

# Office of Catechetical Ministry

DIOCESE OF SAN BERNARDINO

*Oficina para el Ministerio de la Catequesis*



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July 17, 2020

Dear Parish Catechetical Leaders,

God's continued blessings upon each of you, your families, parish community and those you strive to serve in ministry!

We find ourselves once again under the Governor's order to "shelter in place" and many feel we have actually regressed in our reopening phases in the midst of our ever-changing reality effected by COVID-19. However, as faithful followers of Christ and active Catholics in the Diocese of San Bernardino, let us NOT lose HOPE!!! May each of us be reminders to one another of the empowering words of encouragement shared by Saint Paul, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!"* – Philippians 4:13

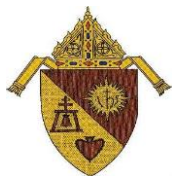
May we continue to look to Christ for our source of hope and strength. Let us be reminded of God's infinite power and promise of provision. Let us be intentional as we seek to recognize the Spirit's presence and the blessings abundantly given to us by our ever present, loving God who journeys with us ...*"Always Forward!"*

The COVID-19 Pandemic has brought on challenging times for everyone. We certainly cannot operate as we always have in the past. Undoubtedly, we are living through a time of transformation. However, we are certain of our continued ability to provide a quality catechetical experience of faith formation for the families entrusted to us in ministry.

The foundation of the following check list has been generously shared by the Diocese of Monterey. It is meant to be a tool in your continued process of planning and preparing for the 2020-2021 catechetical year. Following government guidelines and Diocesan Directives, we need to be diligent and thorough in providing a safe environment for all.

Once again, we encourage you to gather your Pastor, Administrator or Pastoral Coordinator, along with your parish staff and catechetical team to discuss the specific reality of your parish. Here are a few things you may want to consider in your planning:

- 1. Scheduling-** there is no need to rush into starting in August/September. If you are concerned about complying with all the protocols, consider a later start date such as January. This allows you time to celebrate the Sacraments with those who have been previously prepared and await the reception of the Sacraments. Our current reality provides yet another opportunity to consider year-round faith formation sessions and encourages implementation of a new model which involves the collaboration of the entire parish community as catechists and companions on the journey of faith for everyone.
- 2. Facilities-** can programing be expanded to more days and times? Can you stagger sessions and implement more experiences of family faith formation opportunities? What indoor and/or outdoor space do you have available to use for your gatherings? What else may be scheduled at the parish during the same time frame as your sessions?



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3. **Budgeting**- take into consideration all the extra supplies that will be needed to clean, photocopies, etc. What is the current financial reality? As good stewards, how will you best utilize what you currently have? What are realistic ways of reducing overall cost? Taking into consideration that families might have financial struggles, what changes are we considering in our registration fee? Who in the parish can be invited to sponsor some of the additional programming costs (if any)?

4. **Time**- hourly employees need to be attentive to the number of hours for which they are hired. How many volunteers are ready and willing to collaborate with you in ministry? How much time is needed to prepare the space utilized in between sessions? How do you best utilize the time frame you have available for sessions? How do you take into consideration the time constraints and needs of the families you serve?

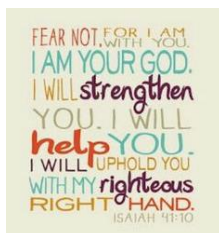
5. **Options** - How are you using technology to offer alternative sessions? How are you incorporating options to meet the realistic needs of families? What options are realistic for your parish, considering the team of catechists and volunteers? How are you inviting and involving other parish ministries in opportunities for faith formation collaboration? What about a hybrid model (long distance learning and some in person session as we are permitted? Or totally an on-line program? What kind of partnerships are to be created or shared (two parishes or more) to offer online catechesis? What new methods of programing could you effectively implement? Please remember, holding virtual sessions or postponing sessions until January 2021 or later are valid options. This is certainly time to think beyond the traditional academic year!

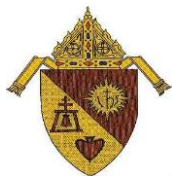
The physical gathering of Catechetical sessions will be influenced by State protocols, which will be adapted by the Diocese and communicated to us. We must be aware there may continue to be delays. However, we know from experience, virtual, on-line sessions and experiences can flourish without being challenged by those changes. Ann Marie Gallant from our Diocesan Emergency Operations Collaborative office and Sr. Chilee Okoko have diligently kept us informed and have previously provided posters in various languages and other resources which were ready to print and post. The attachments contained herein have been added for your convenience. We hope you will use them.

As you gather your team for continued planning and preparation, be sure to include your Pastor, Administrator or Pastoral Coordinator, Catechists, Parents, Principals, Parish Staff, Ministry Council members, members of the local community, fellow parishioners and others who are willing to commit to serve, assist and accompany you in the process. With the help of God's grace, support of your ministry team and our continued commitment to collaboration, we will get through this together ... *"¡Siempre Adelante!"*

Your companion on the journey,

Rosa M. Gouveia





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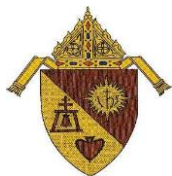
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## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN CREATING YOUR PARISH PLAN**

*Please know these questions are presented as talking points and are meant to help you discuss and create your parish plan. It must be discussed and customized for the reality of your particular location and those you serve.*

1. How will maximum attendance be determined for all Faith Formation sessions with children, youth and adults??
  - a. What capacity do all your facility spaces hold for individual sessions?
  - b. What about the public areas on your parish grounds?
  - c. How many sessions, given all required accommodations, will be needed?
  - d. How many uses are possible? i.e. meetings, classes, general parish use...?
2. Plans should be developed for situations in which more people are seeking to enter the building than can be permitted under the limitations on gathering.
  - a. Who will be monitoring the number of people entering the building?
  - b. How will you handle too many people?
3. Does Faith Formation have enough cleaning supplies to clean the areas being used between sessions and specific groups?
  - a. Who orders, purchases and monitors the supplies?
  - b. Where are the supplies stored? Generally, and for each specific session?
  - c. What supplies will catechists need in spaces for catechetical sessions?
  - d. What will be the procedures for cleaning the specific location(s)?
  - e. How long will it take to clean between uses of designated groups?
  - f. Who is responsible for cleaning? i.e., parish janitorial staff, specific ministry members, designated volunteers, assigned parents, etc.
  - g. How, when and where will the team members be trained to clean?
4. Is the facility prepared, with necessary signage in place? Do all routes for employees, volunteers, and participants maintain enough social distancing?
  - a. What are the designated entrances and exits?
  - b. What is the route in common areas, such as hallways? Is it marked clearly? Who is responsible to ensure signage remains posted?
  - c. What are the plans for arrival and dismissal? Will they be staggered?
  - d. Who will monitor common areas, hallways, sidewalks, parking lots and open space, restrooms?
5. Health Screening
  - a. What are the designated entrances and exits?
  - b. What training will be done? Where? Who? How many stations?
  - c. How many volunteers will be needed?
  - d. Who will monitor wearing of face coverings? Will some be provided?
  - e. What is the contingency for those who show up sick?



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6. Arrival/Dismissal
  - a. Will there be hand cleaning stations available? Where?
  - b. Who will monitor them for cleanliness and sufficient supplies?
  - c. How will physical distancing be assured? Monitored?
  - d. How will sign in/sign out procedures be implemented per session?
    - i App? Paper? What equipment/tools are available for all?
    - ii Where will this occur? Who will be designated to collect?
  
7. Catechists/Volunteers
  - a. How many volunteers will you need? How many catechists?
  - b. What is expected of the catechists, assistants, aides and other volunteers?
  - c. What is the required/expected time commitment for each role?
  - d. What Personal Protective Equipment will the parish be able to provide?
  - e. What, when, where and how will training be offered for all involved?
  - f. Are any catechists vulnerable?
    - i Is anyone over 65 years of age?
    - ii Does anyone have compromised health conditions?
    - iii How will you involve them in your collaborative ministry efforts?
  
8. Faith Formation Opportunities to Discover, Reflect and Share
  - a. What designated curriculum and supplemental resources will be used?
    - i Is it among the resources approved by the Diocese?
    - ii How will technology options be incorporated?
    - iii How will the students use materials?
    - iv How will tools such as pencils, crayons, etc. be handled?
  - b. How will Mystagogy be incorporated throughout the process?
  - c. How will Diocesan values of hospitality, faith sharing, collaboration and reconciliation be lived experiences throughout the faith formation process?
  
9. Parental Permissions & Registration Process
  - a. Signed documentation -either in person or electronic signature
  - b. Need to include participation of minor in designated on-line sessions
    - i Designated platforms should be mentioned along with expectation of participant and adult as applies to parish faith formation process
  - c. When, where and how will registration process take place?
    - i Who will be trained to help with designated roles?
    - ii How will schedules and space be determined for proper use?
  
10. Godparent/Sponsor Designation and Involvement Process
  - a. How will information be gathered and documents collected?
  - b. How will active participation be encouraged throughout the process?