Guidelines for



PARISH YOUTH LEADER

St. John Henry Newman Parish

Contents

Page 2: The Role of Youth Workers in Our Parish

Page 2: Sharing Your Skills and Experience

Page 3: A Welcoming and Inclusive Ministry

Page 3: Appointment and Preparation of Youth Leaders
(including Safer Recruitment Process & Safeguarding considerations)

Page 5: Encouraging Faith, Friendship and Participation

Page 6 Role Description and Person Spec

The Role of Youth leader in Our Parish

Youth workers have the joyful privilege of welcoming, accompanying and encouraging the young people of our parish.

They may be involved regularly in our parish youth group or assist with particular activities, retreats, pilgrimages, days out and other trips for young people.

Whether serving regularly or occasionally, every youth worker and volunteer shares responsibility for creating a safe, welcoming and faith-filled environment.

Youth Leaders do much more than organise activities. Through prayer, attentive listening and faithful Christian example, they help young people build friendships, encourage one another and discover their place within the life and mission of the Church.

Pope Francis reminds us that the heart of every young person should be regarded as "holy ground," containing seeds of divine life (Christus Vivit, 67).

Young people are not simply the future of the Church: they are already active and gifted members of the Church today.

Sharing Your Skills and Experience

Where appropriate, and as their abilities, experience and available time allow, youth workers may be invited to help plan and prepare youth group meetings, retreat days, pilgrimages, trips and other activities for young people.

This might include suggesting ideas, preparing prayer or discussion materials, organising games and creative activities, arranging practical details, assisting with risk assessments or helping to lead part of a session.

We need the different skills, experiences and gifts of our volunteers to make this ministry work. Some people may be confident leading prayer or discussing the faith, while others

may bring skills in music, sport, art, drama, technology, administration, hospitality, first aid or organising activities and trips. Every contribution is valuable.

No volunteer is expected to do everything. Responsibilities will be agreed according to each person's role, confidence, training, availability and the needs of the young people. Appropriate guidance and support will be provided, and all activities will be planned and delivered within parish and diocesan safeguarding procedures.

A Welcoming and Inclusive Ministry

Our youth ministry is committed to being welcoming and inclusive. Every young person should be received with compassion and respect, regardless of disability, faith, health, race, culture, nationality, social or economic circumstances, family background, sex, gender or sexuality. No young person should experience bullying, harassment, humiliation or exclusion.

Inclusion also requires practical action. Youth workers should listen to young people and their families, make reasonable adjustments for physical, sensory, learning and hidden disabilities, use accessible language and activities, and help ensure that venues, transport and programmes are as accessible as possible.

When planning trips, retreats or pilgrimages, youth workers may help with risk assessments, consent and medical information, accessibility arrangements, emergency procedures, appropriate supervision and the safe use of transport.

The needs of individual young people must be considered carefully so that, wherever reasonably possible, everyone can participate fully and safely.

Appointment and Preparation of Youth Leaders

Youth leaders are carefully appointed and equipped for this important ministry.

Appointment is not automatic, as the parish has a responsibility to ensure that each person is suitable for a position of trust involving young people.

Potential Youth Leaders will be considered in consultation with the Parish Priest and those responsible for parish youth ministry and safeguarding.

Before beginning the formal safer recruitment process, each person will be invited to an interview.

This provides an opportunity to discuss the ministry, the needs of our young people, the applicant's faith, experience, skills, availability and reasons for wishing to serve.

It also allows the applicant to ask questions and understand clearly what the role involves.

Following a satisfactory interview and consultation with the Parish Priest, suitable applicants may be invited to begin the parish and diocesan safer recruitment process.

If you would like more information on the process then please click on this link to the Safer-Recruitment-Flowchart-DBS-Role.pdf for further information, but please don't worry, our Parish Safeguarding Representative will guide you through the whole process.

You will be required to undertake Level 3 Safeguarding for Volunteers in the Catholic Church (DBS) Training.

Careful appointment and preparation protect our young people, support our volunteers and strengthen the whole ministry. They help ensure that every youth leader understands the trust placed in them and is ready to serve with faithfulness, competence, kindness and appropriate accountability.

Safeguarding is fundamental to this ministry and will be taken extremely seriously. The safety, dignity and wellbeing of every young person must be at the heart of our youth group, trips and all other parish activities.

Safeguarding is not simply an administrative requirement; it is an essential expression of our Christian responsibility to protect and care for those entrusted to us.

Anyone appointed as a youth worker or volunteer, whether helping regularly with the youth group or assisting with trips and occasional events, will be required to complete the appropriate parish and diocesan safer recruitment process before undertaking the role.

No one will begin work with young people until the necessary checks, references, training and approvals have been completed.

Recruitment decisions will be made carefully and consistently in accordance with diocesan policy and civil law.

Youth Leaders and volunteers must maintain appropriate boundaries, use approved methods of communication, follow agreed supervision arrangements and never place themselves or a young person in an unnecessarily vulnerable situation.

Any concern about a young person's safety or wellbeing must be recorded and reported promptly through the proper safeguarding procedures.

Confidentiality will be respected, but secrecy cannot be promised when someone may be at risk of harm.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Parents, carers and young people should know whom they can approach with a question, concern or complaint. Any concern raised will be heard respectfully and taken seriously.

Encouraging Faith, Friendship and Participation

Our youth group and activities should offer opportunities for prayer, friendship, service, learning and enjoyment. They should help young people encounter Jesus Christ, deepen their understanding of the Catholic Faith and support one another when faith or life becomes difficult.

As Pope Francis explains, youth ministry has two principal aims: reaching out to young people and helping them grow towards maturity in faith (Christus Vivit, 209).

He also calls parishes to provide welcoming places where young people can meet, feel at home and share both their difficulties and their celebrations (Christus Vivit, 218).

This work brings great joy. It is a privilege to watch young people grow in confidence, discover their gifts, develop friendships and begin to recognise God's call in their lives.

Young people should be encouraged to contribute ideas, take appropriate responsibility and help shape the parish's ministry.

Youth Leaders do not lead them as passive followers but walk beside them, helping them become active disciples and leaders within the Church.

St John Henry Newman offers a beautiful foundation for this ministry "God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission." These words remind us that every young person, and every person who volunteers to serve them, has distinctive gifts and a unique contribution to make.

The Youth leader's task is not to decide a young person's vocation for them, but to help them listen for God's voice, recognise their gifts and respond freely and courageously.

Our parish youth ministry should therefore be a place of safety, belonging, joy and hope: a place where young people meet, encourage one another in faith and discover that Christ is alive and walking beside them.

We warmly invite our Youth Leaders to share their skills, ideas, time and faith so that, together, we can build a ministry in which every young person is welcomed, protected and encouraged to flourish.

References
Pope Francis, Christus Vivit, especially paragraphs 67, 203, 209–210, 218 and 242–246.

St John Henry Newman, Meditations and Devotions, "Meditations on Christian Doctrine: Hope in God—Creator."

St John Paul II, Letter on the Second Centenary of the Birth of Cardinal John Henry Newman, 22 January 2001.

Role Description for Volunteer Parish Youth Leader

Appointed by
and Responsible to: The Parish Priest / Overall Youth Group Leader

Function: To work as part of the parish youth work team, promoting the spiritual, social and fun aspects of Christian Life and leading young people into a living relationship with Christ.

Main Responsibilities

1) To encourage young people to be actively involved in parish life taking up their rightful role in the Christian community as ministers of change and growth within the Church and world.

2) To support the establishment a programme of activities which respond to the needs and aspirations of young people of the Parish.

3) To assist in the administration management of the group.

4) To attend team meetings, participating in planning and assessment of activities.

5) To be an advocate for young people communicating their hopes and aspirations to the wider parish community

6) To work with other members of the team to ensure that all activities are conducted in accordance with the safeguarding policies and procedures of the Catholic Church in England and Wales as administered by the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

   This means that no adult must ever be alone with children [anyone under the age of 18] and you must promote safe practices, minimise risk of abuse and take action to report concerns and/or allegations.

7) Where appropriate, develop links with the Birmingham Catholic Youth Service and youth workers at parish, deanery and diocesan level, participating in in-service training and personal formation programmes.

8) To help organise and facilitate events/meetings as agreed.

Person Specification

1) Be a person of faith and prayer, aware of the call to service and ministry of the Church.

2) Able to share faith with conviction, enthusiasm, love joy and hope.

3) Be committed to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and the ethos of the parish and keen to proclaim the message of Christ in all its fullness.

4) Be committed to the spiritual and moral development of the young people of the Parish.

5) Be enthusiastic, reliable and discrete, flexible and adaptable.

6) Have excellent communication, leadership and organisational skills.

7) Be able to deal sensitively with people and resolve conflict.

8) Be over 18 years old if expected to take responsibility of the group.

9) Be willing to undergo the pre-recruitment checks and training required by the Church and to adhere to safeguarding guidance. This post requires an enhanced DBS check

Use of identification Badges

We ask all those who undertake the role of Youth Leader within our parish to wear an identification badge while carrying out this ministry. As Youth Leaders work directly with young people and their families, it is particularly important that they can be easily recognised and clearly identified as people who have been appointed and authorised to undertake this role on behalf of the parish.

The badge helps give young people, parents, carers, parishioners and visitors confidence about who is responsible for leading and supporting our parish youth activities.

Each badge will include the Youth Leader's photograph, their name and the parish they represent, and will clearly state "Youth Leader". This provides a simple and immediately recognisable means of identifying those who have been authorised by the parish to undertake this ministry.

The details provided on the badge may also be used to contact the Parish Office should a young person, parent, carer or anyone else wish to verify the identity of the person wearing it or confirm that they are authorised to act as a Youth Leader on behalf of the parish.

Such a check should not be regarded as a sign of mistrust or as questioning the integrity of the individual. Rather, asking questions and checking the identity and role of those working with young people is an important part of good safeguarding practice, which we actively encourage and support.

The reverse of the badge will also include contact details for the Diocesan Safeguarding Department. These details are available should a Youth Leader, young person, parent, carer, parishioner or anyone else need safeguarding advice or support, or wish to raise a safeguarding concern. Having this information readily available is part of our commitment to ensuring that safeguarding is visible, accessible and taken seriously throughout parish life.

The badges are professionally produced and are supplied complete with an official parish lanyard. Both the badge and lanyard are issued specifically to the named individual for the purpose of carrying out their assigned role. They must not be lent, given to, or used by another person, even temporarily. They should only be worn or displayed when you are undertaking your assigned role as a Youth Leader or attending a parish activity in that capacity and must not be used at any other time or for any other purpose.

Wearing the badge identifies you publicly as someone authorised to undertake this ministry on behalf of the parish, and it is therefore important that it is used responsibly.

Badges and lanyards should be treated with care and kept securely when not in use. If a badge is lost or stolen, this must be reported to the Parish Office immediately so that appropriate action can be taken. If you cease to undertake the role of Youth Leader, for whatever reason, the badge and parish lanyard must be returned promptly to the Parish Office.

These arrangements provide a clear and consistent way of identifying those entrusted with youth ministry within our parish. They form part of our wider commitment to good safeguarding practice, provide reassurance to young people and their parents or carers, and support our Youth Leaders as they undertake the important responsibility of accompanying, encouraging and supporting the young people of our parish.