DIOCESE OF BILOXI
OFFICE OF YOUTH MINISTRY

YOUTH MINISTER GUIDE

FOLLOWING THE CALL OF JESUS TO FORM INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."
- Matthew 28:18-20

SECTION 1

OFFICE OF YOUTH MINISTRY

- The Goals and Purpose of the Office
- Our Saints
- Who We Are

Office of Youth Ministry

Mission Statement

The primary purpose and specific ministry of the Office of Youth Ministry is to develop and implement parish, deanery, and diocesan approaches to the formation of adult youth ministries and youth leaders.

By enabling, catechizing, and forming these adults and youth to be more effective in their roles as leaders, we will draw them and all that they serve more fully into the life, mission and work of the faith community in which we all belong.

Goals

1. To collaborate with other departments, diocesan leaders, pastors, parish leadership groups as well as individual adult youth ministers to develop comprehensive and total youth ministry program so that each parish in each deanery emerges as a model.
2. To develop an awareness of both family and multicultural perspectives that can be utilized and implemented in a parish youth ministry program.
3. To work to establish an active ministry to younger adolescents (ages 12-14) in each parish with a separate group of adult ministers.
4. To provide training in parish-based retreats and Catholic faith formation programs and activities.

The USCCB has articulated three goals of youth ministry in the document, *Renewing the Vision:*

1. To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.
2. To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.
3. To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

Catholic Diocese of Biloxi
Office of Youth Ministry

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Our office hours are 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 a.m. Monday through Friday. The office is closed for all Holy Days of Obligation, Martin Luther King Day, Fourth of July, Mardi Gras, and Thanksgiving.

The office is located at the Diocesan Pastoral Center-
1790 Popps Ferry Rd.
Biloxi, MS 39532

The office can be reached by phone (228)702-2142 or by Fax (228)702-2128.

Instagram: @BiloxiOYM
Facebook: @biloxiyouthminstry
Twitter: @BiloxiOYM
Website: https://www.biloxidiocese.org/youth-ministry

Office of Youth Ministry
Patron Saints
2019

Middle School

Saint Jose Sanchez del Rio

High School

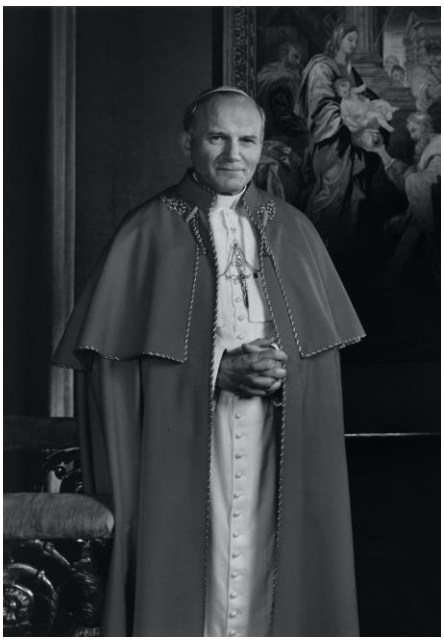
Blessed Chiara Badano and Saint Isidore Bakanja

Young Adult

Venerable Satoko Kitahara and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati

Youth Minsiters

Pope Saint John Paul II



SECTION 2

FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES

- Five Thresholds of Conversion
- Discipleship in Youth Ministry

Discipleship

Discipleship is about living in relationship with Jesus. Not knowing about Him but living life with Him. Discipleship is about entering into the greatest love story of all time - the eternal exchange of love in the Trinity. A disciple allows Jesus to change the heart. Discipleship requires conversion - turning away from sin and turning to holiness and turning to Jesus. This is all about falling in love and staying in love with Jesus.

Our walk with the Lord is always changing. The stages of discipleship below are right from the words of Jesus found in the Scriptures. He is inviting each of us to draw close to His heart.

Stages of Discipleship

- Come and See - John 1:35-39
- Come Follow Me - Matthew 4:18-22
- Be with Me - Mark 3:13-15
- Remain in Me - John 15:4-5

Thresholds of Conversion

The Thresholds of Conversion are outlined by Sherry Weddell in her book *Forming Intentional Disciples.* When properly understood, these thresholds help us identify where someone is at in their spiritual life so that we may best serve them and meet their needs. There are five thresholds - Initial Trust, Spiritual Curiosity, Spiritual Openness, Spiritual Seeking, Intentional Disciple

"Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way he brings youth to our world, and everything he touches becomes young, new, full of life. The very first words, then, that I would like to say to every young Christian are these: Christ is alive, and he wants you to be alive!"

- Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*

Discipleship in Youth Ministry

"Then Jesus approached and said to them, 'All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.'" - Matthew 28:18-20

We are youth ministers because we know, love, and serve Christ and want to invite young people to enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ also. We are disciples and want our young people to become disciples as well.

The early disciples of the Church broke down the practical's of discipleship in the book of Acts.

"They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers." - Acts 2:42

The elements, all centered around Jesus, are shared prayer, fellowship, learning, and mission. We must have all of these elements together - every family should share in this. This can give direction and focus to our youth ministry and efforts of making disciples.

We as Catholics are all about conversion - turning from self and falling more in love with Jesus every day. This too should be the hope for our ministry and our teens - conversion. Our personal ongoing conversion, everything we do must be for the conversion of our teens. Does this game lead to conversion? Does this environment aid in conversion? Does this talk allow conversion? You won't see them embrace their sainthood until your embrace yours.

The altar and the confessional needs to be your office. Be centered on the Sacraments and prayer. If we are falling more in love with Jesus every day, we will have the grace and strength to go forward as missionary disciples.

"Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."-Pope Saint Paul VI

SECTION 3

PILGRIMAGES, EVENTS, AND RETREATS

- Annual Events Offered Through the Office of Youth Ministry

Fall Kickoff
Every year we kickoff the school year with an event to celebrate another year of youth ministry. The particulars of this event change from year to year, but it is a time for all youth ministries to come together. This event is marked by fun, fellowship, and worship. The details will always be posted on our social media pages and sent out through email.

The Challenge
The Challenge is a one day conference just for middle school students throughout the diocese. This event will be held annually in the fall. More information will be posted on our social media pages and sent out through email.

NCYC
The National Catholic Youth Conference is an exciting, biennial three-day experience of prayer, community, and empowerment for Catholic teenagers and their adult chaperones. Freshman in high school through Freshman in college is the age range we take on this trip. This conference is in November in Indianapolis, IN. The schedule includes keynote addresses, prayer, workshops, liturgy, and opportunities to participate in reconciliation and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, recreational activities, concerts, exhibits, and an interactive thematic park.

If you are interested in joining our diocese for the trip; fill out the online application. Total cost of the trip is $550 (This includes travel, hotel, registration, tradeable, and a T-shirt). What you will need to bring is: money for 2 lunches and 3 dinners while we are in Indy in additional to any money you may want for souvenirs. There will be over 200 Catholic vendors at this conference. More details will be provided at a later meeting for those attending.

The most exciting thing you will receive in attending this conference is the experience of bonding with fellow youth from your own diocese, not to mention the over 25,000 youth from all over the United States who attends the conference!!

We look forward to seeing you there with us! Don’t let cost be the deciding factor for you; we will work with you.

Walk for Life/Rosary Rally
The Rosary Rally is in January and is held at the Nativity Cathedral. It is a celebration of the Blessed Mother's intercession within our diocese and in our lives. We also ask for the Blessed Mother's intercession for an end to an abortion. There is also a Walk for Life from the Cathedral to the Lighthouse in Biloxi.

March for life
March for Life is a premiere national gathering of all denominations to protest the Roe vs Wade decision. This event draws over 100,000 people from all over the United States. Young people and adults will travel and attend Rallies and presentations on an array of topics including social justice, servant leadership, racism and cultural diversity. We attend the Life is Very Good rally hosted by the Archdiocese of Arlington.

They will have the opportunity to tour Museums, such as the Holocaust, Air and Space and the Smithsonian to mention a few. They will have the opportunity to see the new Martin Luther King Monument and stand at the Lincoln Memorial. During this trip there is a time set up to meet with our State Senator and a chance to tour the Capital.

The first diocesan meeting to plan March for Life is in early October.

Mound Bayou
For the past three years, youth groups and parishioners in our diocese have helped to coordinate mission trips to Mound Bayou, MS working with the St. Gabriel Mercy Center. We've assisted in renovating buildings, constructing new buildings, and helped the community as a whole in many different ways.

If you are interested in taking your parish youth group on a trip to Mound Bayou, MS over the summer, please contact our office and we will provide you with more details.

Boy's Retreat- Hosted by Sacred Heart, Dedeaux
Boy's Retreat is for teenage boys ages 15-18 years old in 9^{th}-12^{th} grades. For more information you can call the Sacred Heart Office at 228-255-7560.

Girl's Retreat- Hosted by Sacred Heart, Dedeaux
Girls Retreat is for teenage girls ages 15-18 year old in 9^{th}-12^{th} grades. For more information, you may contact the Sacred Heart Office at 228-255-7560.

Search

What is Search? A Search Weekend is a Christian life experience. It is peer guided, and peer given by a Diocesan youth and adult team. On a SEARCH weekend there is sharing by the community members, songs, prayer, small group discussions, Adoration, Eucharist, Reconciliation, quiet time and a great fellowship between you and your "new" friends.

Where is it held? The SEARCH weekend will be held at Sacred Heart Retreat Center in Dedeaux.

Who can come? The SEARCH weekend is designed for high school teens (grades 11-12). Applications will be accepted according to grade levels with SENIORS having first priority. We will accept up to 45 participants for each weekend, and up to 3 to 4 people from each parish.

When? There are two Search retreats - one in January and the other in February.

How much? Fee for the weekend is $80.00 This fee includes sleeping quarters, meals, and all the materials for the weekend. A non-refundable $40.00 deposit is required with all applications. DON'T LET THE COST BE A DECIDING FACTOR!! IF THERE IS A PROBLEM, CONTACT THE YOUTH OFFICE AND WE WILL WORK SOMETHING OUT.

Why should you go? Well, first it is a great gift to you. To get away from all the "things" and to meet and to make a few good friends from throughout the diocese. Secondly, if your life is like a lot of young people, you have some questions concerning yourself, relationships that you are in, prayer, your faith, and the place of Church in your life. We'll try to give you an opportunity to focus on these and maybe SEARCH and find some solutions. Lastly, maybe GOD wants you to be there, so HE can have a chance to spend a little time with you.

Teen Acts- Hosted by Our Lady of Fatima

ACTS is anacronym for Adoration, Community, Theology, and Service. The retreat is targeted for high school youth to learn how to be more involved in their parish and community. Contact 228-388-3887 for more information.

DBYC

The Annual DBYC (Diocese of Biloxi Youth Convention) is held at the Gulf Coast Coliseum and invites all the parishes to come together with their youth groups to celebrate the faith through community, mass, keynote speakers, and worship. The Diocesan Spirit Movers (10th – 12th grade peer ministry team) are the force behind planning the skits, theme, decorations, and act as the Masters of Ceremonies. Target age group for DBYC is 9th – 12th grade.

Started in 1977, the goals have been to encourage community within our entire diocese. In many ways, if our young people don't travel outside their own town or visit other churches, they may not realize that other young people excited about their Catholic faith exist nearby.

We have a welcome ceremony on Friday evening where each parish introduces themselves to our Bishop (in a fun way) and then present the bishop with a gift from their parish. We usually close Friday with a concert or keynote speaker. Saturday is a day filled with fellowship, guest speakers and service activities throughout the day. For lunch, we even invite our young people to dine with our seminarians and other religious to discuss religious vocations. We close Saturday night with Adoration/XLT and Reconciliation. We invite all the priests in our diocese to participate in the Reconciliation service. On Sunday morning Mass is led by our Bishop before we dismiss. Later that afternoon (between 2pm and 5pm) we have a Youth Rally for our 6th-8th grade youth in each parish where they have a keynote speaker and praise and worship opportunities.

We constantly gather feedback from our Spirit Movers and parishes to grow the DBYC into something relevant to our young people while staying rooted in the catechesis of the Catholic church. We've invited our Knights of Columbus, Sisters of Mercy, and other religious orders and groups to set up tables and have opportunities to engage the young people of our diocese to invite them to take part.

MIDDLE SCHOOL RALLY

Our diocesan wide Junior High Rally takes place on the same weekend as DBYC. It is designed for younger adolescents and the adults that volunteer their time to minister to them. The program consists of games, speakers, and small group opportunities.

Notre Dame Vision

We invite you to join us for a week on the campus of the University of Notre Dame. Here, 70 Notre Dame's college students will lead you in an exploration of God's call and the ways in which you can respond to this call with your own gifts. You will have a chance to immerse yourself in the spiritually and communally rich environment of the University. You will benefit from some of the best speakers from across campus and across the country whose stories, witness, and humor will challenge you to expand your imagination and deepen your faith. Whether you are in our large group setting as one of 360 teenagers from across the country or in the small group with 7 other teens your own age, you will find yourself in a vibrant and welcoming community that is committed to authentic prayer, good conversations, and real-life issues.

Notre Dame Vision is open to students entering grades 9-12 in the fall or graduating high school. It is a series of 5-day conferences that includes dynamic large group experiences, reflective small group time, profound liturgies, and excellent music. Speakers from all across the country will break open important themes throughout the week and help participants to relate them to their own lives. 70 Notre Dame undergraduates will serve as Mentors, whether as musicians or small group facilitators.

The University of Notre Dame is the beautiful setting for these conferences. Participants will be housed in student dorms and will eat in the dining hall (one of the best in the country!). The campus is a great location - with idyllic lakes, walking paths, athletic facilities, and restaurants.

Our group usually travels up to Notre Dame the last week of June to partake in Vision.

The cost is **$635** (this includes travel, all but four meals (to and from Notre Dame), and housing and events during the week). There are scholarship and financial aid opportunities through Notre Dame and the Diocese. Please reach out to us at the Youth Office if cost is a factor.

Timeline

If you or any of your students are interested in going to Notre Dame Vision, the application is available on the diocesan website in late November, early December. The bus fills quickly, so it is encouraged to apply early! Ray and Paul are available to talk to any youth groups to stir interest. Vision offers scholarships to participants (more info available on diocesan website) which have to be completed by mid-February.

Spirit Movers

Spirit Mover Requirements:

- A student in grades 10-12 for the academic year.
- An active member in your parish youth group
- Must be willing to share your talents and time
- Expected to attend the Spirit Mover Retreat during the summer.

Formed to respond to a need to have more young people involved in Youth Conference planning and empower young people to be leaders in their own parishes. Additionally, service activities occur throughout the year up to and including putting on a series of middle school retreats completely led by the Spirit Movers. Adult volunteers form pillars of the group each taking on a task to help guide the young people to their own strengths or personal challenge opportunity for themselves.

Started in 2008, this idea was brought to the attention of the youth office by a group of six sophomores and juniors to broaden and involve more young people in our planning of events. Leadership training on how to effectively communicate, lead small groups, and be better Christians were the ideas posed by the young people. The group meets once a month with more frequent meetings occurring as we get closer to youth celebration to effectively practice skits, build decorations, and put together materials as needed. The size of Spirit Movers has varied over the years from as few at 8 starting out to as many as 50 in previous years. The roster is flexible to the number of adult volunteers we have to support them.

The risk of Spirit Movers is that young people may think they can use Spirit Movers as their parish youth group. Our goal at the diocese level is to empower these young adults to be better leaders in their own parishes. We constantly push them to be more a part of their parish community. Being a part of Spirit Movers does not replace the need for them to be active in their own youth group/parish. Maintaining open dialog with the parishes lets us better engage the needs of the young people in the parish. The parish communicates to us if a young person has stopped attending youth group/CCD/Life Teen and we can engage that conversation.

Students interested in being a part of Spirit Movers can apply after DBYC. Applications are found on the diocesan website.

SECTION 4

PARISH SUPPORT

- Adult Team Aid

How to Share your Testimony
The Lord has done beautiful and powerful things in our lives. As disciples, we cannot keep this Good News to ourselves. We may have many different encounters with God's grace that we can talk about. The focus of your witness is to share on thing that God has done in your life. This can be your initial encounter with His love, an experience of His grace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, an experience of His presence in the Eucharist, etc.

Ask Jesus which encounter with His love He would like you to develop for this witness. Then begin preparing what you will say for each section of your witness using the outline below.

Practical Tips:

- Be aware of your body posture. Be confident in what you are saying through your body language. Don't sway back and forth. Be aware of what you are doing with your hands while speaking.
- Be relatable!
- Tell the truth of your story. Don't manipulate facts or embellish/ exaggerate stories to make them more 'exciting'. Everyone has a story, just tell yours!
- Be careful not to use Catholic/religious words that people might not understand - for example "Adoration" "I took my identity in..." etc.
- Do not glorify the sin you were in before encountering Jesus. The life before him can't be more glamorized than the life with him.
- This is about Jesus - not you!

Step 1 - (one minute) - This is where you speak about the situation in your life leading up to the encounter with God that you are going to talk about in part two.

Begin with a sentence that introduce yourself and what you are going to share with them - "Hi my name is - and I want to tell you about the time I came to know Jesus."

Step 2 - (one minute) - This is where you speak about the actual conversion point and/or your specific experience with God. This is the section of your witness where you will need to be the most descriptive.

Step 3 - (one minute) - This is where you talk about your life after the encounter you spoke about in part two until now. Talk about your journey of discipleship.

End your witness with an invitation to your listeners by tying back to the original statement at the beginning of your witness.

Small Group Tips

Having time for small group activities and discussion is important within youth ministry. This is a time when we can get to know the teens on a deeper level and see what the Lord is doing in their life.

Below are some tips and advice in leading a small group. Whether it's a group of teens or adults, these tips can help you feel a little more confident before sitting down with them.

- Pray. Always begin and end in prayer. Keep praying throughout the small group in your heart.
- Let everyone introduce themselves to the rest of the group.
- Start the discussion with the easy, non-threatening questions. This will help everyone feel more comfortable and ready to talk.
- Call the group members by name. This small act lets that person know that you see them individually.
- Ask focused or specific questions. Try to frame your questions in the context of their lives, make it relatable to them.
- Ask how they feel about the topic. This isn't about reporting facts, but sharing the heart.
- Avoid yes or no questions. If they are necessary, be sure to ask for an explanation for their answer - why or why not.
- Understand and be comfortable with silence. There will be times when the group is silent. They might be taking time to think about their responses, or they may not have understood the question.
- Avoid evaluating people's answers with comments like "good answer", "nice point", etc. Acknowledge when the group responds, but in an affirming manner - "thanks for sharing."
- When you ask questions, be sure to ask in kind and non-confrontational ways so as not to put anyone on the spot.
- Be orderly and on target. Beware of tangents; people should eventually be able to call the group to task when they stray from the topic or when the group gets too noisy.
- Give everyone a chance to talk, but don't exhaust the topic. Watch for signs of boredom. Make sure one person is not dominating the conversation, but everyone gets an opportunity to share.

Recruitment for Adult Team

Build Relationships: The most successful way to invite people to join the Core Team is not through pulpit and bulletin announcements. It's done through personal relationships. People don't volunteer for a program; they say yes to a person. That means you have to get into your parish community and get to know as many people as possible.

Set a Goal: You have to be intentional about building the Core Team. Choose a time frame you want to spend recruiting and a goal for the number of people you want to join your ministry. Also, recognize that many people are more open to joining new things at times of transition. For me, late summer and early fall are the prime time to invite.

Pray: It is God's ministry, not yours, and knowing that reminds us that God will provide! Start with a pad of paper and write down all the names that come to mind. Don't judge the names – just write them down! Some of the best Core Team members I've seen were people I assumed were unavailable. Ask your current Core Team members, teens, parish staff and clergy for advice and input. Build a massive list of names, more than will ever possibly join your team. You will hear "No" quite a bit. But the more names you have, the more of a chance you will meet your Core Team goals.

Invite Well: A big mistake I made was how I invited people. I overwhelmed them with information and lists of events and requirements. Good people don't join the ministry for events & meetings – they join to be a part of something awesome and impactful. Your invite should show a potential Core member how they can change a teen's life. Keep your invite short and to the point. (Think elevator pitch.) Tell them that someone (the pastor, Jesus, a teen) recommended them to you, and you would love for them to pray about being a part of Core Team. I've found that describing a Core member as a mentor clarifies the role for someone who hasn't seen it. Invite them to pray about it and let them know you'll follow up in a week. Life Teen has created a promotional video and a Core Team recruitment video that are fantastic resources – you can e-mail these as a follow-up and reminder to your invite.

Follow-Up: Next to that list of names on your notepad, write the date of when you touched base and when you're supposed to follow up with them. Make sure you do it! If they are interested, have them fill out the application, come in for an interview and talk to them about them to shadowing a life night. Use these tools to make sure someone is the right fit for your current team. If your prospective tells you no in your follow up, recognize it's not a "no" forever. Make sure you ask if you can invite them next year and if they say yes, do it!

Core Team Spirituality

Adult Teams are the foundation of youth ministry. They help spread the love of the Gospel to teens and point them in the direction of Christ. They are more than chaperones on a retreat or an extra adult for small groups. Adult Team Members are youth ministers without the "job title". Because of their passion, to walk alongside teenagers in their faith journeys they willingly volunteer their time, supporting the program with lots of energy and love.

It's always a good reminder that to lead teens to Christ, Adult Team Members should be rooted in the sacraments and growing in their personal relationship with Him.

Here are some ideas for your Core Team to implement prayer into their daily lives and as a team.

- **Attend Daily Mass**. It may be difficult to go to Mass every day of the week due to work schedules. Look at Mass times at other parishes if the schedule at your parish is a conflict with work. Start with choosing one specific day of the week. You'll find that as time passes, you'll want to attend more than once a week.
- **Spend time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel** as a team before your planning meeting. It is in the silence of our hearts that He speaks to us. What a great way for us to get out of God's way and let the Holy Spirit plan the night.
- **Adult team members** should spend twice as much time praying about the talk as they do writing and planning it.
- **Pray over the adult team members** that will be giving the talk for the night. This can be done shortly before the night begins or right before the talk is given with the teens. It's a great way to model prayer for the teens as well.
- After the last teens have left for the night, **take some time for a recap** with the Adult Team. What a great time to also share your personal intentions with one another and end the evening praying for each other. Knowing what each other's hearts are going through and how we can pray for one another can only strengthen the team.
- **Have Adult Team prayer partners for the week**. This also helps with accountability. If you make a commitment to pray for someone, you are more likely not to brush off your prayer time when things get busy.
- As Catholics, we have the opportunity to **ask the saints to intercede for us**. There are an abundance of Novenas (a devotion of prayer said for nine days) asking for the intercession of different saints. Recently, our Core Team prayed the St. Michael Novena in preparation for our Spiritual Battles semester. You can pray any Novena that is suited for your team's intentions or prayers of thanksgiving.

- **Pray through 33 Days to Morning Glory together**. You can do this any time of the year. There is a chart in the book that lets you know what date to start in order to have your consecration day land on a specific Marian Feast Day.
- **Schedule a Holy Hour** (or Holy Half Hour or Holy 15 minutes…you get the idea) into your week. Core Members can do this as a group or individually.

Above all, pray with and for each other. One of the ways we build relationships with teens is when we pray with them. Praying over someone may take us out of our comfort zones. Praying with each other as a core team will help ease any nerves we may have. That way, when a teen comes to you and asks for prayers, it'll make it easier to pray with and for them at that moment.

Resources

The two best resources are Sacred Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

But here is a list of resources that will be incredibly helpful to youth ministers and their team-

Websites

- Formed.org
- Lifeteen.com
- Review.catechetics.com
- Nfcym.org
- Thriverswanted.com
- projectym.com

Books

- *Forming Intentional Disciples* by Sherry Weddell
    - *Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples* - especially chapter 7 - *Rethinking Youth Ministry*
- *General Directory for Catechesis*
- *National Directory for Catechesis*
- *The Art of Teaching Christian Doctrine: Good News and Its Proclamation* by Johannes Hofinger
- *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis* by Barbara Morgan and Petroc Willey
- *Leadership for Catholic Youth Ministry: A Comprehensive Resource* by Thomas East

Articles and Encyclicals

- *Renewing the Vision* by the USCCB
- *Christifideles Laici - The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People* by Pope Saint John Paul II
- *Catechesi Tradendae - Catechesis in Our Time* by Pope Saint John Paul II
- *Evangelii Nuntiandi - Evangelization in the Modern World* by Pope Saint Paul VI
- *Christus Vivit - Christ is Alive* by Pope Francis

SECTION 5

DIOCESAN POLICIES

- Safe Environment
- Forms
- Policies

Safe Environment

Anyone working with youth at any capacity must complete Safe Environment Training through Catholic Mutual Group. This can be completed online - https://biloxidiocese.org/safe-environment.

This training is valid for 5 years.

In this section are several forms and the outlines of important diocesan policy regarding work with minors.

All of the following forms and policies are available on the Diocese of Biloxi website - biloxidiocese.org.

Forms-

1. Background Check Form
    a. Anyone working with youth needs to complete a background check through the Diocese of Biloxi. This form can be turned into the Office of Youth Ministry. A background check needs to be renewed every three to five years. Contact your parish DRE or Leo Trahan in the diocesan office to check if the volunteer already has an up to date background check.
    b. This form is also available online in Spanish.
2. Parent Request to Participate & Medical Release Form
    a. This form is required to be completed for any and all events/trips/retreats with youth.
    b. Notary is only required for overnight trips.
3. Adult Medical Release and Information Form
    a. This form is for adults who are participating in youth events/trips/retreats. This form is also required for all events.
    b. This form never needs to be notarized.
4. Volunteer Driver Information Form
    a. If private vehicles are being used, this form must be submitted to the youth minister with the Parent Request to Participate & Medical Release Form. This is to be completed and kept on file to approve anyone driving youth participants for any events/trips/retreats.
    b. The youth minister must keep the form.
5. Driving Parish/Diocesan Owned Vehicles
    a. This memo from Catholic Mutual Group (the diocesan insurance company) outlines what must be done in order to drive a vehicle owned by a parish or Diocese.

Policies-

1. Diocesan Policy Concerning Supervision of Youth Trips & Other Functions
    a. All adult volunteers and participants working with youth must be familiar with everything outlined in this policy.
2. Diocesan Code of Conduct Regarding Contact with Minors and Vulnerable Adults
    a. All adult volunteers and participants working with youth must be familiar with everything outlined in this policy.
    b. This is also available on the diocesan website in Spanish.
3. Policy of the Diocese of Biloxi Regarding Complaints of Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults
    a. This document outlines what to do if a minor comes forward with a claim of abuse.

Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION CONSENT

Both now and, if applicable, during the time of my employment or volunteer service with the Church, I hereby authorize the Diocese of Biloxi, its associated parishes, schools and other ministries (hereafter Diocese), and/or its agents to make an independent investigation of my background, references, character, past employment, education, criminal or police records, including those maintained by both public and private organizations, and all public records for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my Application and/or obtaining other information which may be material to my qualification for employment or acceptance as a volunteer. The Diocese expects to repeat background investigations every three to five years.

I release the Diocese, its related entities, their agents and/or employees and any person or entity which provides information pursuant to this authorization from any and all liabilities, claims or lawsuits in regards to information obtained from any and all of the above-referenced sources used. The following is my true and complete legal name and all information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that a false statement may result in loss of position or other adverse consequences.

PLEASE CLEARLY **PRINT** ALL ANSWERS

_____

Last Name First Name Middle Name

_____

Street Address City State ZIP Code

_____ _____ _____

Date of Birth* Social Security Number Driver's License Number/State/Exp. Date

*Date of Birth information is required for identification purposes only, and is in no manner used as qualification for employment. The Diocese is an Equal Opportunity Employer and, to the extent required by law, does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, age, handicap or national origin.

I am a: ☐ Teacher ☐ Coach ☐ Employee ☐ Volunteer (circle all that apply) at: _____

Name of School/Parish

☐ **Parish** ☐ **School** Catholic Social Services de l'Epee Deaf Center (circle one) _____

City of School/Parish - **REQUIRED**

_____ _____

Signature of employee/volunteer Date

_____ _____

Signature of Principal/Pastor/Director Date

Please continue on reverse.

OFFICE USE ONLY: 4-DIGIT SITE CODE: _____ Data Input By: _____

Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION CONSENT

TO ALL EMPLOYEES AND
VOLUNTEERS

The position you occupy or are applying for is very important to the Catholic Church because you minister to young people and/or vulnerable adults. It is the moral obligation of the Diocese of Biloxi to ensure that these individuals are protected. To achieve this, a background check will be conducted. This report necessarily entails a Social Security number trace and criminal background search from state and county records, Department of Corrections, Administration of the Court, Sex Offender Registries and National and International Terrorism Watch Lists. You may request a copy of the completed report by contacting Integrated Screening Partners at 1-800-474-4420. By initialing this form, you also acknowledge your rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act. These rights can be reviewed at www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore. Please note that:

NO CREDIT INFORMATION IS MADE

AVAILABLE TO THE DIOCESE OF BILOXI.

Please initial that you have reviewed this information: _____

CATHOLIC MUTUAL GROUP®

serving the temporal needs of the church since 1889

MEMORANDUM

TO: Diocese of Biloxi
Locations with Automobile Coverage

FROM: Kris Westlake
Member Services Representative

DATE: February 14, 2019

RE: Driver Information

Part of managing the auto insurance program for the diocese on behalf of Church Mutual Insurance Company (CMIC) necessitates the collection of confidential driver information for individuals who are **driving parish/location owned vehicles**. This information is needed in order to obtain a motor vehicle record (MVR) on each driver. Catholic Mutual takes your privacy very seriously and, as such, has evaluated our processes and procedures to ensure that we are managing your personal information in the most secure manner. Moving forward, rather than submitting your driver information via USPS or email, we will be utilizing our platform, CMGConnect.org in order to securely collect this data. **Each driver** will be required to log in, view a 12 minute safety video and complete an MVR check approval form.

Enclosed you'll find instructions which will assist with accessing CMGConnect and walking through the required steps to create a user account, complete the training and fill out the driver questionnaire. This process will have to be repeated for each driver every five years. There is no cost to you or the Diocese for this service.

To note: *Each location will need to assign one person to manage approved drivers. This person must send their username to cmgconnect@catholicmutual.org to request Driving Coordinator access. The guide to navigating CMG Connect will be located under the Resources tab of your updated sign-on.*

Our goal is to ensure the privacy of our members as well as maintain our objective to *protect* our members. Our hope is that working through the curriculum will result in mindful driving, fewer accidents and safer ministry. If at any point you have questions about this new program, please contact me by email at Kwestlake@catholicmutual.org or by phone at 800-228-6108, ext.2327. If you have questions specific to the CMGConnect process, please contact one of the CMGConnect team members at:

CMGConnect
Toll Free: (800) 228-6108
cmgconnect@catholicmutual.org

Thank you!

10843 Old Mill Road
Omaha, NE 68154-2600
(402) 551-8765
(800) 228-6108
Facsimile (402) 551-2943

Diocesan Policy Concerning Supervision of Youth Trips & Other Functions

VOLUNTEER DRIVER INFORMATION FORM

If private vehicles are being used, this form MUST be submitted with the Parent Request to Participate and Medical release form. Your insurance is the primary carrier in the event of an accident.

1. Driver

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____ Social Security# _____

_____ Phone _____

Driver's License# _____

2. Vehicle that will be used

Name of Owner _____ Year & Make _____

Address _____ Model _____

_____ License Plate _____

Registration Expires _____ Inspection Expires _____

If more than one vehicle is to be used, requested information must be provided for each vehicle.

3. Insurance Information

When using a privately owned vehicle, the insurance coverage is the limits of the insurance policy covering that specific vehicle.

Insurance company _____

Policy number _____

Expiration Date _____

Liability Limits of Policy* _____

*** Please note:** *The required minimum liability limits for privately owned vehicles is $100,000/$300,000. An additional $1 million umbrella is recommended, though not required.*

4. Certification

I certify that the information given on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that, as a volunteer driver, I must be 21 years of age or older, hold a valid driver's license, and have the required insurance coverage in effect on any vehicle used to transport students. I agree to follow all rules of the road and the guidelines regarding supervision of minors.

Signature: _____

Date: ____ /____ /_____

ADULT

MEDICAL RELEASE AND INFORMATION FORM
(Medical Information for Overnight Trips/Retreats Only)

Name of participant_____ DOB _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Medication presently on (Name and dosage for each)

_____

_____

_____

Allergies (Foods, Medication, etc.):

_____

_____

_____

Any other Medical conditions (asthma, diabetes, seizures etc.)

_____

_____

_____

Date of last tetanus shot _____

_____

Contact Person: (relationship) Home Phone Work Phone Cell Phone

---

Contact Person (alternate) Home Phone Work Phone Cell Phone

I hereby give my permission to be administered medical help in case of an emergency. If you have medical insurance please indicate the following:

Insurance Company: _____ Phone: _____

Policy Name: _____ Policy Number: _____

Family Doctor: _____ Doctor's Phone Number: _____

Signature _____ Da te: ___ / ___ / _____

PARENT REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE & MEDICAL RELEASE FORM

Dear Parent or Legal Guardian:

Your son/daughter is eligible to participate in a church/school-sponsored event. This activity will take place under the guidance of _____. A brief description of the activity follows:

Name of Event: _____

Destination:_____

Designated Supervisor of Activity:_____

Date and Time of Departure:_____

Method of Transportation:_____

Approximate Cost**:**_____

If you would like your child to participate in this event, please complete, sign, and return the following statements of consent and release of liability. As parent or legal guardian, you remain fully responsible for any legal responsibility that may result from any personal actions taken by the named student.

I hereby consent to participation by my child, _____
In the event described above. I understand that this event will take place away from the church/school grounds and that my child will be under the supervision of the designate chaperons on the stated dates. I further consent to the conditions stated above on participation in this event, including the method of transportation. On behalf of myself and my child, I acknowledge that a risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists in any public place where people are present and I voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19. I hereby indemnify and agree to forever hold harmless the Diocese of Biloxi, as well as its employees, administrators, trustees, Bishops, priests, attorneys, agents, and affiliated persons and entities from any and all claims which in any way relate to this event and potential or actual exposure to COVID-19, including claims for negligent exposure, negligence, and all related claims.

Print Parent's Name Cell Phone Email

Parent's Signature Date

SWORN TO and subscribed before me on this _____ day of _____ 20_____

_____
NOTARY PUBLIC
(Seal)

My commission expires: _____

Only overnight trips require notarization.

YOUTH

Youth Trips & Other Functions

MEDICAL RELEASE AND INFORMATION FORM

(Medical Information for Overnight Trips/Retreats Only)

Name of participant_____ DOB _____

Medication presently on (Name and dosage for each)

_____

_____

_____

Allergies (Foods, Medication, etc.):

_____

_____

_____

Any other Medical conditions (asthma, diabetes, seizures etc.)

_____

_____

_____

Date of last tetanus shot _____

_____

Parent contact: Work Phone Cell Phone Email:

Contact Person (alternate) Home Phone Work Phone Cell Phone

I hereby give my permission for my child to be administered medical help in case of an emergency. If you have medical insurance please indicate the following:

Insurance Company: _____ Phone: _____

Policy Name: _____ Policy Number: _____

Family Doctor: _____ Doctor's Phone Number: _____

Parents(s) Guardian(s) signature _____ Date: ___ / ___ / _____

Sworn To and subscribed before me on this _____ day of _____ 20_____

_____

Notary Public (seal)

My commission expires: _____

Diocesan Policy Concerning
Supervision of Youth Trips & Other Functions

The following policy adopted by the Diocese of Biloxi and promulgated by Bishop Thomas J. Rodi, is required for all parishes, and for all parish and interparochial Schools.

This policy is to be followed for all school activities and all parish sponsored activities involving youth.

I. Authorization

In the case of schools, field. trips must be approved, both for planning and implementation, in writing by the principal. All other parish trips must have the approval of the pastor of the parish both for planning and implementation.

II. Elementary School grade (Prek3-6) Ficid Trips

Elementary school field trips are limited to one day in duration (no overnight stay) and destinations within 100 miles radius of the school. The Superintendent of Schools must approve any exception to distance or time in writing.

III. Parental permission and Medical Release Form

Signed parental permission slips are required for all field trips involving youth. If the field trip requires overnight stay the permission slip must be notarized and the medical release portion of the form completed. (Forms shall be obtained from the Office of Catholic Schools, Diocesan Youth Ministry Office, or the Diocesan Office of Religious Education)

IV. Transportation

Transportation regulations are as follows:

1. It is preferred that transportation be commercially provided by licensed and bonded carriers. If transportation is provided by, parents, rather than the school or parish, the parent must submit to the principal and or pastor a completed Driver Information Form. Fifteen passenger vans may not be used.
2. When more than one vehicle is used to transport participants, all drivers must have directions and should be familiar with the area where they will be traveling.

3. On long trips, a relief driver must be available at least every eight hours. All drivers should have adequate rest before and after travel.
4. Cars, vans and buses must not exceed the passenger load. All passengers must have a seat; seat belt laws are to be observed at all times.
5. No firearms are to be carried in any vehicle at any time

V. Sleeping Accommodations

1. Adults are not to be housed with youth except when the youth is the adult's own child.
2. As an exception to #1 above, in a large dorm situation, adults may be housed with youth provided that at least 2 adults are assigned to the dorm.
3. Adults are not to use a community shower, nor should an adult be in any questionable state of undress, in the company of youth.
4. The monitoring of clothes changing or showering of youth is not to be supervised by a lone adult. More than one adult must be present during these times. All adult chaperones must understand that extreme caution must be exercised at these times so that no actions, words, stares, or touch have the potential for misinterpretation. Any disciplinary actions are to be carried out after the youth has had the time to be properly dresses and must take place outside of the changing and bathroom areas.
5. Conversations with youth must always be conducted only when the youth is properly dressed.
6. There is to be no coed sleeping in tents or hotel rooms.

VI. Outdoor Camping

1. It is strongly recommended that tents which can accommodate large numbers be used whenever possible. This will allow for better supervision.
2. In the event that outdoor camping is help without tenets, there must be enough adult chaperones to provide adequate security and supervision.
3. Adults are not to sleep in a tent alone with a youth, except when the youth is the adult’s own child.

VII. Hotel Rooms

1. Care is to be taken when booking hotels for groups. A request must be made upon making reservations that, if possible, all of the rooms be on the same floors or location in the hotel.
2. All rooms must be checked by the group leader before assigning them to groups to avoid males and females having connecting doors.

3. Youth must always be informed and reminded of safety rules and security measures.
4. Chaperons must have room keys for minors' rooms.

VIII. Other Accommodations

1. Care is to be taken that sleeping areas are clearly segregated between males and females

IX. Expectations

1. All prescription medications must be given to and administered by an adult chaperon.
2. During any parish or school overnight trip the person(s) in charge must ensure that all participants fulfill their Sunday and Holy Day obligations.

X. Chaperons

1. All chaperons are required to have read and be familiar with the Diocese of Biloxi Policy Concerning Complaints Abuse of Minors.
2. It is required that there be an adequate umber of adult chaperons.
3. Chaperons must be 21 years of age or older.
4. No adult chaperon may consume alcohol.
5. All adult chaperons must be approved by the pastor or principal.
6. Adult chaperons shall not at any time purchase questionable or illegal items for a minor (example: cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, weapons, condoms, and sexually-suggestive materials, clothing or items).

XI. Notification

1. The pastor or principal is to be immediately notified of any major accident or disciplinary need during the trip. The pastor or principal shall immediately notify the Diocesan Risk Manager.

Diocesan Code of Conduct Regarding Contact with Minors and Vulnerable Adults

We are all aware of reports involving the abuse of minors by persons in positions of trust. While persons who would do such reprehensible things constitute a small minority of the population, this notoriety can lead to otherwise innocent behavior being misconstrued. Also, although a minority, we must not forget that persons who would harm our children do exist and it is morally imperative for us to do all we can to safeguard our children. Both of these interests can be served by an established code of behavior consistent with Christian values and Catholic Church teachings.

This policy covers all priests, deacons, religious, pastoral ministers, administrators, staff, employees and volunteers. This policy presupposes that the minor is not the child of the person, since we are generally not in a position to proscribe conduct between a parent and child.

1. No form of corporal punishment is acceptable and is prohibited as a way for behavior management of minors.

2. Appropriate affection is important for a child's development and is a positive part of Church life and ministry. There are forms of affection between Church personnel and minors that are regarded as appropriate examples for most Church sponsored and affiliated programs:

    - Side hugs
    - Shoulder to shoulder or "temple" hugs
    - Pats on the shoulder or back
    - "High-fives" and hand slapping
    - Verbal praise
    - Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of minors
    - Arms around shoulders
    - Holding hands while walking with small children
    - Sitting beside a small child
    - Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
    - Holding hands during prayer
    - Pats on the head when culturally appropriate (example: this gesture typically should be avoided in some Asian communities).

3. Some forms of physical affection have been used by adults to initiate inappropriate contact with minors. In an effort to provide the safest possible environment for minors, the following examples of affection are not to be used in Church sponsored and affiliated programs. This list is intended to be illustrative but not exhaustive.

    - Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
    - Kisses on the mouth
    - Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
    - Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, staff-only areas, or other private rooms
    - Touching knees, thighs or legs of minors
    - Wrestling with minors
    - Piggyback rides
    - Any type of massage given by minor to adult

- Any form of unwanted affection
- Compliments that relate to physique or body development

4. No alcohol, tobacco or profanity are to be used at youth activities. Sacramental wine used during celebration of Mass is not, of course, a violation of this policy.

5. The introduction of sexually explicit or pornographic topics, vocabulary, music, recordings, films, games, web sites, computer software, or entertainment is strictly forbidden.

6. Regarding Pastoral (or other) Counseling and Spiritual Directors, the person should not step beyond his/her competence and may not engage in any sexual intimacies with the person counseled or member of his/her family. The person is to observe chastity consistent with his/her station in life. All sessions should occur at appropriate times and places and may not occur in private living quarters. All information should be considered as confidential and not disclosed unless there is a potential serious threat to the health or safety of the minor or another person. (A potential serious threat would include but not be limited to information that a minor is pregnant, is being sexually or physical abused, is being threatened or stalked, is contemplating suicide or injuring another person, etc.) In such event sufficient information is to be promptly disclosed to the parents and/or law enforcement authorities so as to hopefully reduce or eliminate the threat to health and safety. With regard to information that the child is being abused, the matter shall be reported to the authorities as provided by law and to the Diocese as provided under the "Policy of the Diocese of Biloxi Regarding Complaints of Abuse of Minors." Note: Under no circumstances whatsoever can there be any disclosure-even indirect disclosure-of information received through the confessional.

7. Harassment, whether based upon race, ethnicity, sex, physical appearance or otherwise is not consistent with Christian principles and Church teachings. Each person is made in the image of God and deserving of respect and dignity. No one shall engage in any form of harassment. Any complaint which alleges any form of harassment shall be promptly reported to the appropriate pastor, principal or office director.

8. In general, it is not appropriate for a minor to visit the home of an adult. There may be times when this may be appropriate such as when a group youth activity is scheduled at someone's home. However, minors are not to be present at an adult's home without other adult chaperones being present.

+ Louis Kihneman

Most Reverend Louis F. Kihneman, III
Bishop of Biloxi

January, 2019

POLICY OF THE DIOCESE OF BILOXI REGARDING COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE OF MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

INTRODUCTION

1 Every person is created by God. God has given to each of us a dignity that must be respected. Therefore, the Catholic Church condemns all forms of abuse of people of all ages.

2 In regard specifically to minors, it is the policy of the Diocese of Biloxi that abuse of minors is totally reprehensible and intolerable behavior. Any such conduct is, by its very nature, completely contrary to Christian morality. Therefore, it is contrary to the duties and employment of all personnel serving within the Diocese. It cannot and will not be tolerated.

3 All who serve the mission of the Catholic Church within the Diocese of Biloxi must comply with all applicable local, state and federal laws regarding incidents of actual or suspected abuse of minors and with the provisions of this policy.

4 Through this policy, the Diocese of Biloxi takes steps to safeguard minors in the circumstances described in the following provisions. This policy establishes requirements and procedures in an effort to prevent sexual and other physical abuse of minors by personnel within the Diocese and to provide instructions to all personnel within the Diocese as to how to respond to complaints of abuse of minors, if any such complaints are received. Anyone accused of abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult retains all the rights afforded him or her by canon law or civil law.

DEFINITIONS

5 For the purpose of this policy only:

"sexual abuse" is the involvement with, use of, aiding, tolerating, condoning, employment of, or coercion of, of any minor to engage in sexual conduct, or having a minor assist, participate or cooperate with any –person to engage in any sexual conduct. Sexual conduct involves all acts of a sexual, lewd or lascivious nature contrary to the moral instruction, doctrines or canon law of the Catholic Church or otherwise unlawful, including but not limited to fondling and various acts of sodomy and intercourse, but also the creating, producing, distributing, or facilitating the distribution of any visual depiction of such conduct or behavior, whether simulated or actual; it expressly includes the creation or production of child pornography as well as the possession or viewing of child pornography except for the limited, legitimate purposes of disciplining or the reporting of such matters to authorities. Child pornography is not only a grave moral offense, it is also a criminal offense and is required by law to be reported to civil authorities.

"other physical abuse" is the intentional infliction of any physical injury or emotional injury provided that the latter is of sufficient magnitude so that it causes a deterioration in or endangerment to the minor's health, moral or emotional well-being.

"Child pornography," for purposes of this policy, is the production or possession of child pornography shall be considered sexual abuse of a minor. Possession or production of child pornography is not only a grave offense of children; it is a criminal offense and is required by law to be reported to civil authorities.

"supervisor" *is* the pastor of a parish, the principal of a school, or the director/head of a diocesan office or agency or an affiliated corporation.

"minor" is any individual under the age of eighteen years; this term also includes any individual under the age of twenty years who is currently enrolled as a student in a school of the Diocese of Biloxi or an individual who is a vulnerable adult.

"vulnerable adult" is a person eighteen years of age or older who is significantly impaired in the ability to, or otherwise unable to, protect his or her own rights, interests and/or vital concerns and who cannot readily seek help without assistance because of a physical, mental or emotional impairment.

"clergy" refers to bishops, priests, and deacons.

"personnel" includes all persons, eighteen years of age and older, clergy, religious and lay, who participate in the work of the Diocese of Biloxi, whether full-time or part-time, paid or non-paid.

"Diocese of Biloxi" or "Diocese" includes the diocesan departments and administrative offices, together with all parishes and missions within the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi, and all schools, institutions, agencies, and other offices affiliated with, supervised, controlled or directed by any of the diocesan departments and administrative offices or parishes or missions within the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi.

"Bishop" is the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi as appointed in accord with Church law and includes any individual lawfully exercising oversight of the Diocese in accordance with Church law, whether under the title Bishop, Administrator, Apostolic Administrator, or otherwise.

DUTY TO DISTRIBUTE

6 A copy of this policy will be sent by the Diocese of Biloxi to all clergy, school principals, religious, seminarians, diocesan office directors, parish directors of religious education, parish youth ministers, social service centers, and administrators of housing locations. They are obligated by this policy to distribute this policy to all employees whom they supervise or with whom they serve, as well as all volunteers whom they supervise or with whom they serve.

7 On site audits will be conducted at parishes and schools to ensure the policy has been distributed in accord with paragraph six. It is not necessary to reissue the policy to personnel who have already received it. It is necessary to make certain that all new personnel have received a copy of the policy.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

8 It is recommended that all clergy, seminarians, religious, employees and volunteers participate in a Safe Environment Training every 5 years. This training can take place at the Diocesan, school or parish level or at seminaries. Training is also available on the Diocese of Biloxi web site through Catholic Mutual.

OBLIGATION TO REPORT

9 Any person who has actual knowledge of or who has reasonable cause to suspect an incident of sexual or other physical abuse of a minor by any personnel of the Diocese of Biloxi shall comply with all applicable reporting requirements of local, state and federal laws (unless to do so would violate the priest-penitent privilege of the sacrament of confession), and shall also report to the Diocese as follows:

10 A verbal report shall be immediately communicated to the supervisor unless the supervisor is the subject of the complaint, in which case the report shall be made as provided in paragraph eleven. The supervisor shall comply with the reporting requirements of local, state and federal laws and will also report immediately as directed in paragraph eleven. Within a reasonable time, a written report will be submitted. The reference to the report in paragraph eleven includes both the verbal and written report. A request for anonymity on the part of any person reporting an allegation of abuse who does not wish to have his or her identity revealed will be honored to the extent allowed by law.

11 If the complaint is made against a bishop, priest, deacon or religious, the report is to be made to the Vicar General of the Diocese of Biloxi and/or any person or authority provided for in ecclesiastical or civil law. The Vicar General will also be responsible for any reports that are not covered by the following personnel:

If the complaint is made against personnel of a school, the report is to be made to the Superintendent of Catholic schools of the Diocese of Biloxi.

If the complaint is made against personnel involved in youth ministry, the report is to be made to Director of Youth Ministry of the Diocese of Biloxi.

If the complaint is made against personnel of Catholic Charities of South Mississippi or any housing corporations sponsored by the Diocese of Biloxi, the report is to be made to the Executive Director of Catholic Charities of South Mississippi.

If the complaint is made against personnel involved in parish religious education, the report is to be made to the Director of Religious Education of the Diocese of Biloxi.

All reports are to be given to the Vicar General who will initiate an investigation of the complaint with the advice of the consultative committee as provided for in paragraph fourteen.

In the event that any of the above named individuals are not available, the Bishop may appoint a person to act in the person's absence.

12 A person may also lodge a complaint of sexual abuse or other physical abuse of a minor by contacting one of the following: his/her parish priest, the local dean, the Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate of the Diocese of Biloxi, or the Vicar General directly. All priests and deacons are to communicate promptly any complaint received of sexual or other physical abuse of a minor to the Vicar General.

13 The Vicar General shall immediately consult with, and seek direction from, the diocesan attorney on reporting and complying with applicable law.

THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

14 The Bishop will appoint five to seven individuals to serve as members of a consultative committee.

The consultative committee will advise the Vicar General in the conduct of the investigation. The consultative committee may include mental health or social services professionals, parents, religious, and clergy. The committee has no role in the actual investigation of the complaint, but shall serve to advise the Vicar General, who is responsible for directing the investigation.

15 Upon receipt of a complaint of sexual abuse or other physical abuse of a minor, as provided for in paragraph eleven, the Vicar General shall promptly convene the consultative committee. The Vicar General will direct the investigation of the complaint and must seek the advice of the consultative committee in accord with the following procedure:

A. The consultative committee will meet for an initial conference as soon as reasonably practical to discuss what investigation, if any, is needed.

B. The initial conference of the consultative committee may take place in person or by telephone.

C. Within a reasonable time, the consultative committee will make written recommendations to the Vicar General regarding the aspects of the matter, including, but not limited to:

1. If there is no legal obligation to report the complaint to civil authorities, the committee will advise whether or not to report the matter to civil authorities. The committee should weigh and respect, among other factors depending on the situation, the desires of the victim(s) as to the reporting of the incident(s), taking into consideration the right of the victim(s) to privacy and the present status and circumstances of the subject of the complaint.

2. Whether to suspend, terminate, or take other appropriate personnel action regarding the subject of the complaint.

3. Whether to hire an investigator to conduct an independent investigation.

4. Whether to hire a psychiatrist, psychologist, or other mental health professional to meet with the alleged victim(s) and/or subject of the complaint and/or witnesses.

5. Whether to recommend treatment for the alleged victim(s) and the subject of the complaint.

D. The Vicar General will follow all other pertinent provisions of this policy in matters dealing with allegations of sexual or other physical abuse of minors.

INVESTIGATION

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST DIOCESAN PRIESTS AND DEACONS

16 Due to the canonical relationship which diocesan priests and deacons have with the Diocese, if a complaint of sexual or other physical abuse is made against a diocesan priest or deacon, an investigation shall be made in accord with the policy pertaining specifically to diocesan priests and deacons which follows:

A. When the Vicar General receives a complaint against a diocesan priest or deacon, he will seek the guidance of the consultative committee and will investigate promptly. He may do this personally,

or he may request other priests, deacons, religious or laity, including persons not in the employ of the Diocese, to conduct this investigation under his direction and coordination. This investigation may include speaking with the subject of the complaint, the alleged victim, the family of the alleged victim (if appropriate), and other appropriate persons, whenever possible.

B. If the complaint implicates a significant moral or legal doctrine, and if the priest or deacon admits the allegations, or if the allegations are established, he is to be permanently removed from active ministry. No priest or deacon who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor may be transferred for a ministerial assignment in another diocese.

C. If the priest or deacon denies the complaint, but the complaint implicates a significant moral or legal doctrine, and the evidence warrants it, the priest or deacon is to participate in a professional, independent psychological evaluation with a professional selected by the bishop as soon as possible. Further decisions regarding his ministry are to be made after receiving the results of this evaluation.

D. If the circumstances warrant, the priest or deacon may request an administrative leave of absence which the Bishop of the Diocese of Biloxi may accept. If the circumstances warrant, the Bishop of the Diocese of Biloxi may impose, with or without the concurrence of the priest or deacon, an administrative leave and/or limitation or revocation of ministerial faculties, pending the outcome of the internal investigation and any independent investigation. An administrative leave may be imposed only after the Bishop speaks with the accused priest or deacon. Such action does not imply guilt on the part of the accused priest or deacon.

E. After completion of the internal investigation as established herein, the Vicar General shall make a determination about the validity of the allegation and shall make a written report with recommendations to the Bishop.

F. The Vicar General is responsible for making certain that pastoral care and solace are offered to all concerned. No medical, psychological or physical assistance may be offered without the approval of the Bishop.

G. Treatment is to be provided for the subject of the complaint as deemed appropriate by the Bishop.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PRIESTS, DEACONS, MEN AND WOMEN WHO BELONG TO RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES SERVING IN THE DIOCESE OF BILOXI

17 Due to the canonical relationship which members of religious institutes have with the Diocese of Biloxi, if a report alleges sexual abuse or other physical abuse of a minor by a man or woman, clerical or lay, who belongs to a religious institute, an investigation shall be made in accordance with the policy pertaining specifically to them which follows:

A. When the Vicar General receives a complaint against a member of a religious institute, he will notify the superior of the religious institute that a complaint against one of its members has been received and request cooperation of the religious institute in the investigation. He will also seek the guidance of the consultative committee and will investigate promptly. He may do this personally, or he may request other priests, deacons, religious or laity, including persons not in the employ of the Diocese, to conduct this investigation under his direction and coordination. This investigation may include speaking with the subject of the complaint, the alleged victim, the family of the alleged victim (if appropriate), and other appropriate persons, whenever possible.

B. If the complaint implicates a significant moral or legal doctrine, and if the religious admits the allegations, or if the allegations are established, he/she is to be removed immediately from active ministry.

C. If the religious denies the complaint, but the complaint implicates a significant moral or legal doctrine, and the evidence warrants it, the religious is to participate in a professional, independent psychological evaluation as soon as possible. Further decisions regarding his/her active ministry within the Diocese of Biloxi are to be made after receiving the results of this evaluation.

D. If the circumstances warrant, the religious may request an administrative leave of absence which the Bishop of the Diocese of Biloxi may accept. If the circumstances warrant, the Bishop of the Diocese of Biloxi may impose, with or without the concurrence of the religious, an administrative leave and/or limitation or revocation of ministerial faculties, pending the outcome of the internal investigation and any independent investigation. An administrative leave may be imposed only after the Bishop speaks with the accused religious and the superior of the religious institute. Such action does not imply guilt on the part of the accused religious.

E. After completion of the internal investigation as established herein, the Vicar General shall make a determination about the validity of the allegation and shall make a written report with recommendations to the bishop.

F. The Vicar General is responsible for making certain that pastoral care and solace are offered to all concerned. No medical, psychological or physical assistance may be offered without the approval of the Bishop.

G. Treatment is to be provided for the subject of the complaint as deemed appropriate by the Bishop.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST OTHER PERSONNEL

18 If a complaint of sexual or other physical abuse of a minor by any personnel of the Diocese of Biloxi is presented (other than against a priest, deacon or religious as provided above), the Vicar General shall conduct an investigation as follows:

A. The Vicar General will seek the guidance of the consultative committee and will investigate promptly. He may do this personally, or he may request priests, deacons, religious or laity, including persons not in the employ of the Diocese, to conduct this investigation under his direction and coordination. This investigation may include speaking with the subject of the complaint, the alleged victim, the family of the alleged victim (if appropriate), and other appropriate persons, whenever possible.

B. Other appropriate action may be taken to protect the alleged victim(s), subject of the complaint, or other affected persons during the investigation.

C. If the Vicar General deems it appropriate, the subject of the complaint will be immediately relieved of any position in the Diocese of Biloxi and placed on administrative leave, pending the outcome of the internal investigation and any outside investigation. Administrative leave does not imply guilt on the part of the accused person.

D. The Vicar General is responsible for making certain that pastoral care and solace are offered to all concerned. No medical, psychological or physical assistance may be offered without the approval of the Bishop.

E. After adequate and appropriate investigation, the Vicar General shall make a determination about the validity of the complaint and take appropriate action.

F. Any personnel who admits to, does not contest, or is found guilty of sexual abuse or other physical abuse of a minor shall be immediately terminated from employment, or service, or any position of responsibility within the Diocese.

MEDIA CONTACT AND INQUIRIES

19 Any media contact or inquiries regarding an incident of sexual abuse or other physical abuse of a minor by personnel of the Diocese of Biloxi must be directed to the Diocesan Director of Communications.

20 Within the confines of respect for the privacy of the individuals involved, the Diocese of Biloxi pledges itself to deal as openly as possible with the members of the Church and the broader community about any incident of sexual abuse or other physical abuse of a minor.

RECORDS

21 Records maintained by the Vicar General concerning each occurrence reported, the investigation, and the results of the investigation, shall be placed in a sealed envelope marked "confidential" and held in a locked file cabinet. The Vicar General shall maintain the files, under seal, with access limited to the Bishop of the Diocese of Biloxi, the Vicar General, and the diocesan attorney.

Revised January, 2019