


Planning for Faith Formation in the Fall: *Responding to Covid19*


JUNE 18, 2020



DIOCESE
OF SIOUX CITY
OFFICE OF EVANGELIZATION,
DISCIPLESHIP, AND FAMILY LIFE



**O GOD, GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I
CANNOT CHANGE THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN
AND THE WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.
LIVING ONE DAY AT A TIME, ENJOYING ONE MOMENT AT A TIME.
ACCEPTING HARDSHIPS AS THE PATHWAY TO PEACE. TAKING, AS
HE DID, THE SINFUL WORLD AS IT IS, NOT AS I WOULD HAVE IT.
TRUSTING THAT HE WILL MAKE ALL THINGS RIGHT IF I
SURRENDER TO HIS WILL; THAT I MAY BE REASONABLY HAPPY IN
THIS LIFE, AND SUPREMELY HAPPY WITH HIM FOREVER.**



THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE



Public health authorities (including the CDC) recommend that upon returning to activities in the fall students maintain six feet of social distancing in classrooms and in common areas (e.g. hallways, cafeterias, gyms, large meeting rooms, etc.).



Social distancing rules and recommendations WILL be a part of the day to day experience of young people. This will include wearing masks both in the classroom, and when social distancing is not possible.



Local established routines of socialization and learning will have to be adapted to accommodate this reality.

WHAT WE NEED TO PLAN FOR

- Faith Formation
 - Customary on-site/classroom/in-person approach (keeping in balance the social distancing requirements)
 - Virtual/Online/Remote/At-home approach
 - Hybrid approach
- A number of other pastoral/logistical factors
 - Physical not “social” distance (How do we stay rooted in community and the life of the parish?)
 - How comfortable are parents with children returning?
 - How do we maintain social distancing in all aspects?
 - What about retreats? Events and activities outside of the classroom?
 - How do we rearrange classrooms? Control traffic? Handle snacks?
 - How do we share materials? Should we share materials?



Avoid the rush:

In so far as it is possible, assign students to use different entrances.

Stagger drop-off processes

Put tape marks on the floor

This may require an adjustment of the religious education schedule



Shared storage

Health officials are recommending against allowing students to share spaces like cubbies and lockers.



Rearrange classrooms

Six feet. That is where planning for the new year in the classroom begins.

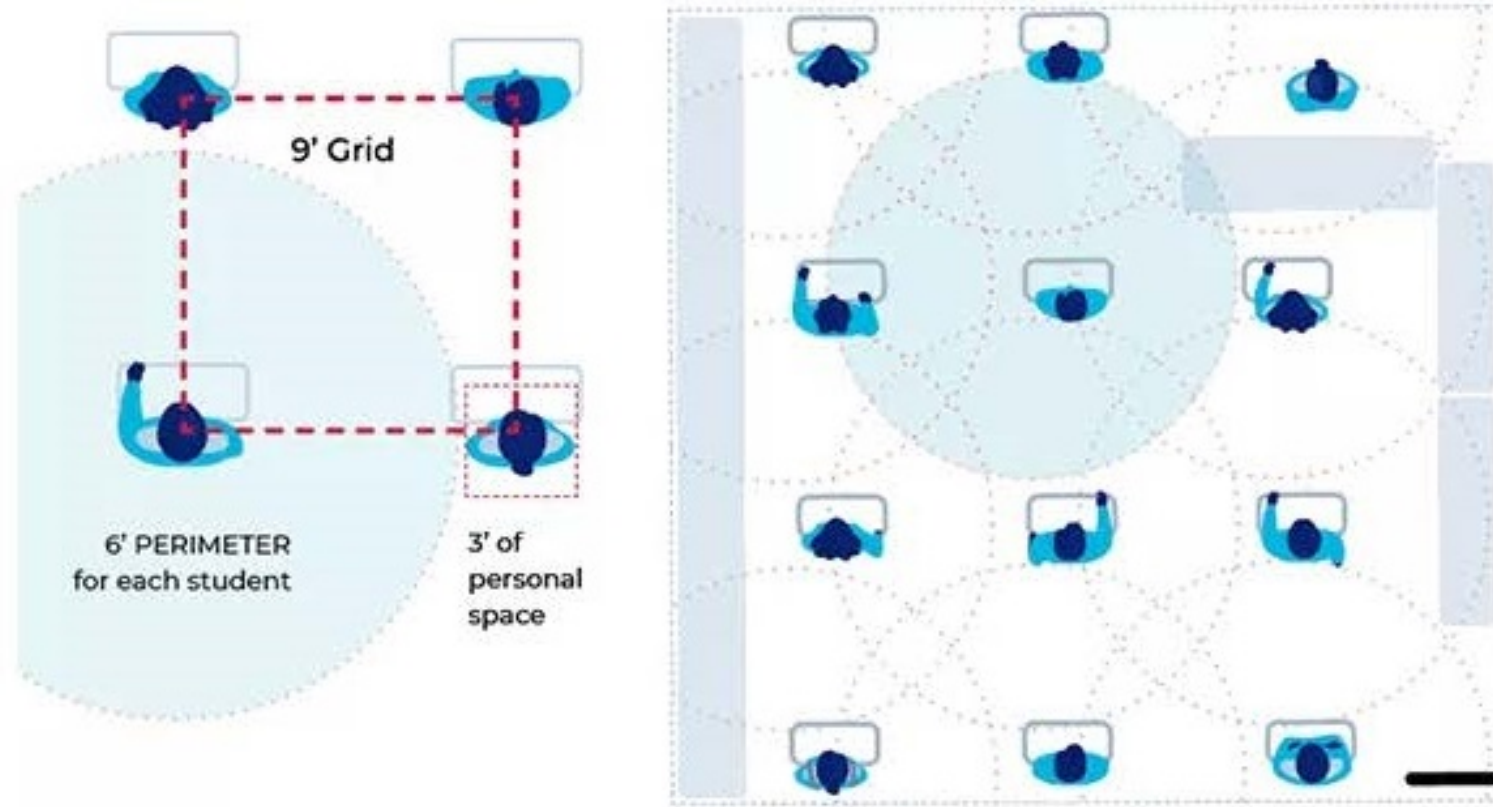
Six feet between desks

Desks face the same direction (no desks grouped together)

Consider every possible space on your campus and the possibility of repurposing temporarily

CHANGES TO ROUTINE

Arranging Instructional Spaces



Normal capacity	Socially distanced capacity
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Example: 960 square feet
(30' x 32' room, with furniture)

31

12



THAT WILL LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS

Minimize movement

- Less travel across the campus will reduce the amount of interaction with others and potential spread of the virus.
- Large gatherings at the beginning and/or end of each religious education session should likely not take place unless the six-foot distance can be maintained.
- This is an important factor in limiting exposure by creating a potentially smaller group and aids in contact tracing if that becomes necessary.
- CDC recommends against large group sharing of meals and snacks. Consider how those snacks could be offered in the classroom instead. Avoid shared serving utensils.

Know your most vulnerable students

- Which children struggled the most, and will struggle the most with remote learning? How can we better accommodate that?
- This may mean to some degree having to give priority to families who don't have access to online learning. (more on this later)

CHANGES TO ROUTINE

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Avoid sharing supplies

- The CDC recommends minimizing the sharing of high touch materials. This will be important in your younger grades.
- A new approach will be needed for communal pencils, crayons, and other craft or even skit/play items.
- Small groups of children could be assigned to a designated bundle of supplies, with disinfection in between. This limits potential exposure to a smaller group... But would be difficult to manage.

Limiting fall of 2020 activities

- CDC recommendations advise against extracurricular activities during the first phase of reopening of schools.
- For our purposes, that means limiting activities to only those that can be done while maintaining social distancing.
- If any of your activities include students singing, it is especially important that social distancing be maintained and all face the same direction (even then, masks are recommended). And adult leading the children should be at least 10 feet away from those singing.

HOW TO HANDLE ON SITE FAITH FORMATION CLASSES

- Just a few possibilities: adaptation, flexibility, parish needs (all of these are factors).
 - Phasing in on-site classes
 - Starting with the younger grades (who do better with in person classes than remote classes).
 - Provide remote/virtual opportunities for older grades
 - As conditions improve, gradually welcome back more.
 - If conditions worsen, it gives time to transition back out of on-site classes.
 - Changing up the schedule
 - It may be necessary to offer classes beyond Wednesday night (e.g. Wednesday night and Sunday morning?)
 - Students could be divided into groups and assigned to a specific day.
 - Major input from families will be need here!
 - This could help parents to gain confidence and relieve any anxiety they may have.
 - It also, again, allows for an easier scaling back of classes if need be.

HOW TO HANDLE ON SITE FAITH FORMATION CLASSES

- Staggering the formation classes alternately
 - Group A meets in person week 1
 - Group B meets online or via at home lessons week 1
 - Group A meets online or via at home lessons week 2
 - Group B meets in person week 2
- Classes could be streamed via Zoom, Facebook Live, etc.
- Allows for “staying connected”
- Allows for easier contact tracing and limiting spread of infection if an outbreak should happen to occur. A mechanism for quarantine is more readily built into this approach.
- Helps to alleviate crowded check ins, all students are getting some level of in-person instruction.



CRITICAL TIPS

- Consider surveying your parents. Get a sense from them how comfortable they are returning to faith formation classes. This will help guide your planning efforts. (Indicators in other dioceses demonstrate the general public is cautious about returning to Mass and school settings). Nevertheless, pastors make the final decision in consultation with parish catechetical leaders.
- Keep up to date on the latest from your school district.
- Remember, this is temporary!
- Pray