

Thy Kingdom Come!



REGNUM CHRISTI
CONSECRATED WOMEN

Code of Conduct
North American Territory

Table of Contents

General Considerations3

Guiding Principles.....3

Physical Contact with Minors3

Other Limits to be Observed5

Indications for Places of Pastoral Activity5

Use of Social Media & Similar Means of Communication6

Correction of Minors.....7

Activities with Minors7

Conversations with Minors about Sexuality7

Sports Activities with Minors8

Activities Requiring an Overnight Stay8

Transportation of Minors9

Procedure to be Followed in the Event of a Serious Complaint.....9

General Considerations

Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi dedicate their whole life to Christ with the deep desire to be instruments for the salvation of people and heralds of the Kingdom of God. They are conscious of having taken vows of poverty, obedience and chastity, living according to the example of Jesus Christ.

The Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi, conscious of their state in life, seek to be icons of the love and purity of Jesus Christ in their dealings with people, especially with children and adolescents. They should strive to behave in a respectful and prudent manner.

The Code of Conduct that follows is the fruit of the Consecrated Women's many years in youth ministry and apostolate, as well as a policy review carried out in light of the current need of the Church to be a protagonist in the fight against the sexual abuse of minors.

Expressions of affection between a Consecrated Woman and a member of her family must also reflect socially appropriate norms, and family traditions.

Guiding Principles

In dealing with minors, the Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi commit themselves to:

1. respect the primary role of parents in the education of their children and their responsibility to dictate the rules for family life;
2. avoid relating to minors with familiarity or intimacy, and behaving as if they were peers;
3. avoid sharing aspects of one's private life with minors;
4. avoid exchanging private messages with minors (e.g., by cell phone, e-mail, etc.) without express parental permission, or at least having informed them;
5. be balanced and fair in their treatment of minors without showing signs of favoritism;
6. refrain from staring at and making comments about the body and appearance of minors;
7. avoid working with minors in an unsupervised environment. If this is the case, they should be accompanied by at least one other adult. If this is not possible, the adult and minor should be in a place that is visible to others;
8. avoid purely social relationships with minors in environments outside of pastoral activity.

Physical Contact with Minors

Every Consecrated Woman must ensure that any display of physical contact with minors does not lend itself to negative or ambiguous interpretations, either by an external observer or by the minor him/herself, i.e., a greeting or a hug.

Physical contact with a minor is permitted provided that:

1. it is fully appropriate to the situation;
2. it is in accordance with the age of the child;
3. it is unambiguously a non-sexual contact;
4. it does not constitute an abuse of the position of authority or trust on the part of the Consecrated Woman;
5. it is demanded by a medical emergency or for the protection required for the child's safety.

Some principles for determining if it is correct for a Consecrated Woman to have physical contact with a minor:

1. it can never happen in private;
2. it cannot be given in the context of spiritual direction or private counseling;
3. it cannot be habitual conduct of the Consecrated Woman.

Conduct that is per se inappropriate does not become appropriate because it is initiated by the minor. It is the responsibility of the Consecrated Woman to indicate to the minor when something is inappropriate. Should such an event occur, the Consecrated Woman should immediately inform her community director or director of apostolate.

Cultural habits or the daily relationship between peers never justify inappropriate physical contact between a Consecrated Woman and a minor.

Some examples of inappropriate physical contact are:

1. any type of contact with the intimate parts of the body;
2. kisses on or near the mouth, or prolonged kissing and hugging;
3. walking hand in hand with a minor (except in brief moments, for example, to cross the street or to avoid getting lost while passing through a large group of people);
4. slapping the back or buttocks; this also applies during sporting events;
5. to wrap the arm around the shoulders in a prolonged manner;
6. any type of massage or rubbing of the shoulders or any other part of the body;
7. placing one's hand on the waist, knee or thigh of the minor;
8. any gesture that can be interpreted as a caress;
9. having the child sit on the Consecrated Woman's lap.

Some examples of physical contact with minors that may be appropriate, depending on the circumstances:

1. shaking hands, as a greeting;
2. having physical contact, in public, on the occasion of a particular event (i.e., a brief embrace to offer condolences, congratulations, etc.)
3. briefly, not for a long time - if the child's situation justifies it - put your arm around the child's shoulders when he/she is sad, angry or having a difficulty, but always in visible places and in front of other people.

Other Limits to be Observed

Minors should be treated as such and not be invited to become confidants of Consecrated Women. Therefore, Consecrated Women shall avoid:

1. sharing with children personal problems or dislikes, difficulties or other concerns regarding the topic of sexuality;
2. asking a minor to keep certain information secret from his or her parents, other Consecrated Women or adults;
3. using offensive language, swearing, or telling jokes in bad taste or alluding to sex.

Some appropriate verbal interactions with minors include:

1. Verbal praise.
2. Positive reinforcement
3. Encouragement
4. Appropriate Jokes

Consecrated Women are not permitted to offer alcoholic beverages, tobacco, narcotics or stimulant beverages (for example, "Red Bull") to minors or adolescents under the legal drinking age. Likewise, Consecrated Women shall avoid drinking alcoholic beverages when they have minors in their care or in their presence.

Consecrated Women are not allowed to change clothes in the presence of minors.

Consecrated women shall avoid giving gifts to minors without parental consent.

When visiting family homes, Consecrated Women may enter the minor's room only in the company of one or both parents.

Consecrated Women shall not prescribe the use or administer medication or provide medical care to a minor without written parental consent, except in emergency medical situations. For those activities where there may be some risk, written parental authorization must be obtained for the application of the corresponding medication or procedure.

Indications for Places of Pastoral Activity

When dealing with minors in the apostolate, Consecrated Women should preferably choose open areas where others can see them, in order to avoid situations where they are alone with the minor.

Bedrooms or bathrooms should never be used for meeting or conversing with minors.

Consecrated Women, when giving spiritual dialogue to minors, should do so in a visible area (walking in a courtyard or outside corridor) or in an office where it can be clearly seen from the outside.

Consecrated Women should not allow minors to enter their bedroom or private areas of the house.

Use of Social Media and Similar Means of Communication

Consecrated Women should be particularly prudent when sending or participating in electronic communications with minors and even by telephone, avoiding comments that are not respectful or that could be interpreted as improper expression of an adult toward a minor. They should obtain parental permission before engaging in communication with a minor by electronic or other means. If possible, parents should receive a copy of such communications.

Members should not communicate with minors (*other than relatives*) using electronic media except as a part of their professional/ministerial responsibilities. This includes email, instant messaging, texting, or social networking sites. If a minor were to contact a Member, a polite response is permitted, but future communications should be avoided.

During any usage of social media or other electronic communications with minors, Consecrated Women are not to:

1. Make comments that are, or could be construed by any observer to be, harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating.
2. Engage in sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities unless these are part of a pastoral situation.
3. Post sexually oriented or morally inappropriate pictures, photos, or comments.
4. Engage in one-on-one video chatting or have one-on-one interaction in a chatroom.
5. Initiate or accept a “*friend*” request (*or similar social media “connection”*) using a personal account.

Even with parental consent for the above, Consecrated Women should favor verbal dialogue with minors. It is forbidden to send and exchange multimedia material, in private, only with a minor. For apostolic reasons, multimedia material may be sent to a group of minors.

Photographs of minors:

1. Consecrated Women may only take photographs of minors and save them on their electronic devices when they are group photographs.
2. Consecrated Women must not take or keep photographs of minors partially or totally undressed, in bathing suits or in pajamas, even when in a group.
3. Post photos of minors or details of ministry/program activities involving minors on any electronic media without the explicit, written permission of a parent or legal guardian.

4. The preceding paragraphs do not apply to close relatives of the Consecrated Woman who are minors.

Pornography is gravely immoral. The use, production, acquisition, possession or dissemination of child pornography material, also through virtual or fantasy images, constitutes a serious crime, comparable to child sexual abuse.

The responsibility for the content accessed by electronic devices used by Consecrated Women may fall on the legal corporations that own the devices. Each Consecrated Woman is accountable for the digital content she accesses.

Correction of Minors

In order to ensure the proper emotional development of the minors with whom they deal, Consecrated Women should never utter words or make gestures that ridicule, discriminate, humiliate or offend them.

The Consecrated Woman, when it is necessary to correct a minor for inappropriate behavior or for not complying with the norms, instructions or directions given, should do so with moderation and within reason, without imposing any punishment that may cause physical, emotional or psychological harm. For example, you will never deny food, water, or the ability to go to the bathroom to any minor.

The relationship with minors should always be respectful, offering help and availability. Consecrated Women shall never threaten or disrespect a minor.

Activities with Minors

Consecrated Women should choose recreational activities with minors wisely. If it is anticipated that parents will consider the activity to be high-risk, alternatives should be sought.

All activities must follow what the administrative regulations of Regnum Christi establish with respect to the security necessary for the activity.

Conversations with Minors about Sexuality

Consecrated Women, in group conversations with minors, should address issues of purity and sexuality in an age-appropriate manner, focusing on general principles.

In cases where it is necessary to go into greater detail, this should be done carefully, always respecting the primary responsibility that parents have in this area.

Sports Activities with Minors

In sports activities with minors, Consecrated Women shall avoid intense physical contact. They will be for the minors an example of equanimity and self-control in the game.

Consecrated Women are not allowed to swim, play paintball, gotcha, wrestle, perform "extreme sports", martial arts, measure forces and other similar activities that require intense physical contact with minors, regardless of the presence or participation of parents.

Activities Requiring an Overnight Stay

Minors are not allowed to stay overnight in the houses of Consecrated Women, unless they have the written consent of their parents for a justified activity.

No foster care (involving an overnight stay) shall be provided to any runaway minor.

When a minor is known to have run away from home, the Consecrated Woman will promptly inform the parents or guardian(s) of the minor's whereabouts. If it is suspected that they have abused the minor, she will inform other members of the family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.), who can take responsibility for the situation of the minor. The safety and whereabouts of the minor will be reported to the civil authorities, in the event that one of the parents has abused the minor. This report will be made through the corresponding legal representatives.

In order for a minor to participate in the activities organized by the Consecrated Women, the written consent of the parents must be obtained. The type of activity that will take place (retreat, get-together, course, nocturnal adoration, missions, etc.) must be included in the authorization.

Consecrated women, when organizing any type of activity with minors (such as sports, formation, spiritual, apostolic, cultural, evangelization missions, etc.), should seek the support of at least two adults to be present at the activity.

During activities that involve the Consecrated Women spending the night away from their own homes (such as camps, retreats, pilgrimages, evangelization missions, etc.):

1. Consecrated Women should have separate rooms for minors, but should remain close to them to monitor their safety and behavior. Preferably, this task should be entrusted to parents or other adults - other than Consecrated Women - who participate in the activities.

2. Showers and bathrooms for Consecrated Women and other adults involved in the activity should be separate from those used by minors. If this is not possible, different times for bathing should be established.

Transportation of Minors

During trips and pilgrimages, the task of driving should be assigned to adult drivers of proven ability, preferably the parents of minors.

Written authorization from the parents must be obtained at all times for minors to travel.

Only in cases of emergency may Consecrated Women transport minors in a car or travel with them alone.

It is absolutely forbidden for a Consecrated Woman to consent or authorize a minor under the age required by law to drive a vehicle.

Procedure to be Followed in the Event of a Serious Complaint

1. Duty to intervene and report:

When a Consecrated Woman knows or has well-founded suspicions that another Consecrated Woman is transgressing the provisions of this Code of Conduct, in serious cases, she has the duty to intervene immediately and directly to prevent conduct that could harm a minor.

The Consecrated Woman should report serious acts or transgressions of the Code of Conduct by another Consecrated Woman to the territorial director and to the safe environment coordinator. What is reported should be in writing, according to the forms used by the territory for these cases.

The Consecrated Woman who writes the report indicated in the above must do so under the principle of loyalty and good faith, reporting the violation of the norms of the Code of Conduct, pointing out the probable intervention of another Consecrated Woman, expressing the circumstances of time, place and manner of execution.

The territorial director shall ensure that, within the process to be followed, the principle of presumption of innocence, due confidentiality and the good reputation of the accused Consecrated Woman are safeguarded. The territorial director shall guarantee their right to defend themselves and present their views about the facts.

The safeguarding of the above principles does not exempt the territorial director from intervening immediately and in a timely manner to guarantee the protection and integrity of the minors under the care of the Consecrated Woman, and may change her community or, if necessary, temporarily remove her from the houses of the Society, notifying the general director.

When a Consecrated Woman is accused of sexual abuse and has an open criminal proceeding, the territorial/general director will not be able to transfer her to another city or country.

In the face of allegations of sexual abuse, all Consecrated Women should proceed in accordance with the Society's proper law, this Code of Conduct and the stipulations of the Code of Canon Law and other ecclesiastical norms in force.

2. Cooperation with civil authorities:

The Consecrated Women are committed to act not only in accordance with this Code of Conduct in terms of when to intervene and report, but also in accordance with the legislation of the United States, Canada and the Philippines in this field.

Consecrated Women who have witnessed an event that may constitute a crime according to the legislation of the United States and the Philippines, must collaborate with the safe environment coordinator for the formulation of the corresponding denunciation and -if necessary- as witnesses within the process to be followed, by virtue of the fact that there is a legal obligation to do so.

The accused Consecrated Woman may be provided with the appropriate legal advice to deal with the complaints made against her, through the legal entity established by the Society for that purpose.