

## Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry



### Chaperone Guidelines

#### Acquiring Chaperones

- Prior to the event, Parish Group Leaders are responsible for coordinating with their Parish Safe Environment contact person that each Adult Participant (age 18 and out of high school) has:
  - Passed a background check through the Diocese of La Crosse
  - Completed the Diocese of La Crosse Safe Environment Training online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/safe-environment>
  - Filled out the Diocese of La Crosse Confidential Questionnaire and turned it in to your parish office).
- Parish Group Leaders are to ensure that each Adult (age 18 and out of high school) has received a copy of these Guidelines.
- There must be a minimum ratio of 1 chaperone to 7 minors.
- There must also be a chaperone representation for each gender. For example, if there are 7 minors attending an event, 3 of them are female and 4 of them are male, then there must be at least 1 female and 1 male chaperone present.
- Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age.
  - It is permissible to have "assistant chaperones" that are between the ages of 18-20, as long as they are in a group and assisting an adult (age 21 or over) chaperone.

*\*The list of all Parish Safe Environment Contacts can be found on our website at*

*\*Waiting until the week of the event will run the risk of the Safe Environment Office not having sufficient time to complete the Background Check process.*

*\*Adults who have not completed these steps prior to the event will not be able to attend the event.*

#### Monitoring the Young People

- Under no circumstances are chaperones ever to be alone in a room with a minor.
- Chaperones are to ensure that teen participants are where they need to be on time.
- Chaperones are to ensure that males are never in female rooms and females are never in male rooms.
- Chaperones are to assist with "crowd control" to minimize disruptions.
- Chaperones are expected to enforce Diocesan policies & rules with **all** young people, not just those in their group.
- Chaperones must be aware of any **SPECIAL NEEDS** of the youth in his/her group.
  - This includes health problems, family problems, & anything else that may help to minister more effectively.
  - Review the section of your young people's permission forms that relate to special needs (Medical History & Medical Treatment sections). Know what to do in the event of a medical situation.
- If a young person needs to speak privately about a matter, do not speak with them behind closed doors. Speak with them in a private, but public place such as in the hallway, or off to the side.

### **Chaperone's Attitude and Experience**

- While we encourage the adults to be open to having a powerful experience themselves, we ask that they remember that their first priority is to be there for the young people. We ask that each adult keep a positive attitude throughout the event. If an adult has a positive attitude, the young people will be more inclined to also have a positive attitude.
- Chaperones may be asked to lead the small group sessions. Please understand that these small group sessions are vital to the young peoples 'experience, as it is a time where they can talk and come to understand how God is speaking to them throughout the retreat. We ask that the chaperones be enthusiastic about the small group sessions, take your time, and ask open ended questions to help generate discussion among the teen participants. Questions will be provided to help get you started.
  - Chaperones must be faithful ambassadors to and of the Catholic Church.
  - If you are asked a question and do not know the answer, often the best response to a question is "I don't know." We do not want to present the youth with any false information.
  - Do not discuss any of your personal misgivings about the Church or members of the clergy with the young people.
  - Chaperones must model fidelity to the Church.
- Chaperones must provide the ministry of presence to the young people.
  - Chaperones are expected to be amongst the youth in their group during activities, meals, and prayer. Talk with your young people and get to know them. Be available to them and their spiritual, emotional, & physical needs.
  - Avoid the "Prison Guard Mentality." Don't stand around the "sidelines" looking in on them. Join in!
  - Provide your young people with a Christian example and role model. Chaperones are expected to attend all activities, reverently worship at Mass, and conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the Gospel teachings at all times.
- Chaperones will not be asked to do anything they are uncomfortable with. There are plenty of other duties they can assist with.
- Chaperones need to be motivated & flexible.

**We want all of the adults to know how much we appreciate the time and energy they are giving to make this retreat a success. If there is anything we can do to help make this an even more positive experience for the adults, please do not hesitate to ask.**