



Diocese of Springfield in Illinois  
**Code of Conduct for Youth and Young Adults (under the age of 18)**

**For Employment or Volunteer Services in a parish, school or diocesan program  
or activity**

## **Introduction**

The intention of this Code of Conduct is to propel the youth of our diocese to be “imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love” by conforming their thoughts, words, and actions to the “mind...which is yours in Christ Jesus,” and by following his example (CCC 1694). It is meant to ensure a safe, healthy and moral environment for youth in any diocesan or parish/school setting. This Code is a reminder that we are all created with dignity in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-28).

Pope John Paul II challenged young people to heroic faith. In his message for World Youth Day 2002, he exhorted them “not to be content with anything less than the highest ideals!” He also said, “If you have an ardent desire for the Lord, you will steer clear of the mediocrity and conformity so widespread in our society...” This Code aids in the creation of an environment that aspires to the highest of standards and ideals.

The content of this Code is inspired by the Holy Father’s message, Jesus “great commandment” (Matt 22: 36-40) of love, and the God given dignity of each person. This Code is one of Christian kindness, respect, hospitality, and care, which will provide an ability to defeat mediocrity and conformity. This Code also reflects Christian stewardship and our proper duty and respect towards places and things.

The following code may be used in conjunction with existing diocesan, parish and school policies, protocols or codes.

**Responsibility Toward God** – *“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to them, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment.” (Matt 22 36-38)*

By using God’s name and the name of Jesus Christ only with respect, and never in careless, abusive, or angry manner

By respectfully participating in prayer and worship

By faithfully representing the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action

By showing respect to the Creator by taking care of God’s creation

**Responsibility Toward Self** - *“...whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.”*

By being mindful that God created each of us in His image and likeness participants will act accordingly:

- by being truthful, understanding, open-minded, gracious, reliable and respectful
- by upholding and supporting God’s plan for sexual relations

- by promoting chastity in dress, speech and action
- by respecting human life in the following ways:
  - Not using, procuring or selling alcohol, tobacco and/or any other illegal drugs
  - Not using profanities
  - Not possessing weapons
  - Not acting in a disruptive manner
- by not being silent and reporting immediately to a responsible adult anytime I feel unsafe.

**Responsibility Toward Others** – *“The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The Whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.” (Matt 22 39-40)*

By respecting the role of adult leaders and administrators and established guidelines

By reporting immediately to a responsible adult anytime I see the safety of another in jeopardy

By honoring and respecting the personal dignity and boundaries of others.

Participants will not:

- Use physical aggression and/or harm
- Use language that insults, bullies, intimidates, humiliates
- Isolate or exclude others
- Threaten or use behavior that leads others into disobedience, disrespect for others, or illegal behavior
- Engage in inappropriate sexual behavior
- Steal
- Disrespect the property of others: personal and institutional
- Gossip, slander or use malicious speech or jokes
- Use sexual language or jokes that demean God’s gift of sexuality or demean the dignity of another
- Cheat
- Initiate or cooperate in harmful behavior/harassment, or acts of violence either by encouragement or supportive observation
- Gamble or take part in any such activity

By promoting and maintaining a safe environment for peers

By making restitution for any damages I cause.

**I have read the above Code of Conduct and agree to support and abide by it.**

Youth or Young Adult Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Leader’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_