



YOUTH &
YOUNG ADULT
MINISTRIES

NOTES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS FOR “THE RELATIONSHIP PROJECT”

WHAT SUPPORT OUR TEENS NEED FROM THEIR PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

- Provide an internet device with video and audio capabilities, and with Zoom pre-installed.
- Provide a safe and quiet environment for their teen to participate. This could be their room.
- Provide earbuds or headphones to ensure privacy and confidentiality. We don't know who is in the background of the other participant screens, and we want to maintain a sense of trust within the group.
- Do not read their journals or listen in on their meetings. This is sacred information, and only meant for the participants.
- Respect their privacy, and know they are in good hands with their parish clergy and ministry facilitators.
- Don't ask what they talked about in each session, but instead allow for open ended conversations.
- Read all parent/guardian emails sent out from the facilitators of this ministry, and lend whatever support they may request.

SAFEGUARDS WE ARE TAKING TO MAKE SURE IT'S THE BEST POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE:

- Every parish who is offering this ministry will only utilize approved Youth Workers (as mandated by the Archdiocese) to lead it.
- Being an approved Youth Worker means they've registered at their parish, trained online with youth protection courses, and passed a background check.
- There will be at least two approved Youth Workers present on each Zoom ministry meeting.
- One Youth Worker will be leading the discussion, and the other will be monitoring for appropriate behavior.
- There is zero tolerance for bullying. The Youth Workers will cultivate a respectful and loving environment, where each person is able to share and feel supported.
- The Youth Workers will always represent the teachings and values of the Orthodox Church. They will never share their own personal views on politics or social issues.
- The Youth Workers aren't there to judge or give advice, they are there to listen, offer support, and cultivate community for our teens.
- The chat feature will be disabled for individuals to communicate to each other. This is to eliminate distraction and potential bullying. Participants will be able to chat to the host and to everyone at instructed times during the program.
- We are offering parishes the opportunity to use a “Code of Conduct” for both Youth Workers to sign, and for participants and their parent/guardian to sign.
- The Code of Conduct provides proper communication of expectations, especially in the event that it becomes necessary to exclude a participant due to inappropriate behavior.
- Inappropriate language, inappropriate behavior or bullying must be reported within the Church structure to maintain an emotionally safe event for teens. If this happens, one of the Youth Workers leading the ministry will contact the parents of the participant and let them know what happened.