

Do Clergy Have the Highest Child Sexual Abuse Rates? A Data-Driven Analysis 8 min read

🕒 6 MARCH, 2025 📁 BLOG

When discussing child sexual abuse, the media often highlights high-profile cases involving Catholic clergy, leaving the impression that religious leaders represent the most abusive group. What makes this heinous is not only the supposed superior morality expected of clergy, but the shame of coverups that often follows.

We should not be surprised by that, since such coverups exist nearly everywhere such crimes are committed, but what does the data actually reveal about the rates of abuse across different groups of men, including clergy, educators, and LGBTQ+ individuals? This article aims to provide a data-driven overview to answer the question: **Do clergy have the highest child sexual abuse rates?**

Here’s a summary chart to reference as we discuss each perpetrator group:

Group	Percent of Offenders	Percentage Who Were Molested as Children
Catholic Priests	4.0%	30-40% (John Jay Report, 2004)
Protestant Clergy	2-3%	Unknown
K-12 Educators	5-7%	Unknown
Boy Scout Leaders	4.4%	Unknown
Sports Coaches	2-4%	Unknown
General Adult Male Population	5%	7-16% (Finkelhor, 1994) 8% (Pereda et al., 2009)
Gay or Bisexual Men	20-40%	46% (Staats et al., 2020)
Transgender Offenders	30-50%	Unknown

<https://www.wholereason.com/2025/03/do-clergy-have-the-highest-child-sexual-abuse-rates-a-data-driven-analysis.html>