



## Reopening of Faith Formation Programs 2020-2021

Though the world is filled with uncertainty about the future, we greet you with the peace and love of Christ! As you face the year ahead, we know many of you are making difficult decisions regarding work, school, and childcare for your children and your family. Please be assured of our love, our understanding, and our hope that resuming parish Faith Formation programs will *not* be a source of greater anxiety, but rather an *oasis* where we can all grow in a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, receiving His love into the most overwhelmed and fearful places in our hearts.

**At our parishes, we strongly believe that our student is the entire family.** It is a privilege to assist you, the primary teachers of your children, in the ways of faith! Based on your survey responses, the encouragement of the Diocese and Bishop Callahan, and prayer and dialogue as a staff, we are planning to move forward with in-person Faith Formation programs for the 2020-2021 year.

**In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, this document contains essential Parent and Parish responsibilities regarding the re-opening of our programs in a safe, loving and responsible way.**

### Faith Formation Programs

Given the nature of our family-based and small-group-based catechetical programs, our meeting schedule will remain consistent with that of previous years:

- **Family Formation** (*Parents & K-5 [St. Mary's] or K-8 [St. Raymond's]*) meet once a month
- **Edge** (*grades 6-8 [St. Mary's]*) meets twice a month, usually the first & third Wednesday
- **Confirmation and High School** small groups (*grades 9-12 [both parishes]*) will meet once or twice each month, usually the second and/or fourth Wednesdays

Our Parish Catechetical Leaders and support team will work with the local county health department to ensure that the re-opening of our parish programs goes smoothly. We will be taking every reasonable precaution, with your help, to keep our catechetical environment safe and healthy. We have a detailed plan, including the three aspects of Protective Measures, Hygiene and Cleaning and Policy and Procedures for COVID-19 Exposure and Positive Tests, that will be implemented effectively by parish staff, catechists, and parents.

*Please note, if you and your family are uncomfortable gathering in person or find yourself in an at-risk category, you are welcome to participate with us virtually through our livestream options!*

## 1. Protective Measures

### Parent/Family Responsibilities:

- Screen your children by taking their temperature and ask health related questions (do they feel well) before attending to the Faith Formation Program. The parish will *not* screen you or your child(ren), unless a student appears to be ill during class.
- Speak with your children about the need to socially distance during programs.
- If you or your children do not feel well, please stay home. Symptoms of being ill include fever, stomach ailments, sore throat, a bad cough, difficulty breathing, headaches, etc.
- Provide a mask for yourself and your children. Unless a documented medical excuse from a medical professional is given, all adults and students five-years old and above are required to wear masks. Free masks will be provided on each program night if needed.
- Notify your Catechetical Leader if your family intends to travel outside of Wisconsin.
- Students are invited to bring water bottles as the drinking fountain will be unavailable.

### Parish Responsibilities:

- The parish will remind catechists and adults who do not feel well to stay home.
- During Faith Formation, parish staff and catechists will actively screen students and adults by paying attention to their appearance, complaints, and any symptoms.
- If a student presents symptoms of illness or appears to be ill, the parish will proceed with a standard medical response that includes the student's temperature and isolating them. Sick students with a temperature over 100.4 will be isolated from other students until a parent or guardian arrives to take them home.
- All adult staff and volunteers (and any student volunteers over the age of 5) are required to wear masks unless they provide a documented medical excuse. Catechists may remove their masks only when they are at least 6 feet away from students and delivering instruction.
- The parish will provide adequate signage to remind anyone with fever or flu-like symptoms not to enter the building and to help encourage proper hygiene.
- Social distancing of at least 6 feet should be practiced by all adults and, when possible, by students, unless for the health or safety of the individual (e.g. childcare)
- All classrooms and gathering spaces will operate at 50% capacity, seating students at desks or chairs at least 6 feet apart and avoiding physical contact between them
  - *For family-based programs (K-5/6-8)*, students will remain with their family during meals, arrival and dismissal. A catechist will escort students to/from their classroom by grade level.
  - *For small-group based programs (6-8, 9-12)*, a small group leader will direct students to and from their small group room; from there, they will remain with their small group and small group leader throughout any and all activities for the remainder of the evening
- Students will not share books, materials, equipment etc.
- There will be no sharing of food. Only pre-wrapped packages will be permitted.
- Visitors to the Faith Formation programs will be limited to essential reasons only.

## 2. Hygiene & Cleaning

### Parent/Family Responsibilities:

Parents are to review and practice the following with their children:

- Washing hands often with soap and water for twenty or more seconds
- Sanitizing hands when soap and water are unavailable.
- Keeping hands away from one's face - not touching one's face
- When sneezing or coughing, to sneeze or cough into a tissue or an elbow

### Parish Responsibilities:

- All adults will sanitize or wash their hands before entering the building
- Hand sanitizers and wipes will be readily available. If a student, catechist, or aide leaves a classroom, he or she should sanitize his or her hands when re-entering the classroom.
- Public areas of the building, where people gather and illnesses could more easily be spread, will be cleaned and sanitized after each program night ends.
- Catechists will sanitize their classrooms after each program night ends. This includes sanitizing the desks, the chairs, the plexi dividers and other high-contact points.
- Catechetical leaders and catechists should avoid physical contact with students. (No handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, etc.).
- The parish will ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.
- After blowing their noses, students should discard the used tissue and wash or sanitize their hands. Adults will model this practice.
- The parishes will make this document accessible to the parish community (via websites, social media outlets, etc.). The document will be reviewed regularly and **updated** as local ordinances are adjusted.

### 3. Policy & Procedures for COVID-19 Exposure & Positive Tests

#### Parent/Family Responsibilities:

- If anyone in your family is *directly exposed to* a person who is carrying COVID-19...
  - Follow the quarantine guidance from the Health Department
  - Notify your parish—St. Raymond's or St. Mary's
  - Take any questions to the Eau Claire County Health Department
- If anyone in your family *tests positive for* COVID-19...
  - Report to the Eau Claire County Health Department
  - Follow the isolation guidance from the Health Department
  - Notify your parish—St. Raymond's or St. Mary's
  - Receive documented permission from a medical professional (doctor, nurse practitioner, PA, etc.) before returning to the parish faith formation program

#### Parish Responsibilities:

- Cooperate with county or municipal health departments if a student or employee is diagnosed with COVID-19 or another serious illness. Names will be kept confidential.
- To return to the Parish Program, an employee, catechist or volunteer who is diagnosed with COVID-19 should receive documented permission from a medical professional (doctor, nurse practitioner, PA, etc.).
- If a classroom(s)/gathering area is impacted by a student or adult diagnosed with COVID-19, the room should remain unused for 3 calendar days and be deep cleaned before it can be used again.
- Employees who are...
  - 1) Ill or experiencing any symptoms of COVID, including, limitation, fever, cough, shortness of breath, and excessive fatigue
  - 2) Have a suspected or diagnosed/confirmed case of COVID
  - 3) Have been exposed to any person with a suspected or diagnosed/confirmed case of COVID
  - 4) Returning from outside the United States, any cruise, or any domestic location that has been identified as a viral hotbed by the local county department of health, or
  - 5) have been exposed to any person returning from outside the United States, any cruise, or any domestic location that has been identified as a viral hotbed by the local county department of health,are prohibited from teaching in the parish Faith Formation program for a period of not less than fourteen (14) days from the occurrence of illness or exposure.
- Parish staff will have the contact information for:
  - County health department
  - Local clinics and hospitals
  - Local schools
  - Diocesan offices