



Monday, August 2, 2021

Letter Regarding 2021-2022 Catechetical Year and COVID-19 Policies

Dear Religious Education Directors, Catechists, and Families,

As we approach another year for in-person catechesis, we will again look for prudent actions to appropriately address the enduring concerns of COVID-19. Moreover, after considering the recent trends in Ohio, the availability of vaccinations for people 12 and older, the low-risk that COVID-19 poses for children, the guidance of healthcare providers, and the experience of reopening our parishes to their normal activities, we expect that parish schools of religion (PSR) will return to more customary operations.

Some considerations for the year are the following:

- Students, volunteers, or catechetical staff who are ill or experiencing symptoms must stay home. If not already adopted, consider a “fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication” policy before returning to catechetical classes or activities.
- For any cases of COVID-19, the policies of the local health department for quarantining and reporting will be followed. Please be aware that these policies are updated frequently; continue to be observant of the changes in these areas from local health officials.
- Good hygiene routines and regular cleaning procedures should continue to be practiced.
- Social distancing is not required but continues to be recommended by the Ohio Department of Health.
- At this time, masks are voluntary for all students, volunteers, and catechetical staff. Policies should ensure that all those who wish to wear a mask may do so, if desired.
- Regular occupancy numbers in classrooms and other spaces may resume.
- Customary instruction should resume without the need for hybrid or all-remote learning options.

Some considerations for the 2021-2022 year (continued):

- Parish youth activities, including retreats, may resume their normal schedules and procedures.
- Vaccinations continue to be encouraged but are not mandatory for employees, volunteers, or students.
- Parishes should refrain from inquiring about an employee's, volunteer's, or student's vaccination status, unless there is a professional reason to do so. For example, to determine whether isolation or quarantine is necessary after a confirmed positive case. Employers, including anyone in a supervisory role, should refrain from even casually asking employees about their vaccination status, unless there is a legitimate reason to do so.

Along with the other Dioceses across the state and public health officials, we will continue to monitor the situation as we begin this year. Thank you again for your enthusiastic commitment to Catholic formation, and by God's grace, we will continue to build on the fruit of the extraordinary efforts of our religious education directors, catechists, students, and families.

In Our Lady,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Daniels", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Daniels
Senior Director