



Diocese of Birmingham
Office for Youth

CROSS

Adult Chaperones

What kind of person should serve as a chaperone? Those who become chaperones must be people who:

- 1) Love God and have a growing personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- 2) Love teenagers and are willing to spend time with them.
- 3) Are practicing Catholics registered and active in a Catholic parish.

The Role of the Chaperone is two-fold: First as “youth minister” and second as “health and safety officer.”

Youth Ministers are **role models and adult friends** to the teens who attend our retreat.

The idea of ministry built on relationships is sometimes called *relational* youth ministry and is based the *Incarnation* of Jesus Christ:

I was speaking to a group of youth workers in Kansas. After I had finished, several people came up to talk. The particular issues varied, but the question was the same: "What program can I use to keep my group enthusiastic about their faith?" My answer was probably disappointing to some people: There are a variety of proven methods, many different youth ministry organizations, denominations, books, and individual churches use every type of program imaginable, and they all seem to work. Yet at the same time, any method can also fail! However, there is a way to build a youth group spiritually and numerically. (Contrary to what some might say, youth go where other kids are, so numbers can at times be important.) There is one word that stands out above all other, and that word is **relationship**. Our Christian faith is seated in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Theologically, Jesus is the ‘Incarnation of God.’ He is God in the flesh (Colossians 1:15). As the ministry of Jesus was incarnate in the Gospels, so our lives must be incarnate in youth ministry. If we are ever to have a positive influence on our young people, we must build relationships with them and live out our faith in front of them. Young people tire of phony programs or manipulative methods. They can see through false pretenses. By building

genuine relationships with them and allowing them to see healthy staff relationships, young people will consider the adults as friends and confidants. I believe that students who remain active in the group will stay in the group because of healthy and genuine relationships.

The old adage "More is caught than taught" rings true in the world of relational youth ministry.¹

Don't be fooled into thinking that time spent just “hanging out” or socializing with teens is wasted. Being with a young person in an informal environment may do more for his or her spiritual life than any class or prayer service ever invented.

In other words, think in terms of positive relationships and role-modeling as a way of figuring out what to do. If viewed from the proper perspective, simply pitching in as teens clean-up or do some other simple task can provide an opportunity for your ministry. Breaks and free-time provide us with wonderful opportunities to seek out and encourage teens, especially the kids who are usually left-out by others.

¹ Jim Burns, *The Youth Builder*, Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1988, pp. 16-17

Okay, but what will I do as an adult chaperone?

In addition to supervising or helping to supervise a cabin, the Adult Retreat Director may assign a task to you but most of the time it will be left to your imagination to find suitable things to do. Assisting with set-up and clean-up, serving and monitoring snacks, observing outdoor recreation, participating in prayer are among the many different things you might choose to do. You may find yourself simply sitting and enjoying the retreat – it is all good as long as you focus on your double role of **youth minister and safety officer**. Do not be afraid to stop inappropriate activities, especially in regard to “personal displays of affection.”

Adults will defer to youth team members in many leadership situations. However, adults are always present to provide support, encouragement, advice and **direction**, when needed.

During Sessions and/or Small Groups: If an adult is in the room while a session is going on he or she should **be attentive to the session**.

During small group time adults need to be careful not to disrupt the small groups. Be cautious about socializing during sessions or small groups. You should go outside if you need to talk with someone during a session or small group.

Specific Safety Responsibilities

- 1) Know emergency procedures, including the location of the first-aid kit and how to reach the CROSS Director at all times (cell phone: 205-335-2926).
- 2) Remain at the retreat center throughout the weekend. If the need arises to leave, you are asked to check-out with the CROSS Director.
- 3) Monitor the health and safety of those in your cabin. Bring concerns to the immediate attention of the CROSS Director.
- 4) Each room or cabin will have at least one chaperone assigned as “**in-charge**.” With the assistance of youth team members and possibly other chaperones, the in-charge adult is responsible for:

- a) Curfew enforcement
 - b) Lights out
 - c) Noise control
 - d) Health and safety of cabin occupants.
- 5) Chaperones (even the in-charge chaperone) do **not** have the authority to change or relax curfew or “lights-out” times.
 - 6) Hazing is never permitted during CROSS.
 - 7) Assist in the enforcement of diocesan **youth protection policies**
 - 8) Bring an alarm clock so you can assist team members as they awaken participants each morning.
 - 9) Double check the status of your cabin during departure:
 - a) Trash is removed
 - b) Lost items are turned-in
 - c) Damage is noted and reported
 - d) Etc...
 - 10) Monitor the appropriate use of prescription medications by the young people in your cabin.

Special Note

You will be assigned to one of the cabins – to sleep in the same general space as young people. Each cabin has bunks for up to 30 people with attached rest rooms and showers.

It is important you supervise the cabin while at the same time **protecting your personal privacy and the privacy of the teens**.

Adults should find bunks close to the front door and located next to or close to other adults. **Arrange to use the shower area before or after teens bathe**.

You may want to return to the bunkhouse during a session to use the showers.

Do whatever you can to **avoid the possibility of being isolated with a teen**.

It is just fine for you to shower or nap in the cabin during a session or small group. However, if you are ever alone you should lock the doors to keep teens out. They should be with the large group anyway.

Feel free to kick them out.

Just remember to leave the cabin unlocked when you leave.

Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama – Office for Youth CROSS Retreat Chaperone – Page 1 of 2

Parish _____ Retreat Date _____

First Name (clearly print your name as you want it on nametag)

Name (First and Last) _____

Telephone(s) _____ Age _____ (Must be at least 21)

Address _____ Sex _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Review the following requirements for adult chaperones. **Check the appropriate boxes to indicate “yes.”**

Application for Service (form AS-1) on file at parish office

Criminal background screen has been completed by the parish is on file with the parish office

Have attended Youth Protection 1 as conducted by the Diocese of Birmingham

Date of most recent attendance at Youth Protection 1 _____

Pastor’s Approval: _____

Photograph Release and Authorization

I hereby grant authority to the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama, its Bishop, staff and volunteers for the use of any videos, photographs, or similar items in which I may appear, or statements made by me in the production, display of public service or promotional material. I also hereby release the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama, its Bishop, staff and volunteers from any claims that may be made by me based upon use of this material. I understand that no material will be for sale or used for commercial purposes. Material will be used solely to promote the youth programs of the Diocese of Birmingham.

Initial one choice: ____ Yes, I give photographic release ____ No, I do not release photographs

I have read and **AGREE** to the rules and guidelines as set forth on the attached document (Adult Chaperones).

➔ Signature _____ Date _____

✘ **FEE:** We happily accept payment **if** your parish is willing to pay or if you are able to help us pay our bills by contributing all or part of the fee. However, we are also willing to waive **all or part** of the fee if it helps you attend. The retreat is run on a tight budget so please mention to your pastor that most parishes pay the adult fee. In any case, your participation as leader and chaperone is more important than fees.

✘ Please contact the Youth Office immediately if your plans change and you are unable to attend the retreat.

✘ You will be notified by the Office for Youth if there is a space for you at the retreat.

Fee (or portion) Enclosed (check payable to: **Office for Youth**)

Please Waive Fee

Fee will be paid when I arrive at the retreat.

Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama – Office for Youth CROSS Retreat Chaperone – Page 2 of 2

Name _____ Date of Birth ___/___/___

Primary Physician _____ Phone () _____

In Case of Emergency Contact:

Name _____ Relationship _____

Phone(s) include area code _____

Health History

Recent serious injury: Describe _____

Recent surgery: Describe _____

Recent hospitalization: Describe _____

Wear glasses Wear contact lenses Diabetes

Heart condition High blood pressure Inoculations: Seasonal Flu H1N1

Other conditions or health issues: _____

Current Medications

Allergies (Include allergies to medication)

Other Health Concerns

RELEASE

I am requesting to volunteer as an adult chaperone for the CROSS Retreat. I hereby relieve Springville Camp and Conference Center; the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama, its Bishop, parishes, schools and all affiliated employees, clergy, religious and volunteers of any and all liability for sickness, accidents or injuries while attending or being transported to/from the program facilities & property. I am a competent adult, and I assume all risks and responsibilities associated with this event of my own free will.

Signature _____ Date _____

Phone: (205) 838-8301
youthministry@bhmdiocese.org