

Certificate of Completion

Date _____

Safe Environment Training For YOUTH Assistants

Parish Name

Trainer Name

Youth Assistants Signature

Parents Signature



Safe Environment Booklet: For YOUTH Assisting Adults in Ministry

*A faith community's response to honoring
and protecting all God's people*

*Diocese of Owensboro 2019
with special thanks to the
Archdiocese of Omaha*

Closing Prayer

Oh God, send forth Your Holy Spirit into our hearts that our minds and souls will embrace all that is good and holy.

Inspire us to speak and act with truth, holiness, tenderness and mercy, especially with the children and youth that we are blessed to serve

Teach and direct us to model Your infinite love and mercy for all

May Your grace ever help and guide us

May we be strengthened always by Your wisdom

For the sake of all Your children, young and old.

Amen

Adapted St. Anthony of Padua Prayer

Remember...

*You can help the adult ministers provide a
SAFE environment
by understanding your role.*

- **Safety is always first**
- **Be aware of any concerns/changes in behaviors**
- **Report these concerns/changes in behavior to an adult minister**

Program Contact Information

Dear Youth Assistants,

Thank you so much for volunteering your time and talents to assist adult ministers who are in charge of diocesan programs and events for children/youth. Your involvement will have a positive effect on all.

The purpose of this training is to provide you with key safe environment (SE) information that will be helpful in your youth assistant role.

God bless you for your generosity and saying “yes” to this important role!

Safe Environment Blessing

Creator God

We ask You to bless us in the youth assistant role You have set before us.

Help us to:
speak the truth so it can be heard.

listen with sensitivity to the needs of children and youth.

put our faith in action by remembering your presence in our lives.

have patience and understanding to handle the ministry placed before us.

We ask this blessing upon each of us, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

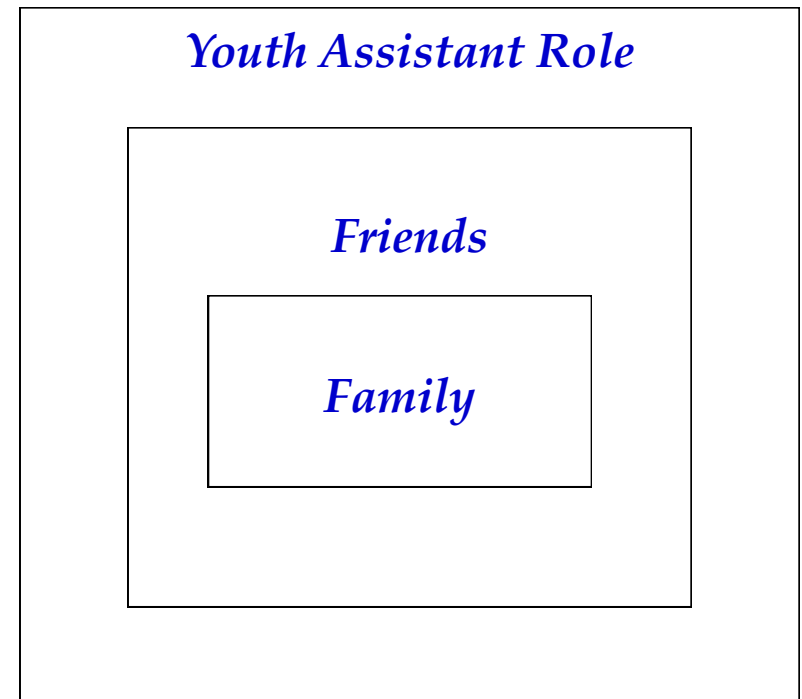
Role Expectations

The below diagram represents the different relationships one may encounter:

Family– Key place where we learn about relationships

Friends– These relationships have a balance of power, status and resources

Youth Assistant– youth leader who helps in Church/School ministries/activities. *Remember that while volunteering as a youth assistant, you need to remain in this role with it's expectations even though you may have friends in the ministry/activities.*



What an Adult Leader Can Expect of Youth Assistants

- Respectful behavior
- Active participation in prayer and worship experiences
- Follow instructions
- Good listening skills
- Include everyone in activities
- Use appropriate language:
 - No name calling
 - Profanities
 - Put downs
- No practical jokes or humiliation
- All relationships need to remain in the youth assistant role during the time one is in this role
- Model program guidelines set by adults, i.e. sufficient sleep, healthy eating, etc.
- Confidentiality

**A Safe Environment is crucial
for the Youth Assistants and
all whom they serve...**

*“Being in the image of God
the human individual possesses the
dignity of a person, who is not just
something, but someone.”
Catechism of the Catholic Church,
Second Edition, 1997*

History of Safe Environment Programs in The US Catholic Church Since 2002

All U.S. dioceses have been mandated to provide:

- *Victim assistance programs*
- *Safe environment policies*
- *Safe environment trainings for adults, children and youth*

Youth Assistant Role Expectations

- Must have completed the 6th grade
- Ability to follow program guidelines set by Adults.
- Positive role model with strong leadership skills
- Interest and availability for working with youth
- Enthusiasm
- Lives out their faith
- Ability to follow instructions
- Strong communication skills

What a Youth Assistant Can Expect of Adult Leaders

- An outline of your program responsibilities, expectations and how you will be supervised
- Communication with your parents regarding your leadership role and responsibilities
- Never to be left alone to supervise children/youth

Ministry Roles Defined...

Adult Ministry Role

Adult Ministry is any role or activity in which an adult has regular contact with children and youth in the name of the Church.

Examples – Coaches, priests, teachers, volunteers, bus drivers, cooks, etc.

Youth Assistant Role

ASSIST adult ministers in working with children/youth:

Examples – youth counselors, religious education assistants, vacation bible school assistants, etc..

So How Does the Church Protect Our Children/Youth?

“ Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these”

Luke 18:16

There are several key things the Catholic Church has put into place to help protect our children and youth. They are:

- **Policies and guidelines for those ministering to children/youth.**
- **Required SE training and background checks for all adults working with children/youth.**
- ***Circle of Grace* safe environment lessons for all youth in the your diocesan schools and parish programs.**

Key Concepts are Taught in *Circle of Grace*

The Goal of the Circle of Grace program is to educate and empower children/youth to actively participate in a safe environment for themselves and others.

God is:

- *“present” in everyone’s Circle of Grace.*
- *“present” because He desires a relationship.*

God Helps us know:

- *what belongs in our Circle of Grace.*
- *what doesn’t belong in our Circle of Grace.*
- *when to ask for help from a trusted adult.*

Youth Assistants Need be Aware of the General *Circle of Grace* Concepts.

Alert the adult leader if:

- **a child or youth talks to you about something “uncomfortable” in his/her *Circle of Grace*.**
- **you witness or hear something that makes you or a child uncomfortable.**
- **you experience something uncomfortable in your *Circle of Grace*.**