

COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN FOR PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Parish Name: St. Joseph-St. Joseph and SS. John & Bernard Parishes (Shared Program)

Parish Address: 220 Church Street, St. Joseph, MI. 49085

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Preparedness Plan Introduction

Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 2020-142 "provides a structure to support all schools in Michigan as they plan for a return of pre-K-12 education in the fall. Under the order, school districts must adopt a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan laying out how they will cope with the disease across the various phases of the Michigan Safe Start Plan. In turn, the accompanying Michigan Return to School Roadmap offers a guide to the types of safety protocols appropriate during each phase. There's no one-size-fits-all solution: What works in Lansing may not work in Sault Sainte Marie. Districts will retain the flexibility to tailor their instruction to their particular needs and the disease conditions present in their regions." (EO-2020-142)

While the above is directed towards our schools, the same principle applies to Parish Religious Education. To assist you with laying out and detailing your plan for in-person classroom instruction, which is possible in Phases 4, 5, and 6 of the *Guidelines for Parish Religious Education During Coronavirus Pandemic (Guidelines)* from the Diocese of Kalamazoo (Diocese), the Diocese is asking each religious education program to complete and return the following on August 31st, 2020.

Preparedness Plan

Every Parish Religious Education program within our Diocese must develop and adopt a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan (“Preparedness Plan”) that is informed by the Diocese of Kalamazoo’s *Guidelines*. Due to the nine-county expanse of our diocese, each Parish Religious Education program has been tasked to prepare a plan that meets the needs and recommendations of their local communities in conjunction with the recommendations and guidance from local health officials and in accordance to the governor’s orders.

A. The policies and procedures that the Parish Religious Education program will follow when the region in which the district is located (the Diocese of Kalamazoo is in Region 3) is in Phase 1, 2, or 3 of the Michigan Safe Start Plan.

If our region is labeled as Phase 3 then we are not allowed to have in-person classes. In this instance, an at-home option is necessary for religious education for each parish. The at-home option gives us the most direct ability to assist the parents in being the primary educators of their children (please see pages 2 & 3 of the *Guidelines for Parish Religious Education During Coronavirus Pandemic* for more information).

Type parish religious education program’s response here:

1. We are going with an online option this year, using My Catholic Faith Delivered. This coincides with the materials we have used within the classroom (Faith and Life series). This also coincides with what our LMC schools use. This option will be 1st through 6th grades. Supplemental material will be sent to all families as well as progress reports on a bi-monthly basis.
2. For 7th and 8th grades we will continue to use My Catholic Faith Delivered and/or Chosen, our school uses this program too. We will also, provide virtual/ZOOM/Google meetings for students and/or parents to meet the guidelines set in the past by the Diocese.

3. We will provide supplemental materials to support our program and progress. Our Confirmation Director already has a virtual/Zoom/social media footprint with items such as; weekly reflections, email blasts, reminders to join our live-streamed Masses, youth group meetings/discussions, and much more.
 4. For the sacramental years of First Communion and Penance, we will send supplemental materials/links/materials to all families. Please note, we may use the US Postal Service for some materials but our main contact with being digital. We will call each family to give personal progress reports.
 5. We will have contact with each family at least twice a month with such materials or students' progress, email blasts, etc.....
 6. Once we are at the higher phases in which we could safely meet our families, we will begin with the sacramental years. This is due to the importance of these years. This would have themes that coincide with where/what the students are learning. We hope this would be working workshops. We will still maintain the online classes.
 7. All meetings will be spaced out during various times days/nights due to the sheer number of children within our program to meet all safety guidelines and protocols.
 8. Awaiting safety guidelines and protocols for our Good Shepherd Program.
- a) ALL SAFETY PROCOTALS/Guidelines set by the state/local/federal governments, health department(s), and the Diocese will be strictly followed.
- b) We will monitor our amount of contact with the families and ask for feedback from them. What is working, what is not working, too much/too little contact information and adjust when and if need be.

c) Catechists/Volunteers/Staff/Others will be strictly limited. No outside person/parent will be allowed to enter due to safety concerns

B. When the region in which the Parish Religious Education program is located is in Phase 4 of the Michigan Safe Start Plan the following policies and procedures must, at a minimum, include:

1. Screening

- a. Any volunteer with the Religious Education program must fill out a form answering the following questions before each time they volunteer in person: “Do you have a temperature of 100.4 or greater?” and “Have you been interacting (within six feet for longer than five minutes) with anyone who has been diagnosed with Covid-19?” If they answer yes to either of these questions they must not volunteer in person.
- b. Volunteers should self-monitor for any symptoms of Covid-19 and if they exhibit any, they should not volunteer in person.
- c. Parents should be asked to monitor their children, and if their children exhibit any signs of Covid-19 or have a fever greater than 100.4 they should not bring their children to class.

Please describe how you will implement the above requirements as outlined in the Return to School Roadmap.

Type parish religious education program’s response here:

1. We will use, “I am safe” questionnaire form in which all volunteers/catechists/students/others will have to fill out. We will offer this in digital and written formats. These will be used accordingly and kept in the parish office with other confidential materials.

2. If someone, states yes to any question, they will **NOT** be granted permission to volunteer. They will also have to have written documentation or proof that are clear of COVID-19, after seeing a medical professional and following the 14-day quarantine set by local/federal governments.
3. We will follow any new or added procedures or guidelines set by the government or the Diocese. (If speaking with a child a parent must answer the questionnaire).
4. Each volunteer/student/catechist/other will have a sign-in sheet/questionnaire that will be verified and the temperature will be taken. The parish office will have a digital thermometer(s). We will notate the temperature on the form and contact information will be verified in case we need to contact them.

2. Social Distancing

- a. Desks, or seats, for students, must be at least 6 feet apart.
- b. All students must face the same direction in the classroom.
- c. Class sizes are limited to space available to meet the distance requirements.
- d. Students must be kept in the same classroom and are not to intermix with students from other classes. There must not be any activities that allow students from different classes to come together, including but not limited to: meals, joint movie watching, joint activities, etc.
- e. Catechists and/or aids should remain at least six feet from students at all times.
- f. No parents or outside adults are allowed in the classroom with the students.
- g. Students are not allowed to share, touch, or borrow other students' supplies. Any supplies in a desk left at a shared classroom must not be handled by religious education students. Students must bring their supplies and take them with them, including any books or materials for class.

- h. Students may go to the bathroom following all protocols already established on Parish Religious Education and Youth Ministry Guidelines for the Diocese of Kalamazoo. They must wear a mask and stay socially distant while going to and from the bathroom and they must be reminded to wash their hands.
- i. A drop-off and pick up procedure must be established that keeps all families 6 feet apart.

Please describe how you will implement the above requirements as outlined in the Return to School Roadmap.

Type parish religious education program's response here:

1. Since we are not using our schools due to their safety guidelines and logistic issues, we will use the Rose Center (St. Joseph) and/or St. Bernard's Parish Center (Benton Harbor). Both locations allow us to be socially distanced (6 feet apart).
2. We will follow the guidelines of how many people are allowed to gather in one place.
3. **ALL** persons will be reminded to maintain the 6 feet of social distance order. Only in an emergency will someone break the distance barrier. **THIS WILL BE DONE EACH AND EVERY TIME.**
4. Cleaning/disinfection procedures will take place before and after such a meeting(s). This will be all touched surfaces and bathrooms.
5. Recommend disinfection materials/chemicals that will be used every time.
6. Mask or face covering **MUST BE WORN** at all times, and one mask will be provided to any person that may not have one. If there is any moment with in the area or common areas, a mask/face covering must be worn.
7. There will be no sharing of materials, pens, crayons, markers, glue, paper, scissors, rosaries, text or activity books, etc.
8. No outside items will be allowed unless disinfected by a parish staff member to ensure it is done by the standards of our protocols.

9. All items used for such materials will be bought to the location by a parish staff member. This will ensure all items are disinfected beforehand and items will be placed in a plastic Ziplock baggie and handed out accordingly. All items will be placed back in a baggie by the student after it is used and collect and place in a large Rubbermaid container. (If items will be used again after disinfection occurs). We will do our best to use items that do not have to be used again or items that can be taken home. The Rubbermaid container then will be removed by the staff member for proper disinfection.
10. ALL rooms, tables, chairs will be set up by staff members to ensure proper distances.
11. Class/meeting sizes will be limited to space available to meet which will be directed by state/local/federal governments/health department and/or the Dioceses.
12. Students/catechists/volunteers/others will be asked to remain in the classroom/meeting room until the end of the session. They will not be allowed to enter any other areas of such location. The only exceptions will be the use of the bathrooms and or in case of an emergency.
13. Catechists/Volunteers/Staff/Others will be strictly limited. No outside person/parent will be allowed to enter due to safety concerns; entry will only be granted due to an emergency.
14. Safety Protocols Signs/Reminders will be placed in prominent positions throughout all areas of our campuses.
15. Extra time will be added to any meetings that take place. Drop/pick procedures will be in a car line that one volunteer or catechists and the other being a staff member. One will verify the 'I am Safe' questionnaire, correct contact information, and signature is given. The other person will take the temperature of the student and ensure their temperature is within the safe zone. Once that takes place the student will be guided out of the car. Upon dismissal, the same persons will ensure the child is dismissed to the proper parent/car in a car line. Social Distance will be used during both drops and

pick up times. Mask will be required as well for both families and volunteer/catechists/staff members.

16. Special markings will be used in any/all shared or common spaces to remain socially distanced from one another.
17. Awaiting safety guidelines and protocols for our Good Shepherd Program.

3. Personal Protective Equipment

- a. All catechists and adult volunteers must wear a mask or face shield at all times.
- b. Students in grades 6 and up must wear a mask or face shield at all times.
- c. All on-campus should wear a mask or face shield in hallways, lines, or at any time they cannot maintain 6 feet distance.
- d. Students ages 5 to 5th grade are encouraged to wear a mask during classes.
- e. It is encouraged for catechists to wear masks that are see-through for students who may have a hard time hearing so they may try to read lips.

Please describe how you will implement the above requirements as outlined in the Return to School Roadmap.

Type parish religious education program's response here:

1. All catechists/volunteers/staff members/students will be required to wear a mask/shield/face covering at all times, in all shared areas on both campuses. To include car lines or any other areas where social distance cannot be maintained.
2. Permission will be granted only if a person request not to wear a mask or face covering for medical reasons. A shield will be strongly encouraged.
3. At this time, we are waiting on the Diocese to see if a group order for face shields can be placed for catechist/staff members. A small amount will be

purchased for any persons claiming to have a medical reason for not wearing a mask.

4. Disposable masks will be available for people who have forgotten and/or persons that are in financial hardship.
5. Hand sanitizer stations will be provided.
6. All persons will be reminded to wash their hands before and after all meetings, to include after visiting the restrooms.

4. Hygiene

- a. Catechists and adult volunteers must wash their hands thoroughly or use hand sanitizer (of at least 60% alcohol) before classes begin.
- b. Parishes should provide portable hand washing and/or hand sanitizing stations in every class space.

Please describe how you will implement the above requirements as outlined in the Return to School Roadmap.

Type parish religious education program's response here:

1. Hand sanitizer (60% alcohol-based) stations will be provided.
2. All person will be reminded to wash their hands before and after all meetings, to include after visiting the restrooms

5. Sanitation/Cleaning

- a. Frequently touched surfaces including light switches, doors, bathrooms, etc. must undergo a cleaning before and after any religious education classes are held. If there is a retreat or an extended session these must be cleaned every four hours.
- b. Desks and tables must be wiped down either with an EPA-approved disinfectant or diluted bleach after each class period.
- c. Staff must wear masks and gloves while cleaning.

d. All cleaning supplies must be stored during class sessions and kept out of the reach of children.

Please describe how you will implement the above requirements as outlined in the Return to School Roadmap.

Type parish religious education program's response here:

1. All touched surfaces will be cleaned/disinfected before and after usage of all share/common/meeting rooms with the recommended cleaning/disinfection materials/chemicals.
2. All will wear masks/face coverings/shields and protective gloves during the cleaning/disinfection process.
3. All cleaning/disinfecting products will be kept safely out of the reach of children and stored within an area of both campuses marked clearly with "For the use of the Religious Education/YM department."

6. Catechist Safety

a. Many catechists in our Diocese are in what is considered the vulnerable category. Keep this in mind while asking, recruiting, and training your catechists. No one that feels uncomfortable being in a social setting should be forced to teach or volunteer.

b. Most studies are showing that adults are more vulnerable than children at this time. Catechists should have little to no personal interaction with other adults during parish religious education time, they should stay in their classroom and not have to move around with the students.

Please describe how you will implement the above requirements as outlined in the Return to School Roadmap.

Type parish religious education program's response here:

1. We have reached out to all catechists and volunteers and asked them to give us their honest opinion on this year's Religious Education. They were allowed to participate or opt-out for this year.
2. All are welcome to join us, when and if, they feel safe to do so.
3. All catechists/volunteers will not be forced to work or donate their time.
4. If a catechists/volunteer needs to be extra careful about social distancing, it will be granted without question.

7. Symptoms During Class

- a. If a volunteer starts having Covid-19 symptoms during class, they are to remove themselves from the classroom. A substitute needs to be ready and available weekly to step in during these situations. The volunteer must go home immediately and be tested if needed. They may not volunteer in person until they have been cleared by a medical doctor or they have gone 14 days without symptoms.
- b. If a student shows Covid-19 symptom, during class they must be sent to a designated volunteer who will call their parent. They must be sent home with their parent(s) or guardian(s) and are not to return to in-person classes until they are cleared by a medical doctor or have gone 14 days without symptoms.

Please describe how you will implement the above requirements as outlined in the Return to School Roadmap.

Type parish religious education program's response here:

1. If anyone, catechists/volunteer/staff/other shows symptoms during a meeting, they will be asked to remove themselves from the campus. A substitute will be provided for the remaining time and/or future meetings may be canceled.
2. If the person is a student, a staff member will remove the child from others and place the child in a designated safe area. In that area, tissues, hand

sanitizer and the master list containing contact information of all parents. The adult will call the parents/guardian/emergency contact for immediate pick-up.

3. If ANYONE test positive will not return until they are granted permission by a medical professional and be symptom/quarantine free for 14 days.

8. Engaging Parents

- a. As always it is important to engage the parents in what is happening during religious education. During this time, it is even more important to communicate regularly. Keep parents updated weekly with any information or changes as to how religious education is being conducted.
- b. Parishes should communicate weekly material being covered and opportunities for faith discussions at-home while having in-person classes.

Please describe how you will implement the above requirements as outlined in the Return to School Roadmap.

Type parish religious education program's response here:

1. Parents will be contacted via email or other digital formats on a bi-monthly basis. This contact as described above in bullet point/section number 1, will be monitored to see if too much or too little contact is made. We do not want to overwhelm the parents. This contact will contain supplemental information per grades and progress reports on their child(ren).
2. We will ask for feedback. What is working, what is not working, too much/too little contact from the office, etc.... and adjust when and if, need be.

C. Please indicate if any additional protocols will be adopted under Phase 4.

Type parish religious education program's response here:

1. We will follow the directions and guidelines set by the state/local/federal governments/health department(s)and the Diocese.
2. At this time, we most likely will follow the same procedures as stated above throughout the entire school year.

D. As the State transitions to Phase 5, indicate which protocols under the following areas from the *Guidelines* the parish will include in its Preparedness Plan (such as, all students will wear a face mask during classes).

Type parish religious education program's response here:

1. We will follow the directions and guidelines set by state/local/federal governments/health department(s)and the Diocese regarding the items below.
 2. At this time, we will follow the same procedures as stated above throughout the entire school year.
- Personal Protective Equipment: Mask, face coverings, face shields will be mandatory, handwashing, and/or hand sanitizer/disinfectant wipes/spray will be provided.
 - Hygiene: Handwashing/hand sanitizer will be mandatory.
 - Cleaning: Before and after all meetings, on or in all common areas with the proper guidelines followed.

- Screening: If in person, temperatures will be taken and the questionnaire will be sought and filled out.
- Testing: Only if someone has been with someone who has been tested and been found positive. We will follow the same procedures as medical professionals/state/local/federal governments guide us.

Final Steps for Submission

Each parish shall complete and submit this “Preparedness Plan” to the Diocese of Kalamazoo’s Secretariat of Parish Life & Lay Leadership for approval by Monday, August 31st at noon.

Name of Parish(es): St. Joseph and SS. John & Bernard

Name of Director of Religious Education Submitting Plan: Roxanne Rogers

Date of Approval by the Diocese of Kalamazoo’s Secretariat for Parish Life & Lay Leadership:

Signature of Executive Director:

Each parish religious education program’s approved plan will be posted to its local parish’s website.

The Preparedness Plan for St. Joseph and SS. John & Bernard Parishes will be found on **(once approved)**

<http://www.ssjohnandbernard.org/>

<https://stjoestjoe.church/>