

Safe Environment Training for Teens

Permission Form

(Please Print Clearly)

Student's Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City/Town: _____

State/Zip: _____ Phone #: _____

Parish/agency/school in which you will volunteer:

(Name of Parish/agency/school) (City/Town)

Describe your volunteer ministry: _____

Student Signature: _____

I/We are giving our son/daughter permission to participate in the *Safe Environment Training for Teens*.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please bring this form with you to the training.

Thank you.



Safe Environment Training for Teens

Guide for Trainers- page 1

I. Opening Prayer, Welcome, Introductions (approx. 10 minutes)

- A. Opening Prayer- See suggestions below
- B. Welcome- Introduce yourself and tell the teens that they are here today to discuss how to interact with each other and the children in their care.
- C. Introductions-Ask teens to introduce themselves: name, parish, volunteer position, e.g.: Grade 4 religious education aide, summer Vacation Bible School, playground volunteer, etc. (This will help you decide which of several 'scenarios' below to choose for this group)

II. Scenarios (approx. 15 minutes to keep them moving on task)

Several scenarios have been developed to assist the participants in how to interact with children with whom they volunteer. In groups, the students will prepare an impromptu skit, highlighting their concerns and their suggested action steps. These impromptu skits will become the basis of later discussion.

Assign students to groups of approximately 5 students and assign each group one of the 9 scenarios. They will decide how to present the scene to the whole group. Their concerns and ideas of what they might do if this situation comes up while they are volunteering will be listed on a flipchart or large sheets of paper taped to the wall.

III. Student Skits (approx. 5 minutes each, approx. 5 skits total)

Each group performs a skit, acting out their assigned scenario. After each presentation, ask the group what concerns this situation raises, and what they would do. Write concerns on wall paper/flip chart on the left side along with action steps on the right. Use one piece of paper for each skit.

There will be several concerns and ideas about how to handle these concerns for each scenario. Write what the students say without discussing for now- you will have time to discuss their suggested responses later.

Example Scenario 1: Concerns- the student won't leave me alone; the student is too needy; the student is stalking me. Suggested responses- tell her to leave me alone; speak to her parents; tell my supervisor.

Example Scenario 2: Concerns- the youth minister is an adult and shouldn't be hanging around with teenagers; I'd get in trouble for skipping school; he is asking me to break rules. Suggested responses- ignore the text; call friends and see what they think I should do; ask my parents for advice.

IV. Break (food) (approx. 10 minutes)

You will need the following materials for this session:

- ❖ Opening Prayer
- ❖ Large paper taped to wall or flipchart
- ❖ Markers
- ❖ Handouts: Diocesan Mission Statement, Standards for Working with Minors, Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries, How to Report a Concern



Guide for Trainers- page 2

V. Trainer Presentations: (approx.. 45 minutes) You will use the following handouts

- Diocesan Mission Statement
 - Standards for Working with Minors (adapted)
 - To Whom Do I Report My Concerns?
- A. Have the students read the Diocesan Mission Statement silently to themselves. Ask for comments from the group about what this statement says/means.
- B. Review the Standards for Working with Minors handout. As you go through the points on the handout, ask students to match the rules with the ideas they expressed following their skits.
Discuss:
What rules were broken? (Match up to concerns)
What is the best course of action? (Look at suggested solutions)
- C. Review the information about reporting concerns with the group. Emphasize how important it is to speak up if they see or learn about something concerning. Using some examples from the scenarios (information on your chart), ask who would they speak to and what would they say? You can ask for volunteers, or if time allows, have them practice in pairs or groups.

VI. Evaluations: (approx. 10 minutes)

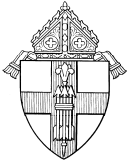
- A. On another sheet of paper, list a plus (+) column and a minus (-) column.
(Here you can have either an out-loud discussion or students could write something on each page before they leave)

In the + column, write down what the teens liked about this training.

In the - column, write down what they did not like.

Ask what could be changed or added in future presentations, and write down suggestions

- B. Distribute certificates of participation and give applause for all in thanks for the teens' volunteer service.



Safe Environment Training for Teens

Suggested Scenarios- Page 1

1. A child in the parish faith formation class in which you volunteer begins to pay too much attention to you. She calls you, she brings you gifts, she shows up at all of your soccer games, she asks you to drive her home after class, she requests that you “friend” her on Facebook.

What are your concerns? _____

What would you do? _____

2. Your parish has a new Youth Minister. He seems to have boundless energy and is great with the teens. Within six months, the Youth Group membership has doubled, and all the kids are attending programs for the first time in many years. He texts you one day inviting you and five other Faith Formation teen volunteers to the local water park. He wants to take you all in his van on a Friday afternoon since the park is so crowded on the weekends. You would miss half a day of school.

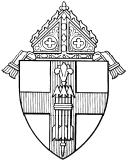
What are your concerns? _____

What would you do? _____

3. Your best friend is helping out in another faith formation class in the same building. You can hear that he has raised his voice. When you pass the classroom in which he is teaching, you notice that he is very red in the face, and you hear him swear under his breath.

What are your concerns? _____

What would you do? _____



Safe Environment Training for Teens

Suggested Scenarios- Page 2

4. You are one of the volunteers for the summer Vacation Bible School. You notice that one of the other volunteers has taken one of the children on a walk some distance away from the rest of the group. You see her hand the child something before rejoining the group. When you remind her that the group is supposed to stay together, she shrugs it off and avoids further discussion.

What are your concerns? _____

What would you do? _____

5. During a first grade class in which you are talking about love (how God loves us, how our parents love us), a child asks, “Do you mean sex?”

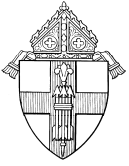
What are your concerns? _____

What would you do? _____

6. You are working with the Kindergarteners in the Summer Vacation Bible School when one of the children comes up to you and says one of the big kids from Grade 2 grabbed him in his private parts.

What are your concerns? _____

What would you do? _____



Safe Environment Training for Teens

Suggested Scenarios- Page 3

7. A second grader rarely stays in his seat during class. Whenever you turn your back for a second or two, he ends up standing on the desk. Other times, he is crawling around on the floor or running across the classroom. You are concerned that he will be hurt, but when you ask him to sit at his desk, he ignores you. You are beginning to lose patience because he is a big distraction.

What are your concerns? _____

What would you do? _____

8. Your high school parish youth group is working with the junior high students. Your friend comes in wearing a t-shirt advertising one of his favorite bands. Your high school parish youth group is working with the junior high students. Your friend comes in wearing a t-shirt from a concert he recently attended. The graphic on the shirt includes two guns along with the name of a popular song, "I Still Kill."

What are your concerns? _____

What would you do? _____

9. You are a volunteer at a parish activity and you see another volunteer taking photos of the students on her cell phone. Later, you see them posted on her Facebook page.

What are your concerns? _____

What would you do? _____



Diocese of Manchester ***Mission Statement***

We are the Catholic Church of New Hampshire, a portion of God's people rich in our tradition and in our diversity, striving in faith for fullness of life.

In communion with the Bishop of Rome and the Church throughout the world, our mission is to witness to the Good News of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit by:

- Worshiping God in Word and Sacrament,
- Proclaiming and sharing our faith,
- Promoting holiness of life through continuing conversion,
- Serving human needs, especially those of the poor and the oppressed,
- Forming Christian communities on the family, parish and diocesan levels
- Fostering reconciliation and harmony among the people of our diocese, our state, our nation, and our planet

Faithful to the constant teaching of the Church, we also pledge to collaborate with all peoples, especially with other Christian Churches, and with Jewish communities, as we devote ourselves to being thankful, responsible stewards of God's gracious and bountiful gifts. While we journey in Faith, we anticipate with joy the day when Christ will come again and everything will be complete in God's love.



Standards for Working with Minors (adapted)

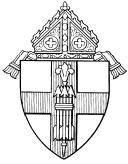
Page 1

A. Establishing Appropriate Conduct with Minors:

1. No one is to be alone with a child. It is best to have two or more volunteers (adults or teens) together when you are with children. If you must be alone with a child on a particular occasion, be sure to be in a “public” place where you can be seen (through a window or across a playground) or when an adult may walk in at any time. This keeps you and the children you are working with much safer.
2. We speak to children and adults and each other with respect. We are not harsh or threatening. We do not need to shame or humiliate anyone. We do not use profane language. We do not use physical discipline or any sort of hitting or slapping or spanking. If a child is uncontrollable, hurry for adult help and practice safety measures decided upon by your volunteer site.
3. We do not use or supply alcohol or other legal or illegal drugs. (Sacramental wine at Mass is the ONLY exception.) If medication we are taking with doctor’s orders makes us drowsy or unable to work with our project, we explain it to our supervisor and work with the children another time.
4. We do not have or show anything resembling pornography with our children by any means: printed materials, videos, clothing, dirty jokes, etc. Sexually oriented or morally inappropriate websites and the like are not viewed, sent or received using church equipment or on church property.
5. We need not talk about sexual matters with children in our care as a church volunteer. We are not there to share personal life stories with these children, but to mentor or serve them and keep them safe. Questions or topics that come up are to be referred to the adult teacher you are volunteering with or your volunteer supervisor. Children would be encouraged to discuss these issues with their parents or guardians.

B. Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries

1. Touching is a “touchy” issue. Here are some guidelines:
 - a. Never touch a child inappropriately e.g., tickling, hugging, that aunt-cheek thing, etc.
 - b. Sideways hugs, handshakes, in-public hugs are always better.
 - c. Use caution and the buddy-system when helping little children in the bathroom, letting them do as much as they can by themselves.
 - d. Unless you are changing a diaper, (and even then, be respectful) don’t touch anywhere that would be covered up with a bathing suit.
2. At an overnight camp or other vacation-type situation it is one person per bed (even if nightmares or thunderstorms occur). At least TWO adults are present at all times.
3. There is no reason to ever be nude in the presence of others. Even if you are helping with showers in a very particular situation, you have your bathing suit on. Your shower is taken



Standards for Working with Minors (adapted)

Page 2

elsewhere or later, after the showers of the children in your care. Again, there should be at least TWO adults present.

C. Electronic Communications

1. When using Facebook and other social networking sites, do not “friend” the students whom you supervise.
2. If you need to communicate information to one of the children you supervise, do it in person or speak to their parent. Don’t email or text them.
3. Do not take pictures of students. Don’t post comments or send to others pictures, videos, etc. of the children whom you supervise. They are minors and deserve their privacy.



To Whom Do I Report My Concerns And How Do I Do That, What Can I Say?

The New Hampshire Child Protection Act, Reporting Law RSA 169-C: 29-32

New Hampshire law provides that “any . . . person having reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected shall report the same” within 48 hours to the Division for Children, Youth and Families. The law applies to all adults, regardless of whether they are a physician, teacher, or work for the Church. The Division for Children, Youth & Families can be reached at (800) 894-5533.¹

To Whom Do I Report a Concern about Abuse or Neglect?

Those who are not over the age of 18 who suspect that a child has been abused or neglected should also report the matter to someone.

If you believe that a child with whom you are volunteering has been abused or neglected, you should talk to one or more of the following people:

- the supervisor of the program with which you are volunteering;
- the adult with whom you are volunteering;
- the pastor at your Church;
- your parent.

What Do I Say?

Talking about this subject is difficult, but some ways to begin the discussion are:

“I have a concern about ...”

“I am uncomfortable around ... because ...”

“So and so’ just told me that ..., so I wanted to let you know.”

If you have any questions or are concerned about telling someone, you can always call the Division for Children, Youth & Families at (800) 894-5533 or your guidance counselor at school.

¹ Adults who work or volunteer for the Church have additional reporting responsibilities if they believe that Church personnel have abused a child. See www.catholicchurchnh.org/docs/doc180.pdf.



Suggested Prayers



God, our Father, we are your children. Thank you for loving us and giving us life. Help us to care for and to protect each other no matter how old or young we are. Give us Your Spirit of wisdom and courage to include those who feel neglected and to speak up for those who are afraid. Strengthen our hearts to be more like yours as we minister in our parishes, schools and in our world. Amen.



Jesus, you gathered children close to you and blessed them. As we share your love with children in our parishes and schools guide us to act with courage and compassion on their behalf. Fill us with the light and grace of your Holy Spirit that we may speak and act as You would, especially when someone needs our help and protection. Amen.



Spirit of God, you dwell in each of us. Help us to be more aware of Your holy presence in each person. Help us to see with your eyes, to love with your heart and to act in ways that reflect the love Jesus showed us. We are grateful for all that you give us and ask that you continue to guide us as we serve one another and strive to keep each other safe. Amen.





Diocese of Manchester Certificate of Attendance

This certifies that

(Name of Participant)

has completed a two hour workshop entitled

Safe Environment Training *for Teens*

*Learning skills that help create safe
environments for children*

Date

Trainer