



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII
DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
WITNESS TO JESUS

Memorandum

August 5, 2021

To: Pastors, Faith Formation Ministry Leaders

From: Lisa Gomes, Jayne Mondoy, Fr. Alfred Guerrero

Re: COVID-19 Protocols for Faith Formation Programs (SY 2021-2022)

Last summer we provided recommendations for a program framework which emphasized the essential role of parents in passing on the faith to their children (Catechism of the Catholic Church nos. 2221 – 2231.) Reflecting upon the past year, we rejoice that even in the midst of the pandemic, genuine efforts were made to reach out and accompany families, giving witness to an ever-deepening relationship with the Lord and equipping them to transmit the Christian faith in the home and out in the community.

The framework also contained a checklist to help parish faith formation programs align their infectious disease prevention policies with mandates issued by the State of Hawaii Department of Health and the Diocese of Honolulu. Now, as we begin the 2021-2022 school year, please take the time to review your parish policies, adjusting as needed for in-person faith formation programs. While most of last year's protocols remain intact, a few restrictions have been eased with the increase of vaccinations. An updated checklist accompanies this memo.

We acknowledge the hard work it takes to minister to others during a global pandemic. Yet, "the Supreme Law of the Church is the salvation of souls," according to canon 1752. So while we must follow particular protocols, may everything we do reflect Christ's enduring love for us, and be directed towards our eternal salvation and that of others.

Questions or concerns may be directed to:

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Program Considerations During the Pandemic

Some may still be hesitant about gathering in-person for parish faith formation programs. Parishes are urged to provide faith formation resources to those who are uncomfortable with returning or who have limited or no access to a computer or mobile device. These may include online meetings and/or providing resource packets for pick-up.

Faith Formation ministries that use school facilities must comply with applicable infectious disease prevention policies of the school.

Similarly, official Associations of the Faithful (such as Catholic Scouting Committee groups) that use parish/school facilities must comply with applicable infectious disease prevention policies of the parish/school. Associations of the Faithful are listed in the [2021 Directory of the Catholic Church in Hawaii](#).

Infectious Disease Prevention Measures

Helpful resources:

State of Hawaii [COVID-19 Resources](#)

State of Hawaii [COVID-19 Guidance for Schools](#)

Diocese of Honolulu [COVID-19 Resources](#)

COVID-19 Exposure: The pastor or his delegate is to immediately report any on-site exposure to COVID-19. Call or text Dara Perreira, diocesan Director of Human Resources, at (808) 342-3241. Ms. Perreira will instruct the parish on next steps regarding quarantine and return to the workplace/ministry.

Vaccinations: It is highly recommended that everyone who is eligible be fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

Consistency in Practice: All employees and volunteers should know what to do when a participant is ill and be well versed with all policies, procedures, and practices regarding the parish's response to the pandemic.

Signage: Post signs in highly visible locations to promote awareness of the parish's protective measures, policies, procedures, and practices such as proper hand washing, proper wearing of masks, social distancing, and staying home when sick.

Stay at Home if Sick: Educate all parents, employees, catechists, and other volunteers about the importance of staying home when sick.



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Visitors: Limit all non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups and organizations.

Coming and Going: Ensure that you have established policies for dropping off and picking up minors thereby limiting the number of individuals on site at any given time.

Checking In: Create a process for screening all program participants, catechists, other volunteers, and visitors in a safe and respectful manner. Screening may include no touch temperature checks, general symptom checking, and having a designated space for those who show signs of illness. Process all persons who show signs of illness with the highest levels of confidentiality, dignity, and respect.

Masks:

Indoor settings - Masks must be worn consistently and correctly by all minors and adults while indoors. Disposable masks should be available in case a need arises. *Children under 2, and anyone with trouble breathing, should not wear a cloth face covering.*

Outdoor settings – Masks do not need to be worn in most outdoor settings. Masks must be worn in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people.

Physical Distancing: Maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between persons when facing in the same direction (such as all desks facing forward.) Maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance if persons are facing each other (such as in group discussions.)

Ventilation: When possible, open windows for greater natural air circulation.

Prayer Services: Prayer should be an integral part of every program in our parishes. Prayer services can be held, but proper physical distancing, wearing of masks, and cleaning protocols should be followed. Be aware of changes to state and county guidelines regarding gathering capacity.

Retreats: Day retreats are permitted provided that infectious disease prevention policies are developed, communicated, and enforced. Overnight retreats are considered a high-risk activity and are generally discouraged. If they must take place, retreat coordinators are to submit a written plan to their host site coordinator addressing issues such as (but not limited to): sleeping arrangements, use and sanitization of shower facilities/bathrooms, meal service/snack and dining facilities, capacity limits and physical distancing requirements for indoor/outdoor activities and group transportation (such as chartered busses), and management of group activities such as singing,



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socializing, games, etc.

Food: Communal food, potluck, or open food tables are not permitted. Masks may be removed only while eating and drinking. Be aware of physical distancing while indoors.

Avoid Sharing Items: Discourage the sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect. Establish a cleaning schedule for all equipment, materials, and devices that must be shared.

Separate Personal Items: Ensure that each student's personal belongings are separate from others.

Hand Hygiene: Encourage participants to frequently wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Adequate healthy hygiene supplies/products should be available such as soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans.

Cleaning and Disinfection: Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, sink handles, light switches, etc. at least daily or between use as much as possible. Provide guides and schedules of when hands should be washed and surfaces should be cleaned. Students should wash their hands before entering the meeting space on any occasion. Restrooms should be checked regularly to ensure soap and towel dispenser are filled.

[END]