



Diocesan Policy Change – Child/Teen Ratio Change:

The Diocese of Des Moines and each parish community is committed the safety of the children and teens which we are responsible for whether they are in-house at parish programs or at events outside our parish grounds. The child/teen to adult ratio is one of many ways we insure a safe environment.

With that said, several catechetical leaders (DREs and youth ministers) have questioned why we have a ratio of 6 children/teens to 1 adult when chaperoning events or field trips outside of parish property. While researching this question neither Sister Jude nor I could locate documentation as to why the ratio was set at 6 to 1.

I asked Sherri Simmer to investigate ratios from dioceses around the country. She discovered that a 6 to 1 ratio was rare. 8 to 1 or 10 to 1 was more common in Catholic Dioceses around the country.

Based upon this information as well as anecdotal evidence from our colleagues in faith formation with children and teens, we have been told that it would be helpful while recruiting quality chaperones rather than a warm body to increase the ratio to 8 to 1. Colleagues also shared that when it comes to larger events, the ratio can also save money for the parish community. For example, if 24 teens are attending NCYC, the parish would need only 3 adult chaperones rather than 4. This would save the parish \$515.00 based upon the 2013 registration fee.

One area that it won't help is in transporting children/teens since most mini-vans, SUVs or cars can handle between 4 and 6 passengers.

The F.F. Policy 463.1 takes effect this month and is attached. The modification is in section 2 language, not section 1. As always, it is diocesan policy that 2 adults (Virtus and background checked) supervise any events whether at the parish or at events outside of parish property.

Please let me know if you have any questions or thoughts about the new policy.

Free Youth Ministry Event to be held at Dowling Catholic on March 30:

Matt Fradd, Catholic Youth Ministry speaker, will be in the Diocese on March 29 at the Iowa Men's Conference. Since his flight doesn't leave until later on Sunday, they have offered his ministry to us for a free Lenten Reflection for teens. The presentation begins at 1:00 pm on March 30 in the Dowling Cafeteria. Please park on the west side of the building. Signs will show you where to enter the school. The event will end by 2:30 pm.

The topic that Matt will present is “*Shattering the Five Myths of Pornography.*” He has been endorsed by Jason Evert who is one of the nation’s top youth speakers on chastity but also seen on the *Theology of the Body* videos.

The Diocesan Office of Youth & Young Adult will be providing a free pizza lunch for participants and chaperones. RSVP to Tessa Schealler so that we make sure we have enough pizza ordered for the day. You can e-mail Tessa at tschealler@dmdiocese.org.

Attached please find a flyer. We ask that you bring interested members of your youth ministry program. If parents have teens who want to attend please send them as well even if you will not be attending, we ask that they stay for the talk too.

Upcoming Social Media Workshop Sponsored by Diocesan Department of Communication:

You will find a flyer attached for an upcoming Social Media workshop sponsored by the Diocesan Department of Communication. Mary Jo Meister, strategic marketing executive from The Des Moines Register, will spend keynote a day looking how innovative programming requires an integrated mix of traditional media as well as digital/social media for successful outcomes.

The Social Media Workshop will be held from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm on April 28 at St. Francis of Assisi parish in West Des Moines. Registration directions are found on the flyer or contact Anne Marie Cox at acox@dmdiocese.org. This workshop is free.

Prayer for the Second Week of Lent:

Father or a child:

From St. Paul’s Letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 12:1-4) “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith.

For the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God. Consider how he endured such opposition from sinners, in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood.”

Mother: We ought to glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Family: in whom is our salvation, life and resurrection.

Mother: Let us pray. Grant us, O God, that through the spiritual renewal of Lent, we may grow in the understanding of the mystery of Chris. This we ask of you through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son.

Family: Amen.

Mother: Let us bless the Lord.

Family: Thanks be to God.

Mother: May the almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless and keep all of us.

Family: Amen.