

Youth Ministry Policy and Procedures

CYM or Adult Chaperone/Volunteer

- ❑ Must be 22 years of age or a college graduate.
- ❑ Coordinators of Youth Ministry who attend events with youth are required to supervise the youth that attend with them at all times.
- ❑ Are expected to chaperone youth at all diocesan sponsored events. Diocesan personnel and their representatives are responsible for facilitating the event, not for supervising youth.

Supervision by Chaperone and Adult Volunteers

- ❑ 2 adult chaperones are required for the first 8 youth at any event and 1 adult for each 10 youth thereafter.
- ❑ There must be at least one male and one female chaperone for each parish group if both genders attend youth events.

Housing

- ❑ Room accommodations for youth events are gender specific. Males are never allowed in female assigned rooms and females are never allowed in male assigned rooms.

Administration

- ❑ Parent/Guardian consent, liability waiver, and medical consent form must be signed by parent/guardian of each participant under 18 years of age.
- ❑ Participants 18 years or older must sign their own Parent/Guardian consent, liability waiver, and medical consent form.
- ❑ An Adult Waiver must be completed for each adult.
- ❑ A Letter of Suitability for adult chaperones must be submitted with the registration for an event.
- ❑ The **ORIGINAL** Parent/Guardian consent, liability waiver, medical consent form must be kept by the CYM or Adult volunteer, and brought to the event with him/her.
- ❑ Code of Conduct must be signed for each participant of each event (Youth and Adult).

Travel

- ❑ No one under the age of **21** may drive other youth to or from a youth event, or during the event.
- ❑ Coordinators of Youth Ministry and Adult Volunteers must provide transportation to and from the event.
- ❑ If using a bus with media systems for transportation, all media/video/DVD material must be reviewed by CYM before using them publicly. “R” rated and adult material is contrary to Christian principles and is prohibited. PG-13 rated materials should be shown only to those 13 years and older and after initial screening by adult volunteers. Adult rated material should never be shown to youth or be in the possession of Church employees or volunteers on parish property or on parish trips.

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The following safety procedures are designed to help ensure your youth ministry programs are creative and enjoyable while providing a safe and caring environment.

Church personnel, paid or volunteer, should clearly communicate at all times with youth and their parents/guardians regarding programming. Parishes must carefully screen volunteers who minister in the program. Activities need to be appropriately supervised and guidelines should be followed to ensure a safe environment for youth.

- ❑ Accurate records of attendance must be kept if there is ever a question of the presence of a young person at a particular event.
- ❑ Coordinators of Youth Ministry are urged to remember that their responsibility to and for youth exists from the time of arrival until the time of departure from parish premises.
- ❑ Youth are never to be left unsupervised while attending any youth ministry function or activity, whether on the Parish premises or at another location.
- ❑ Two responsible adults must remain with the youth until all youth have left the function or Church premises, including parking areas.
- ❑ If it is necessary for a young person to leave a program early, written permission from the parent/guardian must be obtained. Written permission must also be obtained for the youth to leave the function with someone other than parent/guardian. Once a youth has left an event, he/she should not be allowed to return to the event.
- ❑ Provide a safe and welcoming environment for young people to grow in their faith. While some parishes may allow gatherings in the home, it is highly encouraged that events involving youth be held on parish property or a facility conducive for the event (e.g., retreat center, KC Hall, etc.). Such events include meetings, prayer nights, lock-ins, retreats, choir rehearsals, socials, etc.

NOTE: If you use private homes for off-site activities, the homeowner should be aware of the increased liability risk they incur. They should check with the homeowner's insurance agent to see if they are protected for Church group activities. Some policies cover such activities while others require an additional rider.

Coordinators of Youth Ministry should make sure that if a private home is being used for a youth function, an invitation must be made to the entire group and parents are to be made aware of the location. It is the responsibility of the Coordinator of Youth Ministry to make sure that the activities and support materials, resources and discussion at a private home are age appropriate and are in line with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Physically Challenging Activities

- ❑ Training for adult sponsors/volunteers for the particular activity that is planned should precede participation in the activity by any of the youth participants.

Some activities offer a high degree of physical challenge for the participants, for example, rope courses, repelling, white-water rafting, skiing, etc. By the very fact that these activities are more challenging, they involve greater risk. For each such high-risk activity the following should be provided and appropriately used by all participants.

- Licensed, certified instructors who have a good safety record must be used to

- provide training to the youth.
- Proper safety and other equipment necessary or appropriate for the activity.
 - A match between the difficulty of the activity and the skill of the participant. If there is a question about the match for a particular participant, that person should be asked not to participate.
 - During physically challenging games:
 1. Avoid games that might result in head injuries or collisions with other people or natural objects.
 2. Avoid games that incite reckless or aggressive behavior.
 3. Avoid games that are hard to supervise. If you can't stop it quickly, you don't have enough control.
 4. Don't make a reluctant participant play the game.

The above information and policies are not offered to limit activities, but they are offered so that parishes and Coordinators of Youth Ministry will take the necessary measures to keep risk at a minimum.

Fund-Raising

Each parish should have a fund-raising policy that discusses what type of fund-raising activities will be acceptable to the parish.

- Safe environment must be maintained for youth involved in any type of fund-raising activity.

NOTE: Coordinators should avoid fund-raising activities, which could degrade the integrity of the youth or place the youth in any possible danger. Such activities include:

1. Standing in or on street corners or intersections to solicit funds.
2. Going door to door without adequate adult supervision.
3. Performing services or duties beyond their level of expertise/experience and without the proper safety equipment, instructions, supervision.

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