as God's people to protect the children. Harder teaches us how.

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