

## CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES OF CHEROKEE AND HOLSTEIN

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH    OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL PARISH

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### RE-OPENING DIRECTIVES FOR FAITH FORMATION AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION-CHEROKEE PHASE 1 – LIMITED ATTENDANCE

These directives follow the **INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESUMING THE PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF MASS** as issued by the Office of the Bishop on 13 May 2020, **INSTRUCTIONS FOR SPECIAL LITURGIES** as issued by the Office of Worship for the Diocese of Sioux City on 26 May 2020, **Guidelines for Planning Faith Formation Programs in 2020-2021 in Light of COVID-19** as issued by Office of Evangelization for the Diocese of Sioux City on 17 July 2020, and **GUIDANCE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS FOR REOPENING SCHOOLS** as issued by the Office of Catholic Education for the Diocese of Sioux City on 28 July 2020 for the safe provision for faith formation for our youth and adults.

#### Fundamental Considerations

As the events since March of 2020 have demonstrated, COVID-19 has reshaped many of our plans and priorities. We have had to adapt, adjust, be creative and to some degree, experiment. For the most part, we had to do this with little to no notice in the early days of spring. Current trends and the testimony of public health experts demonstrates that these new and different challenges are not going away anytime soon. Quite simply, this faith formation year will be altogether different for all of us. That said, we have established plans for the following circumstances to provide religious instruction for students:

1. Customary onsite/classroom/in-person approach (keeping in balance the social distancing requirements).
2. Virtual/Online/Remote/At-home approach.
3. Hybrid approach, combining elements of both remote learning and in person.

These protocols are issued at this time and will be update when necessary. All parents, catechists, and participants are expected to abide by these protocols to help provide for a safe environment in our faith formation programs.

#### PRIMARY PROTOCOLS-for those attending in-person classes

1. Parishioners are not to attend Faith Formation classes who are
  - a. at a higher risk
  - b. caretakers of those at risk
  - c. are not feeling well
  - d. have a high fever [over 100.3°F], cough, difficulty breathing, and showing symptoms of COVID-19
2. There are **no penalties** for participants staying home due to feeling ill or wish to attend at home as described below [page 3].
3. If **flare-ups of the virus** should occur locally or regionally, classes may be cancelled at a moment's notice.
4. Students, staff, volunteers, and others who **test positive for COVID-19** need to **quarantine for at least fourteen [14] days** before returning to a Faith Formation class.

5. **Participants who arrive with symptoms** will be quarantined and asked to return home. In the case of students, parents will be contacted.
6. **Participants** who test positive after attending a class session are to notify the parish office [DRE and/or pastor] so appropriate steps may be taken to contact the local public health department in order to do the contact tracing to notify fellow participants about possible exposure to COVID-19. Parents of youth faith formation students are to make this notification.
7. **All participants, students, parents, catechists, and staff** will need to hold harmless the parish and the Diocese of Sioux City in the event positive cases of COVID-19 occur as the result of attending classes.
8. Sufficient **cleaning and sanitizing** materials [certified and approved for COVID-19] will be on hand.
9. Arrangements for **cleaning/sanitizing the church** between classes will be in place.
10. **Facemasks** are required to be worn by all adults<sup>1</sup> and children over the age of two [2] in addition to the required with social distancing as these both work in tandem to curb coming into contact with the respiratory droplets that are emitted from the nose and mouth, which in turn introduces viral contamination in the building. Persons over age two unable to wear a facemask will not be admitted. At the discretion of the catechist, the facemask may be removed for some activities.
11. **No gloves** are to be worn.<sup>2</sup>
12. **Classes will be divided into two groups: GROUP A and GROUP B** [ex.: Kindergarten Group A and Group B, First Grade Group A and Group B] with each group attending every other week. Parents will be notified of which group their child[ren] are assigned. Efforts will be made to keep families in the same group so as not to divide families.
13. **The parish church hall and school buildings will remain locked** until class time at which time the entry doors [if possible] will be blocked open to avoid everyone from touching the door handles.
14. **Entry into school building will be restricted** to the east and west doors and **entry into the church hall will be restricted** to the south entrance. Students are to enter at their grades' assigned door.
  - a. The west entrance of the school building for the first-floor rooms.
  - b. The east entrance of the school building for the second-floor rooms.
  - c. The south entrance of the parish church hall for classes meeting in the church hall.
15. **Hand sanitizer** stations will be at the school and church entrances and in every classroom. Frequent and proper hand sanitizing and hand washing will be encouraged.
16. **Everyone** entering any building and classroom is REQUIRED to sanitize properly their hands.
17. **Catechists may meet students** at the assigned outside door or parking lot. If not, the students are to go directly to their assigned classroom. No gathering in the hallways, gym, restrooms, or other areas is permitted.
18. **The stairwells in the school building** are assigned as:

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<sup>1</sup> including priests, deacon, staff, and catechists.

<sup>2</sup> Gloves give a false sense of security. According to the CDC and the WHO, touching a surface that is contaminated or otherwise encountering the virus with your hands does not result in contagion; contagion takes place when we then touch our face. Once contaminated, gloves transfer the virus just as effectively as unwashed hands and the CDC says that the only reason to wear gloves is if doing so reminds the wearer not to touch their face.

- a. west stairwell = going up to second floor
  - b. east stairwell = returning to first floor
19. **Seating** will be done
    - a. at social distancing in each classroom
    - b. in assigned seats with name cards/tents.
  20. **All outerwear** shall be hung on the back of the students' chairs. Any book bags shall be kept at the students' desks also.
  21. **The church and school building will be locked** during class times.
  22. The church and school buildings are equipped with **panic bars** and thus in case of an emergency, all persons may safely exit the building even though the doors are locked.
  23. **Bathrooms** will be available for use, yet caution needs to be used as sanitizing after each use is not possible.
  24. **No food will be provided or distributed in class.** Participants may bring their own water bottle.
  25. **Violations of these directives** could result in:
    - a. **the removal** of the offender[s]
    - b. **the postponement or cancellation** of classes
    - c. **the cancellation** of future classes until further notice
  26. **Cleansing and sanitizing** protocols will be followed after each class time.
  27. **Updates** to these protocols will be shared with all families, catechists, and participants as soon as updates are made.

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#### **PRIMARY PROTOCOLS-for those attending at home**

1. **Parents will need to register with the parish faith formation program** (even if not attending the in-person classes) so that children catechized at home will be included in all communications about parish activities and programs such as
  - a. Faith formation activities which involve all the children of the parish.
  - b. Diocesan/Parish guidelines for sacramental preparation (e.g. important dates, time sensitive requirements, etc.)
2. **Students will be assigned to Group A or Group B** of their grade level so as if they are to attend in person classes, they will have a class already assigned. They can also keep the same pace as the onsite classes do.
3. **If a family decides to return to in person classes,** the parent will call the DRE to inform them of their family changes.
4. **Families are invited to participate** in faith formation activities, retreats, or other events (even if virtual). Sacramental preparation particularly, provides an opportunity for growing deeper in the life of the parish and forming community.
5. **Lessons will be sent** via USPS or email to the parent(s) and will be available on the parish website.
6. **Parents ought to keep a record** (calendar, list, etc.) of time their children spend learning about their faith. The DRE, catechist(s), or pastor will visit with parents to see how things are going.

7. **Every effort** will be made to help those parents feel comfortable in asking for and receiving the help and support that is needed for them to teach their children.
8. Families will have the **opportunity to meet (in-person or virtually)** once or twice during the Faith Formation year for collaboration, support, and sharing their personal experience.
9. The **parish website, social media, technology, and other virtual means** will be used to help support families and to continue to build and strengthen parish community.
10. With the challenges that COVID-19 presents, perhaps **adjustments to schedules will be needed.**

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