



**Guidelines for Parish Religious Education During the Time of COVID Pandemic
July 30, 2020**

2020-2021 School Year

1. These color-designations signal what restrictions schools, businesses, etc., must follow.
 - **Blue:** The new normal. Most normal activities resume with standard precautions.
 - **Green:** Low risk. Some physical distancing measures; limitations on gatherings.
 - **Yellow:** Moderate risk. Moderate social distancing; increased sanitation.
 - **Orange:** High risk. Schools closed for in-person instruction. Only essential work.
 - **Red:** Critical. Stay at home.
 - **Therefore, if schools close because the color code has changed to orange or red, parishes are to cease in-person Religious Education and immediately switch to the K-8th grade to Live in Christ Faith at Home (explained below).**
2. Each parish must establish a health and safety plan before beginning the new RE year. This plan should include:
 - Implementation of social distancing as best you can.
 - **Space out students in classrooms.** If you think it will be hard to social distance the children, especially the younger children, then you need to inform parents of this. The *ND K-12 Smart Restart* plan says facial coverings should be worn by staff and students when social distancing is not possible.
 - **Avoid students and parents congregating.** For example, after RE the hallway leading out the front door can be a traffic backup. One idea is to have teachers take their class (each at a different time) to the social hall or church where there is more space for parents to come in and pick up their children.
 - **Taking attendance of who attended each class, including the catechist.**
 - **Having enough supplies so that each student can have their own supply box.** Avoid commonly shared materials in the classroom; such things as, markers, crayons and scissors, etc.
 - **Requiring students to take their books home each week.** In the event that students need to stay at home the following week or weeks, they will already have their book at home.
 - **Responding to positive test for COVID.** A parish will need to review the situation surrounding the exposure, and may need to cancel in person instructions for a particular class (or classes) for two weeks and switch to home instruction. All positive cases and close contact tracing are handled through local public health agencies.
3. Communicate the plan
 - **Catechists, I would like you to communicate with the parents of your students to see if they are going to be coming to class or not.**
 - If they are coming to class, please let them know what the plan is above

- If they are not going to come to class, please have them contact me, and he will let them know how to do the online/at-home catechesis.
- Parents may be allowed to opt out of in-person instruction. They are to use *Faith at Home Catechesis* (explained below).

4. All parishes must begin in-person instruction no later than October 1, unless the color code of your county is orange or red, that is, school is not in session.

5. Further information for at-home catechesis if we need to shut down again:

- Our Sunday Visitor has created a separate easy to navigate pages for home catechesis: osvcurriculum.com/faithathome. On this web site you will find *Alive in Christ* parent lessons, student books, sacramental books, 7th & 8th grade parish adolescent books, as well as the *Allelu* Kindergarten program.
- In addition to the parent lesson plans, there are new multi-age family lessons.
- The student books are also on-line (they can only be accessed by a passcode that was sent to your parish with the new book order this year). It is still better to have the hard copy book at home.
- You will also find faith-based games that quiz the students, and videos that tie in with the lessons.
- There are lessons and videos for the Kindergarten program “Allelu”. Even if a parish uses a different program, many of these can be used for home instruction.
- For long-term catechesis at home, Our Sunday Visitor has partnered with “Flipgrid”. This is an on-line virtual sharing platform created by Microsoft and Google, and used by schools. It is easy to set up, easy to use for parents and students and can be accessed on a computer, tablet or smart phone. It also has accountability built-in the lessons so that students connect with the teacher/DRE after each lesson is completed. A Gmail account is required for initial set up, but not needed by the parent or student using it.
- There are two helpful instruction videos on how “Flipgrid” works. One is a 10-minute introduction, the other is an hour in-depth training. These are found on the right-hand side column, half way down the page on the *Faith at Home* website by OSV <https://osvcurriculum.com/faithathome>.