



ARCHDIOCESE OF
NEW ORLEANS

Office of Religious Education

July 20, 2020

Dear Pastors and Parish Catechetical Leaders,

We are aware that questions are coming up regarding what Parish School of Religion may look like for 2020-2021 school year. We are working on addressing these concerns and available options. Resources for effective Religious Education and Faith Formation programs are on our website under Faith Formation in Time of Transition. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.

If you decide to have the parents form their children at home, remember they are the prime formators, the publishers have programs that are accessible online with tools to assist parents in this role. The programs may be used in multiple ways to help with the ever-changing reality in today's world. They may be used in a classroom setting if you are able to have face-to-face classes and there are options for hybrid programs, virtual meetings, home-schooling, and family catechesis. Most of these programs have a tremendous adult faith formation component to aid parents in their formation.

We are guided by the state's guidelines and regulations for use of public facilities. The state has specific rules in place for sanitizing public buildings and for the number of people that may inhabit a public space. The Catholic Schools' Office has guidelines for the schools and these guidelines will impact parishes using the school buildings.

If you use the classrooms, and any buildings on your property, you must sanitize the desks, tables, chairs, door handles, any equipment used, supplies, bathrooms, etc. This means that someone will have to do this with a sanitized solution that is acceptable with the state guidelines. This must be done after every use and your Parish Catechetical Leader must be there to assure that it is done for the safety of all that use the facilities. Masks must be worn, safe distancing must be observed, and your volunteers will have to sign the COVID-19 volunteer waiver form.

Thank you for your patience as navigate this new found reality. Our desire is to allow the faithful to come into a deeper understanding and relationship with God. We realize that families are unsure of school as well as schools of Religion and that the climate is changing daily, but our ministry is to help families encounter God and become strong disciples and followers of Jesus by giving them the tools and knowledge needed to form their children in the Catholic Faith. We are also charged with keeping them and our volunteers safe and healthy. We will get through this and we will emerge a much stronger faith filled community. Prayerfully we will also see the family passionate in their desire to form their families in faith.

May God continue to bless you as you serve His people in these trying times,

Alice R. Hughes, D. Min.

Director of the Office of Religious Education

The Office of Religious Education serves the catechetical needs of all people in the Archdiocese of New Orleans by providing lifelong formation centered in the person of Jesus Christ that echoes Christ, his teachings, and his invitation to discipleship.

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July 20, 2020

Dear Friends,

I have received a number of calls about plans for the coming catechetical year. The main questions concern the sending of Guidance for having on-campus, physically present classes where our PSR students learn in a group and if we do recommend this type of format for faith formation, or rather recommend virtual learning via online programs.

Another question concerned the type of sanitizing, and how much sanitizing will be necessary if we are using Catholic school classrooms for PSR, given that the classrooms will be needed for day school in the following morning.

While this sanitizing may be done for after school/evening PSR, with the expectation that students will be using the classrooms, desks, door handles, etc. in the morning, you will need to be sure that you and your catechists do the same sanitizing for the “next-day students.”

Some parish faith formation programs are creating “hybrid” programs for the fall, dividing their very large student populations into partially on-site, physically present classes, and some doing virtual catechesis, similar to the closing out of the 2019-20 catechetical year when Covid-19 hit us. We have recommended that if you choose to do a hybrid format, you consult with parents/guardians to determine which they would prefer for their students, as this will hopefully assure greater “personal investment” and sustained participation in their formation in faith.

This may also be a good time to begin using a “Family Faith Formation” format as parents and their children would be participating together, which our Church always recommends.

Finally, please refer to the ***K-12 Supportive Guidance for Summer 2020*** document that was sent out from our Office in May. The guidance has not changed for any classes or other gatherings where students are physically present to one another since this summer, due to the rise in Covid-19 cases since July 1. Also, make sure that, if you have students and volunteers (catechists & helpers) on-site, you have the waivers signed by parents and the volunteers as was required this summer. All these documents will be sent for your convenience. The documents are available in Spanish if you need them.

We know that this is a very difficult time for every single one of you, parents, students, pastors, and volunteers, both in PSR and school catechesis. Please know that we are walking beside you and will help in any way we are able. Resources are available on our website for virtual learning and other assistance in catechizing God’s people. The web address is: www.arch-no.org/ore. Please spend some time reviewing what is available for this coming year. Let us continue to raise one another up to God in prayer.

God love you,

Barbara

Barbara J. McAtee
Associate Director of Religious Education

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