

**OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION AND EVANGELIZATION
COVID-19 PROTOCOL Q&A**

1. If students do not want to attend in-person faith formation class due to the virus, what can the DRE or Youth Minister do?

Every parish has a different situation and needs. It is a MUST for the Director of Religious Education or Youth Minister to work together and ask the permission of the pastor on the kind of method or approach that can be used or applied with regard to their parish faith formation program given the challenge of Covid 19. Based on the past experience of many parishes and proven good results, the suggested ways of conducting religious formation classes at this time are in person, online, and/or a combination of both or hybrid.

It is very important to remember that every child must be given an opportunity to grow in wisdom and grace and to be accompanied in the Catholic Faith. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the pastor together with his trusted staff and catechists/volunteers to provide the faith formation that they can offer despite the challenges of the pandemic.

2. How can we help keep children and youth safe during faith formation class?

- When entering the class or instruction area, a sign-in sheet/should be provided. These logs will be used to notify parents and catechists/volunteers in case of a positive COVID case.
- Catechists/volunteers will need to show proof of vaccination or provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test on a weekly basis.
- All students and catechists/volunteers MUST wear a mask in any indoor space.
- Religious exceptions will NOT be given for the vaccine in the Diocese of Oakland.

3. If someone in class has tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, how will this be handled?

- Staff and students who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate, per county instructions and inform the DRE for notification purposes. The DRE will contact those individuals who may have been exposed and ask they contact their doctor for further instruction. Those who were not exposed will be notified of a positive

COVID-19 case and informed of non-exposure. Please send an email message to the parent/guardian and student to inform them of the situation.

- Please make sure to NEVER mention who the infected person is but instead say “someone in the group has tested positive for the virus and you have/have not been exposed”. We must respect everyone’s right to privacy under HIPAA.

*Exposure is defined as being in contact with an infected case for 15 minutes or more, with or without a Mask.

4. In the event a student or catechist/volunteer tests positive for COVID-19, how does quarantine work?

- Quarantine requirements vary for exposed volunteers who are vaccinated and asymptomatic versus unvaccinated symptomatic volunteers.
- Those individuals exposed to an infected person who are vaccinated and do not show symptoms should quarantine for 5-7 days and take a PCR or antigen COVID test (rapid test is not preferred). If the test is NEGATIVE they can resume their class or ministry.
- Those individuals exposed to an infected person who are NOT vaccinated and not showing signs of COVID infection should quarantine for 14 days and take a PCR or antigen COVID test.
- Any person who is showing signs of COVID infection (vaccinated or unvaccinated) should test and follow quarantine instructions depending on vaccination status...
- Testing can be obtained by calling the medical provider or making an appointment at a test site approved by the county. Please refer to the following websites:
 - Alameda County <https://covid-19.acgov.org/testing.page>
 - Contra Costa County <https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/get-tested>

5. Is it allowed to bring food during CCD and faith formation classes?

- Food for events (whether for sale or not) must be prepared by an outside professional food service.
- No potluck or home-prepared food will be permitted at parish or school. There are NO exceptions.

- All persons preparing or serving food on parish or school property must wear face coverings and sanitary gloves while preparing or serving food.
- All persons preparing or serving food at parish or school events will be required to self-attest in a signed document they have no COVID-19 symptoms.

6. When children and youth faith formation class is in session, what are some of the ways that the catechist/volunteer can promote the health and safety of students?

The health and safety of the students is a priority in every parish. Every catechist/volunteer are highly encouraged to do the following:

1. Keep windows/doors open to provide for ventilation.
2. Make sure everyone has personal space or comfortable social distancing.
3. Post signs of mask requirements, and provide hand sanitizer.
4. Use hand sanitizer upon entering the classroom.
5. Use Sign-in sheet for students and catechists/volunteers.
6. Clean and return desks/chairs to their original set up after each use.
7. Hand holding during activities or prayer should be discouraged. Do not shake hands when you greet people. Instead nod, smile or elbow bump in acknowledgement

7. Important safety practices to remember for activities or event outside of the parish?

According to CDC guidelines the things that you can do to be safer are as follows:

- Use of face coverings can reduce the spread of respiratory droplets that, in infected people, carry and spread COVID-19.
- In areas of substantial to high transmission, which includes both, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, it is recommended that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with others who are not fully vaccinated.
- Wear a mask consistently and correctly over your nose and mouth.
- If you are not fully vaccinated and aged 2 or older, you should wear a mask in indoor public places.

- If you are fully vaccinated, to maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission.
- Masks must be worn on all public transportation, including carpooling. This requirement is regardless of vaccination status.
- Maintain social distance from people who don't live with you.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated places.
- Wash your hands frequently.
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It is the responsibility of the DRE's, Youth Ministers, and other designated adult leaders to make sure all participants understand COVID-19 protocols, stay home if they are experiencing symptoms, sign in at the beginning of class and be informed while the parish will do everything it can to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the parish cannot guarantee those attending meetings, classes or events will not get infected. All volunteers and staff must be finger printed and undergone the Safe Environment Training.

If you have any other questions, please contact: Fr. Jimmy Macalinao (510-267-8340) or Gloria Espinoza (510-267-8359).