

# **A Guide for a Working Relationship Between The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry and Camp Fire USA**

## **Introduction**

The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry and Camp Fire USA share a common interest in the development and preservation of spiritual and ethical values. Through their affiliated members, they offer young people the opportunities and assistance which facilitate the growth of youth and adults, especially in relationship with self, others and God.

## **Camp Fire USA**

### *Purpose*

Camp Fire USA shall provide, through a program of informal education, opportunities for youth to realize their potential and to function effectively as caring, self-directed individuals responsible to themselves and to others and, as an organization, to seek to improve those conditions in society which affect youth.

### *Policy on Organization of Groups by Religious and Other Institutions*

Camp Fire USA and/or its chartered councils may actively seek the organization and/or sponsorship of Camp Fire programs by institutions, religious organizations, agencies and clubs which subscribe to the purpose and the fundamental principles of Camp Fire USA.

### *Position Statement on Spiritual Development*

Camp Fire USA believes that spiritual development is essential to a healthy, wholesome personality and recognizes the importance of the church and synagogue and of religious teachings in the lives of youth. The spiritual values of the church and synagogue are basic to the Camp Fire program and the Camp Fire law. Each part of this law is related to ethical living, encouraging an appreciation for God's world, emphasizing that service to others is one of the essentials of full living; all of which contribute to the spiritual atmosphere or climate that pervades the whole of life.

Camp Fire USA holds dear the basic freedoms of democracy, one of the most cherished of which is the right of freedom of worship. Not only does Camp Fire USA respect the right of every youth to practice her or his own religion; but, through the Camp Fire program, encourages the active participation in the church or synagogue.

Camp Fire USA recognizes that people differ in religious belief, in religious observance and in religious heritage. It, therefore, urges chartered councils to be sensitive to and appreciative in these differences, taking them into account in organizing Camp Fire groups under religious auspices, in planning religious observances in camps, in planning menus for public functions and in scheduling places and times for council-wide events involving groups of all religious beliefs.

Camp Fire USA seeks the cooperation of leaders to all religious groups in its work with youth, believing that out of the faiths we share as well as our differences in belief, observance and heritage, we can together make our best contribution toward a more spiritual world and one in which the concept of the brotherhood of man finds a reality and expression in the daily lives of youth and adults.

## **National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry Mission and Values**

### *Mission*

The mission of the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry is to serve those who serve the young Catholic Church. The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry participates in the mission of the Catholic Church by advocating for and supporting Catholic youth ministry on the national, diocesan, and local level. As a professional organization of affiliated dioceses and collaborating members, NFCYM:

- Advocates for the role and needs of young people in the church and in society and promotes the role of the church and the Gospel in the lives of young people
- Promotes a comprehensive approach to youth ministry as articulated in *Renewing the Vision*
- Provides leadership, resources, services, and conferences for the education and formation of diocesan leaders, youth ministers, and young people
- Supports diocesan youth ministry leaders and collaborating members

- Dialogues and collaborates with the U.S. Catholic bishops and national leadership organizations for the promotion of youth ministry and the professional development of church leaders

### *Values*

In response to the Gospel, and in pursuit of our mission and vision, NFCYM acts in accord with these values:

- the dignity and giftedness of each person
- the baptismal call of each person to discipleship and ministry
- the gifts and charisms of young people
- the richness of diversity
- the challenge of justice and peace
- the wisdom of shared leadership

The National Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire was transferred from the United States Catholic Conference and it is now an activity of the NFCYM.

### **Objective**

Each organization finds it in its interest to create and to maintain an atmosphere of cooperation in which members may enjoy a working relationship and in which the purpose and mission of each organization will be furthered.

Through this relationship, Camp Fire USA members, youth and adults, who are Catholic, will be enabled by Camp Fire USA and the Catholic Church to further integrate religion into their daily lives. In this sense the Camp Fire program may be viewed as one form of the church's youth ministry.

To fulfill this objective, Camp Fire USA and the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry agree to work in specific ways to effect the purpose of their relationships. These areas of cooperation include:

### **Personnel**

Each organization will designate persons to be consultants to or advisory members of reciprocal decision-making bodies at the Regional and National Levels.

Each organization will develop and distribute guidelines directed toward the selection and training of Camp Fire program leaders and Catholic chaplains to Camp Fire groups, camps, special events, etc. The key to successful group programs is the quality of leadership and the extent of trust shared between the members and the leaders. It is essential to this success that program leaders be selected, trained and supported according to criteria which are derived from the program objectives and the behavioral and developmental needs of the group members.

It is recommended the diocese or parish and local Camp Fire council develop a plan, amenable to both parties, which will govern the selection and training of group leaders.

### **Communications**

Each organization will establish appropriate communications between Camp Fire USA/NFCYM and between the national/local levels of each organization to announce, share and interpret developments of mutual interest.

Each organization will consult with the other for review, prior to publication and distribution, of materials with religious content that will be used in Camp Fire groups where Catholics are found.

Participation in church initiated and administered programs of religious emphasis, such as *Mary, the First Disciple* and *I Live My Faith*, will be encouraged in Camp USA literature.

Each organization recognizes that the other brings a particular expertise and authority to the development of programs. Most notable among the contributions of each organization are program design on the part of Camp Fire USA and guidance in spiritual and ethical values on the part of the Catholic Church. Each plans to utilize the respective contributions of the other organization in offering youth and adults programs

which, ultimately, will reflect the best interests of the individuals, the family, the church, and the community.

### **Leadership Training**

Each organization will collaborate on the development and implementation of training materials to the ends that group leaders will bring their Christian ethics and values into the Camp Fire experience through opportunities such as spontaneous teachable moments, experiential religious education and traditional Camp Fire program components.

The local Camp Fire council shall assume responsibility for leadership training and adult recognition for those subjects which are "Camp Fire" in nature and the diocese or parish will be responsible for providing the training, counsel or recognition appropriate to the needs of the local church which employs the Camp Fire program as a form of youth ministry.

### **National Collaboration**

Camp Fire USA and The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry will promote collaboration in activities that support their mutual goal. This may include the joint submission of grant proposals, program initiatives, or other mutually agreed upon activities.

### **Local Collaboration**

Each organization will promote and assist in the development of similar agreement/guides for use between local dioceses/parish and local Camp Fire councils, should they be needed. This guide may be used as a model.

In view of the interest of both organizations to ensure the appropriate atmosphere for the growth and development of Catholic youth, both organizations look toward the development of guides to working relationships on the local levels where desired and offer their services in the development of such guides.

### **Grievance**

Each organization will use a joint grievance procedure.

Areas of disagreement should be resolved on a local level. If, however, substantial grievances cannot be resolved locally, they should be addressed to the diocesan representative and to the local Camp Fire council, then, if no solution can be found, to the appropriate Camp Fire representative responsible for relationships with NFCYM and to the NFCYM officials responsible for the relationship with Camp Fire USA.

Adopted by:                   Camp Fire USA National Board of Directors

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