

August 26, 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Thank you for your patience for information concerning the 2021-22 Children Faith Formation. I delayed a communication with the schedule, anticipating directives from the archdiocese on Covid-19 guidelines. I received this information late last week, and have communicated with the catechists over the weekend. In addition, I attended a regional meeting of directors, August 25, to address these guidelines. I now share how we will proceed for the upcoming year. Here is the link for registration:

<https://holyname.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/255/responses/new>

Know that I understand that each family makes its own decision on participating in this ministry. I will do everything, within reason, to assist you. May God continue to be with us amid these times, and keep your family united with hope.

Peace

Ken Ortega

### **Classes**

1. In-person classes begin Sunday, September 26. This allow time for registrations, and time to prepare procedures and supplies, in accordance with archdiocesan guideline.
2. Classes begin at 8:45 a.m. and end at 10 a.m.
  - a. Families will gather in the auditorium
  - b. Catechists will lead the children to the classroom.
  - c. Session will occur on the third floor, allowing access to the resource room.
  - d. Catechists will bring the children down after class.
  - e. Direct request for early dismissal to Ms. Julie Yacopino, on-site coordinator. She, in turn, will get your child. This assures safety of the children during class time.
3. The change in class time allows families to attend the 7:30 a.m. Mass or the 10 a.m. Mass. In Advent, the Mass schedule will likely change to allow a 10:30 Mass. This will definitely accommodate our families and any classes that may choose to attend Mass as a group.

### **Home Classes**

1. To accommodate families that are hesitant about in-person non-sacramental years, we will offer a home study option, using the Pflaum online resources. The parent/guardian will lead discussions with their children. When families feel comfortable, they can rejoin us at any time.
2. Contact me in you are interested in this option.

### **Catechists**

As of today, we have two catechists for every class. Attached is a list of catechists.

### **On-Site Coordinator**

Ms. Julie Yacopino will serve as the on-site coordinator, assisting catechist during instruction time. Julie has serve on the RCIA team, Faith Formation commission, and many other ministries at our parish.

## Curriculum

We will continue to use Pflaum's *Gospel Weeklies* for non-sacramental classes. I would like to see how lessons, based on the Sunday Readings, engage children directly.

We will use Pflaum's *Together in Jesus* for First Reconciliation/First Communion.

We will use Ascension Press' *Chosen* for Confirmation 1 and 2.

I also learned that Confirmation candidates, Level 1 and 2 are required to participate in the archdiocesan event, Holy Fire, November 6. We are still awaiting details from the Office of Lifelong Formation. I will contact parents/guardians when we receive more directives.

## Archdiocesan Safety Guidelines for Covid-19

1. **In keeping with Sate of Illinois mandates and with recommendation of public health authorities, we will start the program year requiring masks for all individuals while inside parish and school buildings, regardless of vaccination status.**
2. As conditions improve across our regions and the mandates and guidance of civil authorities and public health agencies allow. We will regularly evaluate whether to continue to require masks for all individuals in our parishes and schools.
3. Classrooms
  - a. Arrangement of desks should allow for three feet physical distancing whenever possible from center point of chair to center point of chair; however, distancing and furniture should not inhibit best academic practices.
  - b. Group tables and other future arrangements can be used; there is no longer a requirement that participant all face the same direction.
  - c. Use of rugs and area carpets is permissible
  - d. Seating charts should be maintained in all classroom in the event they are needed for contact tracing.
4. Hygiene.
  - a. Hand sanitizer should readily available in all classroom, offices and common areas and regular use should be strongly encouraged
  - b. Staff, volunteers, and participants should use hand sanitizer every time they enter a room.
  - c. Everyone should be regularly encouraged to practice good respiratory and hand hygiene (covering coughs and sneezes, frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer).
  - d. Water bottle should be used instead of drinking directly from water fountains.
5. **Ventilation**
  - a. Open window and door to promote cross ventilation.
  - b. Place fans as close as possible to open window or doors (blowing out to promote ventilation.
  - c. Use portable air purifies whenever opening windows is not feasible and/r thee is not a filtered, central HVAC system.
6. **Daily Cleaning.** Proper cleaning and disinfection including wiping down desks and high traffic areas at least once each day the program is in session, will help reduce the presence and spread of any germs.

7. **Outdoor Instruction.** The risk of transmission is considerably lower outdoors than indoors. Whenever possible, consider using outdoor spaces for classes.
8. **Isolation and Quarantine Procedures.** All individuals must remain at home when sick or experiencing any symptoms to minimize the chance of spreading Covid-19 or other germs and viruses. Specifics to quarantines:
  - a. **Symptomatic or Covid-19 Positive Individuals**
    - i. All symptomatic individuals must remain home, regardless of vaccination status. Families are obligated to report Covid-19 diagnoses, or close contact cases, to their parish office and/or program leadership office.
    - ii. If symptoms last longer than 24 hours, an individual must receive a negative Covid-19 test or alternative medical diagnosis prior to returning to the RE program.
    - iii. Any individual who tests positive for Covid-19 must isolate for 10 days from the date symptoms first appeared or the date of the positive test result.
  - b. **Quarantine Procedures for Close Contacts**
    - i. Participants, volunteers and staff who are masked and maintain three feet of physical distancing from the positive individual, do not need to quarantine.
    - ii. Vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine if they are asymptomatic.
    - iii. Unvaccinated individuals who are close contact to positive household members, including siblings, must quarantine.

**Quarantine guidelines continue to be fluid and we expect to issue update guidance closer to the start of the program year.**

All lost contact of presumed Covid-19 positive persons and those cases confirmed Covid-19 positive must be reported by the RE program director via an updated Intake Form to the Archdiocesan Case Management Team, who will conduct the contact tracing and report the case to the local health authorities.

9. **Travel.** We will follow the City of Chicago Travel Authority for all RE/YM parish programs, whether they are located in Chicago, Lake County or Cook County.
  - a. Domestic Travel
    - i. Full-vaccinated individuals do not need post-travel Covid-19 testing or self-quarantines as long as they are not symptomatic and provide proof of vaccination.
    - ii. Unvaccinated individuals must follow the prevailing post-travel quarantine recommendations when traveling to Orange States. The current means a 10-day quarantine or proof of a negative test no earlier than 72 hours prior to returning to Chicago (or anytime post return, through an individual must quarantine until a negative test result is received). A negative test = no quarantine required.
  - b. International Travel. The CDC requires negative Covid-19 test, proof, or recovery to board a plane to the United States. Because of this negative test, there is no required quarantine upon arrival, regardless of vaccination status.