

**Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee**  
**Foreign Travel Sponsored by a Parish**

Foreign travel includes pilgrimages or mission trips to other countries. Parishes must partner with reputable organizations that have a proven track record with pilgrimages or mission trips. All trips sponsored by a parish must be approved by the pastor. **All Diocesan Guidelines for Working with Youth must be followed unless otherwise stated in this document.**

**BEFORE THE TRIP**

- Trips with minors should have leaders who have experience supervising young people.
- Determine the location of the nearest American Embassy to the base of operations.
- It is a good idea to contact the American Embassy and provide names of all individuals traveling, passport information and dates during which they will be in the country.
- Check on the nearest medical facility and what services are available.
- Determine if additional vaccinations are required for the trip.
- Create a plan of action to respond to any emergency. (See Communications)
- Become familiar with the laws and customs of the country to which you will travel.
- Groups should be aware of the rules for bringing prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, and herbal supplements to other countries.

**Youth Groups**

- Minors traveling without parents should be at least 16 years old at the time of the trip. It is always preferable that a parent accompany their child on a foreign trip.
- Adult chaperones traveling with groups of minors must be at least 21 years old and be compliant with all diocesan Safe Environment policies.
- Trips with minors should have one adult for every 6 youth with a minimum of three adults for the first twelve youth. The additional adult is in case there is a need to accompany a young person to a medical facility for treatment or accompany a young person who is sent home early.
- The group leader should have copies of all passports.

**Insurance**

Obtaining medical treatment and hospital care abroad can be expensive, and medical evacuation to the U.S. can cost over \$50,000. Participants must have insurance which covers them abroad.

- All participants must have health insurance. Participants should check with their healthcare provider to ensure that their coverage will follow them.
- Additional travel insurance should also be purchased for each participant.
- All participants should purchase supplemental insurance which will cover health - emergencies in other countries.
- As a member of the Ecclesiastical Province of Miami, the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee can provide a World Risk Assistance Card from AIG Travel. This is not insurance. You can contact them when you are traveling outside the USA and Canada on a trip sponsored by the diocese/parish if you need help finding or arranging services such as:
  - Medical Assistance and Travel Medical Emergency Services
  - Personal and Pre-Trip Services
  - Legal Assistance
  - Emergency Cash – From Personal Funding Source
  - Lost Baggage or Passport Assistance
  - Insurance Coordination
  - Evacuation and Repatriation

- Emergency Message Center
- Other General Assistance

### **Waiver Forms**

- A waiver of all claims against the Diocese and/or parish for injury, accident, illness or death by reason of the activity should be obtained from all participants age 18 and older.
- For youth under the age of 18, the waiver is the diocesan Parent/Guardian Consent and Emergency Medical Release Form. This form should be notarized.
- Youth groups should submit a list of participants and a copy of all diocesan forms and proof of insurance for each participant to the Office of Youth Ministry.

### **DURING THE TRIP**

#### **Housing**

- At no time are minors allowed to be accommodated in host homes.
- Minors may be housed in school auditoriums, parish halls, cabins, dormitories, or hotels.
- Males and females must be housed separately.
- Adults may not share beds, hotel rooms, or tents with youth even if more than one youth is present.
- The only appropriate setting for adults and youth to share a room is dormitory style rooms, cabins, school auditoriums or parish halls.
- Dormitory rooms should be gender-specific with at least 2 adult chaperones per dormitory.

#### **Transportation in a Foreign Country**

- Preferred form of transportation is bus or 12 passenger van. Fifteen passenger vans are not to be used to transport minors.
- Minors must not ride scooters or in the back of open trucks.
- All existing diocesan policies regarding driving minors must be followed.

#### **Supervision of Minors**

- Adult chaperones should be with minors at all times. Minors should not separate from the group for any reason without adult supervision.
- A curfew should be established during the course of the trip.
- Some countries have a lower drinking age than the U.S. Regardless of the laws of the country, alcohol should not be consumed by minors, young adults or chaperones on a parish-sponsored youth group trip.
- It may become necessary to send a minor home before the rest of the group. In that case, the minor must be accompanied by an adult chaperone.
- **All Diocesan Guidelines for Working with Youth should be followed unless otherwise stated in this document.**

#### **Communications**

- Assure that cell phone coverage exists or other means of communication are available in case of emergencies. Groups should familiarize themselves with making calls in the country they are visiting.
- Groups should arrange to have a pastoral care team in place at the parish. This team should include a priest or deacon and another adult that may need to visit families in case of emergency. They should be given a list of all trip participants and their family contact information.