



Parish Social Media Usage Framework:

Recently I have received several request about our diocesan social media policies. Outside of specific policies that your parish requires for employees, below you will find the framework we strongly propose at the Diocese of Des Moines for effective use of the multitude of technology and social media platforms. It supports our safe environment efforts while protecting employees and volunteers.

The diocese and its affiliates recognize that in today's environment, with the increasing prevalence of the internet, employees, clerics and volunteers will use the internet to conduct ministry work and to communicate with associates and friends. The internet provides various ways for individuals to interact and has changed the way we communicate and share information. The diocese views the internet as an important educational and evangelizing tool to promote school and ministerial programs.

The diocese encourages administrators, pastors, lay ecclesial ministers and principals to support internet use and to give employees, clerics and volunteers the necessary training and tools to interact safely and responsibly online. However, those using the internet should bear in mind that certain comments and information may have a harmful effect on the diocese, its reputation and its employees. We support the social media policy guidelines of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). A link to these guidelines is found here: <http://www.usccb.org/about/communications/social-media-guidelines.cfm>

Regarding social media with minors the USSCB's policy is:

Be sure to have permission from a minor's parent or guardian before contacting the minor via social media or before posting pictures, video, and other information that may identify that minor.

Parents must have access to everything provided to their children. For example, parents should be made aware of how social media are being used, be told how to access the sites, and be given the opportunity to be copied on all material sent to their children via social networking (including text messages). While parents should be provided with the same material as their children, it does not have to be via the same technology (that is, if children receive a reminder via Twitter, parents can receive it in a printed form or by an e-mail list).

Church personnel should be encouraged to save copies of conversations whenever possible, especially those that concern the personal sharing of a teen or young adult. (This may be especially important with text messaging.

Make everyone aware of the [Children's Online Privacy Protection Act](#), which is federal legislation that oversees how websites interact with children under age 13.

This is how I do it:

- Text: allow parents the opportunity to receive texts that are sent to their kids. If a teen wants to discuss anything "private" request a face-to-face meeting at the parish, coffee bar or restaurant. Send group texts but make sure everyone you send them to can receive group texts.
- Facebook: Create a Facebook Page – invite teens and parents to like the page. Nothing is sent privately and everyone receives it.
- Twitter: Create a ministry Twitter account and use it to communicate, especially if anything is cancelled or moved due to bad weather.
- Pictures: Follow the Federal Guidelines in the link above.

#### Questions on the number of hours suggested for parish religious education programs per year:

Some of our newer and seasoned catechetical leaders have asked that I publish the diocesan recommendations regarding the amount of hours per catechetical year a religious education program should meet. Catechetical leaders with their pastors and advisory councils work together to determine the number of hours required that best meet the need of the local parish community.

Our diocesan recommendation, which has been in place for many years, is 34 to 40 hours per year. This amount includes time dedicated to adult formation with catechist in-service opportunities. Most of our parishes within the diocese run 1 hour and 15 minutes sessions beginning in early September and end by the first week of May.

For example, if St. Lady of Grace parish had 32 weeks within their catechetical year with 1 hour and 15 minute sessions (including catechist in-services) that would be 40 hours for the year. The reason many parishes meet at least 75 minutes per session is because one hour sessions are very difficult. By the time you take attendance, announcements as well as opening and closing prayer, you may only have about 35-40 minutes to try and get through the lesson.

#### Request from the Office of Hispanic Ministry:

Mayra Moriel de Banuelos from the Office of Hispanic Ministry needs your help. Are there Hispanic adults who work with you who might be ready to consider participating in a formation process towards lay ecclesial ministry in your parish? If the answer is yes please contact Mayra at [mmoriel@dmdiocese.org](mailto:mmoriel@dmdiocese.org) or call her at 515-237-5011. They will be starting their second cohort group formation for Hispanic lay leadership in January 2016 and are gathering names of potential candidates.

The Hispanic Lay Leadership Program is a two year process. The framework highlights four key areas of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral. The formation is provided from the Archdiocese of Chicago's Instituto de Liderazgo Pastoral. This spring the first cohort of 22 local parish Hispanic leaders received their certificates and were commissioned. Thank you for your help.

Important Dates to Mark on Your Calendar:

- **September 10, 2015** – Des Moines Area Youth Ministers Meeting – St. Pius X Church from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm
- **September 14, 2015** – Des Moines Region Adult Faith Formation Directors Meeting – St. Theresa Church from 12:00 to 2:00 pm.
- **September 14, 2015** – CLADD South – St. Edward Church in Afton from 6:00 to 8:30 pm – Topic is Jubilee Year of Mercy
- **September 15, 2015** – CLADD West – St. Mary Church in Red Oak from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm – Topic is Jubilee Year of Mercy
- **September 17, 2015** – CLADD East – St. Augustin Church in Des Moines from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm – Topic is Jubilee Year of Mercy
- **September 20, 2015** – Catechetical Sunday
- **October 11, 2015** – Year of Marriage and Family concluding celebration – “Family is a School of Virtue” at St. Boniface Parish from 1:00 pm until 5:30 pm. More information can be found at <http://www.dmdiocese.org/finish%20flyer%20english.pdf>
- **October 25, 2015** – Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference – “Saved by the Call” – For more information follow this link: <http://www.dmdiocese.org/dcyc.cfm>

**Prayer for Hospitality (author unknown):**

Lord, give us the eyes of Jesus to see our neighbors and the strangers we meet.

Teach us what it means to love the stranger as we love ourselves.

Forgive us for our selfishness,  
for our silence,  
for not caring enough for the strangers who come to our communities.

Teach us to love and care for the stranger the way you do.

Amen.

