

Code of Ethics for Youth Ministry Leaders Revised February 2008

The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry has developed the following code of ethics for youth ministry leaders¹. The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry recommends that youth ministry leaders adopt this code by signing, dating, and placing it in their personnel file. This code of ethics is intended for youth ministry leaders regardless of employment status within the church. While this code may be used in conjunction with existing diocesan policies, protocols or codes, it is not intended to supersede them.

Professional Ethical Obligations

1. Ministerial Role
 - a) Youth ministry leaders work collaboratively with the pastor (and/or other supervisors) and associates in ministry.
 - b) Youth ministry leaders faithfully represent the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action.
 - c) Youth ministry leaders are competent and receive education and training commensurate with their role(s) and responsibilities (§ 231, Code of Canon Law).
 - d) Youth ministry leaders respect the diversity of spiritualities in the faith community and will not make their personal form of spirituality normative.
2. Inclusion
 - a) Youth ministry leaders recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from behaviors or words that are disrespectful of anyone or any group.
 - b) Youth ministry leaders serve all people without regard to gender, creed, national origin, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, immigration status, or political beliefs.
 - c) Youth ministry leaders ensure that all persons have access to the resources, services, and opportunities they require with particular regard for persons with special needs or disabilities.
3. Accountability
 - a) Youth ministry leaders are accountable to the pastor or other duly appointed representative, under the authority of the (arch)diocesan (arch)bishop.
 - b) Youth ministry leaders are called to serve the faith community, carrying out their ministerial functions "...conscientiously, zealously, and diligently" (§ 231, Code of Canon Law).
 - c) Youth ministry leaders exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest standards of integrity regarding the fiscal matters placed in their trust.
 - d) Youth ministry leaders, upon suspecting or learning of abuse of a minor, must notify the civil authorities, as well as church leadership responsible for this topic, in accordance with civil and ecclesial law.
4. Confidentiality
 - a) Youth ministry leaders respect confidentiality, yet are not held to confidentiality in the same way as ordained ministers and licensed, certified counselors.
 - b) Youth ministry leaders adhere to civil and ecclesial law concerning the reporting of neglect, abuse or when physical harm could come to the person or to a third party.
 - c) Youth ministry leaders support the rights and roles of parents while ministering to the needs and concerns of their children.
5. Conduct
 - a) Youth ministry leaders know that they have considerable personal power because of their ministerial position. Therefore, they will sustain respectful ministerial relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power.
 - b) Youth ministry leaders maintain appropriate professional boundaries (e.g., physical, sexual, spiritual, relational, and emotional). Romantic, dating, or sexual relationships between a youth ministry leader and any youth is inappropriate and unethical.
 - c) Youth ministry leaders shall exhibit the highest ethical standards and personal integrity reflective of the Gospel and will avoid even the appearance of impropriety.
 - d) Youth ministry leaders may not use alcohol while supervising youth; may never use illicit substances; and, may never provide alcohol or illicit substances to youth.

6. Referrals and Intervention
 - a) Youth ministry leaders know the signs of neglect and physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.
 - b) Youth ministry leaders know their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and make appropriate referrals.

7. Parish/Diocesan Policies
 - a) Youth ministry leaders know of and comply with all applicable parish, organizational and/or diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, safe Environment, risk management, safety, transportation, parental permission, and medical emergency policies.

I have read and understand the above code of ethics and commit to uphold this code in my ministry.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

References

- Coriden, J., Green, T. & Heintschel, D, Editors, (1985). The Code of Canon Law. A text and Commentary. The Canon Law Society of America. New York: Paulist Press.
- Gula, Richard, (1996), Ethics in Pastoral Ministry. New York: Paulist Press.
- National Association for Lay Ministry Standards Code of Ethics. Downloaded from the Internet on October 16, 2002 at www.nalm.org/standards.html.
- National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry's Organizational Code of Conduct. March 2000.
- NALM, NCCL, and NFCYM, (September 29, 2002). Common Competency Project Core Certification Standards and Competencies. Draft 3.

ⁱ This code of ethics pertains to lay ecclesial ministers serving as youth ministry leaders. These individuals may conduct ministry under a variety of titles, including but not limited to coordinator of youth ministry, director of youth ministry, parish youth minister, and/or campus minister. Some pastoral associates, parish coordinators, and catechetical leaders may also share responsibility for youth ministry and as such may be considered "lay ecclesial ministers serving as youth ministry leaders."