

Appendix B

Use of Zoom and Other Digital Technologies with Youth

*developed by the Office for Youth & Young Adult Ministry and
the Department of Protection of the Faithful*

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Archdiocese of Newark, NJ

Zoom, Go to Meetings and other virtual web platforms are valuable tools that have started being used with youth during these times. However, we need to make sure, that just as when we gather in person, it is important to recall our ongoing commitment to the Protection of the Faithful and to make sure we are being transparent in all we do. Communication with parents, our priests and supervisors in what we are doing and conducting is a necessity.

Some practical suggestions for using Live Streaming Platforms are ...

- There should be a minimum of two adults that are current in their Archdiocesan Safe Environment requirements on the calls (exceptions may be made in a schoolteacher situation running a class)
- The adults leading the call should be properly dressed and conduct themselves the same as they would in an in-person gathering. They should encourage the minors on the call, before it starts, that they need to do the same, and they should take the call in a public area of their home.
- All safe environment protocols and guidelines should be followed – as if it were an in-person gathering
- No adults should enter private Zoom, etc. chat groups by themselves. Two approved adults must be present in these as well.
- Many of these platforms offer the option to record the sessions – we would recommend doing that and keeping them in a file folder to be shared with the Pastor, etc. in case any questions arise.
- Pastors or supervisors and parents should be made aware of the times calls are being made – via social media, email, website, etc., so there are no “surprises.” Just as all face-to-face meetings are scheduled and recorded. Consider the use of a permission slip.
- Many of these platforms offer an option to have a required registration where a password can be given – take advantage of that so unwanted people will not be able to come onto the call.
- When running meetings, only allow the adult host of the meeting to share their screen (Zoom has recently made this a default setting so as not to allow others to jump in and take over the screen)
- If the platform has a “waiting room” feature utilize this. This option allows people to be held in a queue until the adult host comes onto the call – this prevents unknown conversations to take place
- While on these video calls if anything inappropriate is said or done, follow up immediately with the parents and teen – just as you would if it were a in-person gathering. Follow up with a call to Karen Clark, the Director of the Office for Protection of the Faithful, regarding the inappropriate action and what you have done since. If the actions rise to the level of sexual exploitation, local law enforcement and child protection authorities should also be contacted.
- Login credentials and passwords for accounts should be given and kept on file with principals, pastors, or supervisors.