

Diocese of Cleveland CYO and Youth Ministry COVID-19 Announcement

To: Youth Minister's, CYO Member Administrators and CYO Athletic Directors
From: Dobie Moser, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry and CYO
Mary Ann King, Administrator, CYO Athletics
Re: Update for Youth Ministry and CYO Athletics regarding COVID-19
Date: March 12, 2020

On March 12, 2020, Governor DeWine announced plans to close all Ohio K-12 schools, public and private, for three weeks, beginning on March 16 and concluding on April 3. The Governor had earlier declared a state of emergency to protect Ohio citizens from the dangerous effects of COVID-19, a respiratory disease that can easily spread from person to person. The state also issued rules to prohibit mass gatherings, defined as gatherings of 100 people or more in any confined indoor or outdoor space, with limited exceptions. This means that there will be no CYO practices or contests or gathered youth ministry programs during this extended three week spring break time period.

What does this mean for Youth Ministry Programs and CYO practices and games?

Governor Mike DeWine's declaration makes it clear that no youth ministry gatherings or CYO practices or games may take place between March 16 and April 3. All CYO practices and games and gathered youth ministry activities are suspended for the state declared three week spring break time period.

What should CYO leaders and Youth Minister's be doing now?

- Follow the letter and spirit of state government and diocesan guidelines for individuals and groups, according to the best safety practices re COVID-19. Consider alternative approaches such as webcasts or virtual options and on-line materials that do not require person to person direct interaction in a common space;
- The Ohio Department of Health created a Call Center for questions. It is open every day from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at 1-833-427-5634. Calls will be answered by licensed nurses and infectious disease experts. Current information is available at www.coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/
- The purpose for limiting events and gatherings is to slow the spread of the disease. Though the virus to date has shown lower severity of illness for young people, the strategy to cancel events or change delivery of programming is to limit the spread of the virus across the population, even if individuals appear to not have a direct connection to active COVID-19 cases.

As Christians, this Lenten season affords us an opportunity to bring all things to God as we seek to faithfully love and serve the Lord and one another. Please join us in praying for all those affected by the COVID-19 virus. May we have open minds and hearts to seek and to follow God's will in service to one another and to the common good. Peace be with you.