

OFFICE FOR YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT EVANGELIZATION

Guidelines

Youth Ministry Services

7/15/2014

These guidelines and best practices are intended to support and guide the ministry to, with, and for the young church in the parishes of the Archdiocese of Seattle.

Youth Ministry Services Guidelines

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I.0 The Heart of Ministry

“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.” St. Paul declared “For to me life is Christ.”

-National Directory for Catechesis / On Catechesis in Our Time (Catechesi Tradendae) #5

“I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since ‘no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord’ ”.

-Evangelii Gadium #3

“The challenge of discipleship—of following Jesus—is at the heart of the Church’s mission. *All ministry with adolescents must be directed toward presenting young people with the Good News of Jesus Christ and inviting and challenging them to become his disciples.* For this reason, catechesis is an essential component of youth ministry and one that needs renewed emphasis. If we are to succeed, we must offer young people a *spiritually challenging and world shaping vision* that meets their hunger for the chance to *participate in a worthy adventure.*”

-Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry

I.1 Role of Guidelines

Guidelines exist to support the goal at the heart of all ministries – inviting others to a life centered in Christ. Those who serve in ministry or ordained for service in the Church make a committed effort to follow in Christ’s footsteps through a life of missionary discipleship. It is our hope that the publication and integration of these best practices and guidelines into the youth ministry of the Archdiocese of Seattle will allow us to serve more effectively as a community of faith, drawing the young church closer to Christ. It is our expectation that each person who reads these guidelines will accept personal responsibility for adherence to them.

These guidelines are designed to equip Youth Ministry Leaders to direct and/or develop the measures necessary to ensure the safety and well being of youth and ministry team members.

These guidelines are intended to complement:

- *Many Gifts, One Spirit: Pastoral and Sacramental Policies for the Archdiocese of Seattle* (promulgated March 2007)
<http://www.seattlearchdiocese.org/Archdiocese/Policies/Documents/ConsutativeLeadership.pdf>
- *The Policy for the Prevention of & Response to Sexual Abuse, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment and Code of Professional Conduct for Church Personnel* (promulgated October 2007)
- *Code of Behavior and Norms for Adult Leaders* (Office of Youth and Young Adult Evangelization, 2009)
- All other policies of the Archdiocese of Seattle

I.2 Ministry with Minors

The focus on youth that accompanies any ministry with the young church requires a collaborative partnership

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with parents/guardians, and with this in mind youth ministry guidelines require that parish personnel, paid or volunteer, clearly communicate at all times with youth and their parents/guardians regarding programming. Youth ministries 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.

All youth ministry leaders, ministry team members, chaperones and staff must be made aware of these guidelines before departing for field trip/event, and are expected to be familiar with the guidelines and to adhere to them.

The parish, school or agency may add additional safety measures as needed but are expected to follow these guidelines as the minimum requirements.

2.0 Glossary of Terms

Youth

Older Adolescent: individuals age 14-18, generally in high school

Younger Adolescent: individuals age 11-14, generally in middle school

Minor, young person, youth: terms used for an individual under the age of 18. Those age 18 or over and still in high school are also to be regarded as minors for purposes of these policies.

Youth Ministry Leadership Members:

Youth Ministry Leader: an individual lay or ordained, who serves, at the authorization of the pastor, as the coordinator/director of a ministry with, to and by youth. This may be a paid or unpaid position. Titles in the parish setting include Pastoral Assistant for Youth Ministry and Youth Ministry Coordinator. Responsibilities in this area often include Pastoral Assistants of Faith Formation, Coordinators of Confirmation, Coordinators of 'Special Youth Events'.

Ministry Team Member: An individual, lay or ordained, who serves with a parish and/or school's structured ministry with, to and by youth. This term is not linked to age, but to role. This role may include activities which serve to evangelize and catechize youth/young adults, facilitation of small group discussion, leading prayer, providing direction for an activity, etc. This role is typically unpaid and engages volunteers from the faith community in sharing their gifts with the young church.

Supervising Ministry Team Member: This indicates a ministry team member at least 21 years of age, or someone 18 and over employed by the Archdiocese of Seattle or archdiocesan institutions, who is able to supervise minors within these guidelines. This also includes those employed as staff by the archdiocese or an archdiocesan institution for the care/supervision of minors. This role is typically unpaid and engages volunteers from the faith community in sharing their gifts with the young church.

Chaperone: This term applies only to adults at least 21 years of age, whose sole role is to provide supervision. Those who are serving within the ministry are ministry team members. Chaperones might be used for a special event with a very large number of participants that would also require large number of supervising adults.

3.0 Personnel and Ethical & Behavioral Standards

Relationships among people are the foundation of Christian ministry and are central to our life as a church. The standards pay particular attention to those whose ministry calls them to work with minors, and to do so in a manner that is genuine and respectful.

3.1 Overview of Guiding Principles

The ethical standards below are based on five principles of integrity articulated by the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry as essential to effective ministry leaders. Within the Archdiocese of Seattle, Youth Ministry Services maintains these same principles.

- Ministry Leaders shall exhibit the highest ethical standards and personal integrity reflective of the teachings of the Gospel and will avoid even the appearance of impropriety.
- Ministry Leaders shall at all times conduct themselves in a professional manner including developing and maintaining the level of professional competence commensurate with their ministerial duties.
- Ministry Leaders shall witness God's love for every person by sensitivity, reverence, and respect of each individual with and to whom they minister.
- Ministry Leaders shall be conscious of the unique power they have in relationships due to the trust they are given and the visibility of their witness and leadership.
- Ministry Leaders, whether paid or unpaid, are obligated to comply with Diocesan policies with regards to the protection of minors.

Ministry Leaders, as people of God, share actively in the ministry of Christ and the church by living lives of Christian witness and by proclaiming the message of the Gospel in word and deed. They share in the mission that God has entrusted to the church to fulfill in the world, in accord with the gifts and talents that they possess. These gifts and talents are shared with all members of the church thus providing for the continual building up of the Kingdom of God.

3.2 Transparency in our Ministry with Minors

Youth Ministry calls the young church into discipleship and participation in the life of the church community. **It is important that ministry is not used to establish private one-on-one relationships with youth and our methods must reflect this.**

- 3.2.1** One-on-one conversation with a young person is to take place in a public setting with other adults present although not necessarily a part of the conversation.

3.3 Serving as a Ministry Team Member

“Young people need to experience faithful adults in order for them to understand what faith lived out looks like. Adults themselves must be on a journey of faith if they are going to be able to accompany a

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young person on his or her journey.”

-Effective Practices for Dynamic Youth Ministry

- **3.3.1** All ministry team members who have ongoing unsupervised contact with minors or vulnerable adults, and chaperones on overnight events must fulfill all the following requirements of the Safe Environment Program within three (3) days of beginning involvement in ministry with youth, and **before any youth overnight event** with youth, including:
 - Signed statement of receipt and agreement to adhere to the *Policy for the Prevention of & Response to Sexual Abuse, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment*.
 - Signed statement of receipt and agreement to adhere to the *Code of Professional Conduct for Church Personnel*
 - Signed statement of receipt and agreement to adhere to *Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Minors and Vulnerable Adults*.

- 3.3.2** Before beginning work or ministry team activities, the individual must complete the appropriate criminal background check conducted by the Archdiocese every three (3) years.

- 3.3.3** Within 90 days of beginning ministry team activities and **before any youth overnight event**, the individual must complete the Safe Environment Training *Called to Protect for Ministries*. Information can be found on the Safe Environment Website: <http://www.seattlearchsep.org/training2.html>

- 3.3.4** Youth Ministry Leaders, paid or unpaid, ministry team members responsible for supervision, and chaperones must be at least 21 years of age or older to supervise youth participants.

- 3.3.5** A secured file for each ministry team member is to be kept at the parish.
This file is to contain:
 - a copy of any completed volunteer application and any reference checks.
 - signed *NFCYM Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry Leaders* for those serving in youth ministry.
 - clearance/approval notice from the Archdiocese.
 - proof of attendance/successful completion of Safe Environment Training/*Called to Protect for Ministries*
 - for those who will serve as drivers within the ministry setting, the file should also contain a current & complete Driver Application form, along with copies of valid and current proof of registration and insurance – updated annually
 - ◆ *Best Practice*: Volunteers leading smaller youth ‘groupings’ (e.g. a cultural youth grouping; or a scripture study group) may ask the youth ministry leader or parish safe environment coordinator to maintain these files.

- 3.3.6** References should be checked prior to the individual beginning to serve as a ministry team member.
 - ◆ *Best Practice*: Volunteers leading smaller youth ‘groupings’ (e.g. cultural youth grouping; or a scripture study) may ask the youth ministry leader, or parish safe environment coordinator to assist in this process.

- 3.3.7** The person who will supervise the ministry team member should meet with him/her to discuss the role that the ministry team member will have in the program. A clear ‘job description’ should be

provided for every ministry team member.

- 3.3.8** Supervisors should help ministry team members working with youth to be familiar with contact procedures in case of emergencies, in addition to basic warning signs for at-risk issues.

3.4 Utilizing Adults (ages 18-20) in Youth Ministry before they are eligible to Supervise Minors (as an adult age 21 or older)

These guidelines refer to those who are at least 18 year of age and have graduated from high school. Adults ages 18-20 can be a major asset in the development and implementation of a youth ministry program. It is the Youth Ministry Leader's responsibility to effectively utilize adults ages 18-20 to assist with supervision of minors in an appropriate capacity.

- These might include:
 - Ministry Team Members
 - Facilitators of small groups
 - Retreat team members
 - Assisting the Youth Ministry Leader with programs and special events (e.g. service projects, retreats, prayer experiences)

3.4.1 Those who are out of high school and ages 18-20, and who have met all archdiocesan ministry team member clearance requirements, may assist in supervision at activities and events, but may not be solely responsible for supervision of minors.

◆ *Best Practice*—it is often helpful and appropriate to pair those out of high school and 18-20 years old adults with a supervising ministry team member to serve as a mentor.

◆ *Best Practice*—small group breakout discussions within a larger setting may appropriately be facilitated by those out of high school and 18-20 years of age, with a supervising ministry team member in the vicinity and with consideration of the training, skills and maturity of the particular adult who is age 18-20 and serving as a ministry team member.

3.4.2 Those assisting in supervision must recognize that they are ministering as teaching representatives of the Church.

3.4.3 Those assisting in supervision are required to follow all safety guidelines and procedures.

3.4.4 The Policies and Procedures set forth under *Serving as Ministry Team Members* apply to all adult ministry team members ages 18-20.

4.0 Pastoral Care and Boundaries

Youth Ministry Services adheres to the Archdiocese of Seattle *Code of Professional Conduct for Church Personnel*. <http://www.seattlearchsep.org/PDFs/CodeOfConduct2009I.pdf>

It is important to recognize that the inevitable inequality of power in relational ministry demands clearly established and appropriate boundaries. The burden of responsibility always falls on the Ministry Leader to respect and maintain appropriate boundaries. Boundaries include professional, personal, ethical, ministerial, physical, emotional, behavioral and sexual boundaries.

As Ministry Leaders, it is our sacred responsibility to promote, protect, and safeguard the well-being of each individual entrusted to our care. Ministry Leaders serve as examples to others for appropriate behavior, setting boundaries, and following a Christian life-style.

- 4.0.1 Ministry Leaders are expected to continue to refine professional skills and knowledge of ethics in ministry through ongoing personal study and professional development.
- 4.0.2 Specialized knowledge and competency are necessary to meet the needs of youth within specific cultural and rural settings. Our youth ministry processes must affirm the legacy of faith as handed down through values, culture, spirituality, theology and life.
- 4.0.3 Gatherings of youth for formation or special events are not permitted in private homes.

4.1 Counseling and Referrals to Professional Counselors

When ministering to individuals that are encountering a time of crisis or difficulty it is important to remember that specialized training and licensing is necessary to serve as a counselor. It is important to be clear that a minister is not a counselor.

- 4.1.1 Acknowledge the limits of one's own competence and willingly make referrals to professionals whose perspective is in line with the moral and ethical beliefs of the Catholic Church.
- 4.1.2 Each parish should maintain a readily accessible list of social agencies whose work is in line with the moral and ethical beliefs of the Catholic Church from which to refer when necessary.
 - Should a young person or parent/guardian request information regarding a counseling referral, it is advised that the Ministry Leader recommend that the family meet with their primary care physician and receive a referral within their insurance plan.
 - It is not recommended that Ministry Leaders make referrals directly to counselors, however in cases where the family does not have a primary care physician or requests a referral, Ministry Leaders making any type of referral should furnish at least 3 resource options.

4.2 Disclosure

Youth Ministry Services acknowledges that we are partners with the parents/guardians of those to whom we minister and are to act as such. Transparency is an essential element to the youth ministry - parent/guardian

relationship.

- 4.2.1** Youth Ministry Leaders recognize a young person’s expectation of privacy and honor that in a professional way. Privacy considerations do not extend to information regarding serious foreseeable and imminent harm to the young person or others. Examples of issues that would contravene a young person’s privacy include child abuse, sexual/physical threats to others, abortion, and suicidal ideation. In these situations it is essential to seek the appropriate resources for assistance for the young person(s) and family(ies) involved in partnership with parent(s)/guardian(s).

5.0 Developmentally Appropriate Ministry

“Effective ministry with adolescents provides developmentally appropriate experiences, programs, activities, strategies, resources, content, and processes to address the unique developmental and social needs of young and older adolescents both as individuals and as members of families. The approach responds to adolescents’ unique needs, focuses ministry efforts, and establishes realistic expectations for growth during adolescence.”

-Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry

The documents of our church point to the importance of ministering to the members of our faith community throughout the life cycle in a way that is appropriate to the particular stage of development. At all stages of life it is important that a portion of our ministry involves the peer group of those that we minister to and with.

In a particular way the needs of younger and older adolescents are very distinct. There are significant differences in the social, physical, emotional and spiritual development of young people in middle school and of those in high school.

- 5.0.1** In the peer setting of ministry, every effort should be made to develop comprehensive youth ministries that attend in specific ways to the developmental needs of young adolescents gathered as peers and separately to the developmental needs of older adolescents gathered as peers.
- ◆ *Best Practice*—Experiences of catechesis, evangelization, prayer, retreats, social and sporting activities should be tailored to younger or older adolescents and not attempt to meet such diverse needs with one gathering/event.
 - ◆ *Best Practice*—The ministry in family setting and, parish and wider community settings may well address the needs of both younger and older adolescents throughout the life of family, parish and civic community, e.g. the celebration of the Mass is a wonderful parish wide, intergenerational experience of prayer that helps to apprentice the young church into a life of discipleship.
- 5.0.2** Events with minors have special obligations in relationship to Child and Youth Protection. For this reason, if minors will be participants in a Youth Ministry event/gathering, when parents/guardians are not present and supervising their own children, anyone over the age of 18 and out of high school who participates and interacts with youth must complete a background check and complete the *Called to Protect for Ministry* training.

- 5.0.3** Events designed to gather parents/guardians with their teens together do not require that background checks be conducted on each parent/guardian, unless it is an overnight event (e.g. a parent/guardian and teen

retreat). Young people are to take part in any groups with parents with their own parents present. Youth whose parents/guardians do not attend should be supervised/facilitated by appropriately screened/cleared ministry team members throughout the event.

◆ *Best Practice*: Occasional evenings within youth ministry programming designed to facilitate shared prayer, faith learning and conversation are an important aspect of partnering with parents in ministering to the young church. For these evening background checks are not required of all parents. Any youth without parents in attendance should be placed in small groups facilitated by appropriately cleared ministry team members.

6.0 Supervision of Youth

Determining the number of adults needed for supervision of youth depends on a number of factors, including the following: nature of the activity/event, age of the youth, and location of the activity/event.

6.1 Supervision Ratios of Adult:Youth

6.1.1 All events and activities require a minimum of two (2) adults, 21 years of age or older, as supervising ministry team members or chaperones.

6.1.2 Unless the group being supervised is either all boys or all girls with a supervising ministry team member or chaperone of the same gender, it is recommended that there be a supervising ministry team member/chaperone of each gender for mixed gender groups. This is required for overnight events.

6.1.3 Non-overnight Events require minimum of two (2) adult supervising ministry team members/chaperones for the first ten (10) young people; with a minimum 1:10 ratio continuing thereafter. In practice this means 1-20 adolescents need 2 supervising ministry team members/chaperones, 21-30 adolescents need 3 supervising ministry team members/chaperones and so on, and keeping at least one (1) overall supervising ministry team member/chaperone for each gender.

6.1.4 Overnight events require a minimum of two (2) adult supervising ministry team members /chaperones for the first eight (8) young people; with a minimum 1:8 ratio continuing thereafter.

◆ *Best Practice*—When determining the appropriate number of supervising ministry team members/chaperones you should consider the number of supervising ministry team members that would be needed in event of an emergency; are you in a rural or urban setting and what type of emergency and transportation options are available; certain types of activities may require additional supervision or assistance.

6.2 Supervision Guidelines

6.2.1 For High School youth, proper supervision does not always require constant presence if there is an event with sufficient appropriate boundaries and young people are in groups of at least 3, (e.g. when traveling to a conference where there is a set venue with security that young people can freely navigate with personal check-ins with ministry team members throughout the day between

workshops and events).

6.2.2 At all times, older and younger adolescents should be aware of the quickest way of reaching a supervising ministry team member/chaperone. At no time should older and younger adolescents be unable to quickly contact a supervising ministry team member.

◆ *Best Practice:* For young adolescents – regardless of venue or activity, constant supervision is recommended. This happens effectively in a large public venue by assigning youth to a particular ministry team member in small groups.

6.2.3 Before planning any event that may involve a higher risk activity, begin by contacting Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. (206.274.3120) for current guidelines. In cases where risk is greater due to the nature of the experience, supervision by professionals with appropriate training is necessary (e.g. white water rafting, rock climbing).

6.2.4 Periodic, in-person check-in by high school age youth to their assigned group leader is required to take place at a minimum of four (4) hour intervals during longer events. Again, for younger adolescents it is recommended to have the constant presence of supervision, check-in is required at a minimum of four (4) hour intervals if the young adolescents are not being directly supervised.

6.2.5 When traveling on pilgrimages, service experiences or other extended events, assigning a particular supervising ministry team member to a small group of youth is an effective way to supervise all youth in a larger public venue (e.g. a time for dinner in a downtown area).

6.3 Medical

6.3.1 Each parish youth ministry program must have a well-stocked and easily accessible first-aid kit, which includes feminine hygiene products. This kit is to accompany the group on any events off parish property.

Red Cross First Aid Kit recommendations: <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/get-kit/anatomy>

6.3.2 It is preferable that all prescription medications be administered by a parent/legal guardian of the youth participant.

6.3.2.1 Medications may only be dispensed by the Youth Ministry Leader or authorized adult in accordance with the written instructions provided by the parent/legal guardian on the *Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Slip* for the event/activity and only dispensed at the minimum required dosage indicated on the original packaging label:

6.3.3 Medication of any kind is to be administered only after checking the *Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Slip* for written parental/guardian permission, allergies, and other medical conditions. All medicine should be labeled in appropriate prescription or over-the-counter bottles and should not be in the possession of the youth unless necessary (exceptions: those taking insulin, inhalers, or needing an epinephrine pen).

◆ *Best Practice:* Place youth medications in a gallon size plastic, re-sealable bag. Label the bag with the

individual's name, and the date using a sharpie marker.

6.3.4 Upon checking the *Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Slip* for written parental/guardian permission, allergies, and other medical conditions; in the absence of having provided a medication with written instructions, parents/guardians must be contacted to request permission to administer an over-the-counter medication.

6.4 Overnight Trips & Accommodations

6.4.1 Priority must be given during any Church, school, or youth ministry overnight trip to ensure that all participants fulfill their Sunday and Holy Day obligation to attend mass.

6.4.2 Sleeping Arrangements

6.4.2.1 Regardless of the type of accommodations; males should never be in the females sleeping areas and vice versa. Mixed-gender social gatherings are not permitted in the sleeping areas.

6.4.2.2 Hotels

- All rooms must be checked by youth ministry leader/group leader before assigning them to individuals to avoid males and females having adjoining rooms/doors. Adjoining rooms should only be shared by youth of the same gender
- When possible, all members of a group staying in a hotel should stay on the same floor, along the same hallway.
- Minors who are staying in private rooms with no adults, which would be the case when rooms accommodate less than 6 people, should be periodically checked by two (2) adult chaperones of the appropriate gender. Typically, this is done at curfew to ensure all youth are present and in their assigned room.
 - ◆ *Best practice:* Consideration may be given to a supervision plan to monitor the halls in pairs by chaperones overnight. Youth ministry leader should consult with hotel to determine their hotel security practice and protocols.

6.4.2.3 Adults are never to share rooms/spaces with youth that accommodate less than six (6) people.

6.4.2.4 A minimum of two (2) adult chaperones may share sleeping rooms with youth in group sleeping situations where there is beds/space for six (6) or more people (e.g. dormitory, bunk rooms, cabins, gym floor, large room). The adults' beds or sleeping space should be set apart from the youth and preferably near an exit.

◆ *Best Practice:* In certain situations, consideration may be given to planning for awake-overnight supervision by appropriately cleared adults who are not directly responsible for the following mornings' programming.

6.4.3 Whenever possible minors and adults should have separate bathroom and shower facilities, and each gender within those constituencies. When it is not possible to have separate facility, designate specific

times for the separation of gender, and adult and minor bathroom and shower time."

6.4.4 An adult may never be in a state of undress in the presence of any minor.

6.5 Drugs, Alcohol & Pornography

6.5.1 Being under the influence of illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, and/or mood altering substances, and/or being in possession of drug or alcohol-related, tobacco products, tobacco related paraphernalia and/or prescription drugs not indicated on the *Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Slip* by:

- any youth on parish property
- any youth attending or participating in any youth ministry sponsored activity
- any youth attending or participating in any activity that may be associated in any way with the youth ministry
- On international trips even if the drinking age makes it legal

is forbidden and may result in disciplinary action. This may include dismissal from the parish youth ministry, even for a first offense. The decision as to the most appropriate consequence should be made in consultation with one's pastor or supervisor and should take into consideration the pastoral needs of the situation. The parent/guardian should be given information regarding counseling resources and engaged in the parish discussion of appropriate consequences in regards to the ministry environment.

6.5.2 Ministry team members and chaperones may **not** consume alcohol at any youth ministry event/gathering. On overnight events, this restriction applies around-the-clock, continuing to apply for adults during the evening hours, even after the young people have gone to sleep. Any ministry team member that violates this and/or provides or assists youth in obtaining alcohol and/or drugs will be dismissed immediately.

6.5.3 Any youth found to have consumed alcohol or drugs, have them in their possession, or arrives to an event/activity under the influence may not be allowed to remain at the event/activity and must be picked up immediately by the parent/guardian.

6.5.4 The Youth Ministry Leader must inform the parent/guardians of any young person who has consumed alcohol or used illegal drugs at a youth ministry meeting, activity or event. Parents/guardians have a right to know. This is in keeping with our partnership with parents/guardians.

6.5.5 Although bag checks may occur before leaving for events, allegations of possession of drugs, alcohol, and/or pornography still exist. If the allegation of possession is presented, the party or parties should be approached by at least two (2) supervising ministry team members to determine the accuracy of the allegation. If there is a reasonable cause, the ministry team members should request permission to search the possessions of the accused. This should always occur in the presence of at least two (2) supervising ministry team members. It should never be done by a single adult.

6.5.6 Intergenerational gatherings that are primarily youth-oriented should not serve alcohol (e.g. reception

for high school graduates following a blessing at Mass).

- 6.5.7** Programs that sponsor events for intergenerational audiences where alcohol will be available should make sure that parents/guardians of youth are aware that alcohol will be available/served.
- When alcohol will be available should make sure that parents/guardians are aware
 - When alcohol is available sponsors of the event have the responsibility to insure that no under-age drinking will be allowed.
 - Alcohol must be stored in a secured area.
 - When alcohol is available sponsors insure that responsible drinking is modeled for the people present.
 - No underage persons are used as servers or bar tenders

6.6 Smoking Tobacco Products

6.6.1 Youth under the age of eighteen are not permitted to smoke tobacco at any youth ministry gathering.

6.6.2 No one (young person or adult) is permitted to give, lend, or sell tobacco products to a minor. Anyone who sells, loans, or gives tobacco products to a minor is in violation of the law. This is considered a serious offense.

6.6.3 While it is understood that smoking tobacco is addictive, adults who find it difficult to avoid smoking tobacco products are to remove themselves from the proximity of young people and smoke in discreet, designated smoking areas.

- Adults are free to make choices about smoking tobacco products. Adults should consider their sphere of influence, and are encouraged not to smoke tobacco products at youth events/activities. This would keep adults in greater solidarity with young people.

6.7 Arrival & Dismissal

Youth Ministry Leaders must remember that their responsibility to and for youth exists from the time of arrival of the first participant until the time of departure of the last from the activity/event.

6.7.1 Two (2) supervising ministry team members must be present at the event location before the first youth participant arrives.

6.7.2 Two (2) 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 an activity/event early, it is preferred that contact between the Youth Ministry Leader and the parent/guardian regarding this need is made prior to dismissal of the youth. A note should be made on the attendance record for the activity/event as well.

6.8 Water Activities

6.8.1 Water Safety

6.8.1.1 Certified lifeguards must be present when swimming at a public or private pool, lake beach, or any other water venue.

6.8.1.2 Young people must use appropriate certified personal flotation devices at all times when using any kind of water craft and be instructed on the proper use of the craft before using it. When possible, each water craft should have a supervising ministry team member on board.

6.8.1.3 Motorized craft must be driven by those at least age 21 and properly licensed and have been instructed on the use of the craft.

6.8.2 Swimwear/Water related attire

◆ *Best Practice*—establishing consistent parish policies around swim apparel for all participants that reinforce the values of modesty and chastity are strongly encouraged.

6.8.2.1 Modest swimwear is required for all adult ministry team members at all water venues.

- For women: one-piece swimsuits, or two-piece suits that do not expose the midriff should be worn. A t-shirt may be worn over a two-piece suit with a bare midriff.
- For men: shorts/boxer style swimsuits are to be worn.

6.8.2.2 Modest swimwear is encouraged for youth participants at water-related events.

- Young ladies should be encouraged to choose one-piece swimsuits or two-piece suits that do not expose the midriff. It is appropriate to encourage a t-shirt be worn over a two-piece suit with a bare midriff.
- Young men should be encouraged to choose shorts/boxer-style swimsuits.

6.9 Crisis/Emergency/Inclement Weather Preparedness with Minors

6.9.1 Medical Emergencies

6.9.1.1 In life-threatening situations, always contact 911, local EMS to provide ambulance service.

6.9.1.2 Youth Ministry Leaders must be aware of directions to the nearest hospital or medical facility (both locally and when traveling off-site).

6.9.2 Inclement Weather

6.9.2.1 If outside at the onset of inclement weather, especially lightening, move all participants to an inside shelter and monitor the weather conditions.

6.9.2.2 Be familiar with your parish's disaster preparedness plan and follow all evacuation warnings

Youth Ministry Services Guidelines

when facing various weather anomalies (snow, ice, flooding, earthquake, etc.)

- Keep a phone line clear for direct communication to Pastor, Archdiocese, and/or incoming calls from parents/guardians.
- Verify weather conditions.
- Notify parents/guardians regarding dismissal or end of program.
- Do not allow youth to leave without notification of parents/guardians.
- Supervising ministry team members remain on duty until all youth have been picked up.
- Secure property prior to departure.
- If local public school district cancels, youth ministry activities/events should be cancelled as well.
- Be aware of the location of any emergency exits, note the nearest exits, & fire extinguishers in any setting.

6.10 Intruders

These intruder guidelines are an adaptation of CYO Camp Services emergency guidelines.

6.10.1. Intruder

6.10.1.1 If you are comfortable doing so, either alone or with other parish staff greet the individual, ask if you can help them. If they are simply looking around let them know this is a gathering only for the youth of the parish community and designated ministry team members. If they are lost you can give them directions or simply refer them to the parish office. If you are uncomfortable with the intruder quietly move the youth away from the area of the intruder.

6.10.1.2 Ensure that the intruder does not interact with the youth.

6.10.1.3 Ensure that pastor and parish staff is made aware of the incident and the possibility of an intruder.

6.10.2 Intruder with a weapon

6.10.2.1 If the person seems threatening in any way or has a weapon, do not approach or take any chances. Remove yourselves and the campers from the area, notify the parish office with the intruders whereabouts, to allow the office to call 911. If the office is not currently open simply call 911.

6.10.2.1.1 Disperse: All ministry team members will assist in gathering all youth and move quickly and quietly away from the threat and hide.

6.10.2.1.2 Shelter: If locked secure buildings are available, seek shelter in them away from doors and windows, if not hide.

7.0 Transportation

http://www.seattlearchdiocese.org/Assets/Property/5561_AppendixE-59-2014.pdf

Parish Assistance Memo 704 - Archdiocesan transportation policy, including driver application, driver form, policy on passenger van size and recommendation for 100/300 liability, and ban on using electronics while driving.

Youth Ministry Services strongly encourages the use of commercial transportation provided by licensed and bonded carriers for all youth ministry events.

7.1 Driver & Transport Guidelines

When commercial transportation provided by licensed and bonded carriers is not feasible, and transportation is to be provided by a non-commercial carrier/vehicle, whether privately owned or rented, the following guidelines apply.

7.1.1 Youth & young adult groups may not travel more than 500 miles/day. Breaks should be taken at a minimum of every 250 miles, at which point the driver must rest for a minimum of 30 minutes.

- **Additional** approved drivers should be scheduled such that drivers can rotate to provide such breaks and/or in the case of driver incapacity.

7.1.2 Minors may not drive other minors to any overnight youth ministry events, the only exception is *immediate family* with the permission of the parent/guardian that the minors are driving themselves due to extenuating circumstances. If minors, outside of the stated exception, arrive at an overnight event having driven/ridden together, alternate approved transportation will need to be planned when it is the parish/school sending them from the event to home or to an alternate destination.

7.1.3 An adult must never be alone with just one (1) minor in a vehicle, except in the case of minors traveling with their own parent/guardian.

7.1.4 Drivers should be focused on driving. Any activity which could be considered a distraction is to be avoided while the vehicle is in motion. This includes, but is not limited to, electronic communication.

7.1.5 Conduct a head count and roll call upon arrival and before departing from any activity when transporting youth. Also do a visual check upon unloading to be sure that no young person has been left in a vehicle.

- ◆ *Best Practice*—It is recommended that for events where larger capacity forms of transportation is used (e.g. bus, larger capacity vans), consideration is given to making arrangements for a cleared driver to follow in an additional vehicle so that he/she and the vehicle can be available in the event of an emergency. This is a greater consideration when the destination is more distant from emergency services and public transportation.

7.2 Driver Insurance & Registration Information

7.3.1 In all cases, the Ministry Leader is obligated to verify that all drivers have the proper insurance on a personal vehicle to be used for youth ministry and transporting minors this is 100/300 liability, and to follow the process outlined in PAM 704, referenced, with link, above.

7.3.2 No additional insurance is required on rental vehicles. This is, however, left up to the driver's discretion and paid by the driver.

7.3.3 The vehicle must have a valid and current registration and insurance (copies should be obtained) and valid and current license plates.

8.0 Communications and Media Use

“The new digital technologies are, indeed, bringing about fundamental shifts in patterns of communication and human relationships. The desire for connectedness and the instinct for communication that are so obvious in contemporary culture are best understood as modern manifestations of the basic and enduring propensity of humans to reach beyond themselves and to seek communion with others. In reality, when we open ourselves to others, we are fulfilling our deepest need and becoming more fully human. Loving is, in fact, what we are designed for by our Creator.”

Pope Benedict XVI – Message for the 43rd World Day of Communications

With the words of Pope Benedict in mind, it is necessary that we acknowledge the importance of utilizing the new technologies and the internet as a communications tool within our ministries. We must also ensure that we do so in a way which is faithful to modeling authentic discipleship and relationships founded in integrity.

All guidelines in this area do not supersede, and are complementary to the Archdiocese of Seattle policy ‘Social Media’.

8.1 Transparency

- 8.1.1 It is essential to the nature of our ministry that parents/guardians are fully aware of all mediums being used to keep in contact with their young person for ministerial purposes.
- 8.1.2 The intent of ‘Social Media’ policy is that we give witness to the Good News in such a way that we create a safe environment for all young people, which are open, transparent and involves the parents/guardians of the young people as partners.
- 8.1.3 It is important that ministry is not used to establish private one-on-one relationships with youth and our methods of communication must reflect this.
 - ◆ *Best Practice*—Maintain copies of communication with youth, and utilize “public group” pages to connect with youth participating in parish ministries.
- 8.1.4 Unusual circumstances of a pastoral nature should be documented and shared with the pastor or one’s supervisor as soon as feasible. The documentation of any such circumstance should involve a copy of any applicable communication from all types of communication medium.

8.2 Phone Calls

- 8.2.1 Phone calls to a young person should be connected to the ministry setting, and again follow the principles of transparency.
- 8.2.3 When you are contacted by a young person be sure to observe the principles of transparency and conduct the conversation as an aspect of the ministry and be present to the conversation as a

minister.

•For trips off of church property it is appropriate that youth be given the cell phone numbers of the adult leaders to have in case of emergency, (e.g. on an excursion to a theme park). It is also appropriate that, after parents/guardians have been informed, youth cell phone numbers are collected for use that day to ensure safety, following the guidelines of transparency.

8.3 E-mail to minors

8.3.1 Youth Ministry Leaders should not use their personal e-mail account for their ministry work. The parish should provide each minister with an e-mail account for ministry work.

◆ *Best Practice:* Give consideration to establishing the practice that all direct communication to a minor is accompanied by a corresponding copy to the parent/guardian, perhaps in another medium. Paid services exist which allow this to be done with relative ease. This would require collecting e-mail information from both parents/guardians and teens at the time of registration for a program/event.

8.4 Use of Media within Ministry

8.4.1 Showing movies/clips

8.4.1.1 Parental/guardian consent forms must be completed before showing any portion of a film rated “R” on the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) rating scale to high school age students. This impacts film use within all high school youth ministry programs. The title of the film that will be shown, in whole or part, may be included on the overall parental/guardian consent form for a specific event. If this is a specific evening within a youth ministry planned pattern of gathering a specific parental/guardian consent form should be completed.

8.4.1.2 No portion of a film rated “R” on the MPAA rating scale may be shown to students under high school age. This impacts film use within all middle school youth ministry programs.

8.4.1.3 Parental/guardian consent forms must be completed before showing any portion of a film rated “PG-13” on the MPAA rating scale to those under the age of 14. This impacts film use within all middle school youth ministry programs. The title of the film that will be shown, in whole or part, may be included on the overall parental/guardian consent form for a specific event. If this is a specific evening within a youth ministry planned pattern of gathering a specific parental/guardian consent form should be completed.

◆ *Best Practice*—Consult the Catholic News Service movie rating guide, found at <http://www.catholicnews.com/movies.htm> before deciding whether or not any clip is appropriate for use within a ministry setting. This rating system will make note of where a film reinforces or detracts from Gospel values. This system will also indicate films which the MPAA finds age appropriate, that are contrary to the faith. It will also point out films with a high level of resonance with moral and

spiritual values of our faith.

◆ *Best Practice*—Use clips only from films that you would be comfortable having the young person recommend to their parents/guardian for viewing the complete film.

8.5.2 Using Music within Ministry

8.5.2.1 Using music from the popular culture must include a pre-screening of lyrics. Lyrics with Obscenities, explicit sexual focus, violence, or that are demeaning to people of a specific gender, race, creed or sexual orientation, are not to be played/broadcast within the ministry setting.

◆ *Best Practice*—Providing young people with tools to assess media within a Gospel framework is an excellent practice. In this context it may be appropriate to examine the printed lyrics of songs within popular culture, first deleting any obscenities from the printed copy, with the purpose of enabling young people to apply a Gospel filter to media.

Archdiocesan Policy References

Sexual Abuse, Sexual Misconduct & Sexual Harassment – Archdiocese of Seattle Safe Environment Program

<http://www.seattlearchsep.org/PDFs/SEPPolicy2009I.pdf>

Code of Conduct for Church Personnel – Archdiocese of Seattle Safe Environment Program

<http://www.seattlearchsep.org/PDFs/CodeOfConduct2009I.pdf>

Social Media – Principles, Policies and Guidelines for Parishes, Schools and Programs of the Archdiocese of Seattle

<http://www.seattlearchdiocese.org/Archdiocese/Policies/Documents/SocialMedia.pdf>

Parish Assistance Memo 704 - Archdiocesan transportation policy, including driver application, and driver form.

http://www.seattlearchdiocese.org/Assets/Property/2936_WebVehicleSafetyOct.pdf

USCCB Charter for Protection of Children and Youth

<http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/charter.shtml>

National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry Leaders

<http://www.nfcym.org/profdev/resources/COEforYML.pdf>