



Code of Conduct for Ministry with Children and Youth

Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us.

As a staff member or volunteer, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Pastoral Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to children and youth.

Section One: Affidavit

As a staff member or volunteer, I will:

- Exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity.
- Conduct myself in a manner consistent with the discipline and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Complete training in the Diocesan mandated *Darkness to Light* program.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with an individual child or young person at Church activities.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from children and/or youth or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor or administrator.
- Refrain from giving expensive gifts to children and/or youth without prior written approval from the parents or guardian and the pastor or administrator.
- Report suspected abuse to the pastor, administrator, or appropriate supervisor.
- (If I am a mandatory reporter of child abuse in the State of Oregon) Report suspected abuse to the appropriate civil authorities.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.

As a staff member or volunteer, I will not:

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while volunteering in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Purchase, download, possess, or distribute pornography.
- Pose any health risk to children and/or youth (i.e., no fevers or other contagious situations).
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap children and/or youth.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade children and/or youth.
- Touch a child and/or youth in a sexual or any other inappropriate manner.
- Use any discipline that humiliates children and/or youth.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth.

Section Two: Suitable & Unsuitable Behavior and Touching of Children and Youth

Because it would be impossible to compile a comprehensive list of specific acts constituting Sexual Misconduct, we must use common sense, guided by the principles set forth in this Code of Conduct, to direct our behavior.

All staff members and volunteers must be alert to avoid any type of contact with children that might lead to misunderstandings, or be misconstrued or misinterpreted by reasonable people.

The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (www.nfcym.org) provides the following list of appropriate and inappropriate touching in their policies for protecting young children.

The following behaviors are generally considered *suitable* at a child or youth event:

- Side hugs (shoulder to shoulder)
- Pats on the back or top of head
- Handshakes
- “High-fives” and hand slapping
- Verbal praise for a job well-done (not regarding physical attributes)
- Touching hands, faces (usually in context of a blessing), shoulders, and arms of minors
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking with young children
- Sitting beside younger minors
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with younger minors
- Holding hands during prayer

The following are *unsuitable* touching of a child or youth:

- Unsuitable or lengthy embraces
- Kisses on the mouth
- Holding children on the lap who are capable of sitting by themselves
- Touching bottoms, legs, knees, chests, or genital areas
- Wrestling
- Tickling
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of massage

I acknowledge that I have read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct for Ministry with Children and Youth.

I understand that any action on my part inconsistent with Code of Conduct, or failure to take action mandated by them, may result in removal from my position.

I also understand this Code of Conduct does not abrogate or replace any other obligations that I have under any applicable law, guideline, policy or regulation.

I acknowledge that I have been given the Diocese of Baker "Internet Resources Policies and Best Practices" document and agree to comply with all policies as set forth in said document.

Staff Member or Volunteer's Printed Name

Date of Birth

Staff Member or Volunteer's Signature

Date

Parish Name

Parish City