



DIOCESE *OF*
VENICE
— *IN FLORIDA* —

Department of Education

AVE MARIA PARISH

RETURN TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PLAN



Ave Maria Parish's religious education program is for a way of life, integrating catechesis with faith modeled in the family. Family involvement and regular participation in the Sunday Mass are crucial to spiritual development at every age.

Introduction

We have created this plan to aid in navigating the reestablishment of our parish religious education program where employees, students, and families feel safe and to reduce the impact of COVID-19 conditions upon returning to our formation programs. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Health (DOH), and World Health Organization (WHO). Following the Diocese of Venice Catholic Schools and our own parish school, we continue to look at best practices in education while listening to the recommendations being made by the Department of Education (DOE), Office of Early Learning (OEL), the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), and the Florida Catholic Conference School Executive Committee (FCCSEC) and Accreditation Committee (FCCA). Periodical updates will be made to this plan based on information provided by all the organizations mentioned above, and applicable federal, state and local agencies.

Our priorities are:

1. **Safety:** Mitigating and slowing the growth of COVID-19 in the context of a return to work and schools. Understanding that there is inherent risk in returning from social distancing while in a pandemic, we also understand that we are part of a societal decision that accepts balancing COVID-19 risk against the need for life to continue, especially the life and practice of faith and formation in these.
 - a. Hygiene: Within classrooms and other gathering spaces, we will emphasize strong hygienic practice.
 - b. Distance options: For non-sacramental programs/years, if a student or their family member is in a higher-risk group, we may have options available for distance learning. Please notify the religious education office if you fit in this situation.
2. **Presence:** The Church, the Catholic Faith, and the Sacraments are not able to be communicated virtually and require physical presence: the presence of the community of the faithful in the Church for the worship that takes place in Mass; the presence of the minister and recipient for the sacraments; and the source and summit of our Faith, the Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.
3. **Growth:** Despite any limitations, we want participants in our religious education programs to grow in their personal knowledge of the faith, formation in the moral life, and relationship with Christ and his Church through the sacraments.

This document will be updated periodically as new diocesan directives come in. The DRE will share the updated document on the parish website and distribute updated versions to participants as necessary.

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Cleaning and Sanitizing

In the Parish School:

1. Catechists in Classrooms (or another designated volunteer):
 - a. will ensure all commonly touched surfaces, door handles, desks, common equipment are sanitized before and after the class session.
2. Hall monitors and sign in volunteers (or another designated volunteer):
 - a. Will sanitize check in space and check in materials after use.
 - b. Will sanitize other commonly touched surfaces: door handles, bathrooms, chapel, office, water fountains after the catechetical session with electrostatic cleaning equipment using sanitizing solution
3. Equipment and Supplies
 - a. Hand Sanitizer available in all classrooms, the foyer, and the gym. https://cdn.gofoodservice.com/pdfs/products/alpine_alpc-4.pdf
 - b. Peroxy 16 Protein Remover, Cleaner, & Whitener for use by cleaning crew
 - c. Tri-Base 17 Multi-purpose cleaner
 - d. Victory Electrostatic Backpack Sprayer
 - e. Botanical Disinfectant Solution (No Rinse, Non-Toxic) for use in sprayer and by teachers in classrooms. https://bioesquesolutions.com/sds/Bioesque_Botanical_Disinfectant_Solution_SDS_18.pdf.
4. Signage
 - a. The administration will post signage throughout the facility to remind about proper hygiene and social distancing.
5. For information on the thorough sanitization process of the areas not in use or only “passed through” such as hallways, see the complete details in the Rhodora J. Donahue Academy return to school plan.

In the Parish Center:

1. Sign-in volunteers (or another designated volunteer):
 - a. Will sanitize check in space and check in materials after use.
 - b. Will sanitize other commonly touched surfaces: door handles, bathrooms, water fountains, tables and chairs after the catechetical session
2. Equipment and Supplies

Botanical Disinfectant Solution (No Rinse, Non-Toxic) for use in spray bottles.

https://bioesquesolutions.com/sds/Bioesque_Botanical_Disinfectant_Solution_SDS_18.pdf

Hand Sanitizer available. https://cdn.gofoodservice.com/pdfs/products/alpine_alpc-4.pdf

Operations/Logistics for particular programs

1. Entrance Protocols:

No staff, volunteer or participant should come to any catechetical session if they meet any of these criteria: Temperature 100.4 or higher, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, cough, runny nose, sneezing, muscle pain, tiredness; or exposed to someone with COVID-19 positive test results.

COVID-19 Screenings

1. Participants should do a self-evaluation (or parent evaluation) before leaving home and stay home for 24 hours after any of these systems has passed:
 - a. 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth
 - b. Sore throat
 - c. New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
 - d. Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
 - e. New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.

If you are missing a session on account of symptoms listed above, please contact the religious education director at dre@avemariaparish.org

2. Health Checks by the program:

- a. Participants' temperature checked upon entry.

3. Response if a minor's temperature above 100.4

- Return to parental care if the parent is on site
- Place in isolation room and call parent for pickup

- Student provided with a mask, and hand sanitizer
 - Staff directly interacting with student to use Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)
 - Any areas and surfaces contacted the student will be sanitized
 - DRE to track and document the incident and follow up with parents before re-entry following the Diocesan decision tree in the appendix.
 - Adults who are discovered to have a temperature of 100.4 or above will be sent home immediately. Adults who have been sent home should follow up with the DRE before returning to program sessions.
2. Isolation Room (in parish school)
 - a. Location: across from the main office
 - b. Personnel assigned; sign in table volunteer. Monitored by video
 - c. COVID-19 Case Forms- to be filled out by the DRE
 3. Communication Plan

If a confirmed case is made known to the parish religious education program, the parish religious education program will follow the directives of the department of health regarding all public communications. The DRE in consultation with the pastor and other appropriate staff will coordinate all communications following the communication plan in the appendix.

Social Distancing Measures

1. Face Mask Requirements
 - a. Face coverings (self-provided) are required for participants, volunteers, and staff while in the parish school. Masks or gaiters are permitted, but may not be distracting or contain messages or images that detract from the parish environment. The DRE will determine the suitability of all face coverings for both health and social suitability.
 - b. Emergency masks are available at the sign in table
 - c. Outdoor programs and programs in spaces that allow for social distancing may not require the use of face masks.
2. In the Classroom

- a. Handshaking and touching will be discouraged
 - b. Desks will usually be separated by 4 and when practicable 6 feet
 - c. No sharing of food or drink
 - d. No shared supplies or resources – common resources/supplies will be sanitized after use.
 - e. Students will only be allowed out of the classroom one at a time to use the restroom
3. Outside the Classroom
- a. Generally, hallway traffic will be west to east travelling on the right side, east to west on the left
 - b. Students in the hallway will try to keep 3 min and preferably 6 feet between
 - c. Restrooms- capacity is 2 students at any time- Others must wait outside
4. Restrooms
- a. Capacity is 2 per restroom. Others wait spaced apart outside
5. Water Fountains
- a. Used only to fill up personal, unshared water bottles

Visitors and Parents

1. Parents will not be allowed past the sign in table for child pick up or drop off. When practicable, the sign in table will be outside, so as to eliminate congregating in the lobby area. Parent meetings and sessions will be held in the school gym, outdoor classroom space, or parish hall as noted in the program information and communications from the DRE, so as to allow for appropriate distancing.
2. Participants in religious education should avoid contact with regular school students or participants of other programs who may otherwise be in the building if they are not engaged in the activity.

Classrooms and Common Space

- a. Classrooms
 - a. Maximum capacity 15 students- most classes well below this
 - b. Desks separated by 4 feet minimum- 6 feet when possible
 - c. Difficult to sanitize furniture and equipment has been removed, where possible, by school faculty and staff

- b. Specific rooms and limits.
 - a. The chapel capacity is 30
 - b. The gym will seat at max 50% capacity striving for 3-4 feet distance.
- c. Outdoor Instruction
 - a. Masks may be removed for outdoor instruction when students are 6 feet apart
 - b. Shaded areas will be made available to accommodate outdoor instruction

Service Projects, Retreats and special events

1. We continue to follow directives coming from the Diocese of Venice Education Department concerning what programs are permissible.
2. Participants needing service projects are encouraged to contact the DRE about opportunities that are already available within the parish or opportunities that might be completed remotely.
3. Retreat opportunities will follow the Diocesan guidelines currently in place, and adhere to the guidelines of the space we are using.

Other

1. Unnecessary travel out of the area is discouraged. Participants must remain home for 14 days after traveling to another country, or to states experiencing significant COVID-19 outbreaks (as determined by the CDC). Absences will count against the allowable absences for programs.

Training Schedule

1. Catechetical volunteers will be trained on the above protocols in the training sessions provided before programs begin.
2. Orientation about new policies/procedures to be provided via the distribution of this Plan, a special email communication, and a video to be sent to families before religious education programs start.
3. Participants who are minors will undergo an orientation by their catechists on the first day of programs regarding health protocols and spacing protocols, with ongoing training and reminders as required.

Revisions and Communications

1. This plan and its revisions will be reviewed by the DRE and the Pastor. Revisions and adaptations to the plan will be communicated via email as necessary.

Available Programs and special considerations

Extra sanitizing and check-in procedures require more volunteer hours to an already limited volunteer staff. Distancing considerations limit the number of people we can serve at a time.

High School Confirmation Preparation: will be largely unchanged. Small group sessions will meet in outdoor classroom spaces at the school when circumstances permit, using the guidelines above for outdoor classroom space. If it is necessary to use indoor classroom space, those guidelines will be followed. Bug spray will be provided, or participants can bring their own.

RCIA: will remain largely unchanged. Sessions will meet in the parish center to allow for social distancing. The guidelines above that apply to the parish center will be followed.

First Communion Preparation: All children will participate in the short session First Communion program. The classes will be held on Sunday mornings in the classrooms at the Parish School. Guidelines for classroom space will be followed. Children not receiving religious education in school will also participate in the Family Faith Formation program for to fulfill their faith formation requirement, according to the diocesan sacrament preparation guidelines.

Grade level classes: will not be offered this year due to limited space and volunteers. Families who normally enroll their child in grade level classes will be encouraged to join in the Family Faith Formation program.

Family Faith formation: This will be the only option for children in the first year of Sacrament Preparation, since grade level classes cannot be offered. Depending on registration, the once a month parent classes will meet in the school gym or in the parish center. The once-a-month family activities will meet in the school gym, the Church, or at a suitable outdoor location, following guidelines and/or recommendations for each place.

Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP)

- 1 ICP Review/Update Committee
 - a. The Pastor and DRE are responsible for the creation and monitoring of the instructional continuity plan.
 - b. Feedback Collection

- i. The parish will use experience from the period from February 2020-August 2020 and guidance from the Diocese of Venice to plan for any disruptions to onsite delivery of faith formation and sacrament preparation programs.
 - ii. Continuous solicitation of feedback will continue
 - c. The volunteers affected will continue to receive guidance and professional development related to possible future disruptions to in-person classes.
 - d. If a suspension of in-person instruction becomes necessary, the pastor and DRE will determine whether instruction will move all virtual or at-home (in programs for participants over the age of 15 and the Family Faith Formation program), will be cancelled, or will be temporarily suspended and reopened with a new schedule and instruction plans when it is possible to do so safely. New or adjusted requirements may also be developed to meet policies and guidelines that are put in place.
- 2 Beginning of Year Assessment/Data Committee
- a. The DRE and First Communion catechists will monitor First Communion student progress carefully, to review student assessments and progress, looking for any gaps in student skills or development due to the abrupt end of instruction in the spring of 2020.
 - b. Students in need of remediation may be required to do extra at-home or in person work depending on the student's needs.

Limited Distance Education Option “Synchronous at Home Learning”

1. With the approval of the DRE or Pastor, a participant may be able to participate in some, but not all, programs virtually.
2. Because of their nature, sacramental preparation programs will not be offered virtually except:
 - a. For an individual class session, for a participant age 15 or older who is mostly healthy and can fully participate by themselves via Zoom or other on-line video conferencing platform chosen by the DRE. (This is not an option for extended participation, and a request must be made at least 24 hours in advance to set up the necessary accommodations.)
 - b. In the event that a full-program for participants age 15 or older needs to move to remote/virtual instruction on a temporary basis. Participants and parents of participants will be notified of this in a timely manner to allow for adjustments.
3. Our Family Faith Formation Program will be available with virtual and hybrid options. If you wish to participate in a virtual or hybrid option of this program, please contact the DRE. This is a temporary accommodation offered at the discretion of the DRE and pastor. In comparison to in-person instruction and formation, it is woefully insufficient and only being offered in this extreme and temporary circumstance. Regular fees apply. The participant/family must supply all necessary technology at home.

4. Parent sessions for First Communion will also be available virtually as individual sessions. If you wish to participate in a session virtually, please make your request at least 24 hours in advance to allow for sufficient preparation of the virtual learning space.
5. Regular virtual attendance with sound and camera on is necessary when the class is live and is a condition of receiving “credit” for attending.
6. While the parish will make reasonable effort to allow for live video of classes that we are able to offer virtually, it may at times only be possible to offer taped video or just audio. There may also be occasions when no recordings are available or appropriate (e.g., if they system goes off-line, there is substantial time the students are working on their own, if there is a substitute, etc.)
7. The parish is not responsible for delivering recorded content. The student must be prepared to work through material on their own at home.
8. A catechist may discontinue a live or recorded audio or visual at his or her discretion.
9. Families will need to arrange to pick up and drop off books and materials between home and school. In many cases PowerPoint presentations, worksheets and other resources may also be posted on the class Learning Management System.
10. The live or taped class is only for the use and consumption of the individual participant enrolled in the class for formational purposes. Unless the assignment is to be completed with a parent, family member or sponsor, the live or recorded session cannot be shared with anyone else. The classroom is a special space where mistakes are made and growth in virtue is a work in process. Sharing classroom video or audio with others of any human failings, embarrassments or shortcomings by any volunteer, participant or staff member is grounds for suspension and other sanctions.
11. Because this is a new initiative, it is subject to change and unforeseen challenges as we work together through this difficult situation. Patience, flexibility, understanding, and trust is essential to working through this novel situation.