



## Guidelines for Developing Programming for all Sacramental Preparation, Faith Formation, Youth Ministry, and RCIA for 2020 – 2021

*Keep me safe, O God; in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, you are my God, you are my only good.*  
Psalm 16: 1-2

During the COVID-19 pandemic this year, parishes continue to carry out their principal calling: to care for the faithful – especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, both within and outside the parish community – nourishing them through the Gospel and the sacraments, and continuing to provide ministry; including sacramental preparation, faith formation, youth ministry and RCIA.

To facilitate the provision of safe ministry in every parish, Bishop Boulette has requested that all parishes create a COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan in his communication to pastors on June 24, 2020. Please note that the Archdiocesan Policy for Ministering to Minors is still in effect. You can find a copy of the document at:

[https://www.archsa.org/images/uploads/Policy\\_for\\_Ministering\\_to\\_Minors.pdf](https://www.archsa.org/images/uploads/Policy_for_Ministering_to_Minors.pdf)

As you move forward with planning, please consider the following:

- Overnight retreats are not recommended at this time.
- **Appendix A** provides some sample formats for parish religious education and youth ministry.
- Please include the General Disclaimer that appears in **Appendix B** in all your registration forms for religious education and youth ministry.
- Any and all formats that include online interaction of minors (those 17yrs. old and under) with any adult volunteer or staff member and/or parish onsite in-person formation require that parents sign the release form in **Appendix C**.
- **Appendix D** provides a sample of additional items that may be added to a parish COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan

We are called to be diligent, flexible, creative, and compassionate as we accompany the People of God during these extraordinary circumstances in parish life. In the Guidelines that follow, different options are available for various types of formation.

### **I. BAPTISM PREPARATION SESSIONS (FOR PARENTS REQUESTING INFANT BAPTISM & GODPARENTS)**

Baptism preparation is a basic and essential function of parish life. An online-assisted format should be chosen for baptism preparation sessions whenever possible. All the elements of Preparation and Catechesis of Parents and Godparents as stated in Section V. of the GUIDELINES

FOR INFANT BAPTISM apply. The GUIDELINES can be viewed at <https://www.archsa.org/baptism>

Parish accompaniment of parents and godparents must always be an integral part of this preparation. For example, it is inadequate to post a video or link to some materials on the parish website and ask parents and godparents to complete it as their preparation. A videoconference option such as Zoom or Google Classrooms allows an instructor, facilitator, or team to present content segments in real time followed by small group discussion. Preparation materials for participants can be emailed, mailed or picked up at the parish prior videoconferencing sessions. In addition to virtual options, there should always be provision made for persons without reliable internet access, who are unable/uncomfortable using an online format, or when an online or virtual format is not practicable or possible. Such persons should be provided with all the necessary materials and accompanied by either phone sessions or in-person sessions following the parish COVID-19 Safety Plan.

Some of the currently approved baptismal preparation materials are posted on the DPM page of the Archdiocesan website and can be found at <https://www.archsa.org/baptism-prep-resources>

## **II. FIRST RECONCILIATION/FIRST EUCHARIST PREPARATION & CONFIRMATION FOR ADOLESCENTS (FOR INFORMATION ON PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS, SEE SECTION VI.)**

Within any parish religious education program, preparation for the sacraments is critical and indispensable. For this reason, it is recommended that if at all possible, in-person sessions take place during the year in which an individual is expected to receive First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, or Confirmation. Nevertheless, for this to be possible, the Parish COVID-19 Health & Safety Plan must be implemented and followed. If any parent declines such sessions for their child for health or safety reasons, they are to be provided with online and/or hard copy materials and regular guidance from a parish catechist to prepare their child at home.

Parents should be reminded that no sacrament can be received “virtually,” and each parish may decide how to implement any necessary in-person practice or rehearsal as well as the sacramental celebration itself. Any in-person event, rehearsal, or sacramental celebration must follow the Parish COVID-19 Health & Safety Plan.

## **III. CONFIRMATION PREPARATION FOR ADULTS (18 AND OVER)**

Confirmation preparation for adults, like all sacramental preparation, is to continue in every parish. In order to ensure the valid reception of the sacrament, parish staff accompanies, assists, and provides guidance to individuals preparing for Confirmation. Please see *Preparation for Adults Receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation* found at <https://www.archsa.org/adult-confirmation>

These adults do not belong with adolescents preparing for Confirmation, nor is the RCIA process appropriate for them, since they are neither catechumens nor candidates for full communion.

Depending on the adult confirmand's formation needs discerned during the necessary first encounter – which can take place in-person, by videoconference or by phone – the parish staff member can recommend one of several options for sacramental preparation. An individual could 1) take the parish-provided Adult Confirmation preparation (a sample preparation can be found here: <https://www.archsa.org/images/uploads/Suggested-Adult-Confirmation-Curriculum.pdf>). 2) receive Adult Confirmation preparation at another parish, arranged and secured by the parish staff member, **not** the adult confirmand 3) take the online-assisted Adult Confirmation preparation.

The parish staff member and the adult confirmand are to discuss each of these options and their corresponding requirements. The adult confirmand should also receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation within a week or so before the Confirmation celebration takes place. Please remind the adult confirmand that no sacrament can be received “virtually.”

#### **IV. RCIA AND RCIA ADAPTED FOR CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE**

Also an essential part of parish life and formation, the “catechumenate is not an optional activity, but basic and fundamental for building up the personality of the individual disciple, as it is for the whole Christian community.” (GDC 64) The RCIA and RCIA Adapted for Children of Catechetical Age are to continue, either in-person with all Archdiocesan sanitation, physical distancing, and masking requirements in place or through regular videoconferencing with appropriate materials being picked up at the parish. Nevertheless, there should always be provisions made for persons without reliable internet access, who are unable/uncomfortable using an online format, or cannot participate in in-person sessions for whatever reason. Such persons should be provided with all the necessary materials and accompanied by either phone sessions or in-person sessions at their home according to the Archdiocesan guidelines regarding sanitation, physical distancing, and use of masks.

With regard to the Rites, including Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, Welcoming Baptized for Full Communion, etc.; they are to be celebrated during the Sunday liturgy with the catechumens and candidates that are able to attend, following the Parish COVID-19 Health & Safety Plan. Those unable to do so for any reason should follow the Rites virtually through the parish live-streamed Mass, where possible. In addition, the pastor or his delegate should follow-up with those unable to attend to discuss the Rites and their implications.

Those catechumens (and candidates, where appropriate) present during the Sunday liturgy should also participate in the Dismissal before the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins to share and discuss the scripture readings with guidance from a member of the RCIA team following the Parish COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan. Instructions for the Rite of Election and Easter Vigil 2021 will be forthcoming.

#### **V. PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE**

Parishes continue to be called to provide formation to those seeking the sacrament of matrimony. It is essential for couples to receive formation on the theology of marriage and participate in activities that will help them grow in the life skills necessary for marriage and family life. Formation is done at the parish level with the goal of creating a solid, long-lasting bond between the couple and the parish community.

Marriage preparation can be implemented through one of the following options (if meetings are in-person, please follow your parish's COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan; meetings can also be conducted through video-conferencing platforms as appropriate):

- In-Person One-On-One meetings: couple meets with parish priest, deacon, sponsor couple or marriage ministry delegate for an Inventory or Marriage Preparation Program.
- In-Person Group meetings: parish priest, deacon, and/or marriage ministry delegate(s) meet with a group of couples preparing for marriage to complete a Marriage Preparation Program. These can be done as weekly sessions or as day retreats.
- Blended (Online and In-Person): Couple participates in an online Inventory and/or Marriage Preparation Program. Parish priest, deacon, sponsor couple or marriage ministry delegate meets with couple every week throughout the process (or some of the weeks) to review and further explore the material from the online program and to accompany the couple in their overall marriage preparation process.
- Online Only: Couple completes an online Inventory and/or Marriage Preparation Program with its pertinent reflection work done from home. Important consideration: This online only option is not recommended for local couples, it should only be used in special circumstances where either the bride or the groom are not locals and cannot participate in the local marriage preparation programs. Please note that when the bride and/or groom are in the military, they have access to the services of the Archdiocese of Military Services U.S.A., including marriage formation, engaged retreats, etc.

For a list of recommended marriage preparation programs and resources, please visit [www.archsa.org/mpresources](http://www.archsa.org/mpresources). All programs listed are available in English and Spanish (except where indicated) and they include appropriate sections for newly engaged couples and/or for those already married civilly looking to convalidate their marriage in the Catholic Church.

## VI. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND YOUTH MINISTRY

This time of pandemic has given us new opportunities to advance our creative outreach and pastoral care of the children and youth of our communities. Those in Parish Religious Education Programs or Youth Ministry may be able to meet in person if all guidelines from the parish's COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan are followed. If any parent declines such in-person participation for their minor for health or safety reasons, they are to be provided with online and/or hard copy materials and regular guidance from the parish catechist/ youth minister so that the minor can participate from home. Below are some of the online and other resources available from the major publishers for Parish Religious Education Programs. Please see **Appendix A** for some sample format options for Religious Education and Youth Ministry.

### *Resources from Publishers for Parish Religious Education Programs*

- **Loyola Press** – For current users of the text series *Christ Our Life* there are numerous, free, at-home resources available. Parents can always access at-home resources at and [www.christourlife.com/family](http://www.christourlife.com/family). Family resources are available, including at-home, parent-led lesson plans.
- **Sadlier** – Sadlier offers online resources for parents, catechists, and parish catechetical leaders free of charge with no login necessary. Everyone has access to these resources whether or not they are current Sadlier customers. <https://religion.sadlierconnect.com/login.html> or contact [sbacon@sadlier.com](mailto:sbacon@sadlier.com)
- **St. Mary's Press** – There are online resources for the parishes using St. Mary's Press materials. At-home guides as well as e-books and other supportive materials are available, including support for parents teaching from home. For anyone using St. Mary's Press, contact them directly for access to online support for using their materials at home. The ministry care team direct line is 1-800-533-8095. [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org)
- **RCL Benziger** – If a parish uses the *Blest Are We* or *Be My Disciples* program, they have access to a free online e-book for both participants and catechists. If assistance is needed, contact Jennifer Vargas-Stolper, at 626-893-6976 or [jvargas@rclbenziger.com](mailto:jvargas@rclbenziger.com) Free online catechetical resources that are liturgically based are available here: <https://www.rclbenziger.com/catholic-resources>
- **Lectionary Resources** – Benzinger also has lectionary resources - free to everyone - available for primary, intermediate, and Jr high levels. There are Gospel Reflections designed to be used with families and in intergenerational settings along with a "Question of the Week." Go to <http://rclblectionary.com/>
- **Our Sunday Visitor** – *Alive in Christ* Parish Digital Books and Home Lesson Plans. You can access the digital books by going to the Student & Family Tab: <http://aliveinchrist.osv.com/family>
- **Pflaum** – This publisher providing is the texts of the Sunday liturgies along with reflections free of charge as an aid to worship, especially for those who cannot attend Sunday liturgies because of illness or because they have been cancelled. In addition, there is a list of resources to help parents provide interaction during periods of school closure. <https://www.pflaum.com/free-online-resources-to-use-at-home-during-covid-19-outbreak/>
- **Sophia Institute** This resource offers free lessons and activities to help families whose children are on home-study. Includes ready-to-go plans. [https://sophiainstituteforteachers.org/elesson/free-current-events?utm\\_source=mailchimp&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=covid](https://sophiainstituteforteachers.org/elesson/free-current-events?utm_source=mailchimp&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=covid)

### *Resources from Publishers for Youth Ministry Programs*

- **Life Teen** – For current subscribers, resources are available at <https://lifeteen.com/>. For non-subscribing parishes, there are some available free resources that can be utilized for faith formation in youth ministries:
  - Lectio Live: A YouTube livestream every Wednesday at 5:00pm, discussing and praying with the upcoming Sunday Mass readings <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeYPzNQ7pEh-nVk3aoHWy6tba7-LTXepo>

- Summit Teaching Videos: Every Monday a new Summit teaching video is published, which unpacks the next Sunday's mass readings  
[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeYPzNQ7pEh8\\_puI6XcsrCYMeV5w7Xs2O](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeYPzNQ7pEh8_puI6XcsrCYMeV5w7Xs2O)  
 Subscribing and non-subscribing parishes can email the local area contacts for Life Teen for questions or more information: Lacey Sorrell [lsorrell@lifeteen.com](mailto:lsorrell@lifeteen.com) or Monica Harness [mharness@lifeteen.com](mailto:mharness@lifeteen.com).
- **Center for Ministry Development** – Subscribers can access a variety of resources and a newly developed online confirmation program at <https://www.cmdnet.org/>. They have resources for middle school and high school and other resources on the liturgical year, movies, saints, families, etc. For program information, contact Angel Barrera at [angel@cmdnet.org](mailto:angel@cmdnet.org).
- **Ascension Press** – A variety of programs for teens are available for purchase (hard-copy and/or online) at <https://ascensionpress.com/pages/teen-faith-formation>. The resources they offer are focus on the theology of the body and scripture among other themes. For questions you can email [sales@ascensionpress.com](mailto:sales@ascensionpress.com).
- **FORMED** – This online platform offers the program “YDisciple” among one of their options for youth ministry. This small group approach program addresses various topics and contains videos, guides for leaders and participants, and parents’ guides in English and Spanish. For information visit <https://watch.formed.org/ydisciple> or call 1-800-376-0520.

## VII. ONGOING ADULT FAITH FORMATION, LAY MOVEMENTS, AND OTHER PARISH MINISTRIES

Ministries may be able to meet in person. Nevertheless, for this to be possible, all guidelines from the Parish’s COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan must be implemented. Ministries are also encouraged to continue to minister to the People of God through other media (live video meetings, podcasts, pre-recorded instruction, instant messaging apps, etc.)

*For additional assistance, refer to the Department for Pastoral Ministries website at: <https://www.archsa.org/pastoral-ministries> or please contact:*

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## Appendix A - Sample Formats for Parish Religious Education and Youth Ministry

These are among the format options that can be implemented for Religious Education, Youth Ministry and other ministries as appropriate. The options listed are adjustable, interchangeable and are to be adapted to the particular needs and resources of the individual parish community as well as the changing realities of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overnight retreats are not recommended at this time. Please include the General Disclaimer that appears in **Appendix B** in all your registration forms for religious education and youth ministry. Any and all formats that include online interaction of minors (those 17yrs. old and under) with any adult volunteer or staff member and/or parish onsite in-person formation require that parents sign the release form in **Appendix C**.

**Option 1 – Family Faith Formation at Home** (*for situations w/ little to no internet access at home and catechists not comfortable with technology*)

The Parish Catechetical Leader and volunteers assemble packets for distribution to families who register for the parish program. The Catechetical Leader communicates with catechists individually, in groups based on age of participants, all together via a virtual platform, (those catechists without internet access can be telephoned) prior to the start of each month to go over the particular theme, relay the key points to cover with the parents, announce new information, and provide encouragement and affirmation. Catechists then contact each family in the grade level to which they are assigned on a monthly basis to go over lessons with the parent, answer questions, assess needs, etc. This should especially be considered for the grade levels preparing to receive any of the sacraments within that year.

1. **Packets** – Include original participant text (do not photocopy unless instructed to do so by the publisher), supplies for projects not typically found in homes, Parent Information (see below for details), and zipper-type bag with name label if any work needs to be returned to the parish. Alternatives to turning in work or completed exercises include photos of finished work sent via email or text, an activity log completed by the parent with the date of each lesson and a check-off of objectives met, or a phone discussion with the parent. Packet pick-ups may be scheduled at monthly intervals or one per semester. Create a rolling schedule for packet pick-up by last name or age group as appropriate. For safety and health reasons, you should not have many families attending the packet pick-up at the same time.
2. **Parent Information to be included in the Packet:** – Contact information for the Parish Catechetical Leader, package pick-up dates for year, explanation of expectations for parent, and step-by-step instructions for each lesson to be done together during the month. You may also include videos that can be accessed on a mobile device. Explain how participants and parents are called to guide the progress of participant learning. Each publisher has different models for this.
3. **Implementation:** Encourage families to set a regular time each week to complete the lessons together. Most weeks the parent will be facilitating a learning session. Consider reserving one week each month for a family project – a service opportunity, creating a saint book, constructing a home altar, etc. Families should discuss the activity.
4. **Also:** Consider having half of the religious education participants come to the parish on-site one week, and the other half the following week, to reduce the number of participants on-site at a given time while following the parish’s COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan. The Catechetical Leader is to assist catechists prepare material for the families to do together at home during alternate weeks.

This model above serves all participants regardless of internet availability and access to technology but does require organizing a packet pick-up process and significant accompaniment on the part of the catechetical leader, catechists, and volunteers.

**Option 2: *Family Formation (Blended Learning Approach)***

In Family Formation, a monthly topic is presented to families by the catechetical leader, pastor, parochial vicar, deacon, via zoom or other technology. Parents would then extend the learning throughout the month with directed activities. This may require a separate coaching session for parents that is recorded by the catechetical leader and volunteers or offered in-person following all guidelines from the parish's COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan. Activities are given with options to use a physical or digital workbook.

1. **A Presenter** - is assigned for each monthly topic. The presentation should be recorded in the event it would need to be offered multiple times. Under the direction of the Catechetical Leader, the team of catechists then create assignments for various age groups within families. The team and Catechetical leader will call each family monthly to check on progress with the home learning.
2. **Implementation** - Virtual meetings are preferred where possible. Depending on the number of families, several presentations may be scheduled, and the families placed in groups based on the ages of the children. In some parishes, gathering families in a large space may be possible. However, if all guidelines from the parish's COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan cannot be followed, family sessions should not be done in-person.

**Option 3: *Family Formation (Digital Learning Approach)***

Lessons for each of the monthly themes would be available either as digital workbooks or through online links. Most major publishers have been working to put their physical texts online as eBooks, made available for purchase in this format or included with the purchase of a physical text.

1. **The catechetical leader:** identifies resources that can be made available online, utilizing a platform such as Flipgrid, Moodle, or Google Classroom to post activities in the digital workbook, supplemented by videos or reflection questions to which participants can post responses. Ensure there is a way to track progress if this is not a feature included in the platform. This model allows the catechist or catechetical leader to record introductory videos to the lessons that deliver content and asks the parent to serve as facilitator of discussion that follows. Catechetical Leaders should choose a platform that is mobile device friendly so that parents without computers can use their smartphones.
2. **Implementation:** Considering the monthly theme or curriculum chosen for the parish, choose the appropriate lessons and post them on the online platform. Record a video introducing the theme and giving the objectives for the lesson of the week (this may be one of your catechists or you may have catechists do this for their own class or grade level). There should be a short introductory video for each lesson. Ideally, allow one week for a service project or a creativity project. Record an introduction that gives at least two options - one service and one creativity (collage, poster, video, play, booklet, etc.). Have families post their results on the online platform.



#### **Option 4 – In-person gathering with live video access (YM)**

The Youth Ministry team prepares for the in-person gathering following all guidelines from the parish's COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan. In addition, the team prepares to have live online access for those teens that will be participating from home. Pertinent accommodations should be made regarding games, handouts, music, etc. for both in-person and online participants. Some examples include:

1. Email materials to online participants before the meeting and have them available on screen in addition to have them in hard-copy for in-person participants (as per the parish's practice).
2. Prepare necessary equipment for online access (computer, camera or phone, etc.)
3. Divide the YM team so that some work with the in-person participants and some with online participants during games, small group sharing, etc.

#### **Option 5 – Hybrid asynchronous/synchronous faith formation (YM)** [online/pre-recorded faith formation with follow-up meetings that are live and online]

The Youth Ministry team can utilize a faith formation program from one of the Catholic publishers or Catholic programs (Loyola, Life Teen, CMD, etc.) that provide asynchronous learning (online formation that the participant can watch/read/work on their own time). The team can also pre-record videos of the sessions and upload them to the parish website for the participants to watch. The key element in this option is the live follow-up (synchronous). The team prepares a live, online meeting that complements the asynchronous learning. Ideally, these follow-up online meetings should occur every week or every other week. Other things to consider:

1. In using this option, there should always be provisions made for families without reliable internet access or who are unable/uncomfortable using an online format for whatever reason. These families should be provided with all the necessary materials and accompanied by the YM team.
2. As an additional element to this option, the YM team can plan monthly/bi-monthly/quarterly in-person meetings to complement this hybrid option, following the parish's COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan.

#### **Option 6 – Family faith formation at home (YM)**

The YM team prepares packets to distribute on a monthly basis to the families that do not feel comfortable assembling in-person and that do not have internet access. The families will then have faith formation sessions at home, following the material provided. The YM team will call each family at least once a month to offer assistance with the progress of the formation and answer any questions that may arise.

1. Identify the materials that need to be sent home with the teens and procure as needed.
2. Create a rolling schedule for packet pick-up by last name or age group as appropriate. For safety and health reasons, you should not have many families attending the packet pick-up at the same time.
3. Create a guide for the family to follow that includes topics, activities and important dates, including the next pick-up time/date.
4. Check with your DRE and other ministry leaders to see how this packet distribution could be a joint effort among ministries.
5. Assemble packet for teens/families and hold the packet pick-up as scheduled.
6. Call the parents to follow up on the progress of the home faith formation.

*The Family Formation at Home options can more easily continue functioning if at any time our communities are again placed under lockdown by our government and health officials.*

## Appendix B

*Please include the following General Disclaimer in all your registration forms for religious education and youth ministry:*

[*Name of Parish*] is dedicated to preventing the transmission of COVID-19. We are following CDC guidelines for sanitation, social distancing and face coverings. Even with these precautions, infections are still possible and may result in serious illness or even death. If you have concerns about your child's safety or your child or someone in your household is in a vulnerable population, you may opt to have your child participate in religious education/youth group on-line or by correspondence. If you have questions about whether your child or a family member are in a vulnerable population, please visit the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/other-at-risk-populations.html>

# Appendix C

## PROVISIONS FOR INFORMED CONSENT FOR MINOR PARTICIPATION VIA TELECOMMUTING (COVID-19)

This Informed Consent for minor participation via telecommuting contains important provisions for using the phone or the internet during the period of the current COVID-19 pandemic. Please read this carefully, and let your religious education directors/coordinators or youth ministers know if you have any questions.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct enacted by the Archdiocese of San Antonio, all ministry with minors via telecommuting will occur with two qualified adults in the sessions at all times.

For purposes herein, telecommuting refers to participating in religious education classes, youth groups, or other meetings remotely using telecommunications technologies, such as video conferencing or telephone.

Risks to confidentiality. Because telecommuting takes place outside of the normal gathering places on parish grounds, there is potential for other people to access these conversations or stored data could be accessed by unauthorized people or companies.

You are solely responsible for obtaining any necessary equipment, accessories, or software for your child to participate in telecommuting, as well as for ensuring the security of such equipment, accessories or software for your child's participation.

Recording. The telecommuting sessions shall be recorded by the religious education coordinators/youth ministers solely for auditing purposes and such recordings may not be published in any form, including any social media forums.

### Parent/Legal Guardian Informed Consent

This agreement is intended as a supplement to the registration forms for in-person ministry with minors and does not amend any of the terms of that agreement.

Your signature below indicates agreement with its terms and conditions.

I agree to allow my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in religious education/youth group participation via telecommuting with religious education/ youth group qualified adults at \_\_\_\_\_ (*Parish Name*), during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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*Parent/Legal Guardian Signature*

*Date*

## Appendix D

### *A sample of additional items that may be added to a Parish COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan*

The following procedures will assist parishes to serve children, teens, families, and volunteers at parishes on-site. If any person has discerned that he or she is unable to participate in the celebration of Mass for health reasons, then they are also unable to participate in on-site parish ministry.

Note that those highlighted are required; those not highlighted are recommended.

#### **Prior to Engaging in Religious Education or Youth Ministry Events:**

##### 1. Cleaning/Sanitizing Common Space/Touch-Points

While surface spread of COVID-19 is less common than previously reported, continue to disinfect all common touch surfaces prior to the event.

- This includes, but is not limited to: light switches, door knobs, chairs or tables in use, microphones/audio equipment, etc.
  - Use an approved CDC disinfectant: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>
- “It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. This is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads, but we are still learning more about how this virus spreads.”
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>

##### 2. Event Temperature Checks

#### **During Religious Education or Youth Ministry Events:**

##### 1. Physical Distancing

Participants will continue to socially distance themselves at events, especially when indoors or in enclosed spaces. Appropriate distancing will be based on the most recent recommendations from the CDC, state, or local health departments. At the time of this publishing, the current recommended distance is 6 feet.

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

##### 2. No Physical Contact

Avoid physical contact with one another. This includes but is not limited to: hand shaking, hugging, fist bumps, high fives, or any games/activities where physical contact is required. This is believed to be the MAIN way the virus is spread, through close physical contact with an infected individual.

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>

##### 3. Attendance Sheet/App to track participation.

Staff are required to track attendance of all participants and acquire names and contact information (including contact information of parent/guardian in the case of minors). Proper care for participants requires that we know who is in attendance at all times. Individuals known to have contracted or are/have been exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should not

return until after a 14-day self-quarantine followed by at least 72 hours of no symptoms. Individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 should not participate in activities until they have self-quarantined for 14 days from the date of exposure.

4.. Outdoors or in open public space is preferred.

Most Youth Ministry activities can be done outdoors. Whether games/activities, talks or witnesses, small groups or prayer/worship, all these can be done outdoors where there is the lowest chance of contracting or spreading the virus. With social distancing and holding events outdoors solely, (provided weather cooperates), you may minimize the chance of contamination.

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/visitors.html>

5. Indoor Events:

Face Coverings/Masks:

- When indoors, participants and adult leaders must wear face coverings.
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

Necessary Sanitation:

- All common touch points should be sanitized before and after each meeting.
- If possible, utilize larger classrooms or parish hall to allow for adequate social distancing.
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- It is recommended that participants do not share materials (notebooks, writing implements) or personal items such as water bottles.
- Food can be part of your ministry gatherings if you can follow standard food safety practices and regulations, including the following:
  - a. Ensure that all food preparers or distributors wear masks, gloves
  - b. Food should be served in individual covered containers/wrappers
  - c. Design your distribution process in such a way as to limit contact between employees/volunteers and the guests they are serving.

**After Ministry Events:**

1. Reporting if a Participant, Chaperone or Staff Member shows symptoms or results in a positive Covid-19 test after an event:

- Advise individuals to follow CDC reporting guidelines should a person become ill and tell him/her to call his/her doctor.
- The Pastor, Director of Religious Education, or other individual designated by the pastor should submit a COVID-19 incident for to Risk Management: [risk@archsa.org](mailto:risk@archsa.org)

2. Feedback/ Adjustment:

- These recommendations will be reviewed and revised as necessary on a regular basis to ensure that they are adequate responses to changing conditions.
- Recommendations may be relaxed or increased based on the recommendations of federal, state, and local health departments.