

Dead Theologians Society Safe Environment Policy

The Dead Theologians Society is concerned with holiness of life and recognizes that holiness involves resisting evil as well as promoting what is good. The entire meaning of our society is to cooperate and promote the good of the Church by developing virtue and eschewing vice.

Therefore this society will wholeheartedly and vigorously work to ensure the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well being and safety of every leader and participant, as well as every guest, in the activities of the work of this youth apostolate.

We implement the following policies aware of the fact that our ministry happens among youth who are at times confused and about the meaning and appropriate place of sexual expression and in a time when society in general is highly 'sexualized,' especially in the media of our day. We are also painfully aware of the abuses which have happened in the Church we love and are committed to zealously uphold these regulations and so create environments which are above reproach and a model of purity and wholesomeness in youth ministry in accord with the teachings of the Church on youth, ministry and human sexuality.

We are committed to cooperation with the safe environment programs of each and every diocese in which the Dead Theologians Society has chapters.

All of our leaders will be fully certified by diocesan safe environment authorities.

- This includes submitting to all required background checks which the local diocese may require of its youth ministers, including criminal, financial and driver background checks if required by the parish or the diocese.
- No person who has any history of child abuse or sexual abuse may ever be involved as a leader or participant in a Dead Theologians Society chapter. While forgiveness and redemption is a real hope and expectation for those who sin, the stain on their reputation in these areas creates a situation in which they must be barred from participation for the good of the apostolate.

Chapters of the Dead Theologians Society will do nothing to avoid parish, diocesan or other required certifications and, in fact, see these programs as assistance to our ministry and the confidence which parents, pastors and the whole Church can have in the work of this apostolate.

* The Dead Theologians Society is a part of the Church and a part of the parish. It will not meet offsite or over a diocesan boundary in order to avoid the requirements of a local ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Cooperation and respect must be the hallmarks of an apostolate which is so steeped in the Tradition of the Church as is this one.

No Dead Theologians Society leader of any age will be alone with teens in any circumstance. A second leader or adult must always be present.

Worship, prayer and especially reconciliation services will always be arranged in a manner which assures that even the priest will never be in an isolated space with a youth participant. Our standards will be high as or higher than those of the parish and the diocese in which we serve so that our work will remain above reproach.

The Dead Theologians Society does not sponsor overnight activities nor does it allow any activities in which the youth are to sleep individually or as a group.

Retreats are retreats of the parish and not sponsored by DTS. Such retreats should not be advertised or represented as DTS retreats. Any and all youth retreats are subject to the rules and guidelines of the NCCB, the diocese and the parish and are not the responsibility of the Dead Theologians Society.

Dead Theologians Society leaders will not transport youth in their capacity as DTS leaders.

- If, as parish or diocesan youth leaders, or in some other official capacity, they do transport youth, they are to do so in full compliance with the guidelines of the local parish and diocese for those situations.
- The Dead Theologians Society chapter activities are held in a single place in which all gather. There is no need for DTS leaders, youth or parents to be involved in transportation as leaders of a DTS activity. Therefore, as DTS leaders, youth and parents, per se, no responsibility is assumed for the transportation of youth.

All public displays of affection, kissing, fondling, hugging or any inappropriate touching between participants or participants and leaders is forbidden during the activities of the Dead Theologians Society, no matter how strong the bonds of affection between boyfriend and girlfriend may be.

- Borderline behaviors should fall under the rubric of “if in doubt, do not do it.”
 - Touching which is open to interpretation must be interpreted in a way which sides on caution.
 - This protects the youth and the leaders.
 - It protects the Church and DTS.
 - It does not hurt anyone to restrain themselves for this higher good while at a DTS gathering.
- This agreement must be explicitly articulated in all Dead Theologians Society chapters without exception. A DTS meeting is a PDA-free zone.
- No person in a leadership position of a DTS chapter will pursue or maintain any inappropriate relationship with a youth participant **at any time** (including offsite or when DTS is not meeting or in session).

- Violation of this tenant incurs a lifetime ban from the organization and, if illegal locally, will be promptly reported to all appropriate authorities without exception.
 - This is a point of integrity for the Church.
- DTS leaders will be familiar with the 'mandatory reporting' statutes of the state, county and municipality in which they reside and will vigorously uphold those laws, recognizing that the temptation will always be present to make the fatal mistake of making an exception for an acquaintance, friend, an otherwise talented leader or a sympathetic figure.
- Questionable activity which falls outside of the mandatory report statutes will nonetheless be promptly reported to the proper ecclesiastical authorities.