2021-2022

Temporary COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for Catechesis in the Diocese of Austin

All parishes are expected to provide catechetical and sacramental formation for the 2021-2022 catechetical year. The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis has outlined below temporary COVID-19 safety guidelines recommended for catechesis in the Diocese of Austin. These are designed to assist Pastors, DREs and parish leadership in discerning and initiating the most reasonable protocols for each parish community. Pastors are encouraged to utilize resources from within their parish community to advise on these guidelines. Religious education programs should begin as currently scheduled but no later than the second week of October 2021.

- Social distancing that preserves the instructional experience for all students is encouraged, by limiting close face-to-face contact, per the CDC guidelines.
- Parish catechetical programs should establish an appropriate health screening process to be followed by catechists and young people prior to entering parish buildings in which RE is to be held.
- In the context of individual parish catechetical programs, while facemasks are strongly encouraged for children 12 and under and unvaccinated older students, it remains the pastor’s prudential judgment whether to require masks or not.
- Parish catechetical programs should establish procedures to include regular cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing of facilities prior to and after RE classes. Parishes should provide the needed supplies for this to occur.
- Parish catechetical programs should encourage students and volunteers to follow handwashing and hygiene protocols that mitigate the spread of the virus.
- The parish may hold off-campus activities, including retreats, service projects and other events. The parish should follow, as best they can, protocols that mitigate the risk of virus spread when arranging transportation for these activities.