

2021-2022

# COVID-19 SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR CATECHESIS IN THE DIOCESE OF AUSTIN

As we embark upon the new catechetical year, the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis has outlined below the minimum COVID-19 safety guidelines for catechesis in the Diocese of Austin, effective Aug 10, 2021. These recommendations are intended to serve as a guide for Pastors, DREs and parish leadership to discern protocols for each parish community. Pastors are encouraged to utilize resources from within their parish community to advise on protocols and practices. These guidelines will be reviewed and updated based on the most up-to-date information available.

- All parishes will provide catechetical and sacramental formation for the 2021-2022 catechetical year.
- Religious education programs may start, with the prudential judgement of the pastor, no later than the second week of October 2021.
- In the context of a parish catechetical program, pastors have the option to require masks for participants 12 and under. For those over 12, masks are strongly encouraged for those not vaccinated.
- 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 done prior to entrance into parish buildings for students, employees, volunteers, and visitors.
- Parish catechetical programs will establish procedures to include regular cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing of facilities prior to classes and after classes.
- Parish catechetical programs should have students and volunteers continue 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.



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