

DIOCESE OF SAN JOSE CATHOLIC COMMITTEE ON SCOUTING AND CAMP FIRE

Diocesan Religious Counselor Policy

COUNSELOR STATEMENT

As an adult called to minister to youth, your ministry requires you to accept responsibility for the care of the spiritual, mental and physical well-being of the youth you serve. In all ministries certain risks are inherent in the proper exercise of ministry. These risks are always real and prudence dictates that due caution must always be exercised. This is especially true of those who work with youth.

Today's society has become much more aware of the existence, causes and scope of the abuse of children. It rightly responds to the abuse of a child with revulsion and moral outrage. Whenever an adult, who through an association with a church program or an organized youth program, is accused of misconduct with a minor, this outrage is intensified. Even though those accused may be innocent, their personal ministry and the ministry of the church will more than likely be irreparably harmed by the ensuing scandal.

As mentioned before, all Christian ministries involve certain risks. These risks are inevitable whenever a Christian responds to Christ's command to spread the Gospel message. The possibility of encountering difficulties should never deter someone from ministering to youth.

Ministering to youth has correctly been termed a relational ministry. This requires the adult to develop a personal relationship with the youth to whom he/she ministers. This relationship between the adult and youth is one based on trust and mutual respect. It is through this caring relationship that the adult is able to foster the spiritual and faith developmental processes within the youth.

As a minister to youth, your primary mission is to nurture the spiritual needs of the youth. However, you cannot effectively carry out your mission if the youth are being abused by others through neglect, or emotional, sexual or physical abuse. Conservative statistics on the abuse of children state that as many as one in five boys and one in three girls will be sexually molested before the age of twenty-one. Knowing this, it is more than likely that we, adults who minister to them, will come into contact with youth that have been or are currently being abused. Therefore, it is your responsibility to be able to recognize some of the signs of possible child abuse. To accomplish this task, you need to avail yourself of readily obtainable written and/or audiovisual materials. There are also training programs available through various youth serving organizations to help you in this area. The Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting and Camp Fire will be able to assist you with these training materials.

In addition to observing the possible signs of abuse, a youth may disclose to you that he/she is a victim of abuse. In either case, once you have cause to believe that a youth's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected, you must report it immediately to the proper authorities in your State and Diocese. Most States have criminal and/or civil penalties for failure to report such cases to the proper authorities. Know your State policies!

There are many challenges in today's society that youth must encounter on a daily basis. As adults who work with youth we are called by Christ to assist them in facing these challenges with a strong faith in Him and a healthy self-image. To this end we must always keep in mind that our role as ministers to youth includes being an advocate for youth. It is through our understanding and awareness of the problem of child abuse that we can start to fulfill this role.

DIOCESAN POLICY

Adults must be cautioned to act very wisely in all relationships with youth. In order to protect the youth we serve and to prevent tragic accusations, the following precautions are to be followed:

1) No adults should let themselves become involved in a situation where they are alone or secluded with a youth. If a youth desires a confidential conversation, the adult should make sure that the discussion takes place in the full view of other people. For example, an adult can have a private conversation in a park full of people, but never behind a closed door.

2) Whenever a person volunteers to work with youth, it is imperative that a responsible and knowledgeable person interviews the adult. References should be carefully checked and documented in order to see that the individual has not had any previous complaints leveled against him/her. This is especially important if the adult is either unknown or new to the local community. The attached reference checklist should be used, as it is evidence that a background check was attempted.

Some indicators that could signal a possible problem are the following:

- resistance to interviews or reference checks;
- insistence on a one-on-one relationship with youths;
- inordinate amount of interest in working with youth, in several youth serving organizations.

3) All Counselors operating within the Diocese of San José, must be certified by the Catholic Committee on Scouting and Camp Fire.

RELIGIOUS COUNSELOR APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone No: (H) _____ / _____ (B) _____ / _____

Occupation: _____ Employer: _____

Registered with BSA: __ GSUSA: __ CAMPFIRE: __ Primary Position: _____

Over age 18? _____ Parish: _____

Religious Educational Background (Catholic School, etc):

Please be specific _____

Current and other adult religious/ faith education (Workshops, etc):

Please be specific _____

Scouting/ Campfire Background (Positions/ dates/ locations/ awards):

Parish/ Church Activities:

Community Activities, Civic Awards, Hobbies, Other Interests:

Explain why you want to be a Religious Emblems Counselor:

I have read and understood the "COUNSELOR STATEMENT" and "DIOCESAN POLICY", and agree to fully abide by their terms

SIGNED

PARISH ENDORSEMENT:

I, the undersigned, certify that the applicant is an active member of my Parish. I further endorse this person as a Religious Emblem Counselor, within the Diocese of San Jos,, with the duty and responsibility of guiding the faith development of Catholic youth. To my knowledge, the applicant is qualified to work with youth, in accordance with our diocesan youth protection policy.

PASTOR
FOR DIOCESAN USE ONLY:

DATE

CERTIFICATION RECORD

Registration Verified: BSA__ GSUSA__ CF__ Leadership Training:_____

Counselor Training:_____ Youth Protection Training:_____

Reference Check by:_____ Date:

Interviewed by:_____ Date:

Approved:_____ Date:

For the following Emblems:

LIGHT OF CHRIST_____ PARVULI DEI_____

AD ALTARE DEI_____ POPE PIUS XII_____

FAMILY OF GOD_____ I LIVE MY FAITH_____ IMMAC HEART OF MARY_____

MARIAN_____ SPIRIT ALIVE_____

Commission valid until:_____ RE Counselor Reg #:_____

**Diocese of San José,
Catholic Committee on Scouting and Camp Fire**

BACKGROUND REFERENCE CHECKLIST

Applicant's Name _____

REFERENCES: List 3 persons not related to you who can judge your qualifications as a Religious Counselor.

Name	Complete Address	Telephone
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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

If you have a current application and references on file with your Youth Organization, you may choose the following option:

I hereby release my Volunteer References held at the BSA--GSUSA--CF (circle one) Office for review by the Catholic Committee on Scouting and Camp Fire.

_____ Date _____ Applicant's Signature

FOR DIOCESAN USE ONLY: (Use back of page if necessary)

1) Name: _____

Comments: _____

2) Name: _____

Comments: _____

3) Name: _____

Comments: _____

Unless otherwise indicated, I, _____, have contacted the above listed references for the named applicant. I have noted their comments on this form. All comments I've received will be held in the strictest confidence.

Date _____ Signature _____