

EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL THOSE WHO MINISTER TO YOUTH

Our work with young people, whether we are a paid employee or a volunteer, is a direct response to Jesus' command to...

"Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation"
(Mk. 16:15)

The local church of Toledo would be unable to proclaim the good news without dedicated and faithful disciples like you. The Diocese of Toledo is grateful and truly blessed that you have chosen to share your gifts with the young people in our care. Here are some important reminders of what is acceptable and unacceptable in our working with youth. These guidelines are imperative for the protection of our youth and for your protection as well. Also in accord with the Ohio revised code (109.574-577, 121.401, 121.402), our volunteers working with youth may be required to be fingerprinted.

DO

1. DO act as a role model reflecting the values of the Catholic Church.
2. DO speak and act with respect and regard for the value and uniqueness of each youth.
3. DO maintain ongoing communication with your supervisor regarding interactions you have with youth.
4. DO know to whom you report and let them know if something strange, embarrassing or possibly compromising happens to you in your ministry. They can best help begin investigative or remedial action before a youth reports something to his/her parents.
5. DO be a good listener.
6. DO get parent/guardian permission slips signed for any event involving transportation.
7. DO meet with a child in an office with a window, an open door or another adult present.
8. DO use discretion with physical displays of emotion, such as hugging children. A hug can have different connotations for an elementary student than for a junior or senior high student.

Points to consider:

- a. Is it youth initiated?
- b. Did you ask the youth if he/she would like a hug?
- c. Is it your need or the youth's need you are considering in offering a hug?
- d. Is it appropriate for the "culture," situation or setting?

9. DO only participate in trips sponsored by your schools or the Diocese.
10. DO use discretion with electronic media; i.e. email for any personal correspondence with youth.

DO NOT

1. DO NOT become their “buddy.” As an adult, it is not appropriate to build a social life around/with youth.
2. DO NOT use suggestive jokes, stories or language with youth. While youth may hear jokes and off color stories from peers, it has a different impact if they're coming from a role model such as a scout leader, coach or teacher.
3. DO NOT drive alone with a child. If you are involved with transportation for a field trip or some other event make sure you are transporting more than one student. (Note: An obvious exception to the rule of not being alone with children is where there is a relationship to the child; i.e., niece, nephew, etc.)
4. DO NOT consume alcohol or illegal controlled substances in the presence of children or prior to being with children.
5. DO NOT participate in overnight trips with youth without at least two adults present, and make sure that it is an official Diocesan/school related event.
6. DO NOT accompany children into restrooms. If you do, try to have another adult present.
7. DO NOT visit a child's home without at least one other adult present if a parent is not home.
8. DO NOT attempt counseling unless you are trained as a counselor.
9. DO NOT discipline using physical contact or demeaning or sarcastic language.
10. DO NOT share inappropriate personal information with youth.