



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARLINGTON

Vicar General

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August 18, 2020

Dear Brother Priests,

In keeping with a practice initiated in 2015, I am requesting that each Pastor with any scouting or scout-like organization in his parish review the attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). **Please forward the MOU to the respective organization leaders for them to complete the appropriate portion of the form.** Once the leaders have acquired the necessary information, they can return the form to you for your signature. Please forward the completed form to the diocesan Office of Youth, Campus, and Young Adult Ministries by **September 30, 2020**. As you know, these MOUs are retained on an annual basis.

The MOU is intended to help ensure that the scouting leaders in our parishes promote materials and activities which are consistent with our faith as well as to:

- Assist the Catholic Committee on Scouting with gathering accurate data about all scouting groups and leader contact information throughout the diocese;
- Prompt any necessary conversations between parish leadership and scouting leaders so as to avoid any unnecessary misunderstandings;
- Help scouting leaders understand the expectations placed upon them due to their affiliation with your parish;
- Increase awareness of Catholic religious activities and recognitions available to youth participating in various scouting organizations;
- Assure parents and parishioners that parishes are taking steps to ensure the messages shared in scouting activities are consistent with the Catholic faith and diocesan policies.

Attached is a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that will hopefully clarify any questions that you may have. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact Kevin Bohli, Executive Director of the Office of Youth, Campus, and Young Adult Ministries, at (703) 841-2559 or kevin.bohli@arlingtondiocese.org.

Fraternally in Christ,

Very Reverend Jamie R. Workman
Vicar General

2020-21 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding provides an agreement between the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, the parish, and the scouting leaders identified on the following page commencing September 1, 2020 and ending September 30, 2021. Because within a parish program all bear similar responsibility to witness to Church teaching on essential matters of family and morality, this agreement applies to Catholic and non-Catholic leaders in all parish scouting-like organizations (e.g., American Heritage Girls, Camp Fire, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Trail Life, Troops of St. George, etc.).

Catholic scouting can contribute immeasurably to a youth's spiritual development and appreciation of God's role in a youth's life. Scouting, in a Catholic context, should promote healthy personal and spiritual growth, leadership, and an appreciation for, support of, and commitment to God, community, and country. Scouting has had a profound impact in many parish communities and we believe it will continue to do so in our parish community. The Catholic scouting religious recognitions and activities offered by our parish and youth ministry programs should be an important part of unit activities and complementary to the formal religious education and other youth ministry opportunities offered within the parish.

To support these youth, **the Diocese agrees to:**

- Provide training to those interested in religious recognition programs;
- Provide information to help scouting leaders share information about religious activities, emblems and other religious recognition with their units;
- Provide information about spiritually engaging activities for youth and adult scouting leaders;
- Support a diocesan committee on Catholic scouting to provide guidance to units and support for religious programs;
- Provide guidelines related to youth safety and protection to be followed by scouting units (in addition to any required by the scouting organization).

To support these youth, **the Pastor or Administrator agrees to:**

- Promote and support scouting;
- Consider requests for space, support and financial assistance;
- Encourage the Director of Youth Ministry and scouting leaders to collaborate as appropriate in youth outreach and development;
- Consider his or a designee's participation in scouting activities (Mass for scouting, retreats, unit activities, etc.);
- Review and consider for approval the adult leaders of the scouting program(s) operating on the premises of the parish or school with the understanding they will lead in accord with the policies and procedures of the Diocese and parish;
- Review any concerns related to the scouting programs' alignment with Catholic teachings and diocesan policies and procedures.

To support these youth, **as a Scouting Leader in our parish's Catholic unit I agree to:**

- Observe and act consistently with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church on matters of faith and morals, including, but not limited to matters related to respect for human life, human sexuality, and marriage;
- Ensure that all leaders and volunteers also observe and act consistently with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church on matters of faith and morals, including, but not limited to matters related to respect for human life, human sexuality, and marriage;
- Observe and abide by the policies, objectives, aims and practices of the Diocese and this parish and/or school;
- Observe and abide by all policies and protections put in place by the parish and Diocese related to child and youth safety and protection, including ensuring that leaders and volunteers are in full compliance with the diocesan child protection policies;
- Notify scouting youth and parents about scouting-specific religious activities and recognitions available to them (more information can be found at www.arlingtondiocese.org/youth-ministry);
- Request the permission of the Pastor or Administrator prior to taking any youth to an event or discussion or making use of materials in which it is likely that the topics of abortion or human sexuality will be addressed in a manner contrary to Church teaching;
- Be alert to the possibility that situations may arise (at the parish or in another locale) in which youth or leaders may be exposed to materials or a speaker or other person whose message is contrary to Church teachings; avoid such situations to the extent possible; and promptly report to the Pastor or Administrator any such situations which do occur;
- Provide a signed copy of this agreement to the parish.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FAQ

Q: If a scouting group does not meet on parish grounds do they need to sign?

A: Yes. As long as they actively recruit in your parish (bulletin, school notices, fliers, etc.) then the scouting leaders in that unit that address parish youth should sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

Q: Do unit leaders affiliated with the Knights of Columbus have to sign the Memorandum of Understanding?

A: Yes. As long as they actively recruit in your parish (bulletin, school notices, fliers, etc.) then the scouting leaders in that unit that address parish youth should sign the Memorandum of Understanding. In that case, however, the Chaplain of the Council for the Knights may sign in place of the pastor. **N.B.** The Knights' Board of Directors implemented a policy that directed all Knights Councils to discontinue direct sponsorship of Boy Scout troops and instead to provide financial and volunteer support to troops or other youth activities that are sponsored by parishes.

Q: Are parishes required to implement the Memorandum of Understanding?

A: Yes, the Bishop has asked all parishes to comply with implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Q: What should a pastor do if a unit leader will not sign?

A: The parish should make sure that unit leaders understand the intent and the importance of having this understanding. The parish should try to allay any concerns. Unfortunately if a unit leader will not abide by the agreement, that unit leader should not be involved in leading a Catholic unit or unit closely affiliated with a parish.

Q: Who is being asked to sign?

A: The intent is for the key unit leaders of all Scout and scout-like groups (e.g., American Heritage Girls, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Trail Life, etc.) to sign—from the smallest unit (e.g., den) on up. So for example, with BSA, in addition to the Charter Organization Representative, the Committee Chair, Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, Cubmaster, and Den Leader would also sign. Assistant leaders in the smallest unit would not have to sign as the key unit leader would be responsible for making sure that the responsibilities were understood and abided by all.

Q: What is the overall process?

A: Each scouting organization in the parish should receive from the parish or other source a separate copy of the understanding. The organization's "top" scouting leader in the parish completes the contact information section and provides the agreement to all leaders within that organization at the parish level and asks them to sign the signature page. The top scouting leader then provides the completed form to the pastor who then reviews and signs the form and the parish returns the form to the Diocese for review. **If unit leaders begin their service after the form has been submitted, the "top" scouting leader may either ensure the new unit leader is aware of and observes the Memorandum of Understanding or completes and submits the form to the pastor.**

Q: Are non-Catholics able to be scouting leaders under this Memorandum of Understanding?

A: Catholic scouting units should have a goal to help all young people to discover Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church and the sacraments. Scouting leaders are very influential role models in the life of a young scout and should therefore be a witness to the Catholic faith. If a non-Catholic is a scouting leader in a Catholic unit, they must not do anything through their public witness, their actions, or their statements which would contradict Catholic teaching on faith and morals. It is possible for a non-Catholic to publicly "observe and act consistently with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church on matters of faith and morals" without actually being a practicing Catholic.