

Policies and Guidelines

For Ministry with Youth



Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina
1662 Ingram Rd.
Charleston, South Carolina 29407
(843) 402-9115 ext. 38

Permission to reprint must be granted by:
Office of Youth Ministry
Diocese of Charleston
Copyright, 2007

Table of Contents

Introduction	
Purpose of the Guidelines.	3
Chapter 1	
What is Youth Ministry.	4
General Description	
A Vision for Catholic Youth Ministry	
Chapter 2	
Services of the Offices of Youth Ministry.	12
Chapter 3	
Job Description and Competency Standards for	
Youth Ministry.	16
Chapter 4	
Liability Guidelines and Policies.	19
Chapter 5	
Diocesan Policies for Youth Ministry.	27
Youth Ministry in the Parish	
Chapter 6	
Personnel Guidelines: Hiring a Youth Minister.	32
Chapter 7	
Ministry Supervision.	42
Chapter 8	
Recommended Guidelines for Adolescent Retreats.	48

Diocese of Charleston Policies and Guidelines **For Ministry with Youth**

Introduction

The Office of Youth Ministry is the diocesan agency mandated to foster the development of a comprehensive Catholic Youth Ministry, rooted in Gospel values, which reflects a family and multi-cultural perspective in all the parishes of the Diocese of Charleston.

This mission is implemented through six functions:

- Training and continuing education of parish youth ministry leadership;
- Providing consultation and resource services;
- Networking leadership in youth ministry;
- Coordinating Junior and Senior High School Conferences, retreats, Christian Leadership Institutes, and other such programs;
- Creating and sponsoring innovative pilot projects in youth ministry;
- Promoting quality standards for parish youth ministry.

Consistent with the role of “promoting quality standards for parish youth ministry,” the Office of Youth Ministry has developed the following **Policies and Guidelines for Ministry with Youth** in the Diocese of Charleston.

Purpose of the Guidelines

Policies and Guidelines for Ministry with Youth are needed in the diocese in order to:

- Ensure that a comprehensive approach to serving youth of the Catholic community is effectively promulgated and understood within the parishes of the Diocese of Charleston;
- Provide norms against which the progress of the parish youth ministries toward implementing a comprehensive youth ministry can be measured;
- Manage risk effectively and minimize the liability of parishes and the Diocese.

Chapter One

What is Youth Ministry?

General Description

“Youth Ministry may be defined as the response of the Christian community to the needs of young people and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community.” (*A Vision of Youth Ministry, United States Catholic Conference (USCC), 1976.*)

Youth Ministry is TO, WITH, BY and FOR youth. Youth Ministry is not only a ministry to youth by adults. It is a responsibility in which youth share. Youth ARE the Church of today, not only the Church of tomorrow.

A Vision for Catholic Youth Ministry

The great changes in society during the 1960's, and the revitalization of the institutional Church following the Second Vatican Council, provided the context for rethinking and articulation of effective youth work in the Catholic Church. Thus, in 1976 the United States Bishops published *A Vision of Youth Ministry*. This document set the Church in the United States on the road toward what has been termed as “comprehensive youth ministry.”

One of the foundations of the vision is the connection of youth ministry with the overall mission of the Church. “While parishes must choose the methods, leaders and programs that best match their particular resources and community, providing for ministry to youth is NOT optional or peripheral to parish life: it is integral and necessary that youth are attended to and included in the Church's three-fold mission of community, message and service.” (*A Vision of Youth Ministry, United States Catholic Conferences (USCC), 1976.*)

A second foundation centers Jesus as the model of the Church's ministry on behalf of adolescents. The gospel story of Jesus' encounter with the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) captures the dynamics of a ministry which is fundamentally relational and manifested by the actions of presence, listening, responding and empowering. Thus, this ministry is firmly rooted in the person and Gospel of Jesus Christ, and it calls leaders to constantly invite young people into relationship and to imitate Jesus' action of service to others, especially those forgotten in society.

A. Definition of Who Catholic Ministry Serves

For the purpose of these Guidelines, the terms “youth” or “adolescent” refers to two groups: early adolescence (10/11 – 14/15 years) and late adolescence (15/16 – 18/19 years.)

B. Goals of Catholic Youth Ministry

In 1997 the United States Bishops produced a document entitled “Renewing the Vision”, a pastoral plan for youth and those who work with them. In the document “Renewing the Vision” the US Catholic Bishops stipulated three main goals for youth ministry:

- **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 faith community.
- **Goal #3:** To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person

C. The Context of Catholic Youth Ministry in the Diocese of Charleston

Ministry occurs within a given social, culture and religious context or perspective. Each of these exert an important influence on those being served and thus must be considered before designing the specific form of ministry.

Within the Diocese of Charleston, there exists a diversity of ethnic, financial, and geographic perspectives, the knowledge of which will enhance the effectiveness of the parish's ministry to youth.

Family Perspective

The primacy of parents and guardians in the catechizing of their children must be recognized. As such, they must be partners on the team that forms the faith of youth. Further, the needs of the parents and families must be considered when designing activities that are part of the parish ministry.

Culture and Ethnic Perspective

The Diocese of Charleston is rich in its cultural and ethnic heritage. Each culture brings its own language, custom, special needs, value system, relational patterns, as well as particular signs and symbols that carry faith for them.

Catholic Youth Ministry must seek to include and affirm youth in their culture, to minister them within that context, and promote the appreciation of all cultures and races through cross-cultural experiences. In this way, parish youth ministries play an essential role in diminishing the evil of racism that has been so destructive in our society.

Rural/Urban/Suburban Perspective

The Diocese of Charleston is composed of five deaneries representing a wide variety of parish settings: rural farms; heavy manufacturing towns; cities and towns that cater to tourism; suburban communities surrounding large cities, urban, rural and center city communities.

The following is a generalized description of characteristics for each of these settings:

- Parishes in rural/small town settings are characterized by smaller numbers, greater distances, fewer resources, and usually are family/community-centered and more closely knit. Catholic Youth Ministry in this setting should seek partnership with other parish youth ministries, community events, school activities, and other religious traditions. Further, parishes are encouraged to plan regional activities with other parishes in their area, and to avail themselves of the diocesan youth programs.
- Parishes in suburban settings generally serve a constituency that is larger in numbers, have adequate financial resources, and possess more options for youth. These parishes are encouraged to develop a wide variety of opportunities in varied formats, and to develop partnership with other parishes in their area which have fewer resources.
- Catholic parishes in center-city settings tend to have a smaller number of young people and below average financial resources. These parishes are encouraged to offer outreach efforts and greater focus on immediate, critical needs of youth as essential ingredients of their ministry.

Summarizing the rural, suburban, and urban perspective; Parishes need to know their community, neighborhood and programs. Avoid competition with other parishes and seek partnership with parishes and churches nearby. Take advantage of diocesan training and programs.

Economic Perspective

Since Catholic parishes exist in many geographic settings, they also reflect the economic characteristics of the neighborhoods and communities they serve. Thus, there exists among parishes in the dioceses a significant wealth disparity. Often the parishes with the least amount of resources are in the greatest need for a viable youth ministry program.

While being respectful of each parish community's individual rights, Catholic Youth Ministry in the Diocese of Charleston challenges parish leaders to recognize a jointly shared responsibility to all Catholic youth, regardless of where they live. Further, youth leaders are encouraged to provide and to avail themselves of opportunities (according to the social teaching and tenet of the Catholic Church) where youth from different economic backgrounds can come together to develop relationships and appreciate their common faith tradition.

D. Components of a Comprehensive Catholic Youth Ministry

“Renewing the Vision” speaks of eight components which make up youth ministry. These may be seen as organizational sections that make up what is called a comprehensive youth ministry. They may also be considered opportunities that are provided for youth as a response to needs.

The components for Catholic Youth Ministry are not separate programs. Instead, they are the essential ingredients that comprise a balanced program. A youth program should have all of the components within their parish youth ministry.

Ministry with adolescents utilizes each of the Church's ministries – advocacy, catechesis, community life, evangelization, justice and service, leadership development, pastoral care, prayer and worship – in an integrated approach to achieve the three goals for ministry to youth. These ministry components describe the “essence” of ministry with adolescents and provide the Church with eight fundamental ways to minister with adolescents. These components provide a framework for the Catholic community to respond to the needs of young people and to involve young people in sharing their unique gifts with the larger community. They provide a structure for the Church's ministry with adolescents, while encouraging local creativity in developing programs, activities, and strategies for each component. Each ministry component supports and enhances the others. A comprehensive ministry with adolescents provides balance among all eight components. The balance can be achieved throughout a year or season of programming. Even a single program or strategy can incorporate several of the ministry components.

The following listing represents a brief explanation of each component for effective youth ministry:

1) The Ministry of Advocacy

“Speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of the destitute, open your mouth, decree what is just, defend the needy and the poor.” (Proverbs 31:8-9) Advocacy in youth ministry is an ongoing and pervasive commitment to listening, interpreting, and speaking for youth within the Church and the community. It calls for adults to help bring about change when there is injustice to the youth of our Church and community. Advocacy calls adults to act on the behalf of young people in order to give a voice that empowers young people to address the many problems they face.

2) The Ministry of Catechesis

“Quite early on, the name *catechesis* was given to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples, to help people believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in His name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building upon the body of Christ.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church #4)

Being in a relationship with Jesus Christ and the faith community demands that systematic and ongoing formation and education be available to help youth understand the content of Catholic Christianity, its history and application to their lives. Traditionally, we have referred to this effort as catechesis. Catechesis can be accomplished (traditionally) through classes that are age or interest appropriate and are offered in a variety of formats and time periods. Catechesis also occurs through other experiences such as retreats, liturgy, workshops, conferences, service and preparation for the sacraments.

“The Church is the body of Christ. Through the Spirit and His actions in the sacraments, above all the Eucharist, Christ, who once was dead and is now risen, establishes the community of believers as His own Body. In the unity of this Body there is a diversity of members and functions. All members are linked to one another, especially to those who are suffering, to the poor and persecuted.” (The Catechism of the Catholic Church #805-806)

Opportunities for creating community help young people to develop relationships among themselves and with caring adult leaders as well as with the community as a whole. Community life is nurtured when the atmosphere is welcoming, comfortable, and safe. One in which adolescents know that their contribution is welcomed, their energy is appreciated, and their presence affirmed. Community life is

enhanced when leaders promote and model an attitude that is authentic, positive, accepting and understanding – assuring young people that they are valued and cared for as gifted individuals.

Community building takes place through many youth functions such as: retreats, small group's discussion, games, service projects, liturgy experiences, parish events, trips, youth nights, sports.

3) The Ministry of Evangelization

Evangelization is "...the initial effort by the faith community as a whole to proclaim through word and witness the Good News of the Gospels to those who have not yet heard or seen it, and then to invite those persons into a relationships with Jesus Christ and the community of the believers." (Challenge of Catholic Youth Evangelization) The Ministry of Evangelization with adolescents incorporates several essential elements; witness, outreach, proclamation, invitation, conversion, and discipleship.

"We are always evangelizing. Evangelization is the energizing core of all ministry with adolescents. Every relationship, program, and ministry with adolescents and their families must proclaim the Good News, invite them into a deeper relationship with the Lord Jesus, and empower them to live as disciples." (Renewing the Vision – A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry)

4) The Ministry of Justice and Service

Opportunities for service and action on behalf of justice call youth to experience and appreciate the concrete application of the Gospel to the needs of others. While service projects by young people are praise-worthy, the development of a Christian social consciousness as a thread throughout the lived experiences of youth must be the goals of this component. It is not enough for youth to simply do, without knowing the why of what they do. In the world we live in today we must give the youth every opportunity to develop a "ministry" that is rooted in the Gospel values.

5) The Ministry of Leadership Development

"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings by the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestations of the Spirit is given for some benefit." (1 Cor. 12:4-7)

The Ministry of Leadership Development calls forth, affirms, and empowers the diverse gifts, talents, and abilities of adults and young people in our faith communities on behalf of a comprehensive ministry with adolescents. This approach involves a wide diversity of adult and youth leaders in a variety of roles. Many will be involved in direct ministry with adolescents, others will provide support services, and yet others will link the ministry effort to the resources of the broader community.

This approach must include young people in leadership roles (to, with, and by) as to incorporate and provide ownership for and by youth of our church. Young people must be included in the ministries of our church if we are going to truly live out the core of the Gospel. As echoed in the words of Pope John Paul II at World Youth Day in Denver, "Young pilgrims, Christ needs you to enlighten the world and to show it the 'path to life' (Psalm 16:11)...Place your intelligence, your talents, your enthusiasm, your compassion, and your fortitude at the service of life...The Church needs your energies, your enthusiasm, your youthful ideas, in order to make the Gospel of life penetrate the fabric of society, transforming people's hearts and the structures of our society in order to create a civilization of true justice and love."

6) The Ministry of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is the effort that responds to the profound needs of adolescents for personal and spiritual direction. For example, being present with youth (and parents) during times of crisis and stress, developing skills in communication and problem solving, listening, providing resources for timely intervention when there are suicide attempts, substance abuse problems, family problems and pregnancy issues, etc. are ways in which this component becomes real for youth.

7) The Ministry of Prayer and Worship

Opportunities for prayer and worship help youth deepen and celebrate their youth to celebrate and deepen their faith by experiencing different types of communal prayer and liturgical experiences. This provides opportunities for youth to gain a deeper awareness of who they are, and why they believe what they do.

Integrating prayer in all activities for youth, creating meaningful liturgies where they are allowed to be ministers as well as celebrants, penitential services, retreats, guided personal prayer, adoration, are just a few examples of the experiences that should be available for youth.

E. Principles of Youth Ministry

Adolescence is a Unique Time of Personal Development

The teenage years represent the critical period of transition from childhood to adulthood, during which physical psychological, and social growth is more concentrated than at any comparable time span in life. The teenage years are an important juncture for individual spiritual development. The youth begins to form a personal sense of meaning, sets values, and becomes capable of a deeper personal relationship with Christ, coupled with responsible Christian action.

Youth Ministry is Concerned with the Total Person

Youth ministry must take seriously its responsibility to help young people grow as total persons: socially, spiritually, culturally, etc.

Youth Ministry is Rooted in Relationships

Youth ministry involves first and foremost, not programs, but relationships. Within accepting relationships, young people are enabled to face and accept themselves and others, to clarify their goals and values, and dare to become the person they are called to be. These relationships challenge young people to a greater growth and openness to God.

Youth Ministry is a Call to Community

God calls youth and adults to be members of God's people, the Church. The community brings the living presence of Jesus in Word and Sacrament to the youth. Youth Ministry seeks to enhance and support the basic faith commitment of youth in each of the local communities of family, parish and school.

Youth Ministry Proceeds as an Affirmation of Gifts

The recognition and development of individual gifts and the building of a positive sense of personal worth and ability are an important aspect of the process of youth ministry. Youth ministry effectively calls the young person toward maturity. Affirmation must be united with genuine trust of the young person's integrity and ability.

F. Implementing a Comprehensive Catholic Youth Ministry

Implementing the goals and components of Catholic Youth Ministry has resulted in a great diversity of programs and processes in the parishes of the Diocese of Charleston. At the same time, the full dimension of Catholic Youth Ministry has often been confused with only one form of ministry – the youth group.

Youth groups (or some form of youth groups such as the CYO model) have been a prevalent way of ministering to young people. However, studies and experience have revealed limitations in relying upon this form as the only way to minister to young people. Most youth groups focus on only a few of the eight components, which make up a total youth ministry. Studies show that parishes that adopt a total youth ministry program which has all of the eight components functioning in their youth ministry are far more likely to reach a broader-size membership.

Both approaches can be contrasted in the following way: group ministry starts with a group and asks others to join. The assumptions of this approach are:

- that youth needs are similar
- that youth like to join groups
- that youth are available at the same time one or a few adults can meet the needs of the group

Comprehensive youth ministry begins with a team of adults and youth that are formed for ministry. The assumptions in this approach are:

- that youth have different needs
- that youth like to choose how to be involved
- that youth have hectic schedules
- that many people doing a little can get more accomplished
- that young people benefit by having a variety of adults to relate to

Characteristics of the Comprehensive Model

The comprehensive model is best implemented using a variety of programs offered and organized in time formats and settings designed to meet the needs and interests of youth and families. This comprehensive style of programming is characterized by the following elements of effective ministry with youth:

- **Balanced Ministry Programming**

Demonstrates a balance among the eight components, program settings and methods so that the needs of all the young people and their families can be reached and all the resources of the community are wisely used. Given this broad scope, it is very tempting to emphasize only one or two components, or to sponsor only gathered youth programs.

- **Interest-Centered**

Develops programming based on the needs of youth and families. Programs are designed around the different interests of youth and families so that they attract a wide spectrum of participation. This avoids the problem of attempting to create every program “with everybody in mind.”

- **Variety**

Realize that no one format or timeframe works for everyone. Work on a variety of program formats – gathered and non-gathered; a variety of program schedules – weekly, monthly, extended time, daily, overnight, weekend, week-long, weekdays; a variety of environments for programming – parish facility, homes, retreat centers, community centers; and a variety of leaders – in different program settings. There is so much diversity in needs and so much competition for young people’s time that a youth minister must be very creative in offering formats, settings, and schedules that respond to the real life situation of young people.

- **Freedom of Choice**

Overcome the “you have to come to everything” mentality by allowing young people to select the programs that address their needs in a time schedule and format that best suits their interests and life situation.

Catholic Youth Ministry is best expressed when the needs of all of the young people are considered and opportunities to meet their needs are provided. This philosophy asks for a paradigm shift in our thinking. No longer can we be content to let programs be our only response. We must work collaboratively, not only among our Catholic agencies and organizations, but with civic and other faith communities as well. Young people are the young Church of today, with gifts, talents, enthusiasm, and a longing for God. It is the responsibility of the entire faith community to provide for their personal and spiritual development as Catholic Christians.

G. Comprehensive Youth Ministry

Comprehensive Youth Ministry is the approach recommended by the Diocese of Charleston, for the following reasons: it reflects more accurately the reality of youth in today’s society, it is effective in terms of both time and cost, is the best use of human resources in the parish.

Whatever form Catholic Youth Ministry takes in a parish, it is important to keep in mind that effective implementation will require that:

- proper assessment and planning take place
- the pastor be active and visible in his support of the efforts of the parish youth ministry
- programming is based on the needs of the parish and the neighborhood community in which the parish is located
- the parish commits adequate financial resources to ensure the viability of the ministry
- a team is formed of adults and youth who are accountable and responsible for the implementation of the various components of Catholic Youth Ministry

Concluding Comments

The vision for Catholic Youth Ministry presents a challenge for all those concerned about young people. There is much to be learned and integrated into the way parishes do ministry with youth. There is also a need to recognize that Catholic Youth Ministry is not a group that youth join. Rather, membership comes through baptism into the Christian community. Thus, the invitation to participate is offered to all youth and all youth are welcome at all programs. If parishes broaden their vision of who they serve, they will, indeed, model the inclusive servant leadership of Jesus in the Gospel.

Chapter Two

Services of the Offices of Youth Ministry

The Office of Youth Ministry for the Diocese of Charleston is committed to assisting parishes in the development of ministry, to, with, by, and for young people. The Youth Office serves adult and youth leaders through training and formation opportunities, consultation and resource services, participation in diocesan, regional, and national events, and advocacy on behalf of youth to the Church and larger society.

Goals

- To serve youth and adult leaders in their ministry to, with, by, and for young people
- To provide training and formation opportunities for youth ministry leaders to carry out effectively their role in educating and forming young people as Catholic Christians
- To assist parishes in the development of a comprehensive ministry with young people, taking into consideration the needs, culture, resources, and contexts of ministry
- To educate the wider Church and civic community on issues related to young people and youth ministry
- To provide opportunities for youth and adults to experience the larger Church community
- To provide opportunities for youth and adults to experience the larger Church community
- To advocate on the behalf of the needs of youth people

These goals are met through the following programs.

Adult Leadership Opportunities

- **Consultation**

The Office of Youth Ministry is available for on-site consultation regarding personnel placement, personnel issues, diocesan policies and guidelines, crisis questions, program designs, implementation and evaluations. This service is available to parish youth leaders, pastors and pastoral associates, directors of religious education, parish council and staff, and principals.

- **Orientation for new Youth Leaders**

The office is available for full orientation of new leaders in Youth Ministry. During the orientation, youth leaders are given an overview of diocesan activities, policies, and resources.

- **Network Gatherings**

Network gatherings take place in each of the deaneries of the Diocese of Charleston on a bi-monthly basis, except during the summer months. Youth leaders from the parishes meet with the diocesan director to gain regional and diocesan information, instruction, resources, and networking opportunities among parishes.

Youth Ministry 101:

YM101 is an introductory training for those beginning their ministry with young people. The training includes presentations on adolescent growth and development, youth culture, trends and issues, youth ministry goals, comprehensive youth ministry components, resource alternatives, and the planning processes (such as designing a calendar with all eight components of youth ministry.) The training is specifically geared to parish youth ministry core groups that are comprised of adults and youth. This training is offered in the fall or by appointment.

Ministry Mentoring:

With recognition that new ministry professionals and volunteers need assistance and guidance during their first few years of service, the mentoring program connects veterans in the field with newcomers. The program is intended to help with adjustments, transition, and chaos that many new youth ministry personnel experience.

Youth Ministry Advisory Committee (Think Tank):

The youth ministry advisory committee known as the “think tank” consists of 12-15 professional and volunteer youth ministry leaders who gather quarterly with the staff to provide insights, input, evaluation, visioning and, direction to the office. Members are invited to serve on the committee for a minimum of two years.

Leadership Development for Youth**National Catholic Youth Conference:**

The National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) is an exciting, biennial three-day experience of prayer, community, and empowerment for Catholic teenagers and their adult chaperones. The schedule includes general sessions and workshops addressing a wide variety of topics as well as opportunities for reconciliation, daily liturgy, and special activities such as concerts, a dance, and comedy club. The thematic park is a unique venue incorporating traditional exhibits with interactive educational and recreational activities.

World Youth Day:

WYD is a week-long series of events attended by the Pope and hundreds of thousands of young people from all over the globe. It has become the largest single mobilization of young people in the world. WYD08 attracted 223,000 registered pilgrims, including 110,000 from 170 nations making it the largest event ever hosted in Australia.

High School Christian Leadership Institute:

The High School Christian Leadership Institute (CLI) is a five-day-long experience for high school students from throughout the diocese. The students come together, with adult ministers, to foster leadership development, experience community, and spiritual growth in order to produce Christian leaders for parishes, schools, and the larger community.

Junior High Christian Leadership Institute:

The Junior High Christian Leadership Institute (CLI) is a five-day-long experience for junior high school students from throughout the diocese. The students come together, with high school counselors and adult coordinators, to foster leadership development, experience community, and spiritual growth in order to produce Christian leaders for parishes, schools, and the larger community.

Junior High Youth Rally:

This annual event offers junior high students from around the diocese a day to gather and learn more about themselves, their Church, and their faith. The rally usually features a keynote presentation, music, icebreakers, prayer, and liturgy experiences.

Senior High Youth Conference:

The annual conference is an opportunity for high school youth from around the diocese to gather for a weekend of spiritual motivation, sharing, and good fun. The event features several keynote presenters, icebreakers, music, and liturgy with the Bishop in a “big” Church experience.

Young Men’s Retreat:

The Young Men’s retreat is a weekend for any and all young men in High School. This weekend is action packed with music, games, talks, small groups, faith sharing, and much more all directed towards Young Men. The weekend is not restricted to the topic of religious vocations, but how to live as a Man of God within today’s worldly values

Young Ladies Retreat:

The Young Ladies retreat is a weekend for any and all young ladies in High School. The weekend consists of music, games, talks, small groups, sharing faith and much more all directed towards young ladies. The weekend will also focus on self-esteem, self-worth and how to live as young ladies of God.

Junior High Retreat:

The retreat is a co-ed three-day weekend encounter with Jesus for those students in the 6th – 8th grades. The weekend includes a variety of activities and discussions that call the participants to make some self-discoveries, to examine relationships beyond the superficial level, and to realize how faith in Jesus applies to everyday living. This will be done through the exploration of the following topics: “Who am I? Who is Jesus? What do I really believe? What does it mean to be a real Catholic Christian?”

Renew and Rejoice Retreat:

The annual conference is for Youth Minister’s and Religious Education Directors to experience renewal and rejoicing during this beautiful three-day retreat.

SEARCH Retreat:

The Search for Christian Maturity (simply referred to as Search) is a weekend retreat program offered by the Diocese of Charleston that enables high school students to explore in a deeper way their own faith. This is accomplished by having the searchers come to know themselves in a more personal and spiritual manner and to know God in a more loving and personal way.

CEO Days:

CEO means continuing educational opportunities. The Youth Ministry CEO Days are designed to act as a educational opportunity for those who work with youth on the Parish level. The topics range from special national studies regarding youth and families and the church, catechetical training, to formational opportunities for leaders and those who assist with youth ministry. The main purpose is to provide quality and needed resources and information regarding youth ministry.

Evangelization Team:

The Evangelization Team is designed for young people to have a voice and input into the ministry for youth. Each youth must go through an application process to be accepted on the team. The meetings take place on a monthly basis throughout the diocese. The prime directive of the Evangelization Team is to develop retreats and conferences.

Distribution of Catholic Scouting Materials:

The Youth Office serves as a resource center for scouting materials such as religious award workbooks, awards, and emblems.

Chapter Three

Job Description and Competency Standards for Youth Ministry

A. Competency-Based Standards

Competency standards for Youth Ministry have been developed by the NFCYM, whose guidelines all parishes follow. These standards present the youth minister with a self-assessment tool which guides him or her in developing the proficiency with which for ministering to and with the demands of young people. An effective youth minister is committed to ongoing enrichment and learning. The particular cultural and geographic setting, the context in which youth ministry is to be carried out, as well as the size and location of the community, will require additional skills and/or modifications in these standards.

The Office of Youth Ministry strives to make available training on each of the levels of competency standards. These training sessions provide classroom training and in-service training, as well as ongoing enrichment. Training is also available for those seeking professional certification through the Center of Ministry Development.

The following is a summary of the *National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry Competency-Based Standards for Youth Leaders in Youth Ministry*. (You may contact the Office of Youth Ministry to find out where you can obtain the complete text.)

Person of the Minister:

The minister has an “understanding of vocation, work of the Gospel, mission and ministry of the Church as personal and professional lifestyle.” (Committee on Certification and Accreditation, NFCYM Competency-Based Standards, p.1.)

Knowledge and competency (ability to apply what is known) are sought in the areas of:

- Spirituality and Prayer
- Ministry in the Church

Theology and Spirituality:

The minister recognizes the need for “study, understanding and application of Catholic theology as core to the vocation of Ministry.” (Ibid p.2)

Knowledge and competency are sought in the areas of:

- Hebrew and Christian Scriptures
- Christology
- Ecclesiology
- Catholic Doctrine
- Sacraments
- Moral Theology and Decision Making
- Catholic Identity and Ecumenism

Human Resource Management:

The youth minister develops and manages structures and processes that enable youth, as well as adult co-ministers, in their personal growth, group interaction and development aimed at effective integration of all dimensions of youth ministry.

Knowledge and competency are sought in:

- Communication Skills
- Ministry Management Skills
- Legal Concerns

Foundations of Youth Ministry and Ministry to the Adolescent:

The Certified Youth Minister (CYM) familiar with “adolescent maturing patterns, physical and physiological development, sexuality, social behavior and emotional attitudes.” 9 (Ibid p.2.) He or she also recognizes the impact of adolescent development on faith development and maturity.

Knowledge and competency are sought in:

- Adolescent Development
- Principles of Catholic Youth Ministry
- Components of Catholic Youth Ministry
- Family and multi-culture perspective in Youth Ministry
- Resources in Youth Ministry

B. Recommended Minimum Qualifications and Competencies for CYM

The Competency-Based Standards provide a comprehensive picture of the knowledge and competency needed for the role of CYM. Parishes are not always able, however, to find someone for the role of CYM who has such competencies and knowledge at the outset. Therefore, we require the following minimum qualifications for use in discerning whether a person should be considered for the role of CYM. Once so discerned, the pastor and pastoral council should require and provide ongoing training for the CYM to meet and obtain the minimum standards.

Personal Qualities:

- Commitment to Catholic Christianity evidenced by an active prayer life and participation in the sacramental life and mission of the Church.
- Genuine love for youth and a desire to advocate on their behalf.
- Demonstration of a balanced lifestyle and healthy adult relationships.
- Commitment to ongoing professional training and spiritual development
- Demonstration of age-appropriate behavior and maturity.

It is appropriate, at this point, to address the issue of age. There is a tendency to consider young adults, usually between the ages of 20-22, for the role of CYM. Considering the scope of responsibilities, the minimum education, experience, knowledge and skills needed for the role, and the life tasks required for the transition from young adulthood to adulthood, it is strongly recommended that persons of more maturity be considered. Since it is difficult to assign a specific age to “maturity,” those responsible for discerning and selecting the CYM are urged to utilize extreme care.

Skills and Competencies:

Besides personal qualities, the Diocese of Charleston recognizes the need to discern the skills and competency level (standards) to be in ministry to and with young people. The following represent the skills and competencies required for each of the following positions: a Youth Leader, Administrator of Youth, Coordinator of Youth, Director of Youth, in a parish (cluster) setting. Please check with the Office of Youth Ministry if you have questions about previous experience or education that would offer equivalence to the basic competency standards required by the Diocese of Charleston.

Director of Youth Ministry**Basic Description:**

The Director of Youth Ministry (DYM) has full administrative responsibilities for the total youth ministry program or cluster. This person is capable of supervising other youth ministry personnel, managing a youth ministry office, recruiting, training and supervising volunteers who work in youth ministry, planning and developing all the components of youth ministry for the young people in grades 7-12, planning and developing the catechetical component for this program, scheduling programs and special events, acting as a youth ministry resource person, and evaluating this program in accordance with the norms of the diocese.

Skills Required:

(To include the qualities and competencies needed by all pastoral ministers.)

Competencies and Scope of Responsibilities:

- A. Knowledge of and ability to convey effectively the official teachings of the Church regarding scripture, doctrine, morality, and spirituality with a demonstrated fidelity to these teachings.
- B. Ability to initiate, plan, organize, implement, and evaluate all components of youth ministry to meet the faith formation needs of adolescents in grades 7-12 by: developing all components of youth ministry – word, worship, community, pastoral care, justice and ministry, enablement, advocacy, and evangelization.
 - Developing, coordinating, and directing preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation.
 - Recruitment, training, and supervision of volunteers to assist in these programs.
 - Arranging facilities, schedules, and communication for these programs.
 - Developing and fostering formation of the youth ministry core team.
 - Forming retreat teams.
 - Planning retreats.
 - Planning and facilitating programs with a family perspective.
 - Maintaining all necessary records.
 - Managing a youth ministry office.
- C. Knowledge of youth ministry and catechetical documents, resources, and processes.
- D. Preparation of annual budget for youth ministry program.
- E. Working collaboratively with pastor, parish staff, and especially catechetical leaders.
- F. Knowledge of diocesan policies and guidelines to ensure that youth ministry programs are developed in accordance with diocesan guidelines.
- G. Active participation in deaneries and diocesan youth ministry meetings and in-service events.
- H. Active on-going personnel spiritual formation.

Chapter Four

Liability Guidelines and Policies

In these days, when recourse to courts to settle differences is occurring, youth ministers avoid an awareness of and compliance with the law at their own peril. Much more than that, however, their responsibility to youth, their parents, and their guardians is paramount. Youth ministry demands that church personnel, paid or volunteer, clearly communicate at all times with youth and parents/guardians regarding programming. They must carefully screen those who volunteer to minister to the youth, appropriately supervise all activities, and implement all the diocesan policies that govern the safety and care of the youth and the people who minister to them. Youth ministers must strive to model their leadership on that of Jesus and, as He was, be committed to care in every way for those young people in Catholic parishes.

The following guidelines and policies are not offered in order to limit youth leaders in their ministry or frighten pastors, pastoral councils, and parish staff. Instead, the following guidelines and policies are offered so that parishes and youth leaders will take the necessary precautionary measures in order to keep risk at a reasonable level. Hopefully, an increased sense of responsibility on the part of youth leaders will enhance their ministry to and with youth.

A. Overview of the Law

The following legal definitions and theories are most applicable to youth ministry.

Law of Agency

This legal principle governs who is responsible for the action of another and under what circumstances liability exists.

An employer (referred to as the principal) can be held responsible for the acts of an employee (called the agent) under the Law of Respondent Superior (“The employer must answer”) if two conditions are met:

- The one who acts is the agent of the employer; and
- The employer/agent’s wrongful acts are within the scope of his or her employment/ministry.

The issue is whether the questionable act was of the kind for which the employee/agent was hired to perform. Did it occur within the authorized time and space limits of the job, and was the act undertaken, at least in part, by the intent to serve the employer?

The employer, in this case, is the parish and, ultimately, the Diocese of Charleston. The agent is the Coordinator of Youth Ministry. Under the law, even volunteers in the program can be considered as agents of the Coordinator of Youth Ministry, as well as of the parish and/or diocese.

The youth leader does not need to be paid to be considered an agent. The issue is whether the parish has the right (expressed or not) of control over the person’s work. That is, does the parish have the authority to hire and fire a Certified Youth Minister and govern the manner in which work is done? The answer will always be “Yes,” even for volunteer youth leaders.

The CYM and volunteer worker, however, may still be held responsible for acts caused by his/her own negligence and intentional assaults.

The Law of Negligence

A person (or institution) is negligent for his/her actions if:

- There was a duty.
- The duty was breached.
- There was injury or damage.
- The injury or damage was caused by the breach of the duty.

For example, if the parish youth ministry program sponsored a swim party and the youth leader was reading a book while some youth were diving dangerously, the youth minister would be liable if a young person was seriously injured. In addition, the parish and diocese may also be held liable under the law of agency. Their duty was to supervise the event. The duty was breached, resulting in an injury. The injury was proximately caused by the breach of that duty.

In today's society, people sue people they do not know; therefore, the call to be in relationship and to communicate with the youth and their parents/guardians is one that must be taken seriously. All youth leaders and volunteers should be aware that they are never immune from the possibility of injury or lawsuit. Despite all of their best efforts, precautions, training and planning, someone may get injured. The diocese has retained coverage that protects youth leaders and volunteers while acting within the scope of their ministry. It should offer them security as they go faithfully about their ministry. Recall though, as was said above, youth leaders and volunteers are liable for their own criminal or negligent acts. The following guidelines are not burdensome, and many are already standard operating procedures for diocesan employees and parishes of the diocese. Ultimately, as youth leaders develop an awareness and sensitivity to the guidelines and policies they will find them an aid and assurance in their ministry.

B. On Site Parish Youth Ministry

Ministry to and with youth, or any events/activities in which youth are involved as participants in the parish, youth ministry programming requires the following:

Supervision

All youth ministry programs, activities, events, and retreats, are to be adequately supervised and chaperoned. The Diocese of Charleston offers the following required chaperone ratio: Junior High Ministry requires a chaperone ratio of 1 adult for every 7 young people and High School Youth Ministry requires a chaperone of 1 adult for every 10 young people. Chaperones of both genders should be available when both of the genders are present. Chaperones are defined as young adults who are a minimum of 21 years of age. Young adults between the ages of 18 (and out of high school) to 20 years of age who assist with youth ministry are not considered chaperones.

Supervision of youth ministry includes the following:

- Ensuring the safety of the young people while at a program or activity;
- Assisting the Youth Leader with implementation of a program or activity;

- Seeing that the guidelines for behavior and safety are followed;
- Accountability for the young people before during, and immediately after any youth function.

Chaperones should be informed of their role and responsibilities for each distinct youth ministry program or activity, as it may be different depending on the situation. The selection of appropriate adults to serve as drivers and chaperones is critical, and the importance of following diocesan policy cannot be overstated.

The youth minister should have clearly defined guidelines for participation by youth, as well as procedures for dealing with violations of those guidelines. These guidelines should be communicated to both parents and young people. Guidelines should be stated in writing. Parishes may consider asking parents and young people to sign a statement confirming that they have read the guidelines and agree to abide by them.

The diocese suggests that the following to be part of any statement or guidelines regarding participation in youth ministry.

- Possession of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco products are not permitted at any youth ministry function. (This includes adults!) Anyone found in possession of these items will be sent home immediately and the police will be notified. If the function is held away from parish grounds, the parents will come and retrieve their son/daughter. In the event the function is a distance away from the parish, the young person will be sent home with the cost borne by the parents.
- No type of weapons is permitted at any youth ministry function. Persons carrying a weapon will be dismissed immediately to the custody of the police and the parents will be notified.
- Inappropriate behavior, including the use of offensive language and inappropriate attire, will not be tolerated.

Arrival and Dismissal

Youth leaders are urged to remember that their responsibility to and for youth exists from the time of arrival to the time of departure. Generally, fifteen minutes prior to an event and fifteen to thirty minutes after an event give parents and/or youth ample time to make connections and meet deadlines.

Youth leaders are reminded that youth are never to be left alone on the parish premises. The youth leaders or another adult responsible for the program must remain with the youth until all youth have left. Two adults should share this responsibility.

If it is necessary for a young person to leave a program early, clearly state that notification from the parent or guardian is required. Do not dismiss a young person to the care of an adult who is not the parent or guardian without express permission.

Attendance

Keeping accurate records of attendance at scheduled parish youth programming will be helpful if there is ever a question of presence of a youth at a particular event, program, class, etc. Parent may believe youth, especially those who drive themselves, were at a particular event, when, in truth, they were not.

Youth present on the premises, but not at an activity when it begins, should be invited to come in or asked to leave the premises. Youth leaders who contact the parents of youth who are unexpectedly absent from events or youth nights will have a way both to communicate with parents and to encourage future participation by being both welcoming and showing concern.

B. Off Site Parish Youth Ministry

As part of a holistic, intentional, year-round youth ministry program in a parish, youth often participate in activities and events that take place away from the parish premises. These activities may be parish, deanery, or diocesan-sponsored. They also require us to be concerned for the safety and well-being of our youth.

C. Forms

Permission, Medical Release and Information, Waiver of Liability Forms

All youth and adults are required to complete and sign the "Permission to Treat/Medical Release From and Waiver of Liability". (Please see Appendix.) Additionally, youth participants also need express permission of their parent/guardian to participate in a particular event. It is possible to combine all of these into one form. (Please see Appendix.) Legally, a "year-long" release form is not acceptable. A separate release form must be completed and signed by the parent or guardian each time a young person attends an off-site event.

Whenever a youth ministry program or activity takes the young people "off site," the youth leader must carry the release forms of the young people in attendance. While driving to and from a location, however, the drivers of each vehicle should have in their possession the forms for the people traveling in their vehicle. This policy is in case the group gets separated and an accident occurs. The adult driver would then have the necessary paperwork to have someone treated. Please remind the adults that parental release forms are to be kept confidential.

Medical Care and Emergencies

Emergencies can happen to anyone at any time, requiring quick judgment and prompt action. It is highly suggested that emergency plans be in place for all possible problems. (Example: fire, flooding, hurricane, lost person, severe injury.) When traveling or attending a retreat center, it is important to note where the nearest medical help can be attained.

The youth minister or another designated adult should be able to administer emergency care at any youth program or event. CPR and Basic First Aid Training are offered through local agencies such as the Red Cross.

A general first aid kit should be available wherever youth gather and should be carried to all off-site events. Kits should be checked by a medical doctor or a certified registered nurse. The kit should also contain emergency contact numbers such as parish, pastor, parents, and nearest hospital facilities. The kit should be checked for completeness prior to any youth ministry event.

Site Selection

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

If you are using a retreat center, you are strongly encouraged to see if there is health insurance available for purchase by your group.

E. Transportation

Please note that the South Carolina Transportation laws are currently changing. Contact the state police in your area to answer any specific questions that may apply.

Drivers and Insurance

All drivers must complete and sign a Volunteer Application Form and undergo applicable background screening, even if they will drive only once for the parish youth ministry program. In addition, each driver must complete a Driver Information form that should be kept on file at the parish. (Both forms may be found in the appendix.)

- The insurance that a volunteer carries on their vehicle must meet the diocesan-recommended limits of \$100,000 per person and \$300,000 per occurrence.
- The insurance on a volunteer's car is considered primary in the event of an automobile accident.
- The medical insurances of the passengers in the car are considered secondary coverage.
- The diocese does not carry insurance to cover automobile accidents for drivers of privately owned vehicles. Therefore it is essential that all drivers be checked to insure that they are covered.

Passenger Vans

South Carolina state law requires drivers of 16-passenger vans to hold a commercial license. This is true whether the driver owns the van or is driving a rental. There are no exceptions to this law.

Diocesan Van Passenger Policy

The following is the diocesan policy governing the purchasing, rental, and usage of 15-passenger vans. This policy became effective as of October 1, 1998.)

- A 12-15 passenger van *cannot* be used to transport students ages preschool to grade 12 to or from any school or parish function.
- "School or parish function" is defined as any function related to school or parish operations, including religious education programs.

- Seats cannot be removed from a 15-passenger van to reduce seating capacity.
- Nine-passenger vans (or smaller) *can* be used for parish or school functions as stipulated by federal law and diocesan policies.

Rental Vehicles

When renting vehicles for youth ministry activities, the insurance available through the rental company, which covers the vehicle in case of accident, should be purchased. The drivers who are listed on the rental agreement are the only people eligible to drive that vehicle. Drivers must be at least 24 years of age.

Privately Owned Vehicles

The diocese has purposefully not issued a blanket prohibition against the use of privately owned vehicles because there will be locations, particularly in rural areas, which have neither parish vehicles nor access to commercial rentals. However, the diocese strongly recommends the use of privately owned vehicles be avoided whenever possible.

In those instances where there is no alternative except to use privately owned vehicles:

- Check the state proof of insurance card of the driver(s) to ensure that they have liability insurance. Those who do not have insurance should not be permitted to drive on parish business under any circumstances.
- Check the driver(s) license of those driving to ensure that there are no legal limitations (i.e. no night driving, correctional lenses required, etc.)
- If the youth minister is expected to use his/her own vehicle to transport young people to and from activities, the Office of Youth Ministry strongly encourages that he/she carry increased insurance coverage to limit his/her risk.
- Whenever possible, teenagers *should not* be allowed to drive to any function or event without prior written consent from the parent/guardian. Also, no other person may ride with the said young person unless there is prior written consent from his/her parent/guardian.

Watercraft

U.S. Coast Guard regulations must be observed when using watercraft and such vessels should be used only for their intended purpose. No vessel shall carry more passengers than it is officially designed to carry. Check that the vessel has a current Certificate of Inspection and that it is operated by qualified personnel. Do not use uninsured watercraft.

When using any type of personal watercraft (i.e. jet ski), young people must wear certified life preservers and be instructed on the proper handling of the craft before using it. The Office of Youth Ministry suggests motorized craft (motor boats) should be driven by those 24 years of age or older, who are properly instructed in the use of such watercraft.

Water Activities

Water activities require special precautions. Whenever swimming, whether at a beach, lake, private or public pool, a certified lifeguard must be present.

Physical Challenge Activities

There are some activities which offer a high degree of physical challenge for the participants e.g. rope courses, obstacle courses, white water rafting, camping, sports, etc. Such activities are used to build a group cohesiveness and trust and to help form a positive self-image for the individual participants.

By the very fact that these activities are more physically challenging, they involve a greater risk. To ensure that the youth experience the activity at its best, provide the following:

- Licensed, certified instructors who, either as part of an organization or on their own, have a good safety record
- Proper safety equipment
- Match between the difficulty of the activity and the skill ability of the participants
- Training for adult sponsors/volunteers particular to this type of activity.

D. Pastoral Care

The youth leaders and other adults often must respond to youth in crisis situations. Many of the situations that surface are simply the normal struggles of adolescent growth, but at times adults in youth ministry may be confronted with crisis issues which may be life threatening to the young person. The way in which they respond and what they say may have potential legal implications of which they should be aware.

Unless the adult is a licensed professional counselor, he/she should not describe him/herself as one verbally or in any written publicity material. His/her role in the area of pastoral care is to listen compassionately and empathetically to the young person who is sharing his/her story.

Confidentiality

The type of information shared by young people in these situations gives rise to an expectation of confidentiality on their part. The confidentiality must be scrupulously honored, except under the following circumstances:

- There is a risk of danger to the youth or another person that is reasonably foreseeable by the adult, e.g. suicide threats.
- The story shared is one of child abuse, ranging from physical, mental, or providing of illegal substances to a minor.

The Pastoral Care Environment

Relationships with young people require prudence.

Do not meet with youth alone in isolated situations. Let someone know you are going to be in conference and advise them when the youth leaves. Leave your door open a little when meeting with youth in these situations.

If, for whatever reason, an adult must drive a young person home, call the parents to seek their permission. Notify someone at the parish that you are doing so, informing them of the time you are leaving and reporting to them when you return.

Be aware of your limitations, both in terms of education, training, and experience in this fragile area.

Keep a list of community referral agencies/individuals available and provide youth referral assistance.

Be aware of the signs which indicate a youth is in a crisis situation and make an immediate referral, informing the parent/guardian.

Know what to do if a young person comes to you in crisis. Make sure you know to whom you must report and when.

Seek continued enrichment and training in the area of pastoral care.

Sexual Abuse

The Catholic Church expects all in ministry to live chaste and moral lives, respecting in every way the gift of sexuality. Inappropriate sexual activity abuses the power and authority of the pastoral role of all who work for and serve the people of God.

Thus, sexual misconduct by church ministers (youth leaders) of the Diocese of Charleston is contrary to Christian morals and civil law and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

The Diocese of Charleston has significant responsibility to ensure that positive steps are taken to identify those persons that have had prior personal experience in the sexual misconduct area.

Every person who has regular contact with young people (both employees and volunteers) must complete the following:

- Diocesan policies regarding any and all forms of background screening.
- Receive proper in-servicing (education) involving the parish and diocesan policies. (VIRTUS Training)
- Insure proper documentation for state and diocesan regulations/policies has been checked and is on file.

Insuring proper documentation state requirements and in-servicing must be made a condition of employment for all youth ministers, as well as for volunteers for working with youth.

Reporting of Suspected Sexual Misconduct

If a youth minister suspects, either because of direct observation or through a report from another youth or adult, that any adult volunteer may have behaved inappropriately, he/she must immediately follow the diocesan policy on “Child Abuse and Student Abuse Prevention and Response.” Every parish should ensure that they have a copy and all employees and volunteers have been in-serviced.

Chapter Five

Diocesan Policies for Youth Ministry

Each parish should develop a youth ministry policy manual to contain at minimum the following:

Youth Ministry in the Parish

❖ Policy #100

Each parish will have a vision and mission statement regarding the way they minister to, with, and for their young people, as outlined in the United States Bishop document "Renewing the Vision."

❖ Policy #101

Each parish will have a clearly defined policy for participants and procedures for dealing with violations of these policies. These policies should be based on the mission statement of the parish, reflect the needs of the community, and be clearly stated in writing. Mandatory policies should include the following:

- a parent consent liability waiver is required for any and all youth activities;
- the purchase, possession or consumption or use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs will not be tolerated;
- youth must be dropped off and picked up at appropriate times;
- No minors are permitted to drive from parish facilities to off-site parish-sponsored youth events unless written permission is granted by the parents.

Participant Supervision

❖ Policy #102

Parishes are responsible for providing adult supervision for young people while they are on parish grounds both before and after programs. The "two-adult rule" must be obeyed at all times, meaning that at least two adults must remain present until the last participant has left. Adults are defined as persons 21 years of age and older. Persons under the age of 21 may assist with youth programs if they are acting in the role of assistants or helpers, but should not have total responsibility for younger children

❖ Policy #103

Parishes will have a statement defining and forbidding corporal punishment. Corporal punishment includes hitting, pushing, shoving, and slapping. Parishes should develop consequences for inappropriate behavior and consequences should be explicitly spelled out before events take place. When disciplining, youth leaders should use the "two-deep approach", meaning two adults should always be present.

❖ Policy #104

Parishes will have a search and seizure policy in the event it is suspected that a young person is in possession of illegal drugs, alcohol or weapons. The police will be summoned. This policy must be communicated to all participants and parents.

❖ **Policy #105**

All youth participants must be enrolled in the student accident coverage provided by the Office of Youth Ministry. The fee is \$5.00 per student, and the coverage runs from August 1st until July 31st. (For more information please contact the Office of Youth Ministry.)

Appropriate Behavior for Youth

❖ **Policy #106**

No minor should be provided with alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, or any other substance prohibited by law.

No youth should be permitted to alter their body in any way during a youth ministry event, for example; body piercing, tattoos, shaved head or colored hair.

Adults should monitor the music, movies, and television programming at youth events for inappropriate language and behavior. Movies should be G, PG, or PG-13 (youth 13 and over only). Music should not contain obscene language or lyrics. Content should be previewed prior to showing to youth.

Youth should understand the appropriate attire for each event. (Swimsuits, shorts, halter tops, explicit language on shirts or shorts is prohibited.)

Each parish is encouraged to formulate a policy regarding the use of language, jokes, and appropriate touching among males and females.

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR OF ADULTS

❖ **Policy # 107**

Adults should not consume alcoholic beverages or use any tobacco product during a youth event.

Adults should not use drugs or other substances prohibited by law.

Adults should be living by the moral teachings of the Catholic Church. Any adult living with a boyfriend or girlfriend outside of marriage should not be permitted to work with youth.

No adult is allowed to date any youth under the age of 21 whom they have met through youth ministry events or programs.

Adult must use appropriate touch when affirming or consoling youth.

All volunteers must be properly trained and in-serviced for their ministry.

Background Screening

All adults working or having regular contact with children under the age of 18 must have prior approval and background screening before serving in any role in youth ministry. (For more information contact your parish pastor.)

Off-Site Activities

❖ Policy #108

When sponsoring a youth activity away from parish premises, there must be one adult leader per eight older adolescents (ages

14-19) and one adult per six early adolescents (ages 10-14). If both female and male youth will be present at the event, there must be both female and male leaders.

On overnight events, there must be a minimum of one adult leader of the same gender sleeping in a dorm-style room with the young people (six or more youth), but at no time should an adult be left alone with a youth.

In hotel settings, youth should be housed with youth and adults housed with adults. Each youth is required to bring a sleeping bag when staying in a hotel where they will share a bed with another youth.

Priests and seminarians must always be housed separate from youth.

❖ Policy #109

Attendance at events which take place away from parish grounds cannot be mandated, nor do young people have an inherent right to participate in such events.

❖ Policy #110

A signed parent/guardian consent form and liability waiver must be submitted by each participant for each off-site or overnight event. Young people who do not turn in the completed forms cannot and will not be allowed to participate. Use only authorized permission slips.

Always give the parents advance notice and full information regarding the events in which their children/ youth will be participating. Parents must give written permission anytime a youth will be leaving Church property.

❖ Policy #111

The youth minister will develop an emergency action plan covering the various emergencies which can arise during an overnight event. Emergency action plans shall be developed for the following emergencies: fire, lost participants, physical injury, sudden illness, drowning, hurricane, and tornadoes. The emergency action plans should be in written form and posted where it is readily accessible to adult team members.

❖ Policy #112

A doctor, registered nurse or someone certified in basic first aid and CPR basic first aid should be present during all parish-sponsored overnight events. When sponsoring a swimming event at either; a camp facility, beach, or public or private pool, there must be a certified lifeguard present.

❖ Policy #113

Whenever a young person is injured on or off-site, an accident report should be completed immediately. A copy should be retained in the parish file. (Forms should be reviewed by pastors prior to filing). A second copy should be given to the guardians/parents of the injured youth. A third copy should be sent to the diocesan youth office via e-mail or fax as soon as possible.

Transportation

❖ Policy #114

Drivers should be at least 21 years of age or older (24 years of age for rental vehicles), have a valid, non-probationary driver license and no physical disability that could in any way impair his/her ability to drive a vehicle safely.

All drivers must complete the diocesan driver information sheet. The form, along with a photocopy of his/her proof of insurance and driver license should remain on file at the church. (Please see the volunteer screening policy and form regarding background checks for volunteer drivers.)

❖ Policy #115

The driver, of any vehicle, who transports youth to and from an event, must be insured with the following minimum limits:

- \$100,000 per person/ \$300,000 per occurrence
- The vehicle must have a valid, current registration and license plate.

❖ Policy #116

No children under the age of 18 are permitted to be transported in 10-15 passenger vans.

When using a passenger van/ bus with a seating capacity of more than 16 persons, the driver must have a commercial driver's license.

❖ Policy # 117

When renting a bus and driver, a copy of the bus company's liability form with a minimum of \$1,000,000 insurance must be placed on file at the church, as well as carried to the event.

❖ Policy #118

The "two-adult rule" must be used when youth are being transported to and from church related events.

Each driver should carry a copy of the parental release forms for each youth in their vehicle in case they become separated from the rest of the group. (Special care should be taken to instruct the drivers on the confidentiality of information contained on the parental release forms.)

❖ Policy #119

A travel plan for overnight trips containing important phone numbers, site location, travel route, etc., should be left with the person serving as the main contact at the church in event of an emergency.

❖ Policy #120

Youth are strongly discouraged from driving to church-related events. However, since the Diocese of Charleston is a rural diocese, it may sometimes be necessary for youth to drive to events. This will only be allowed under the following guidelines:

1. The driver must have a written note from their parents/guardians giving permission for them to drive to and from the event.

2. If an additional youth will be riding with them, he/she must also have written permission from their parents/guardians.
3. The passenger will not be allowed to switch vehicles.

Child Abuse Policy

❖ Policy #121

All parish personnel, compensated and volunteer, must be thoroughly in-serviced on their duties pertaining to the diocesan sexual abuse policy, as well as the State of South Carolina laws regarding child and sexual abuse. (All adults working with youth must successfully complete VIRTUS training.)

If a youth worker suspects or is confronted with a case of abuse, the guidelines as outlined in the Diocesan Abuse Policy should be followed.

Student Accident Insurance Policy

❖ Policy #122

All students that are involved in Youth Ministry activities are required to purchase Student Accident Insurance coverage. The coverage runs August 1st through July 31st. It must be purchased annually.

Code of Ethics

❖ Policy #123

All adults must sign The Code of Ethics and it must be kept on file in your local youth office.

❖ Policy #124

All information regarding youth and adults must be stored in a locked and secured location. (i.e. personal information gleaned from “conversation in which a youth confided personal information about themselves”)

See appendix for all necessary Diocesan Youth Ministry Forms

Chapter Six

Personnel Guidelines: Hiring a Youth Minister

The Office of Youth Ministry offers the following seven-step process for hiring a youth minister:

Step 1 – Job Description

The Office of Youth Ministry recommends that the parish leadership discuss the following issues and arrive at a shared understanding before a person is actually sought for the position of Youth Minister.

The first step is to gather a group of interested parties, along with the Pastor and Pastoral Staff, to discern the following questions:

1. Why is our parish interested in hiring a Director of Youth Ministry?
2. What advantages will a salaried youth worker bring which are not possible with the volunteers we now have?
3. In 100 or fewer words, what is the goal of our youth program?
4. Have we consulted with parish teenagers and their parents?
5. Do we want a full-time or a part-time person? Why?
6. What are the unique needs of the youth in our parish?
7. How does a youth ministry position fit into our overall parish goals, vision, and financial priorities?

B. Analyzing the Needs

Once you have decided that you want to hire a Youth Minister, it is important to put together a committee whose task is to define the needs and develop a job description for the position of youth minister. It is important that you establish your criteria of what you want the youth minister to do *before* you start the process of actually looking for someone to fill the role.

1. Discuss the answers from the previous seven questions.
2. List the needs of the youth the church ought to address.
3. Identify key needs which are not being met.
4. Discuss the parental and youth input from phone surveys, church surveys, mailed questionnaires, listening sessions, etc.

C. Determining Principle Objectives of your Youth Ministry Program

1. Based on the needs you have determined, set objectives for your ministry effort based on the eight components of Youth Ministry. An objective generally begins with “To...” and states a specific outcome that is being aimed for by the group. It forms the basis for evaluation when the effort is completed, so it should be capable of being measured in tangible terms.
2. List objectives in order of importance.
3. List them in time order. Sometimes a less important objective should be met first in order to facilitate work on a more important one.

D. Search Committee

After determining the above tasks are completed, the pastor (or person in charge of hiring) shall establish a search committee, most likely comprised of the pastor or his delegate, youth ministry volunteers, parents, youth, and pastoral staff/council members. The search committee’s main job is to formulate and write a job description based on the needs drawn out by the listening sessions, youth and parent surveys, and any other previous group discussions.

E. Formulating a Job Description

1. Using your needs and objectives and the job description elements set forth in of these guidelines, “Competency-Based Standards in Youth Ministry”, determine what to include in the job description for a youth minister in your parish.
2. Determine what objectives and goals could be realistically accomplished by an individual in a year. Ask yourself, where do you realistically see your youth program five years down the road?

Sample Youth Minister Job Description:

St. Gerard Catholic Church
123 Evangelization Way
Mission, SC 29414

Director of Youth Ministry
Job Description:

- I. Parish Profile
(Gives applicant an immediate picture of the parish)
 - A. Pastor
 - B. Location
(Rural, urban, city, etc.)
 - C. Mission Statement
 - D. Parish Staff

(Lets applicant know whom he/she will be working with)

- E. Membership
(How many households?)
- F. Characteristics
(Economic level, cultural makeup, etc.)
- G. Community Description
(One or two sentences describing the local community, city, etc.)
- H. Parish Plan
(What is available for the youth ministry program – youth office, youth room, church, gym, outdoor area, etc.)
- I. Schools
(What schools do most of the youth attend – small, large, private, Catholic, etc.)

II. Accountability and Work Relationships

The Youth Minister is directly accountable to the Pastor (or Pastoral Administrator, Parochial Vicar) and indirectly accountable to the pastoral council and parish community. Since the roles of Director of Religious Education and Director of Youth Ministry are co-equal ministries, the Youth Minister should not be accountable to the DRE, except as he/she develops, coordinates, and oversees adolescent catechesis.

- A. The Director of Youth Ministry will serve on the Pastoral Team, attending team meetings, in-services, and days of reflection.
- B. The Director of Youth Ministry will develop annual ministry objectives which, along with this job description and the letter of employment, will serve as the basis for ministry evaluation by the Director of Youth Ministry and the Pastor.
- C. The Director of Youth Ministry will serve as liaison between the Pastoral Team and all youth serving programs in the parish programs and agencies in the community.
- D. The Director of Youth Ministry will develop and maintain a collaborative relationship with the Director of Religious Education and the school principal.
- E. The Director of Youth Ministry will attend parish events, which includes liturgy.

III. Programming

In line with the 1997 NCCB document *Renewing the Vision of Youth Ministry*, the Director of Youth Ministry will develop programming which is comprehensive, intentional, and year-round.

- A. Ministry of Catechesis (Religious Education, Faith Formation)
 - 1. Be responsible for (or be involved in) the religious education program for young (middle school and high school age youth) people.

2. Be responsible for recruitment, in-service and training, and evaluation of volunteer catechists.
3. Maintain personal, professional, and spiritual development through course work, reading, seminars, workshops, etc.

B. Ministry of Prayer and Worship

1. Work with Parish Liturgy Committee to involve young people in the parish's worship experience.
2. Facilitate the planning and implementation of special masses, prayer services, and reconciliation services for youth.
3. Facilitate the planning and implementation of retreat experiences for the youth.

C. Ministry of Community Life

1. Facilitate the coming together of the parish youth through social events, youth nights, retreats, lock-ins, service projects, speaker forums, etc.
2. Establish a core group of adults and teens to oversee youth activities.

D. Ministry of Pastoral Care

1. Be present to the parish youth and, to the extent possible, get to know them personally. Develop a strong outreach to all the youth of the parish.
2. Initiate and oversee training opportunities in pastoral care for adults and youth volunteers.
3. Develop a community agency referral system that can be used in times of crisis for youth and their parents.
4. Participate in on-going education in the area of pastoral care.
5. Develop and implement a family and multicultural perspective in all areas of ministry to and with youth when and where appropriate.

E. Ministry of Justice and Service

1. Develop a knowledge of the parish and local community service organizations and establish a rapport with them.
2. Initiate and oversee justice and service awareness workshops, religious education opportunities, special speakers, etc. for adult volunteers and youth.
3. Develop service (ministry) opportunities that are a part of and foundational to the youth ministry program of the parish.

F. Ministry of Leader Development

1. Develop and maintain core teams of adults and youth leaders to direct and carry youth ministry programs, activities, and events.
2. Develop and implement a needs assessment, set goals and objectives, and develop action plans for the parish youth ministry.
3. Develop and implement specific training for youth to participate in the different ministries in the Church community (ex. Training lectors, Eucharistic ministers, greeters, etc.)

G. Ministry of Advocacy

1. Maintain communication with the Pastor, parish staff/council, adult volunteers, and local high school(s).
2. Participate in pastoral staff meetings and prepare and submit written reports to the necessary personnel.
3. Advocate for youth needs and activities in the broader community.
4. Maintain a liaison with other levels of structure for youth ministry: cluster, deanery, and diocese levels.

H. Ministry of Evangelization

1. Empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.
2. Develop and implement opportunities for young people to participate in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.
3. Design and develop programs that foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person in the parish.
4. Train, equip, and empower youth people to be peer evangelizers to other youth, their families, and community.

IV. Qualifications

- A. Personal
- B. Education and Personal Experience
- C. Competencies

V. Salary and Benefits

The Diocesan Youth Office recommends that parishes contact the Diocesan Human Resources Office for any new and updated changes in the policies involved in the hiring process.

When the job description is completed, the search for a youth minister that fits the parish job description can begin.

Step 2 – Announce the Position

- A. Begin the recruiting process by announcing the position at least 1 month prior to hiring. It is a good idea to notify the Office of Youth Ministry that you have begun the search process. That office on occasion receives resumes from those looking for a job in youth ministry. When announcing the job opening, the search committee must decide whether they will advertise locally, regionally, or on a national level.

- B. When recruiting a youth minister, the search committee should ask itself the following questions:
 - 1. What qualifications should our candidates have?
 - 2. How important is previous experience versus education? What kind of education is appropriate for the job?
 - 3. When do we want the minister to start?
 - 4. What is the salary range we will offer?
 - 5. Are we only going to interview from within our parish or will we be interviewing candidates from out of town?
 - 6. How many candidates do we want to interview? How many can we afford to interview?
 - 7. Who will do the interviewing? How many stages will we have in the process?
 - 8. What kinds of questions will be asked?
 - 9. How will the final hiring decision be made? By what date?

Qualifications and Skills

It is important that the search committee concentrate on the specific qualifications and skills that best match what their job description says and how this corresponds to their ideal candidate.

Qualifications

The youth minister candidate should have the following minimum qualifications for youth ministers:

- 1. Practicing Roman Catholic in good standing, with an active prayer and faith life.
- 2. Personal maturity. (Minimum age of 21)
- 3. At the minimum, a basic competence in the key knowledge and skills areas.
- 4. At the minimum, a basic understanding of current Catholic theology: Morality, Catholic Doctrine, Sacraments, Scriptures, Christology, and Ecclesiology.
- 5. A thorough working knowledge of principles of total youth ministry and its theory and practice, as well as current trends in the field. (Ex. Have read and understood the USCC new document “Renewing the Vision” on youth ministry.)

Skills

The search committee should check to ensure that the candidates possess the necessary skills to implement a total youth ministry program. These skills include the following, but are not limited to:

1. Listening skills.
2. Organization and planning skills.
3. Small group facilitation and meeting skills.
4. Relational ministry skills.
5. Outreach ministry skills.
6. Ability to recruit, train, and support adult and teen leaders.
7. Ability to design and develop a sacramental preparation class for those in confirmation.
8. Ability to design and develop retreat models and the ability to train a retreat team.
9. Ability to plan and lead community-building activities such as liturgies, prayer services, youth nights, and retreats.
10. Ability to collaborate effectively with the pastor, parish staff, parish council, and parents.
11. Ability to develop and plan a calendar for the year which reflects an effective, comprehensive youth program. (This would include planning and maintaining a budget.)

Please Note: If a youth minister is hired but does not have the necessary skills to implement a total youth ministry program, the parish should require and be willing to support continuing education to achieve proficiency within a specified time period.

Step 3 – Screen the Applicants

The search committee should gather on a periodic basis to review and screen applicant resumes, looking for those applicants who match the qualifications and skills desired. (This should take place at least twelve weeks before the hire date.)

Upon review of the resumes, the search committee should select those candidates that best reflect the qualifications desired. After the selection, the committee should check all candidates' references thoroughly.

The following are a few sample questions that you may want to ask those who are listed as references:

1. In what capacity do you know the candidate?
2. How long have you know the candidate?
3. Have you ever experienced the candidate in the context of their ministry?

4. Can you describe any successes they have had in their ministry?
5. How would you describe the candidate's maturity and ability to work with others? Adults? Young people?
6. What would you say are the candidate's strengths and weaknesses?

Step 4 -- The Interview

The interview process should be conducted by the search committee with no more than 5-8 members, as too many people could serve to intimidate the candidates. The interviewers should plan out and practice how they will conduct the interview. After each interview, there should be a period for the committee to review each candidate's responses. Generally, this can be done by providing each member of the search committee with a post-interview form that asks them to reflect on the candidate's responses. This is usually best done first by themselves and then as a group.

During the interview, it is important to have the candidate do most of the talking. Too often the interviewer does more talking by telling the prospective candidate about what kind of person it will take to do the job instead of allowing the candidate to describe him/herself and what type of ministry they can provide. By allowing the candidate to describe their ministry, the interviewer can then decide if the candidate fits the needs of the parish.

It is good to use 10 to 20 standard questions for candidates being interviewed, while still allowing the conversation to flow freely between questions. Standardized questions provide a means of treating each candidate the same and covering the same materials in each interview. Thus, fair comparisons can be made between the candidates. The questions should cover all aspects of the candidate's background: education, experience, ministry style, mental and spiritual well-roundedness, communications and management skills, and spirituality.

- As a reminder, review the background data on the candidate and contact references prior to the interview.
- Determine interview questions and design a grid in order to compare responses.
- As open-ended questions.

Here is a sample of standard interview questions in no particular order:

1. Tell us a little about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in youth ministry?
3. Describe your spiritual life. How do you nurture your spiritual life?
4. What strengths do you bring to this job? What are your weaknesses?
5. Describe the best boss you ever had. Describe the worst boss you ever had.
6. How has your education prepared you for youth ministry?
7. How do you plan out your day? Your week?
8. How do you relate to young people? Adults?
9. What is your vision for youth ministry?
10. What would you hope to accomplish in the first year if you were to be hired?
11. What ministry models have you worked with and what curriculums have you used?
12. How much public speaking have you done?
13. How would you go about beginning a high school youth program?

14. What kind of experience and involvement do you have with liturgy?
15. Why should we hire you?
16. What are your long term goals?

It is also helpful to give a few scenarios to see how the candidate responds. Here are several examples:

17. What would you do if...
 - a. A teenager came to an activity high or drunk?
 - b. One of your adult volunteers was accused of sexually abusing a parish teenager?
 - c. A teenager confided to you that he was thinking about suicide?
 - d. A teenage girl said that she thought she was pregnant and was afraid to tell her parents?
 - e. You thought you did not have enough adult volunteers?
 - f. You had a youth who was always causing trouble at your youth group meetings?

Step 5 -- Selection and Notification

After the search committee has interviewed all potential candidates, the committee should then decide on the top three applicants. The search committee should then pick the best candidate that meets their specific qualifications. Sometimes search committees face the problem of not finding a candidate that meets at least their minimum qualifications. Instead of compromising, the search committee should begin the process all over again. Although this may slip the timeline in the hiring process, it is better than having to fire someone later.

Once the committee has reached an agreement on its first choice, it should notify the applicant by a formal phone call and “letter of employment.” The letter should contain the following and be signed by the pastor:

- Job Description
- Salary and Benefits
- Starting Date of Employment
- Method and Timing of Evaluations
- Terms of Accountability

Step 6 -- Salary & Negotiation

The pastor and the new youth minister need to mutually agree upon the salary and benefits offered by the parish. It is recommended that the pastor contact the Office of Human Resources for any questions regarding benefits and salary.

The experience of the Church in the United States through the mid-1970’s was that “ministry” in the Church was done by either vowed religious or diocesan priests.

Belonging to a religious community or a diocese made it possible to serve free from the worries and distractions of supporting oneself. The ministry of these men and women made it possible for parishes, schools, and other institutions to provide services at a very low cost. The resulting belief, conscious or unconscious, was that these same services could be provided by lay people at the same or slightly higher cost. Officially, the Church is clear about compensation for services. After acknowledging the need for appropriate formation, the Revised Code of Canon Law states:

“The (lay people) have a right to a decent remuneration suited to their condition; by such remuneration they should be able to provide decently for their own needs and for those of their family with due regard for the prescriptions of civil law; they likewise have a right that their pension, social security and health benefits be duly provided.”

The Bishops of this country declared in their economic pastoral:

“All the moral principles that govern the just operation of any economic endeavor apply to the Church and its agencies and institutions; indeed the Church should be exemplary.” (Emphasis there.)

The Bishops further state:

“Those who serve the Church
...should receive a sufficient livelihood and the social benefits provided by responsible employers in our nations.”

Step 7 - Notification of Applicants Not Chosen

After the negotiations are finalized, the search committee will need to notify those applicants not chosen for the position by letter.

Chapter Seven

Ministry Supervision

A. Supervision

Supervision is the process whereby someone who is trained and experienced in pastoral ministry looks over and assists someone of lesser experience and/or responsibility. The process is based on a relationship of caring and concern, as well as honesty and openness. In supervision, the supervisor helps the employee identify strengths, weaknesses, abilities and areas needing growth or development. Through careful attention to both success and failure of the employee and his/her effective response to ministry, the supervisor helps the employee to improve performance and develop a more positive attitude toward ministry.

B. Use of Evaluation

One of the key essential tools in ministry supervision is the evaluation process. Evaluations are helpful in a variety of ways. The evaluation process can provide an index of the strengths and weaknesses of a minister, and an accountability to the duties of the job spelled out in the minister's job description. Some of the most important facets of the evaluation are the following:

- Evaluations should be done on a regular basis.
- Evaluations should be written.
- Evaluations should be done by both the supervisor and employee.
- Evaluations should include a dialogue about the evaluation between the employee and the supervisor.

The following materials contain tools that can assist with supervision and evaluation. (Supervision Process: to assist the supervisor in regular supervision sessions.)

- Supervision Process – to assist the supervisor in regular supervision sessions
- Youth Minister Performance Appraisal – to assist the supervisor in evaluation of the youth minister
- Youth Minister Self-Assessment Guide – to assist the youth minister in competency evaluation
- Youth Minister Learning Plan – to assist the youth minister in developing strategies to improve or achieve competency in a particular area

C. Supervision Process

Effective supervision promotes communication and acts as a support for the minister in their ministry. Supervision helps others to exercise their gifts and talents in their particular ministry. The supervision process is helpful in that it affirms, challenges, and invites growth in the minister as they work in their own particular ministry.

The supervision process begins when the supervisor and minister come together to dialogue on the ministry of the youth minister as exercised in a particular parish. It may involve:

- Regular scheduled supervisory sessions in which the supervisor and minister discuss what has transcribed in recent youth activities and what is planned for the future. It is a good idea to agree to a specific time such as weekly, monthly, or quarterly.
- Regular staff meetings which provide a structure for ongoing dialogue on relationships, expectations, and difficulties.
- Written documentation concerning the content of the supervision session.

D. Goals of Supervision

- To promote growth and new development through change in direction set forth by the supervisor through dialogue, learning contract, etc.
- To nurture and develop the professional qualities and competence necessary for a minister in today's world.
- To assist the minister in measuring the outcome of his/her ministry efforts.

E. Supervision Session

The supervisory session should be used as a time to reflect on the direction the particular ministry is taking. It should be a time to reflect on whether the youth minister is meeting the written job description duties as agreed upon at the time of hiring. It is a time to discuss the strategy and progress of the objectives and goals. It is a time to affirm the positive and encourage the areas that need development or improvement. Lastly, the session should contain written information and signatures that reflect any changes or agreements so as to give a history of what took place between the supervisor and youth minister.

Supervisory sessions do not hold the same weight as a performance review. The review should take place either every six months or once a year.

The following are the main issues discussed at a supervisory session: Review of the job description, progress of goals and objectives, long-range visions, areas of concern, problem-solving, status of current projects, parish structure and collaboration issues, personal support, re-sourcing, management and maintenance issues, and strategies for growth.

The following is a sample supervision session:

This supervision session is divided into two broad areas: Part I – General Responsibilities and Part II – Comprehensive Youth Ministry. Consider Part I and Part II to be equal weight when articulating strengths and suggestions for improvements. (This appraisal may be adapted by the parish to reflect the particular job responsibilities of the parish's youth minister.)

Performance Scale: 0 – No basis for judgment, 1 – Unsatisfactory, 2 – Needs Improvement, 3 – Satisfactory, 4 – Outstanding

Part I – General Responsibilities

Exercise of Christian Leadership:

- _____ The YM manifests a lifestyle of Christian leadership to the Christian community.
- _____ The YM ministers effectively, working with parish staff, within parish structures, and with the diocesan, regional, national, and global Church.

The YM maintains professional work habits:

- _____ Dependability
- _____ Cooperation/Flexibility
- _____ Professionalism
- _____ Priority Setting
- _____ Safety
- _____ Stewardship of Resources
- _____ Resourcefulness/Creativity
- _____ Constructive Initiative
- _____ Formal Communications
- _____ Organizational Awareness
- _____ Time Management
- _____ Integrity
- _____ Sound Judgment
- _____ Problem-Solving Skills

Part II – Comprehensive Youth Ministry

Adolescent Development:

- _____ The YM applies appropriate managerial principles of adolescent development with a program of youth ministry. He/She assesses and utilizes family, social, cultural, and global trends in developing a youth ministry program.

Ministry Management Skills:

- _____ The YM applies appropriate managerial principles and administrative skills to the coordination and accountability for parish youth ministry.
- _____ The YM has knowledge of and utilizes effective communication skills and ministry management skills. He/she recruits, trains, supervises, and dismisses volunteers, as well as coordinating training and programming.
- _____ The YM facilitates the planning, implementation, and evaluation of both long-range and short-range program goals in light of the specific needs and ethnic-cultural composition of the parish.
- _____ The YM shows knowledge about legal concerns and provides for the protection of youth and the integrity of programs.

Youth Ministry/General:

- _____ The YM articulates a vision of youth ministry, including its various components, dimensions, principles, and goals in light of the applicable documents and pastoral letters of the Church.
- _____ The YM infuses multi-cultural dimensions into all youth ministry programming.
- _____ The YM infuses a family perspective into all youth ministry programming.
- _____ The YM fulfills a commitment to ongoing professional formation.

Evangelization:

- _____ The YM assists people to understand and interpret their life and faith experiences in light of Scripture, the Church's tradition, and their culture.
- _____ The YM utilizes appropriate methodologies of spiritual development and catechesis within a program of youth ministry.
- _____ The YM extends to all youth an invitation to participate in the life of the Church through the development of outreach ministries.
- _____ The YM infuses evangelization techniques into all aspects of youth ministry.

Prayer and Worship:

- _____ The YM provides opportunities for participation in prayer, personal spiritual development, and communal worship, while maintaining sensitivity to the cultural practices of the faith community.
- _____ The YM infuses spiritual formation into all aspects of youth ministry programming.

Justice, Service and Pastoral Care:

- _____ The YM provides opportunities for youth to experience and participate in Christian service, with an emphasis in linking such opportunities to the fostering of peace and justice.
- _____ The YM develops systems to extend program opportunities to groups and individuals less likely to participate due to factors such as physical or developmental disabilities, educational disadvantages, language barriers, or social alienation.
- _____ The YM facilitates the development of the community among young people, their families, the parish, and the local community.
- _____ The YM makes appropriate referrals for youth and families that need professional counseling.
- _____ The YM works to sensitize the parish community to the critical needs and concerns of the youth.

Supervisor's Comments

When giving a performance review, it is important that the supervisor is both honest and clear in the evaluation. After the supervisor has read and studied the employee's own written review appraisal, the review should go as follows:

- Employee's Major Strength(s)
- Suggestions for Improvement
- Summary Comments by the Supervisor
- Response by Employee
- Youth Minister Improvement Plan

- Youth Minister Learning Plan
- Supervisor's Signature and Date
- Employee's Signature and Date

Youth Minister Questions for Self-Reflection:

1. What have you found encouraging about this year's experience in youth ministry?
2. What have you found discouraging about this year's experience in youth ministry?
3. In regards to your individual ministry, are you feeling? (Check all that apply)

- Supported
- Stifled
- Understood
- Frustrated
- Challenged
- Encouraged

4. How many hours per week (on average) do you work? _____

How do you divide your time?

- Administrative
- Planning
- Training
- Counseling
- Programming
- Teaching
- Other, please specify:

5. How often do you take time for personal growth, prayer, reflection, and recreation?
6. How are your personal strengths/weaknesses affecting your ministry?

Please rate the following on a scale of 1 – 10 with 1 being negative and 10 being positive:

- I feel that I am visible to the larger community.
- I feel like I have a good relationship with the staff.
- I feel like I communicate well with my core team/volunteers.
- I am satisfied with the working conditions.
- I feel like I have adequate resources and materials for my program.
- I feel supported in my ministry by my supervisor.

7. Regarding your job description, are all aspects fulfilled?
8. How is your role as a youth minister viewed by the rest of the staff?
9. What revisions would you make in your job description for the next year?

10. In what area of your ministry do you think that you need to improve?
11. In what area of your ministry would you like additional training/education that would be of value for your ministry?
12. What are your goals for your ministry in the coming year? What are your long-term goals for yourself professionally?

Self-Directed Learning

Youth ministry has experienced tremendous change and growth in the past ten years. Youth ministers can no longer rely on formation acquired when they first entered the field as adequate to keep pace with the ministry. Continuing education is essential. Ideally, ongoing formation should meet the unique learning needs of a youth minister. In order to develop a learning strategy best suited to previous formation, experiences and current job responsibilities, the youth minister must regularly assess his/her competency in an intentional way.

Self-assessment is the first step in developing a Learning Plan. Honest self-appraisal of one's competency level surfaces both strengths and learning gaps. Once the learning gaps have been identified, a self-directed learning plan is developed utilizing resources that will help the youth minister achieve competency in that particular area.

Learning Plans are established with the support and approval of the youth minister supervisors. The youth minister Learning Support Team (if applicable) can assist the youth minister in researching potential learning strategies. The team provides mutual support and re-sourcing. Both common and separate learning goals of the team members are pursued and learning is shared.

Chapter Eight

Recommended Guidelines for Adolescent Retreats

The practice of providing intensive faith-growing experiences for adolescents through retreats in evening, day-long, overnight, and multi-day formats, has been one of the most vital and frequently utilized elements in the entire revitalized youth outreach and pastoral care process begun in recent decades, in U.S. parishes and Catholic Schools. Youth ministry in the diocese of Charleston has also long made use of retreats to evangelize and catechize to young people. Because retreats are such an important process in the faith-growth of adolescents, it is vital that they are based on sound principles.

Studies and surveys by *Group Magazine*, a Christian youth minister resource magazine, shows that young people have had the most intense conversion experiences while on weekend retreats.

These guidelines are offered, not to predetermine the style and content of any adolescent retreat program, but to present principles to keep in mind when planning and implementing any parish retreat experience.

A. Theological Principles Guiding Youth Retreats

Youth retreats should be designed to foster a personal relationship with Jesus that leads to discipleship within the community of the Church. Retreats are a type of experience through which the Church exercises her pastoral ministry to youth by proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ, by fostering the formation of the Christian community, by providing opportunities for participants to reflect upon questions of faith and life experience in the light of the Gospel, and by challenging the youth to personal response of ministry.

The doctrinal content of youth retreats should be theologically consistent with the official teaching of the Catholic Church. Prayer, in its liturgical, communal, and personal forms, is an essential aspect of the retreat experience opening participants to ongoing conversion and deepening of faith. Retreats for youth should provide life-giving liturgical celebrations that are based on principles of good liturgy, are appropriate for the occasion, and are celebrated with sufficient time to allow full preparation and participation by the assembly.

B. Psychological Principles Guiding Youth Retreats

Retreats should provide the opportunity for participants to integrate their experience and thereby deepen their sense of belonging and meaning.

Retreat environments and experiences must be characterized by acceptance, growth, and freedom. It is never appropriate to manipulate either an experience or the environment in order to obtain a specific response. Emotional manipulation is also inappropriate and youth must be assured that whatever emotions they experience at any given time during a retreat are valid and have no overtones or consequences.

Youth attending the retreat should be given diverse opportunities through which they may express themselves and feel safe doing so. The psychological well-being of participants is safeguarded by maintaining a good balance of recreation, reflection, structured activity, rest and diet.

Retreats for adolescents especially lend themselves to peer ministry. Not only does such an approach encourage the sharing of the Christian experience, but it also further encourages youth to exercise their baptismal call to witness to Christ one another.

Retreat experiences are only one aspect of a continuing faith formation process. Therefore, they are most, and perhaps only, effective within the context of a comprehensive youth ministry.

C. Catechetical Principles Guiding Youth Retreats

Human experience is the starting point for youth catechesis, joining the personal story of youth to the Christ story.

The content and design of youth retreats should be age appropriate and should be varied i.e. the same type of retreats should not be repeated with the same group over and over.

Retreats lead young people to service (ministry) and actions for justice and peace. Retreats should lead young people to personalize their faith, not privatize it.

Discussion, group processes, small group sharing, and activities involving all youth participants should use the group dynamics appropriate for the activity, group, content, and goals of the retreat, and should be led by those familiar with these dynamics.

Storytelling, faith sharing, and personal witnessing, as well as time for private reflection and journaling should be respected as valuable elements in communicating the Gospel message.

- Movement One: Experiencing life; which enables youth to express their own life activity or their community, culture, etc., on the topic or learning experience?
- Movement Two: Reflecting together, which allows youth to engage their memory, reason and imagination.
- Movement Three: Discovering the faith story and vision of the Catholic Christian Community in response to the session at hand.
- Movement Four: Owning the faith, which provides youth with an opportunity to compare their own life experience and faith with that of the Catholic Christian Community.
- Movement Five: Responding in faith, which helps bring youth to a lived faith response, to a decision for action.”

D. Developmental Principles Guiding Youth Retreats

Youth Retreats Early Adolescence (Ages 10 – 15)

When planning retreat activities for younger adolescents, keep the following in mind:

- “Physical Activity: Time to stretch, wiggle, exercise, relax, non-competitive/competitive games, and activities.

- Competence and Achievement: Provide new ways of thinking and doing; provide time with friendship groupings.
- Self-Definition: Provide time to absorb new ways of thinking and doing; provide time with friendship groupings.
- Creative Expression: Provide opportunities to express creatively new feelings, interests, and new abilities and thoughts through exposure to drama, role-playing, etc.
- Positive Social Interaction with Peers and Adults: Provide time with peers which allows for support, companionship, and challenge; retreat team members must be willing to share their own stories, experiences, views, values, and feelings.
- Structure and Clear Limits: Provide explicit boundaries, rules and limits, allowing participants some input in setting them.
- Meaningful Participation: Successful events are planned with, not for, young adolescents and provide opportunities for young people to develop a sense of responsibility.”

Middle and Late Adolescence

(Ages 14 – 19)

When planning retreat programs, sessions, and experiences for older adolescents, keep in mind the following conditions necessary for healthy Christian faith growth in this age group. Provide opportunities to:

- I. Participate as full members of the faith community and society, experiencing a sense of belonging and mission.
- J. Gain knowledge and experience in making moral decisions based on the Gospel and Tradition
- K. Form and experience positive relationships with peers and develop friendship-making and maintaining skills.
- L. Explore who they are and who they can become.
- M. Develop a social consciousness that is grounded in Scripture and the teachings of the Church by exploring, discussing, and acting on global and social justice and peace issues.
- N. Understand their sexual growth and develop healthy Christian values and attitudes regarding their own sexuality.
- O. Develop personal prayer lives by experiencing a variety of prayer forms and styles.
- P. Develop relationships with adult Catholic Christians who will share their own faith journeys and who will ask questions that encourage critical thinking and reflection.

Recommended Retreat Components

Physical –

- Adequate sleep.
- Adequate recreation time.
- Balanced diet.
- Access to outdoors and nature, if possible.

Spiritual –

- Eucharistic Liturgy (priority on a multi-day retreat).
- Reconciliation Service.
 - ✓ Ensure there will be a necessary number of priests for reconciliation.
 - ✓ Consider presenting some catechesis on the sacrament over the retreat period.
- Communal and private prayer and reflection
 - ✓ Provide mentoring in these types of prayer
- Praying with and using Scripture

Psychological/Social/Catechetical

- Balance of private time and group time.
- Opportunity for pastoral care and guidance.
- Reflection on human, personal, and communal experience.
- Community building.
- Opportunities for participation and involvement.
- Creative activity and expression.
- Input and presentations and follow-ups.
- Discussion and sharing opportunities.

Supportive Components

- Adequate and early program planning and design.
- Adequate and early team preparation.
- Orientation or preparation for parents/guardians and participants before the retreat.
- Follow-up process (immediate and short-term – there is no need for an endless follow-up of an experience).
- Evaluation by team and participants.

E. Concluding Comments

Besides being excellent evangelization and catechetical approaches, retreats are an integral component of any faith-formation ministry which, by definition, seeks the conversion of others.

The main task in facilitating a retreat is to create the ambient, the milieu, an environment where young people can experience the grace of conversion.

Conversion is experienced as a relationship with Jesus Christ and “is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful. That is, it is not a private experience, but is uniquely communal and sacramental. It is a spiritual journey that is life-long and has a beginning, middle, and an end. It does not end with confirmation, for example.”

If the retreats effort centers on the collaboration with the Holy Spirit in the work of conversion, then the fruit of those efforts will be visible in the life of youth who experience the retreat.