



*Go Make Disciples*

EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS  
ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY

# Fall 2020 Faith Formation

## Guidelines for Parish Faith Formation Programs

**The guidelines in this document are an extension of the Resumption of Ministry Guidelines that were issued by Archbishop Coakley on May 22, 2020. The only significant change to those guidelines is the recent lifting of the nursery restriction, released on Monday, August 10, 2020.**

# Fall Catechetical Programs: Four Possible Options

For the coming fall semester, parishes have four options that we can identify for their faith formation programs.

**Option A:** On-site, in-person gathering for Faith Formation

(According to state and local guidelines; also see the *Procedures for Resumption of Ministry Activity* document on our website at [archokc.org/mass.](http://archokc.org/mass.))

**Option B:** Online Virtual Formation

**Option C:** Family Faith Formation

**Option D:** Hybrid Approach – Combined Gathered & Non-Gathered

*“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

*- Romans 15:13*

# Overview

The following are guidelines and best practices. Ultimately, each pastor, along with his staff, should assess needs at the local level to deem what is best and most prudent for their unique circumstances, while at the same time being diligent to abide by standards provided by the authorities.

Our archdiocese is unique, with parishes in diverse geographic areas around the state. To follow a system-wide decision process would not make sense. The best decisions will be made at the most local level, following guidelines and protocols provided by the authorities. Each specific parish community should monitor closely their "community spread" of the virus and make decisions based on that data. It would seem prudent to have monitoring efforts in each community include the tracking of more serious cases of the illness as well as hospitalizations and deaths.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has brought with it many challenges. We cannot operate as we always have; however, we are still able to provide a quality Faith Formation program for our families. This document is a tool to assist with evaluating your plan for the 2020-2021 faith formation year. Following guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), we need to be diligent and thorough in planning and implementation to ensure that the health and safety of all participants remains a priority.

## **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html)

## **Oklahoma State Department of Health**

<https://coronavirus.health.ok.gov/>

## **State of Oklahoma, Governor's Page with Resources**

<https://govstatus.egov.com/oklahoma-coronavirus-information>

## **Archdiocese of Oklahoma City COVID- 19 Information**

[archokc.org/health](http://archokc.org/health)

To ensure that all areas of Faith Formation are covered, we encourage parishes to consider enlisting the support of a team to help with planning, utilizing the gifts of the greater community such as:

- Pastor;
- Principal of Catholic School;
- A health care practitioner with some experience in contagious disease;
- A few catechists/leaders;
- Parish Catechetical Leaders (PCLs) - Director of Religious Education, Confirmation Coordinator, RCIA Director;
- Parent(s).

While we do not know exactly what will be required for the reopening of Faith Formation programs, Parish Teams may want to consider the following in their planning:

**Scheduling:** You do not need to rush starting in August/September. If you are concerned about complying with all the protocols, consider a later start date;

**Holding non-gathered sessions:** Virtual/online or family Faith Formation in homes;

**Facilities:** Can programming be expanded to more days and times?

**Budgeting:** Take into consideration all the extra supplies that will be needed: cleaning supplies, required signage, thermal thermometers, etc.;

**Time:** Hourly employees need to be attentive to the number of hours for which they are hired.

### **Facilities use and management**

The reopening of Faith Formation programs needs to be governed by the Parish Pastor, and informed by the guidelines provided by national, state and local authorities. Please check regularly with these guidelines, as the COVID situation

has proven itself to be one that is constantly changing. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for starting the 2020-2021 Faith Formation year with gathered sessions. While the archdiocese will continue to monitor changing requirements and report those to parishes, it is up to each pastor and his parish staff to monitor state and local public health conditions for any changes that may be required.

# Develop a Plan

Before deciding to provide on-site Faith Formation, it is very important to develop a plan. The Pastor and Parish Teams should consider if the parish is able to provide a safe and healthy environment for the staff, volunteers and children/teens/adults of the parish.

Develop a plan that will need to be customized for each location:

## **How will maximum attendance be determined for all Faith Formation sessions with children, youth and adults?**

- Capacity of class spaces and public areas;
- Time needed between classes for sanitizing;
- Should reservations be required?

## **Plan for situations when more people are seeking to enter the building(s) than are allowed under the limitations on gathering.**

## **Does the parish have enough PPE and cleaning supplies, and storage for those supplies?**

## **Is the facility prepared, with necessary signage in place? Do all routes for employees, volunteers and participants maintain enough social distancing?**

## **Health Screening - what will be required and who will be responsible?**

## **Arrival - How will the teachers handle hand sanitizing, physical distancing, sign-in?**

## **Catechists/Volunteers - How many will be needed, how will they be trained to meet the new guidelines, and how will they get the PPE supplies they need?**

## **Teaching/Session supplies - What materials are needed and how will they be distributed to avoid cross-contamination?**

# OPTION A:

## Gathered On-site Faith Formation

The following areas will assist with planning for Gathered/on-site reopening of Faith Formation programs, including but not limited to RE Classes, Youth Meetings, Parent meetings, RCIA, Adult Faith Formation Classes, Prayer services, etc.

**These guidelines and recommendations are meant to serve and help you think through your plan – NOT meant to overwhelm you with more things to do. We are just trying to be diligent in asking the right questions and thinking through the best practices to open fall programming as safely as possible. If there is some way we can help you or if you are feeling overwhelmed with what needs to be done, please don't hesitate to contact us for help!**

The below guidelines are an extension of the [Resumption of Ministry Guidelines](#) that were issued by Archbishop Coakley on May 22, 2020. The only significant change to those guidelines is the recent lifting of the nursery restriction, released on Monday, August 10, 2020.

### **Facilities (This applies to schools, halls, meeting rooms, etc.)**

Visual cues such as tape or signs can be placed on the ground, floor or wall, six feet apart and everyone will be asked to observe those visual cues and not move closer to someone (other than a household family member).

Signage can be placed at all entrances to the building that explains the COVID-19 symptoms (those with symptoms will be asked not to enter), how to stop the spread of COVID-19 and the importance of handwashing.

The disinfectant used to clean should meet the EPA/CDC guidelines.

This link provides more guidance: [hepa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19)

Arrange rooms with distancing between where each person will be seated. There should be six feet of distance between the catechist/leader and participants.

#### Drinking Fountains/Refillable stations

- Do not use

#### Restrooms

- Sanitize frequently - door handles, light switches, faucet handles, etc.
- The number of people using the restroom at any given time should be monitored.

#### Classrooms/halls/teaching spaces

- Should be sterilized before and after each use
- Wash hands before entering and when leaving
- Provide hand sanitizer

### Arrival/Dismissal

Where possible, traffic control should be established for the facility so that volunteers and participants enter by one door and exit at another door (unless not possible at a location). Signage should be placed outside the doors instructing everyone as to the entrance and exit of the building.

Each time entering the building, everyone will sanitize his/her hands by using hand sanitizer.

Good best-practices:

Multiple entry points:

- Don't have everyone enter the building from one door
- If there aren't multiple doors, designate one as an entrance and one as an exit

Provide temperature checks upon entrance (*see Health Screening section below*)

Sign in/sign out options:

- Kid Check:  
<https://tinyurl.com/yau6eoxc>
- Use a separate paper for each child
- Use pen once, place in a container to be sanitized later
- Attendance: if attendance can be taken and reported electronically, followed up with a phone call to the household, this can take the place of a sign-in sheet.
- Diligent planning must still happen for the dismissal, however, to ensure that the child goes home with the appropriate person. All documentation must be kept and archived.

Consider staggered times for arrival and dismissal:

Can different groups be scheduled at different times?

- By family
- By grade level

### **Personal Protection**

Cloth face coverings prevent the person wearing the mask from spreading respiratory droplets when talking, sneezing or coughing. If everyone wears a cloth face covering when in public, the risk of exposure can be reduced. Since people can spread the virus before symptoms start, or even if people never have symptoms, wearing a cloth face covering can protect others around you. Face coverings worn by others protect you from getting the virus from people who are carrying the virus. (CDC)

Cloth face coverings

- Should be worn by employees, volunteers and participants at all times except where the space allows for great social distancing (e.g., five people at a Bible study in a room that holds 25 people) or the unique circumstances of a program (e.g., tightly knit group of families getting together for catechesis) allow for greater flexibility.

- Catechists/Leaders, staff and adult volunteers may wear a face shield, unless in close contact with a participant.

#### Gloves

- Must be worn by adults when screening for temperature and symptoms
- Gloves must be worn when cleaning and disinfecting

## **Physical Distancing**

Employees, volunteers, adults and participants should maintain a six-foot distance from others where possible unless they are from the same household.

- In common areas such as lobbies, hallways, sidewalks, hospitality areas outside and around church or school.
- In classrooms.
- Chairs, desks and tables should be spaced apart where possible.
- Limited space may require limiting the number of participants in order to meet social distancing guidelines.
- If other spaces are being used for participants, such as parish centers, parish halls, multi-purpose rooms, floor markings and signage can be used.

## **Health Screening**

Before entering buildings or facilities, all participants could have their temperatures checked via no-touch thermal scan thermometers (for a list of PPE vendors, go to [www.okcommerce.gov/ppe-source-directory/](http://www.okcommerce.gov/ppe-source-directory/)). If a participant has a fever, he/she must not enter the building or facility.

- Identify one place where screening can be done.
- Check the temperatures of all volunteers and participants.
- Anyone with a temperature over 100.4 degrees must be sent home.
- Temperatures less than 100.4 degrees could be asked questions regarding symptoms:
  - Do you have a cough or any other symptoms?
  - Have you been exposed to anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

## Teaching/Session Facilitation

Limit sharing of any supplies - Bibles, textbooks, pens, etc. and consider prohibiting such sharing

## Art/crafts supplies

- Limit or prohibit sharing
- One-time use
- Possibly assign participants things like crayons and felt pens
- Avoid storing supplies used by participants in a common container

## Environment items that should be disinfected before/after use

- Desks/chairs/tables
- Chalkboards/whiteboards/bulletin boards
- Devices such as CD players/televisions/DVD players/AV equipment

## Storage of Supplies

- What will need to be stored and where will you store it?
- Where will you store extra cleaning supplies, sets of craft supplies, etc.

## Prayer services

- Archdiocesan and parish protocols for Mass should be followed
- Small groups can go to the church, but avoid large gatherings

## Catechist/Leader Meetings/Trainings

- Training should be completed for the following:
  - Information on COVID-19 and how to prevent it from spreading, including which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting the virus;
  - Self-screening at home, including temperature and symptom checks. Not coming to work or participating in activities if staff or volunteers have symptoms of COVID-19 such as frequent cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, recent loss of taste or smell or if they or someone they live with has tested positive for COVID-19;
  - To seek medical attention if their symptoms become severe, including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion or bluish lips or face;
  - The importance of frequent handwashing with soap and water, including scrubbing with soap for 20 seconds (or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol when staff cannot get to a sink).

Proper use of face coverings including:

- Non-surgical masks such as neck gaiters and bandanas do not protect the wearer and are not considered personal protective equipment;
  - Masks can help protect people near the wearer, but do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent handwashing;
  - They must cover the nose and mouth;
  - Employees should wash or sanitize hands before and after using or adjusting face coverings;
  - Avoid touching the eyes, nose and mouth;
  - They should be washed after each shift.
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- Who are your catechists/volunteers/leaders and are they at risk?  
(individuals age 65 or older, chronic illness, etc.)

## **When a Staff Member, Participant or Volunteer Becomes Sick or Presents Symptoms**

Monitor staff, volunteers and participants for signs of illness. Should someone have a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, show coughing, fatigue or shortness of breath, or display other COVID-19 symptoms, and does not have any other health conditions that shares these symptoms, they should be sent home.

Health experts recommend implementing contact tracing efforts when a staff member, volunteer or participant has tested positive. More information is available on the CDC website for how to do this: [\*\*CDC Contact Tracing.\*\*](#)

## OPTION B:

# Online Virtual Faith Formation

A second option that could be considered, particularly for the Fall semester, is moving to all online or virtual Faith Formation. Utilizing tools like FORMED.org, the Catechetical Institute online platform, YDisciple or other similar programs, all classes could be provided online with added interactive sessions on Zoom or Google Hangout for group discussion and processing.

If using this option, be sure to be aware of possible limitations in your community with regard to the availability and accessibility of technology, both physical equipment and the service provided before selecting this as the only option. Many families do not have internet service in their homes, or at least not at the level sometimes needed for seamless delivery of online content. Others do not have basic equipment like computers or tablets for their children's use. If such circumstances exist in your community, consider how you can accommodate those families with hard copies of lesson plans and text materials that they could pick up at the Parish.

Please reach out to our staff at the archdiocese for ideas in this category that could be adapted to fit the needs of your unique community.

More resources can also be found online at [archokc.org/digitalresources](https://www.archokc.org/digitalresources).

# OPTION C:

## Family Faith Formation

Family Faith Formation can be centered in the home, bringing the practice of faith into the center of home life. We can help provide new opportunities for our families to have a lived experience of Jesus and his Church. This is not a home school model of Faith Formation and is not simply moving our classrooms online. Instead, we look to the needs of our families and find ways to accompany them on this journey. For example, formation can be broken into modules in which a series of “family meetings” take place in the home, on days that best fit each family’s schedule, using creative, interesting and relevant resources, including videos, stories, sharing, reflection, prayer and family experiences to make this time fun and fruitful. COVID-19 provides not just challenges but new opportunities to minister to our families.

Again, please reach out to the staff at the archdiocese for ideas that can be adapted for families.

Additional resources can also be found online at [archokc.org/digitalresources](https://www.archokc.org/digitalresources).

## OPTION D: Hybrid – Gathered and Non- Gathered combined

Should your parish decide to do a combination of gathered and non-gathered Faith Formation, all guidelines described above in gathered/on-site Faith Formation sessions should be followed.

Archdiocesan staff are happy to assist with ideas that can be adapted for your unique parish needs.

Additional resources also can be found online at [archokc.org/digitalresources](http://archokc.org/digitalresources).

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