

Youth Ministry Best Practices

Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux

Youth Ministry Best Practices

Q - Why is risk management an important component of youth ministry?

A - Often, the danger and liability exposures from youth ministry activities are not fully understood until an accident occurs. Best Practices will help ensure the safety of all participants.

Q - Is it difficult to implement necessary risk management procedures?

A - No. Catholic Mutual has completed an online training module and extensive supportive information to assist youth ministers, leaders and chaperones. This can be accessed by logging onto the Catholic Mutual website at www.catholicmutual.org, Login: 0352hou Password: service , and selecting Online Training. In addition, the Youth Ministry Activity Checklist on the next page provides specific guidance regarding questions that need to be reviewed and answered.

Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux

Youth Ministry Activity Checklist

Activity Event _____

Dates and/or Training of Event _____

Locations _____

Please ensure all questions have been reviewed and a response indicated.

- _____ Is the activity safe and approved?
Comments: _____

- _____ What type of transportation is being utilized?
Comments: _____

*Note: 11 (including driver) – 15 passenger vehicles cannot be used unless they meet school bus standards.

- _____ If drivers are employees or volunteers, have required driver forms been completed?
Comments: _____

*Note: Motor vehicle record checks are always recommended.

- _____ Have all staff and volunteer drivers completed the online *Be Smart Drive Safe* defensive driving module?
Comments: _____

- _____ Have all leaders and chaperones completed appropriate safe environment training and undergone successful background checks?
Comments: _____

- _____ Are the adult leaders and chaperones-to-youth ratio adequate for the activity?
Comments: _____

- _____ Has necessary communication regarding the activity been provided to all parents and guardians?
Comments: _____
- _____ Have all permission and release forms been signed and returned?
Comments: _____
- _____ Have all staff and volunteers viewed the online youth ministry module *Everything Matters and Everyone Has a Role?*
Comments: _____
- _____ Has the youth minister, youth leader or location transportation coordinator viewed the online training module *Church Transportation – Is It Necessary and Ministry Based?*
Comments: _____

Signature of individual(s) verifying all questions have been answered:

Signature(s)

Date

YOUTH MINISTRY ONLINE TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

The key to a successful Youth Ministry program is finding an effective – yet safe – way to connect with kids today. Youth Ministers are charged with the profound responsibility of engaging young people within the Catholic Church, while keeping those who participate safe from harm. Not only are Youth Ministers responsible for safety, but the young person themselves and their parents must also play a role. The following guidelines have been developed to assist you in your role as a Youth Minister. Please feel free to contact Catholic Mutual if you have any further questions.

Thank you for all your efforts in keeping youth safety at the forefront of your ministry.



WHAT IS YOUTH MINISTRY?

- ▣ Balancing ministry and fun - The key to a successful Youth Ministry program is finding an effective, yet safe way to reach kids today while still making it fun.

WHAT'S GOING ON?



Activity Selection

- ▣ Think about safety...think about risk.....
- ▣ Good idea vs. bad idea
- ▣ Assess the risk - Is it necessary for a successful ministry?

Examples of what might be too risky:

- ▣ High Ropes Course
- ▣ White Water Rafting
- ▣ Rock Climbing/Rappelling
- ▣ Paintball
- ▣ Water Skiing
- ▣ Off-Road (Jet Skis, Snowmobiles, Dirt Bikes, ATV's)



When planning any activity, be sure to contact the (Arch) Diocese or your local Catholic Mutual Office prior to scheduling.

chaperone/Volunteer

A chaperone/volunteer must:

- ▣ Complete Safe Environment requirements
- ▣ Review "CARES" Chaperone Guidelines
- ▣ Be 21 years of age or older
- ▣ View *Youth Ministry: Everything Matters and Everyone Has a Role* online training
- ▣ Attend required meetings
- ▣ Know the activity
- ▣ Understand his/her responsibilities

HOW DO WE ROLL?

TRANSPORTATION SELECTION

- ▣ Review (Arch) Diocesan Transportation Policy
- ▣ View *Church Transportation - Is it Necessary & Ministry Based?* online training.
- ▣ Preferred Methods
 - ⇒ Meet at location
 - ⇒ Wheels for hire
 - ⇒ Approved volunteer drivers
 - ⇒ Drivers should take *Be Smart-Drive Safe* online course

NEVER

- ▣ Allow anyone under the age of 21 to drive
- ▣ Permit unapproved drivers
- ▣ Use 11 (including driver) - 15 passenger vans



Details, Details, Details

- ▣ Obtain contact information for parents
- ▣ Obtain Youth Ministry Registration Packet from each youth member
- ▣ Ensure (Arch) Diocese reviews any contract/agreement associated with activity
- ▣ Make an advance visit to off-site activity location to help foresee any potential risks
- ▣ Create a plan of action for potential emergencies
- ▣ Obtain Parent Permission Slips and Adult Chaperone Liability Waivers
- ▣ Obtain Volunteer Driver Form

PARENTS IN THE LOOP

Parents must:

- ▣ Know activity
- ▣ Know transportation mode
- ▣ Know destination
- ▣ Know timeframe
- ▣ Have read/signed all forms

Parents should:

- ▣ Attend planning meetings
- ▣ View *Youth Ministry: Everything Matters and Everyone Has a Role* online training
- ▣ Be involved

GET THE WORD OUT

- ▣ Communication (text, blogs, email, social networking, etc.) must be
 - Appropriate
 - Monitored
- ▣ Communication from Youth Ministers should:
 - Be open & transparent
 - Be sent to all youth (i.e. text, blog, email, etc.)
 - Include copy to parents
 - **NOT** be done privately with an individual youth
- ▣ If a social network site is established for Youth Ministry, it must be monitored on a regular basis. Any inappropriate material should be deleted immediately.

WWJD?

- ▣ Code of Conduct - covenant between all participants and the Church to agree to behave appropriately and safely
- ▣ View *Youth Ministry: Everything Matters and Everyone Has a Role* online training

Also Available:

Youth Ministry Resource Manual

Youth Ministry Quick Guide

Youth Ministry Poster



Catholic Mutual Group
10843 Old Mill Road
Omaha, NE 68154

Phone: (800)-228-6108
Fax: (402)-551-2943

Email: rm@catholicmutual.org



ONLINE TRAINING

To begin the training:

- Sign into Catholic Mutual's website www.catholicmutual.org. Click "Member Login." The user name is 0352hou and the password is service (all lower case letters).
- Click "Login"
- Select "Online Training"
- Click "[Please click here.](#)"
- When you reach the training site, you will be prompted to:
 - Select a language
 - Select a subgroup – From the drop-down menu, select and click on your (Arch) Diocese
 - Select a subgroup again – From the drop-down menu, select your location
 - Confirm your selection is correct
 - Select *Youth Ministry Everything Matters and Everyone has a Role* from the drop-down menu
 - Click "Launch Course"

If you experience any trouble viewing the training courses, please contact OPUS at (913) 825-1600 or email help@opustraining.com. They will be happy to assist you.