



Faith Formation 2020-2021

Guidelines for Parish Faith Formation Programs

Office of Religious Education
Archdiocese of Los Angeles



Revised July 31, 2020



Catechetical Year 2020-2021: Three Options

For the catechetical year of 2020-2021, parishes have 3 options for their faith formation programs.

Option A: Gathered On-site Faith Formation (according to State and Local guidelines)***

Option B: Non-Gathered Family Faith Formation

Option C: Combined- Gathered & Non-Gathered

*****As of July 17, 2020, the State of California has mandated that schools located on the pandemic watch list may not be open to in-person instruction in the Fall. Los Angeles County is one of the areas on the watch list. As a result, Catholic Schools, Religious Education Programs - including Confirmation and Youth Ministry - and all other ministries may not have in-person, gathered sessions or meetings. Please watch for updates from the Archdiocese in the months to come.**

Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:2

Overview

The Pandemic of COVID-19 has brought on challenging times. We cannot operate as we always have; however, we will still be able to provide a quality Faith Formation program for our families. This check list is a helpful tool to help you begin to plan for the 2020-2021 faith formation year. Following guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and local government (see links below), we need to be diligent and thorough in planning and implementation to ensure that the health and safety of all remains a priority.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>

Ventura County Public Health Department

<http://www.venturacountyrecovers.org>

Santa Barbara County Public Health Department

<http://publichealthsb.org/health-officer-orders>

To ensure that all areas of Faith Formation are covered, you should enlist a team to help with the planning of the Faith Formation programs, one that utilizes the gifts of the greater community such as:

- Pastor
- Principal of Catholic School
- A health care practitioner with some experience in contagious disease
- A few catechists/leaders
- Parish Catechetical Leaders (PCLs) - Director of Religious Education, Confirmation Coordinator, RCIA Director
- Parent

While we do not know exactly what will be required for the reopening of the Faith Formation programs, you may want to consider with your team the following in your planning:

1. **Scheduling:** you do not need to rush into starting in August/September. If you are concerned about complying with all the protocols, consider a later start date.
2. **Holding non-gathered sessions.**
3. **Facilities:** can programming be expanded to more days and times?
4. **Budgeting:** take into consideration all the extra supplies that will be needed to clean, required signage, thermal thermometers, etc.
5. **Time:** hourly employees need to be attentive to the number of hours for which they are hired.
6. **Facilities use and management**

The reopening of the Faith Formation programs will be governed by the comprehensive State of California protocols outlined in these guidelines from the Archdiocese. Please check regularly with local county and city guidelines, as there may be a few county specific requirements such as signage. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for starting the 2020-2021 Faith Formation year with gathered sessions. While the Office of Religious Education (ORE) will continue to monitor changing requirements and report those to parishes, it is up to each parish program to monitor state and local public health conditions for any changes that may occur.

Develop a Plan

Before deciding to provide on-site faith formation, it is very important to develop a plan and consider with your team if you are able to answer the following questions in order to provide the safest environment for the staff, volunteers and children/teens/adults in your parish.

Developing a plan [this must be customized by the location]:

1. How will maximum attendance be determined for all Faith Formation sessions with children, youth, and adults?

- What spaces are you able to use for your sessions?
- What capacity do the class spaces hold, given distancing requirements?
- What about the public areas?
- How many uses are possible in a day, given sanitation requirements? i.e. meetings, classes, general parish use?
- How many sessions, given all the accommodations required, will you need?
- Will you require advance reservations/registration/confirmation of in-person attendance for each session?

2. Plan for situations when more people are seeking to enter the building(s) than are allowed under the limitations on gathering.

- Who will monitor the number of people entering the building?
- How will you handle too many people?
- Will you be in contact with ADLA COVID-19 team and/or the authorities, if necessary?

3. Does Faith Formation/Youth Ministry have enough cleaning supplies to clean the spaces used?

- Who orders and monitors the supplies?
- Where are the supplies stored?
- What supplies will catechists/leaders need in their teaching spaces?
- What will be the procedures for cleaning the building(s)?
- How long will it take to clean between uses?
- If you use the church will you be able to clean it between Masses?
- Who is responsible for cleaning?
- Will you have enough personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, coveralls as needed) for the people who are doing the cleaning?
- Training on use of cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment use.

4. Is the facility prepared, with necessary signage in place? Do all routes for employees, volunteers, and participants maintain enough social distancing?

- What are entrances and exits?
- What is the route in common areas, such as hallways? Is it marked clearly?
- What are the plans for arrival and dismissal? Will they be staggered?
- Who will monitor hallways, sidewalks, and parking lots?

5. Health Screening

- Which screening are you going to conduct?
 - At-home assessments; assessments upon arrival; temperature checks or not?
- Who will conduct the training for those who will do the health screenings?
- What training will be done? Where? Who?
- How many volunteers will be needed?
- Where will the screening take place? How many stations are needed?
- What is the contingency for those who show up sick?

6. Arrival/Dismissal

- Are hand cleaning stations or dispensers available?
- Who will monitor them?
- How will physical distancing be assured?
- How will sign in/sign out procedures be implemented?
 - App? Paper?
 - Where will this occur?

7. Catechists/Volunteers

- How many volunteers will you need?
- How many catechists/leaders?
 - What is expected of the catechists/leaders?
 - What Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will the parish provide?
 - Time commitment?
 - Training?
 - Are any catechists/leaders vulnerable?

8. Teaching/Session supplies

- How will the participants use materials?
- How will tools such as books, pencils, crayons, etc. be handled?

OPTION A:

Gathered On-site Faith Formation

The following areas will help you plan for the Gathered/on-site reopening of the Faith Formation programs, including but not limited to retreats, parent meeting, and prayer services, etc.

Facilities (this applies to schools, halls, meeting rooms)

- For religious education programs using Catholic school facilities: the Parish Catechetical Leader, school principal, and Pastor should together coordinate the use of the facilities and a cleaning schedule for them.
- Visual cues such as tape or signs will be placed on the ground, floor or wall, 6 ft. apart and everyone will be asked to observe those visual cues and not move closer to someone (other than a household family member).
- Signage will be placed at all entrances to the building that explains the COVID-19 symptoms (those with symptoms will be asked not to enter), how to stop the spread of COVID-19 and the importance of handwashing.
- The disinfectant used to clean will meet the EPA/CDC guidelines. This link provides more guidance:
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sarscov23>.
- Arrange rooms with distancing between where each person will be seated. There must be 6ft. of distance between the catechist/leader and participants.
- Parking Lot
 - Must be monitored
 - Use every other parking space
 - No gatherings

- Playgrounds
 - Closed
 - No common area to congregate (such as hospitality area, benches, outside classroom area).

- Drinking Fountains/ Refillable stations
 - Do not use

- Restrooms
 - Sanitize frequently- door handles, light switches, faucet handles, etc.
 - The number of people using the restroom at any given time should be monitored.

- Classrooms/halls/ teaching spaces
 - Must be sterilized before and after each use
 - Wash hands before entering and when leaving

Arrival/Dismissal

1. Traffic control will be established for the facility so that volunteers and participants enter by one door and out another door (unless not possible at a location). Signage will be placed outside the doors instructing everyone as to the entrance and exit of the building.

2. Each time entering the building, everyone will sanitize his/her hands by using hand sanitizer.

- Multiple entry points:
 - Don't have everyone enter the building from one door
 - If there aren't multiple doors, designate one as an entrance and one as an exit

- Monitor parking lot:
 - Only allow parking in every other space
 - No congregating.
 - Children must be dropped off and picked up as swiftly as possible
 - Multiple dismissal points

- Sign in/sign out options:
 - Kid Check: <https://tinyurl.com/yau6eoxc>
 - Use a separate paper for each child
 - Use pen once, place in a container to be sanitized later
 - Attendance: if attendance can be taken and reported electronically, followed up with a phone call to the household. This can take the place of a sign in sheet.
 - Diligent planning must still happen for the dismissal, however, to ensure that the child goes home with the appropriate person. All documentation must be kept and archived.

3. Staggered times for arrival and dismissal:

- Can different groups be scheduled at different times?
 - By families
 - By grade level

Personal Protection

Cloth face coverings prevent the person wearing the mask from spreading respiratory droplets when talking, sneezing, or coughing. If everyone wears a cloth face covering when out in public, the risk of exposure can be reduced. Since people can spread the virus before symptoms start, or even if people never have symptoms, wearing a cloth face covering can protect others around you. Face coverings worn by others protect you from getting the virus from people carrying the virus. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

- Cloth face coverings
 - Must be worn by employees, volunteers and participants
 - Catechists/Leaders, staff and adult volunteers may wear a face shield
- Gloves
 - Must be worn by adults when screening for temperature and symptoms
 - Gloves must be worn when cleaning and disinfecting

Physical Distancing

Employees, volunteers, adults, and participants must always maintain a 6 ft. distance from others unless they are from the same household.

- Every employee, volunteer, parent and participant must maintain 6 ft. from one another:
 - In common areas such as lobbies, hallways, sidewalks, hospitality areas outside and around church or school
 - In classrooms
 - Desks and tables need to be spaced apart as well as chairs
 - Limited space means a limit on the number of participants (no more than 12 participants per classroom)
 - If other spaces are being used for participants, such as parish centers, parish halls, multi-purpose rooms, floor markings and signage should be used.

Health Screening

Before entering buildings or facilities, all participants must have their temperatures checked via no-touch thermal scan thermometers (for information on how to acquire these thermometers, please see page 12 of [Catholic Schools “Starting the School Year Smart” document issued June 23, 2020](#)) by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles). If a participant has a fever, he/she must not enter the building or facility. Temperature checks should be included with health screenings.

- Identify one place where screening can be done
- All volunteers and participants must have their temperature taken
- Anyone with a temperature over 100.4° must be sent home
- Temperatures less than 100.4° must ask questions regarding symptoms
- Do you have a cough or any other symptoms?
- Have you been exposed to anyone with Covid-19?

Teaching/Session Facilitation

- No sharing of any supplies:
 - Textbooks
 - Bibles
 - Pencils/pens

Art/crafts

- No sharing
- One-time use
- Assign participants things like crayons and felt pens

Environment items that must be disinfected before/after use

- Desks/chairs/tables
- Chalkboards/whiteboards/bulletin boards
- Devices such as CD players/televisions/DVD players/AV equipment

Storage of Supplies

- What will need to be stored and where will you store it?
- Where will you store the extra cleaning supplies, sets of craft supplies for each child, etc.

Prayer services

- Diocesan and parish protocol must be followed.
- Small groups can go to the church, but avoid large gatherings
- At this time, only 25% of building capacity or 100 people are allowed
- The church/chapel will need to be sterilized before and after use.

Catechist/Leader Meetings/Trainings

- Training will be completed for the following:
 - Information on COVID-19 and how to prevent it from spreading including which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting the virus.
 - Self-screening at home including temperature and symptom checks.
 - Not coming to work or participating in activities if staff or volunteers have symptoms of COVID-19 such a frequent cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, recent loss of taste or smell or if they or someone they live with have been diagnosed with COVID-19
 - To seek medical attention if their symptoms become severe including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face.
 - The importance of frequent handwashing with soap and water including scrubbing with soap for 20 seconds (or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol when staff cannot get to a sink).

- Proper use of face coverings including:
 - Non-surgical masks do not protect the wearer and are not considered personal protective equipment.
 - Masks can help protect people near the wearer, but do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent handwashing.
 - They must cover the nose and mouth
 - Employees should wash or sanitize hands before and after using or adjusting face coverings.
 - Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth
 - They should be washed after each shift.

- Who are your catechists/volunteers/leaders and are they at risk? (individuals 65 years or older, chronic illness, etc.)

When a Staff Member, Participant, or Volunteer Becomes Sick or Presents Symptoms

Monitor staff, volunteers, and participants for signs of illness. Should someone have a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, who show coughing, fatigue, or shortness of breath, or who display other COVID-19 symptoms, and who do not have any other health conditions that shares these symptoms, they should be sent home.

If you have a positive case of COVID-19, please follow all county public health procedures, and complete the [**ADLA COVID-19 Report Form and Instructions**](#) to report it to the Archdiocese.

If you are contacted by the health department or any other entity with the directive to partially or completely close, please contact your pastor for guidance and support.

OPTION B: Non-Gathered Faith Formation

Non-gathered Faith Formation can be centered in the home bringing the practice of faith into the center of home life. We can help provide new opportunities for our families to have a lived experience of Jesus in His Church. This is not a home school model of Faith Formation. This is not simply moving our classrooms online. Instead, we look to the needs of our families and find ways to accompany them on this journey. Ideas like formation broken into modules in which a series of “family meetings” take place in the home, to be done on days that best fit the family schedule, using creative, interesting and relevant resources including videos, stories, sharing, reflection, prayer and family experiences to make this time fun and fruitful. COVID-19 provides not just challenges but new opportunities to minister to our families.

Please reach out to your Regional Coordinators and Coordinators of Youth Ministry for ideas that can be adapted to fit the needs of your unique communities. Resources can also be found online at LACatholics.org.

OPTION C: Combination – Gathered and Non-Gathered

Should your parish decide to do a combination of gathered and non-gathered Faith Formation, all policies described above in gathered/on-site Faith Formation sessions must be adhered to. Parishes can implement the non-gathered sessions using Faith Formation resources available by accessing la.catholics.org.

Contact Information

Regional Coordinators

San Pedro Region - Terri Palmer

tannepalmer@sppr.org

San Fernando Region - Dana Couso

dcouso@sfpr.org

OLA Region - David Lara

dlara@olapr.org

San Gabriel Region - Katie Tassinari

ktassinari@sgpr.org

Santa Barbara Region - Teresa Duran

tduran@sbpr.org

Coordinators of Youth Ministry

Katie Zeigler

Lead contact for San Fernando Region & San Pedro Region

kzeigler@la-archdiocese.org

Kelly McLoughlin

Lead contact for Santa Barbara Region

kamcloughlin@sbpr.org

Dayrin Perez

Lead contact for San Gabriel Region & OLA Region

dperez@la-archdiocese.org