Jeremiah 1:7

A Safe Environment Formation Program for High School Youth Ministering to Children & Youth under Age 18

Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Participant Handbook

Name __________________________
Parish _________________________
Ministry Role ___________________
Opening Prayer

Reading: Genesis 1:26

Leader: In our desire to serve, let us be aware of the authority given us by God. Out of this authority, comes a power to care for creation.

All. We have the power to help, to heal, to prevent, and to protect.

Side A. We have the power to build others up
Side B. and the power to tear down.

All. We choose to build.
Side A. We have the power to create safe places
Side B. and the power to take away self-confidence.

All. We choose to create.
Side A. We have the power to believe in the potential of each person
Side B. and the power to deny one another's right to safety.

All. We choose to believe.

All. We pledge to protect. Our voices speak of our desire to serve.
Side A. We are voices of hope, voices of promise,
Side B. voices of peace, voices of trust,
Side A. voices of safety, voices of forgiveness,
Side B. voices of integrity, voices of concern,
Side A. voices of belief,
Side B. voices of faith.

Leader. We know that our courage, our desire, and our motivation come from God. We ask God's help in obtaining our goal in being servants who bring peace and healing.

Amen.
Formation Objectives:

The Teen Participant will

1. understand the meaning of ministerial authority, stewardship, service and the effects of personal power in relationships

2. understand the meaning of sexual abuse

3. learn the meaning of personal and relational boundaries

4. acquire skills to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries

5. To develop skills to recognize and report concerns and abuses for boundary violations with children and other teens
Human Dignity: Personal Authority & Power

1. God as Creator shares His authority with us (Gen. 1:26)
2. This shared authority is called stewardship or management of creation:
   • Care of the goods of the earth
   • Care of ourselves
   • Care of others

This authority empowers us to treat creation, ourselves, and others with a profound dignity and respect.

YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
(1 COR. 3:16)
The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. (Psalm 33:5)

- List ways in which you have experienced God sharing the goodness of his creation with you.

- List ways in which you have experienced God sharing his goodness with you through the care of others.
The Commandment to Love

You shall love God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your mind, and with all of your strength. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

(Mk. 12: 30-31)
Identify 3 things about yourself as a person that you feel good about:

1.
2.
3.
Every human being is good and loved by God.

1 Cor. 13:4-8

Love (agape) involves
• Respecting others’ feelings and needs
• Offering but never forcing our own desires on others
• Never manipulating others to get what we want for ourselves
• Helping others if they need & ask for help
• Helping others to help themselves

As ministers, we have a responsibility to do our best to protect those entrusted to our care from anything that might harm their physical and emotional well-being.
Agape- Unselfish love; accepting people for who they are.

⇒ Identify characteristics for:

loving (healthy) relationships

unloving (unhealthy) relationships
Relational Authority & Power

Relational authority: We exercise a certain power or influence in the care of our neighbor.

1. Parental & Teacher authority: our response to them is respectful, in so far as their authority is properly applied (not harmful).

PEER INFLUENCE as POSITIVE & NEGATIVE

2. Teens as role models: set a good example

RELATIONAL POWER is grounded in servant leadership: respecting the dignity of every person entrusted to our care.

“You, then, should wash others’ feet” (John 13:14).
• List persons with authority or power over others.

• List persons with authority or power over your own lives.

• List persons in which you have authority or power over.
Ministerial Authority & Power

*Legitimate Power*

**Ministerial authority:** representatives of the Church have both the privilege and the responsibility to show Jesus Christ through WORDS and ACTIONS. (Luke 9:46-48; John 13:1-17)

**Teens:**
good stewards (managers); called to be servants.

**Positive use of Power:**
- Serving with kindness; being encouraging
- Listening, showing respect & care
- Maintaining appropriate boundaries
- Enforcing rules and guidelines fairly

**Negative use of Power:**
- Being bossy
- Forcing someone to do something he or she doesn’t want to do
- Joking about someone’s body
- Touching a person in a way that makes him or her feel uncomfortable
Sexual Abuse:
Sexual abuse: any sexual activity involving words or touch of the genital areas of a person’s body.

It includes
• Showing or taking nude or partially nude photos
• Showing or touching genitals
• Sexual intercourse

Abuse is behavior which uses manipulation or force to violate another person’s personal boundaries.

Effects:
• Causes harm to the dignity of the person
• Results in loss of self-respect, trust, and personal integrity as a child of God

It is morally wrong AND against the law!!!
Boundaries are a part of EVERYTHING WE DO.

⇒ Identify rules (purpose) in everyday life.

Boundaries: written and unwritten rules that help keep people safe and healthy as individuals and in relationships with others.

They can be physical, emotional, behavioral. They can be verbal or non-verbal.

• Know your boundaries.
• Recognize the responsibility to tell others when they violate boundaries.

SPEAK UP when you have CONCERNS THAT YOU OR OTHERS ARE BEING MISTREATED.
Personal Boundaries involve touch and space (physical or emotional)

**Do Not:**
- Do **not** touch or make comments to anyone in a way that makes them uncomfortable or is inappropriate
- Do **not** hold a child on one's lap
- Do **not** create excessive physical contact
- Do **not** make fun of others
- Do **not** take someone else’s belongings or damage them.

**Do not** allow children to engage in activities their parents or other adults at the event would not allow.

- **DISCUSS OTHER PERSONAL BOUNDARIES**
Relational Boundaries have to do with how we establish appropriate connections with others.

**As a Volunteer:**

**DO**
- Be equally fair to everyone
- Be only with children where there is open access. An adult should always be present when you are volunteering.

**DON’T**
- Don’t be alone with one child in a secluded or empty room.
- Don’t give expensive or inappropriate gifts in order to get them to do what you want them to do.

- Identify other relational boundaries
Relational Boundaries involve managing appropriate and inappropriate physical and verbal expressions in relationships.

Remember!!! As a person in a ministerial role, one always has a certain power that comes from the nature of the relationship.

Touch can be good!

Appropriate Displays of Affection in Ministry
- Brief hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Hand shakes
- High fives or hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands during prayer or while walking a small child
- Add additional expressions
Inappropriate Displays of Affection in Ministry

- Avoid any form of unwanted affection
- Don’t engage in full frontal or bear hugs
- Don’t touch bottoms, chests, or genital areas
- Don’t lay down or sleep beside a younger child
- Don’t give or receive massages
- Don’t tickle or wrestle with younger children
- Don’t play games with inappropriate touching
- No kissing
- Avoid making compliments or comments that relate to physique or body development
Emotional Boundaries

♦ Being friendly vs. being friends?

Emotional boundaries involve those who you choose to share thoughts, feelings, or other information with or who you want to spend time with.

Boundary violations:
1. Gossip
2. Breaking promises
3. Pressuring others to spend time, share thoughts or feelings with yourself or someone they are uncomfortable with
Ministerial Boundaries involve following rules, guidelines and policies specifically set to protect everyone.

KNOW:

♦ The policies of the event and follow them

♦ When to raise concerns if they are not followed by others

♦ Which ADULT IS IN CHARGE of the event

♦ The event’s policy for taking young children to the toilet (this should only be done by an adult)
**Boundary Violations: Reporting**

If you observe or experience a boundary violation or suspect a boundary is not being respected:

**DO:**
1. Do tell the adult in charge or the program director
2. Do talk to your parents
3. Do keep telling an adult until you get the kind of response you need

**DON’T:**
1. Don’t ignore your suspicions
2. Don’t share your concerns with another child
3. Don’t give up if adults you tell do not address or correct the boundary concern or violation
Role Activity:
What NOT TO DO;
What TO DO!

Youth Volunteer
Code of Conduct

VBS Rules

CCE Rules

Closing Blessing & Commitment
Role Activity:
Pick one of the following scenarios.
Apply today’s learning to what you should or should not do.

Situation 1:
You regularly assist an adult catechist who today is 10 minutes late. Parents have been dropping off their children but no adult is present.

Situation 2:
On a teen retreat, you notice that one of the adult team members has been initiating what seems to be an excessive amount of full frontal hugs with the teens.

Situation 3:
You notice that an adult volunteer frequently shows a lot of attention to a few of the children while some children seem to be virtually ignored.

Situation 4:
In your work with middle school youth, you notice an adult volunteer teasing and making comments about various kids’ body parts.
**Youth Volunteer Code of Conduct**

As a community of faith we are committed to safeguard our children and youth, the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. The following rules and regulations reflect that commitment and are a condition of teens serving in volunteer ministry.

**As a youth volunteer, I will:**

- Represent my Parish/School as an example of the Catholic Christian values it represents.
- Safeguard children and youth entrusted to my care at all times.
- Treat everyone; children, youth and adults, with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with a child or youth at church/school activities.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children or youth.
- Not use foul or inappropriate language in the presence of the children or youth serve.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries in my relationship with the children and youth I serve.
- Refrain from giving inappropriate, personal gifts to children or youth.
- Report concerns about boundary issues to a responsible, safe adult.
- Report suspected abuse or neglect to a responsible, safe adult immediately.
As a youth volunteer, I will not:

- Risk the safety of, or violate the healthy boundaries of any child or youth in my care.
- Smoke or use tobacco products on parish property and/or in the presence of children or youth.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while volunteering.
- Spank, shake, or slap children, youth or any other person.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten or degrade children, youth or any other person.
- Touch a child, youth or any person in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Engage in any conduct that frightens or humiliates children, youth or any person.
- Commit an illegal or immoral act in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Use profanity or tell dirty jokes in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Sexually harass any person, e.g., requests for sexual favors, sexually explicit statements, etc.
- Take, post or exchange pictures of the children or youth with whom I volunteer without the permission from the individual’s parent or guardian.

- As a youth volunteer, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct. I commit to being an example of Catholic Christian love and support to those am allowed to serve. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in my suspension or termination of my role as a youth volunteer.
CLOSING PRAYER & COMMITMENT

Adult Blessing of Youth

Dear Lord, We ask You to bless these teens who are serving in their parish or school as participants in the Church’s efforts to provide a loving, safe and secure environment; allow them to be the "ears, eyes and voices of the children and young people" in their care.

Give them the grace needed to fulfill the special role each of them has in the mission of the Church; and allow that grace to help them serve those in their care with integrity and hearts full of love.

Lord, as representative of the adults with whom these teenagers will serve, let us now commit to supporting each of them in fulfilling their mission to serve You as they serve others. We pray for all adults in ministry to reinforce the rules and maintain healthy boundaries, allowing these teenagers to be partners with "eyes, ears and voices" that protect the children and youth they serve.

May the ministries we serve always be focused on glorifying You, Lord with our words and actions.
AMEN

“Let no one look down on you because of your youth, but be a continuing example of love, faith, and purity to believers.” 1 Timothy 4:12 NAB
CLOSING PRAYER & COMMITMENT

Youth Commitment

Dear Lord,

We thank you for the gift of our lives and for the children that have been entrusted to our care. We pledge to faithfully assist those adults who have been placed in authority to provide a safe and protective environment for those children in our ministry.

We promise to follow God’s plan to care for the good of others as well as to follow the guidelines for safe environment that have been established by this Archdiocese.

We ask for the continued wisdom and courage needed to live as loving disciples of Jesus so that we might serve as Christian models for others, especially those children or teens in our ministry.

May these efforts glorify You and build the Kingdom of God. We ask this in Jesus’ name.

AMEN
“But the Lord answered me, “Say not, 'I am too young.' To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command, you shall speak,” (Jer.1:7)

Notes:

Acknowledgements:
The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston would like to thank Kevin Prevou, Director of the Office of Young Adult & Youth Ministry for the Diocese of Ft. Worth and Karen Martin, Director of Faith Formation at St. Angela Merici Parish, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston for their assistance in developing this program.

Jim Barrette, Director, Secretariat for Pastoral and Educational Ministries  
Brian Johnson, Director, Office of Youth Ministry  
Anne Comeaux, Director, Continuing Christian Education Office  
Norma Torok, Associate Director, Office of Youth Ministry  
Mark Ciesielski, Associate Director, Offices of Youth Ministry and Continuing Christian Education