

never appropriate to manipulate either an experience or the environment in order to obtain a specific response. Spiritual and emotional manipulation are inappropriate, and it is essential to assure young people that whatever emotions they experience at any given time during an event are valid and have no moral overtones or consequences.

The following actions may be seen as manipulative and inappropriate and must be avoided at all times:

- “It is absolutely forbidden under any circumstances during an overnight event for minors to be physically restrained or deprived of their ordinary senses in any way (e.g., blindfolded, kept in darkness), subjected to any humiliating or demeaning treatment (e.g., any form of hazing), deprived of a reasonable amount of sleep, or deliberately frightened.” (Safe Environment Policy of the Archdiocese of New York)
- “Contradicting any authoritative teaching of the Church on faith and morals, or encouraging youth to disagree with or act contrary to any authoritative teaching of the Church on faith and morals.” (Safe Environment Policy of the Archdiocese of New York)
- Damaging images of Christ, overtly or covertly.
- Public confession of sins.

- Public admission of sinfulness that implicates another.
- Altar calls that elicit pledges of conversion.
- Not providing opportunities for adequate sleep at overnight events.
- Manipulating the physical environment in order to cause dissonance (e.g., covering windows so one is unable to see the time of day).
- Pressure to display physical action/reaction to prayer/music.
- Singular emotional attachments between youth minister and adolescent.
- Counseling teens without a professional license.
- Showing of R-rated movies or PG-13 films with morally objectionable content.
- Sexual contact between adult minister and adolescent.
- Activities or consultation that involve isolating a youth with an adult minister – for private discussion, transporting, dating, etc.
- Public displays of affection.
- Encouraging teens to idolize youth ministry personnel.
- Encouraging dissension or division between youth and parents.
- Encouraging young people to be secretive about the content and experiences of events.

ON-SITE SUPERVISION

PARTICIPATION

Youth ministry is the outreach, evangelization, mentoring, support, and formation provided by the parish to the young people of the community. Youth groups can be an aspect of youth ministry but should not be the only one. A key component is evangelization. It is important that all young people are welcome to participate in the parish youth ministry; however, some activities or programs, such as peer ministry or confirmation preparation, can be limited to specific youth.

Best Practice: Youth ministry teams should annually discern how well they are reaching a variety of young people who have different spiritual dispositions by using a diversity of methods and programs.

Best Practice: Include programming that all young people can participate in regardless of whether they are registered members of the parish or Catholic.

REGISTRATION AND FEES

Since youth ministry can consist of a variety of programs and activities, registration may not be the best method of keeping track of students. Registration can be required for components of youth ministry, such as con-

firmation preparation or small group ministries.

It is important to keep a record of young people who participate in your youth ministry. This record can give the youth ministry team easy access to emergency contacts and information regarding health concerns as well as birthdays, interests, and contact information.

Policy: Students and parents/guardians should complete a Youth Ministry Information Sheet each year. This form should be kept on file.

It is up to the parish community whether to charge a fee for participation in youth ministry. Fees are often a necessity for events and some programs. However, no young person should be denied the ability to participate in youth ministry because of financial constraints.

Best Practice: Budget for “scholarships” for events and programs for young people whose families cannot pay full fees.

Best Practice: If possible, budget to cover the costs of chaperones and adult leaders for activities.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Youth ministry has a responsibility to know where young people are at all times when they are in its care. This means being intentional: knowing who has attended, when they arrive and when they leave, and having appropriate



adult ministry leaders present. When planning events and programs, it is important that adult ministry leaders arrive early enough to be there when students begin arriving. Adults need to plan on staying until all young people have left the grounds of the parish or event. Sign-in/Sign-Out sheets (see sample in “Forms and Tools”) provide a record of attendance if a parent/guardian calls and asks when his/her child arrived or left. They also ensure that you have emergency contact numbers on hand if needed.

Policy: Youth are never to be left unsupervised while attending any youth ministry function or activity, whether on parish premises or at another location.

Policy: All participants must sign in at arrival and sign out upon departure. Sign-in sheets must include an emergency contact phone number.

Policy: Students may not leave an event or program before its conclusion without documented permission of a parent or guardian. A notation should be made on the sign-out sheet.

Policy: Once a youth has left an event, he/she should not be allowed to return to the event.

Policy: A minimum of two adult youth ministry leaders must remain with the youth until all youth have left the function or church premises, including parking areas, or been picked up by a parent/guardian.

Best Practice: Parishes should set up procedures to

notify parents of youth non-attendance at an event for which the youth is registered or anticipated to attend.

Best Practice: Invite adult leaders to complete a Youth Ministry Information sheet for adults. This will ensure you have emergency contacts for your leaders as well.

LATE PARENT/GUARDIAN PICK-UP

There are occasions that a young person’s parent/guardian is late in picking up him/her from an event. All attempts should be made to contact parents/guardians by phone from the program site. After a specified amount of time set by the parish, it is appropriate to contact the emergency contact from the Youth Ministry Information Sheet. These procedures should be communicated to all parents at the beginning of the year or at registration time for an activity or program.

Policy: Never allow a youth to ride home with someone without a parent/guardian’s written consent.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, WEAPONS AND PORNOGRAPHY

Policy: Being under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol and/or mood-altering substances, and/or being in possession of pornography, weapons, illegal drugs, alco-

holic beverages, drug- or alcohol-related paraphernalia, tobacco products, tobacco-related paraphernalia and/or prescription drugs not indicated on the Permission and Release Form are forbidden. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action for:

- Any youth on parish property
- Any youth attending or participating in any youth ministry-sponsored activity
- Any youth attending or participating in any activity that may be associated in any way with the youth ministry

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

Policy: Ministry team members and chaperones may not possess or consume drugs, alcohol or pornography at any youth ministry event/gathering. On overnights, this restriction applies around-the-clock, continuing to apply for adults during the evening hours, even after the young people have gone to sleep. Any ministry team member who violates this policy will be dismissed immediately.

Policy: Any adult who provides or assists youth in obtaining alcohol, weapons, drugs or pornography will be dismissed, and the proper authorities will be notified.

Policy: Any youth found to have drugs, alcohol, weapons or pornography in their possession, or who uses or arrives to an event/activity under the influence of drugs/alcohol, may not be allowed to remain at the event/activity and must be picked up immediately by the parent/guardian.

Policy: In keeping with our partnership with parents/guardians, the youth ministry coordinator must inform the parents/guardians of any youth who have possessed/consumed alcohol, possessed/used illegal drugs or possessed pornography or weapons at a youth ministry meeting, activity or event.

Policy: The youth ministry coordinator must inform the

pastor of any young person who has possessed/consumed alcohol, possessed/used illegal drugs or possessed pornography or weapons at a youth ministry meeting, activity or event.

Policy: Although bag checks may occur before leaving for events, allegations of possession of drugs, alcohol, weapons and/or pornography still occur. If an allegation of possession is presented, the party or parties should be approached by at least two supervising ministry team members together to determine the accuracy of the allegation. If there is a reasonable cause to believe the allegation is true, then ministry team members should request permission to search the possessions of the accused. This should always occur in the presence of at least two supervising ministry team members. It should never be done by a single adult. Ideally, it should be done by the youth ministry coordinator.

Policy: Intergenerational gatherings that are primarily youth-oriented (e.g., a high school graduation reception) should not serve alcohol.

Policy: If youth are attending an activity/event for intergenerational audiences where alcohol is available/served (e.g., parish dinner), parents/guardians of youth must be aware that alcohol will be available/served. Chaperones and event sponsors have the responsibility to ensure that no underage drinking will be allowed. Adults chaperoning youth at such events cannot consume alcohol.

TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND E-CIGARETTES

Policy: The use of tobacco products and e-cigarettes is not permitted by young people at any youth ministry gathering.

Policy: No one, youth or adult, is permitted to give, lend or sell tobacco or e-cigarette products to a minor. It is a violation of the law.

Policy: Adults are asked to refrain from using tobacco and nicotine products at youth ministry events. If they do use tobacco or nicotine products, they are to remove themselves from proximity of young people and use the product in a discreet, designated area.

OFF-SITE EVENTS AND OVERNIGHT TRIPS

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Off-site events and overnight trips can be effective tools in youth ministry. However, they also can present unique issues in supervision and safety of young people. This is why the archdiocese is instituting a policy that young people under grade 9 cannot participate in overnight events. With this in mind, special care must be taken

when planning such events.

Policy: Parishes cannot host overnight events or trips for young people in grades below 9th grade.

Policy: Permission for parish-sponsored overnight events must be submitted for approval to the pastor at least six weeks prior to the event (see Forms).

Policy: Priority must be given during any off-site or overnight trip to ensure that all participants fulfill their