YOUTH WORKER BEST PRACTICES
FOR ZOOM YOUTH MINISTRY

APPROVED YOUTH WORKERS

All in-person and virtual youth ministry events and programs must have approved Youth Workers present. The ministries may include but are not limited to, Sunday School, Greek Language Cases, Hope, Joy, GOYA, Folk Dance, Youth Choir, Sports, Retreats and other in-person or virtual get-togethers of children and youth of all ages.

Whether clergy, paid staff, parents, or volunteers, all Youth Workers must be registered, trained, and screened as an official "Youth Worker" under the Policies for the Safety of Children and Youth as adopted by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

NUMBER OF YOUTH WORKERS

A Youth Worker should never be alone with a child or youth at any time, both during in-person or during virtual meetings or events. The "Rule of Three" states that you must have a minimum of 1 Youth Worker and 2 Children, or 2 Youth Workers and 1 Child.

It is suggested that for all online youth ministry meetings and events, that you have a minimum of at least 2 official Youth Workers present at all times. It is best to designate one Youth Worker to moderate the meeting, and the other Youth Worker to keep an eye out for questions and monitoring for inappropriate behavior such as verbal language, gestures, and potential bullying. If you are using breakout rooms, you will need one Youth Worker per breakout room.

YOUTH WORKERS ARE ROLE MODELS

Concerning verbal interactions: Youth Workers must continue to be mindful that their words and the words of the youth participants on these types of church sponsored video meetings are important and can positively or negatively change lives. In other words, as a Youth Worker one must enforce the policy against name-calling, off-color or sexual jokes, shaming, belittling, cursing or any other inappropriate verbal interaction by either adults and/or youth participants.

SET UP YOUR ZOOM MEETING SAFELY

Generate a random Meeting ID when scheduling your event and require a password to join. You can share the Meeting ID on your website by embedding it into the site with a button to click, but only send the password with the link to join via email to the participants. Disable the ability for participants to join before the host, to ensure there is always a Youth Worker present.

HOSTS AND CO-HOSTS

The person scheduling the meeting is automatically the host. Once the meeting begins, the host can assign the other youth worker(s) to be the host or a co-host. This will allow the other Youth Workers to help monitor the participants and mute/unmute as necessary.

PARTICIPANTS RENAMING THEMSELVES

Some of the participants may be using their parent's Zoom account, and when they log into the meeting, it may have their parent's name listed. Participants can rename themselves by clicking

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on the upper right hand corner of their Zoom picture/video and click the "rename" menu option. Make sure to set a rule that everyone must only use their first and last names (and possibly a group number or symbol if needed), but no other emojis or inappropriate slogans. The Host can also change the name of a participant at anytime.

DISABLE PRIVATE CHAT

Zoom has in-meeting chat for participants to send a message to everyone publicly, privately to another participant, to the host only, or to no one. Disable participants from sending private messages to each other or to everyone in the group. This will help to prevent any bullying or inappropriate side conversations from happening. If you would like the participants to type in their responses to a question for everyone to see at a particular time, the host can turn on and off the option to chat with everyone.

BREAKOUT ROOMS

If you would like to divide the participants up into smaller discussion groups, you can use the breakout room feature. Only the host has access to assigning participants to rooms. If the host is manually assigning participants into breakout rooms during the call, it is suggested that you have the other Youth Worker give directions about what is going to happen during the breakout rooms, the duration of time together, and any other announcements or expectations. Each breakout room must have at least one Youth Worker present to facilitate appropriate conversations and behavior.

MUTE/UNMUTE PARTICIPANTS

Remind participants to keep themselves on mute at certain times when the host is speaking to eliminate background noise. The host or co-hosts can mute/unmute individual participants or all of them at once. You can enable "Mute Upon Entry" when scheduling the meeting, or you can allow participants to join without being muted to greet each other for the first 2 minutes of the meeting, then officially begin by asking everyone to mute themselves as you start with a prayer and offer a welcome message or directions.

DISABLE PARTICIPANT VIDEO

Hosts and co-hosts can turn someone's video off. This will allow hosts to block unwanted, distracting, or inappropriate gestures the participant is displaying on video. If you want them to show their video screen again, you will need to click on their name again, and click request to turn video back on.

TURN OFF FILE TRANSFER

In-meeting file transfer allows participants to share files through the in-meeting chat. In your Zoom settings, switch this off to keep the chat from getting bombarded with unsolicited pics and content.

DISABLE SCREEN SHARE FOR PARTICIPANTS

It is best to disable screen share for all participants, and only allow the host or co-hosts to share. You can save this in your zoom settings before you create a meeting. If you forget to change the setting before you start a meeting, there's a way to modify your settings after it begins. Once your Zoom meeting is running, click the arrow button to the right of the green "Share Screen" button at the bottom and click "Advanced Sharing Options". A dialog box will pop up allowing you to switch screen sharing availability from all participants to the host only.

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ANNOTATION & WHITEBOARD

Annotation allows you to draw on a shared screen, and Whiteboard allows you to write on a blank screen everyone can see. You can disable the annotation and whiteboard features in your Zoom settings to prevent people from writing all over the screens. If you chose to use these features, there is the option to only allow one person to use the remote at a time. If this isn't chosen, then the participants can all write at the same time and it can get a little crazy.

REMOVE UNWANTED OR DISRUPTIVE PARTICIPANTS

From the Participants menu, the host and co-hosts can click on a participant's name, and several options will appear, including "Remove". Click that to remove someone from the meeting if they are causing unwanted or disruptive behavior.

ZOOM PROFILE PHOTOS AND BACKGROUNDS

All Youth Workers and participants must have a church-appropriate Zoom profile photo and their physical or virtual backgrounds must also be church-appropriate.

PHOTOS/VIDEOS OF ZOOM PARTICIPANTS - FOR YOUTH SAFETY

Any recordings or screen shots with images of minors may not be posted that include the names indicated of the participating minors. Even with proper written consent from the parents or guardians, it is best practice to only post screen shots which DO NOT include the names of the children and minors. To disable their names from always showing on the screen, click on your video settings, and under "meetings" un-check the box that says "Always display participant names on their videos."

SAFE AND QUIET SPACE FOR PARTICIPANTS

Communicate in advance with all participants and their families that they will need an internet device with Zoom pre-installed, and a safe and quiet space to participate in the online youth ministry program.

CODES OF CONDUCT

It is Best Practice to include: 1) a 'Code of Conduct' for the Youth Workers; and 2) a 'Code of Conduct' for the participant and their parent or guardian. 'Code of Conduct' statements signed in advance by Youth Workers and also by both parents and youth participants provides proper communication of expectations, especially in the event that it becomes necessary to exclude a participant due to inappropriate behavior.

REPORTING POLICIES

Reporting of inappropriate conduct, be it verbal, gestures, or facial reactions during the virtual meeting, is mandatory. This reporting of inappropriate behavior includes the behavior of the youth participant and the youth worker. All policy statements regarding bullying, swearing, inappropriate gestures and other inappropriate behavior is to be enforced, regardless if the meeting is in-person or virtual. Inappropriate language, inappropriate behavior or bullying must be reported within the Church structure to maintain an emotionally safe event for the children and youth.

Incident Reports/Notices of Concern can be fillable PDF's, hand-written, or emailed; but should be immediately sent to the supervisor of the meeting or ministry. Additionally, it is important to ensure that parents, who are not in the virtual meeting, are notified if their child breaks the code of conduct.

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