



High School Youth Ministry Handbook

“Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example for the believers in your speech, your conduct, your love, faith, and purity.”

1 Timothy 4:12

This passage summarizes youth ministry. Essentially, it serves as our mission statement. It challenges youth to become role models, to strive for justice and peace, to follow Christ's example, to actively participate in the Church, and to deepen their relationship with God.

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Section One: About Youth Ministry

According to **Renewing the Vision** published by the National Council of Catholic Bishops in 1997. Catholic Youth Ministry has three universal goals:

- Goal 1:** To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.
- Goal 2:** To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.
- Goal 3:** To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

While focusing on growing in faith and evangelizing to our peers, we implement all of the components detailed below to create a balanced program. While we utilize various High School Youth Ministry curricula as well as creating projects or teaching tools to convey the message, our primary resources are The Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Catholic Youth Bible, Catholic Youth Handbook, Life Teen and associated workbooks. Our program is a combination of church teaching, personal experiences, faith sharing, bible studies, and the usage of both mainstream and Christian video/audio media. Our ultimate goal is to encourage and deepen faith in order for our teens to grow into active participants in the Catholic Church.

We actively participate in regional and diocesan events and retreats, allowing us to share and join in the broader Church. Locally, we enjoy building community with the other youth ministries of St. Michael Parish and through participation in volunteer activities whenever possible.

COMPONENTS OF YOUTH MINISTRY

Advocacy:

- Interpreting the needs of youth and their families, especially the social problems facing them;
- Acting with or on behalf of youth and their families for a change in the systems (policies, procedures, or programs), which create or contribute to the social problems;
- Giving young people a voice; and,
- Empowering them to address the social problems that they face.

Catechesis:

- Sponsoring youth toward maturity in Catholic Christian faith as a living reality through the kind of teaching and learning that emphasizes understanding, reflection, and transformations;
- Fostering in youth a communal identity as Catholic Christians within the intergenerational community of faith; and,
- Helping them to develop their own personal faith identity.

Community Life:

- Creating an environment which nurtures meaningful relationships among youth and between youth and adults characterized by Gospel values (e.g. acceptance of all people, trust, respect, cooperation, honesty, taking responsibility, willingness to serve);
- Helping young people feel like a valued part of the church community; and,
- Providing opportunities for social interaction and meaningful participation in the life of the church and civic community.

Evangelization:

- Evangelization is the energizing core of all the components of youth ministry.
- Proclaiming through word and witness the Good News of the Gospel to youth who have not yet heard or seen it.
- Inviting them into a relationship with Jesus Christ and the community of believers; and,
- Ongoing witness of the faith community as it attempts to live out the Gospel with such authenticity that the faith of all the members is sustained and nourished.

Justice, Peace, and Service:

- Guiding young people in the development of a social consciousness and a commitment to a life of justice and service grounded in their faith in Jesus Christ, in the scriptures, and in Catholic social teaching;
- Empowering young people and their families to work for justice by concrete efforts to address the causes of human suffering, to serve those in need, to pursue peace, and to defend the life, dignity, and rights of all people; and,
- Infusing the concepts of justice and peace into all youth ministry efforts.

Leadership Development / Empowerment:

- Recruiting, training, and supporting youth and adult leaders in youth ministry;
- Empowering youth for leadership and ministry with their peers in their schools, and in the church and civic community;
- Developing a leadership team of youth and adults to organize and coordinate a ministry with youth; and,
- Partnering with parents and families in promoting positive youth development and faith growth.

Pastoral Care / Guidance:

- Promoting positive youth and family development through a variety of preventative strategies (e.g. developing life skills and parenting skills);
- Caring for youth and families in crisis through support, counseling, and referral to appropriate community agencies; and,
- Providing guidance as youth face life decisions and make moral choices.

Prayer and Worship:

- Assisting young people in deepening their relationship with Jesus through spiritual development and a personal prayer life;
- Providing a variety of communal prayer and worship experiences with youth to deepen and celebrate their relationship with Jesus in a caring Christian community; and,
- Involving young people in the sacramental life of the Church.

Section Two: Rules and Responsibilities

ST. MICHAEL HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH MINISTRY CODE OF BEHAVIOR:

The diocesan code of behavior is used for all parish, regional, and diocesan events. Within the parish, our expectations are simple: **RESPECT** for yourself, and other individuals, things, ideas, and opinions. We abide by the laws of God and humanity, and are always conscious of each other's safety and well-being.

Because we often share personal stories and emotions, the conversation shared in any youth ministry setting or event remain confidential among the group members and are not shared at school or home, unless the situation raises a potential "red flag."

WITHOUT EXCEPTION, THE FOLLOWING "DIOCESAN RISK MANAGEMENT" POLICIES APPLY:

- No one youth will be alone with one adult. The "Rule of 3" applies – 1 adult and 2 teens or vice versa.
- After curfew, if a "youth" room must be entered into by an adult, that adult **MUST** be of the same gender as the room's occupants and a second adult, (male or female) will be present at the doorway to the room.

DRESS CODE:

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Romans 12:1-2

We observe the "**HIDE YOUR B's RULE.**" At no time, even when stretching or bending should any of your B's show – that includes bras, boxer/briefs, breast, bottoms, backs and bellies. **Any teen or adult that is dressed in appropriately according to the above guideline will be asked to change.** (See attached Diocesan "Code of Behavior" for entire outline.)

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES TO AND FROM ANY PARISH, LOCAL OR REGIONAL EVENT:

The diocese requires that drivers and chaperones be at least 21 years of age and must show proof of insurance. This is for liability and insurance reasons.

1. Ask a member of the group to say a short prayer (for safe travel) before departure.
2. Review the expectations with the group, i.e. appropriate language, music, discussion topics, etc.
3. Make sure you have copies of the permission slips for the teens in your care. The forms will either be collected and given to the event coordinator at check in, or kept for the ride home.
4. Do not leave until the entire group is present and accounted for. If someone is late, please call them or their parents before you leave. Phone numbers are provided on the permission slips.
5. For safety reasons, all cars should caravan together. If one car stops for food, they all stop. Then, if anything should happen (i.e., flat tire, overheating), someone is there to go for help.
6. During transport, you are responsible for all youth in your vehicle. Feel free to take appropriate disciplinary action. If you are not comfortable doing so, please notify the youth minister about the situation as soon as possible, so appropriate action can be taken, if necessary.

Section Three: Expectations, Behavior, and Disciplinary Actions

For any reason, the parish youth minister has the discretion to take the following actions for the benefit of the individual or the group, as each individual situation may warrant. The youth minister(s) can:

- Immediate dismissal from the session or event;
- Suspended attendance from regular parish or special diocesan events;
- Require accountability to the group upon return; and,
- Other options based upon the discretion of the youth minister(s), with or without the consultation of direct supervisors and/or the pastor.

The youth minister also has the right to refuse to all participation in any event, because they are the liable party and assume responsibility in the absence of a parent or guardian.

The youth minister also has the right to dismiss a youth to their parent or guardian at any time during an event.

**Section Four:
Important Contacts**

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