

Appendix VII

Youth Volunteer Acknowledgement

Dear Parents/Guardians of students:

Your child has requested to volunteer with the Catholic parish or school program.

All youth volunteers will be asked to complete safe environment lessons through the religious education program or in a Catholic school. (It is permitted for parents to decline this education for your child by signing a form-letter for that purpose.) Any youth serving as a peer-leader will also be asked to review the *Diocese of Gallup Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Minors* and sign a *Diocesan Code of Ethics*. We ask that you review the contents of the second page of this permission form which provides an abbreviated portion of the *Code of Ethics* and *Interactions and Behaviors* from the *Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Minors*. Please retain that page.

Youth volunteers work in conjunction with adult supervisors. The youth volunteers are required to abide by the rules and requests established by the program supervisor.

The following information is from the *Diocese of Gallup Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Minors*:

Minors participating in service are an important part of many activities of the Diocese. This includes peer leaders and minors serving other minors. Following are standards for their service:

1. All minors serving as volunteers must attend an age/grade appropriate Safe Environment Education session annually or have an "Opt-out" letter. Documentation must be kept on file.
2. Minors serving as peer leaders for minors must be 12-18 years old and must sign the Diocesan Code of Ethics, be familiar with the *Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Minors* and have submitted a signed parental consent on the Youth Volunteer Acknowledgement Form. (See Appendix VII)
3. All other minors in recognized positions of service (altar servers, etc.) must have a parental consent on the Youth Volunteer Acknowledgement Form. (See Appendix VII)
4. Programs for minors shall be supervised or administered by at least two Safe Environment-trained adults.

By signing this document you are providing permission for your child to volunteer in the parish and/or school program and you will assist your child in ensuring a Safe Environment is maintained for all children and youth in the Diocese of Gallup.

Parish Name

Date

Parent's Name

Parent's Signature

Youth Name

Age

Youth's Signature

Date

Youth Volunteer Acknowledgement – Awareness Information

Responsibilities as a youth volunteer for the safety of minors:

- Exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity
- Conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the discipline, norms, and teachings of the Catholic Church
- Encourage an environment that is free from all forms of abuse including intimidation, harassment or bullying.
- Immediately report any form of abuse to minors to an appropriate authority. This includes questionable behaviors by any adult such as described below.

Expectations of Adult Employees and volunteers while working with youth in ministry:

Adults can be expected to:

- always take actions in the best interest of the safety of the youth in their presence
- treat children and youth with respect
- exercise discipline in manner that does not belittle the youth
- communicate primarily to the group rather than individuals, especially in electronic media

Adults will not –

- use of tobacco products in the present of minors
- possess, use or distribute alcohol or illegal drugs during youth ministry
- strike, spank, shake or slap children/youth
- frighten, humiliate, ridicule, threaten or degrade children/youth
- possess or distribute pornographic images by any type of media
- use their authority for their own benefit, particularly at the expense of a child
- use profanity in the presence of children.
- touch a child/youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner such as:
 - any unwanted touch
 - lengthy or inappropriate front embrace
 - kisses on the mouth
 - touching buttock, chest or genital areas
 - wrestling or tackle football
 - tickling
 - massage; either to youth or receive from a youth
- be alone with a child or youth in a closed or private place (behind closed doors)
- give expensive gifts to youth/children
- show excessive favoritism toward certain children
- photograph individual children without parental consent
- tell off-color or sexual jokes or discuss sexual encounters
- tell secrets and ask youth to keep secrets, especially individuals
- use texting or other electronic media to arrange personal meetings with children
- use electronic media to discuss personal or intimate issues with a child

Peer-leaders:

Youths serving as Peer-leaders assume a role with responsibility similar to that as an adult. Therefore, nearly all of the expectations for adults apply to them as well. The ultimate goal of a safe environment for youth can only be accomplished through leadership with integrity at all levels.