Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau
Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Youth Formation
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GUIDELINES FOR VIRTUAL CLASSES AND MEETINGS (ADAPTED FROM ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS GUIDELINES)

1. All Catechists and ministry leaders must adhere to the "Diocesan Policy and Guidelines for Use of Technology, Email, and Social Media." A copy of the guidelines should also be distributed to each parent. Parents must sign and return a copy of the "Parental Consent and Media Release" before any communications with minors may begin.

2. At least two adults who are compliant with Diocesan Safe Environment Policies should be present during every virtual meeting.

3. No direct messaging or private chat features should be utilized between adults and teens/children. Always include a parent or another Safe Environment compliant adult in communications with individual children.

4. Make your meeting space professional and prayerful even online. All parties should be aware of their surroundings while on virtual meetings. Individuals should be in public spaces of their homes, avoid personal spaces, ie. lying in bed.

5. If posting a picture from a virtual meeting, you should have already obtained a signed "Media Release Parental Consent Form" from the parent of that child. Names of teens/children should be removed or hidden prior to posting.

6. Continually communicate with parents as to what meetings are taking place, what platforms you are using to communicate with their children, and how they can be involved.

7. Scheduled virtual events and social media communications should begin no earlier than 8:00am and virtual events and communications should finish no later than 9:00pm at night.

8. Every parish leader and catechist should be utilizing an email address specifically used only for parish ministry correspondence. Please **do not** use a personal email address. The password for the ministry email account used by Catechetical Leaders or other ministry leaders, should be given to your pastor and catechists should share their password with the Catechetical leader, all for Safe Environment purposes.

The following practices are related specifically to the Zoom platform, but should be translated to whatever virtual platform you choose to use:

1. When scheduling a Zoom meeting, under "Advanced Options" choose to utilize a Waiting Room and disable "Join before host". This will allow you to screen who can enter the group. This is required if you are sharing Zoom Meetings ID's publicly to ensure that anyone who should not be in your meetings are unable to get in.

2. Be certain to LOCK your meeting once all expected participants have arrived.

3. On the Zoom Chat feature, click on the ellipse to the right of "Everyone" and under "Participant can chat with" select either, "everyone publicly" or "no one". This will ensure that private chats are not occurring between adults and teens.

4. In the Zoom host controls, click the arrow next to Share Screen and click Advanced Sharing Options.
Under "Who can share?" choose Only Host and disable "File Sharing". This will prevent anyone in the meeting from "grabbing" the screen and the host being unable to monitor what is shared.

5. Enable another Safe Environment trained adult to be a "co-host" to help moderate the event and in case you as the "host" get disconnected.

6. If you have "breakout rooms," it is permissible to have one adult lead each small group discussion. You as the host can hop in on the various discussions.