

Preparing to Reopen – Planning for the Future Amidst Uncertainty 2020

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TOPIC ONE: *How do we deliver meaningful faith formation in the 2020-2021 catechetical year?*

ONSITE

This model is based on the parish's pre-covid19 mode of catechesis for adults and children.

Adaptations include:

- sanitizing all surfaces before and after facility usage
- use of facial coverings by all participants
- implementation of social distancing.

At all times, please follow current diocesan, state and local, and CDC advisories

OFFSITE

This model is based on all faith formation taking place somewhere other than the parish campus.

Adaptations include:

- Move all gathered faith formation events away from the parish campus
- Create digital playlists for children and adults in order for the individual to be able to select formation opportunities that meet their needs [Vibrant Faith Catalyst Toolkit: Design Faith Formation 2020-21 Playlists for Faith Formation Online](#)
- Engage people in the three different learning communities: inter-generational, family, peer
- Children's faith formation lessons can be sent home and parents can be asked to teach the lesson plan
- New materials could be offered that focus on family faith formation instead of grade level instruction.
- Emphasis on Family prayer and faith sharing
- Adult bible studies and faith sharing moved to online platforms such as Zoom, or GoToMeeting, etc.

HYBRID

- This model includes elements of both the Onsite and Offsite models. [Hybrid Faith Formation webinar](#) 1:01:40
- Organize 'drive thru' events to pick up materials or build community (ie. Distribute Easter baskets, Advent Wreaths, Prayer cards, etc.)
- Use Catechists as Companions for families to meet with via Zoom or other platforms for encouragement and support. [Catechist as Teacher-Companion](#) St. Raphael Catholic Church
- ¼ of families can meet in person at the parish each week and the other 3 weeks in the month faith formation can happen in homes

TOPIC TWO: *How can we help parents embrace the responsibility of catechesis with their children?*

AFFIRM AND THANK PARENTS

- Parents teach their children how to tie their shoes, brush their teeth, use their manners, etc.
- Remind parents they teach the faith to their children the same way through everyday actions.
- Provide simple ways parents can share faith with their children - car chats, meal conversations, morning and nighttime prayers or blessings, etc.

RESPECT AND HONOR PARENTS

- Acknowledge that parents know and want what is best for their children.
- Work in conjunction **with** parents, not **for** parents.
- Remind parents that the church's role is to support them as the first and most influential formers of faith for their children.
- Make intentional connections with parents via phone calls, emails, surveys, newsletters, workshops, parent sessions, etc.

MEET PARENTS WHERE THEY ARE AT

- Meet parents where they are at, not where we want them to be.
- Provide parents with quality formation and prayer experiences that will help deepen their faith, while not embarrassing them for what they do not know.
- Lead families on a journey of faith through an accompaniment model of discipleship.

FIND THE HOLY IN THE ORDINARY

- Help parents to see the holiness that surrounds them in their daily life together as a family.
- Teach parents simple but profound methods of prayer and reflection to use in the course of their day to see that God is present in all things, at all times.
- Encourage parents to share their own faith stories with their children.

ACCOMPANY PARENTS

- Use every milestone and every touchpoint as a means of accompaniment.
- Celebrate with parents the sacramental milestones of their children.
- Celebrate the secular milestones as well: the beginning of preschool, graduations, birthdays, drivers' licenses, etc.
- Take great care to journey with parents during parents' sessions, sacramental meetings, baptismal preparation, parenting workshops, and more!
- [Equip parents to embrace their child's faith formation](#) Loyola Press
- The Peyton Institute for Domestic Life: The Think Tank to develop new models for family life and spirituality. [Peyton Family Institute for Domestic Church Life](#)

TOPIC THREE: *How do we accompany and form the domestic church in the faith?*

WHAT DOES 'DOMESTIC CHURCH' MEAN

The term 'Domestic Church' refers to the family, the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. Though recovered only recently, the term dates all the way back to the first century AD. The Greek word *ecclesiola* referred to 'little church'. Our Early Church Fathers understood that the home was fertile ground for discipleship, sanctifications, and holiness. (Archdiocese of Cincinnati)

COACH FAMILIES TO LEAD FAITH AT HOME

- Coaching can assist families in setting goals for growing in faith at home. A helpful acronym that some coaches use is QDAR.
 - Question- The coach can ask what the family wants to accomplish. Ex: What is it that you want for your family in terms of faith?
 - Decision- The coach can clarify for the family what they want and where they are.
 - Action- The coach can ask the family what an action step would be to move toward the goal they want to achieve.
 - Results- The coach can check in with the family along the way to see if they are on track and are moving in the right direction. Additionally, the coach can pose clarifying questions for the family to decide if they are achieving the desired goal. Ex: How is this working for us?

Source: Adams, Marilee. [Change Your Questions Change Your Life: 12 Powerful Tools for Leadership, Coaching, and Life](#). Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Inc., 2015.

RESOURCES AND TIPS

- As a leader, walk with families in creating a home as a haven of Christian love and life.
- Create family prayer services that can be used within each domestic church
- Be familiar with the following resources on building a domestic church
 - [Vibrant-faith-catalyst](#): A network of leaders committed to creating vibrant lifelong Christian faith formation. Vibrant Faith also offers training in how to be a Coach
 - [Catholicmom.com](#): Contains articles of support for Catholic parents, podcasts, Catholic movie reviews.
 - [Catholicfamilycrate.com](#): Offers paid monthly and seasonal subscription boxes containing books and activities to do within the home. They also provide free resources, including coloring pages and emails with prayers for you and your family.
 - [Catholicallyear.com](#): Started by a Catholic mom of many children. She runs a blog that provides great Catholic resources for parents (and practical support and advice). She also has a shop where you can purchase digital downloads of Catholic booklets.

TOPIC FOUR: *What kind of training (methodological, catechetical, technology) and support will we provide catechists to do faith formation?*

METHODOLOGICAL

- Take time to talk with catechists and express appreciation for their efforts.
- Form support groups with all catechists for sharing in joy, growth, and prayer.
- Share the positive comments you hear about and their work.
- Involve catechist in planning and evaluating the faith formation program.
- When recruiting new catechists be realistic and honest about what the task entails
- Encourage the textbook publisher representative to give a presentation to the catechists on how to use the books.

CATECHETICAL

- Determine the goals for catechesis and evangelization in your parish.
- List the objectives and outcomes for your catechetical plan
 - Assure that each catechist understands said objectives and outcomes
 - Establish a plan for implementation which includes roles and responsibilities of catechists, parents, children, adults
 - Evaluate your catechetical plan: successes, challenges, improvements for the future.
- Encourage catechists to take classes through the CPM
 - Classes will be held online
 - Cost is \$50 per class
 - For more information click here: [CPM](#)
- Professional Development Webinars for catechists/catechetical leaders are available (many are free)
 - [Ave Maria](#)
 - [NCEA](#)
 - [NFCYM](#)
 - [OSV Our Sunday Visitor](#)
 - [Loyola Press, Catechist's Journey](#)
 - [RCL Beniziger](#)
 - [Sadlier](#)
 - [Sophia Institute](#)
 - [Team RCIA](#)

TECHNOLOGICAL

- [Moving Faith Formation Online](#) Webinar with John Roberto in which John explains how to use online communication/faith formation tools
- Website platforms
 - [15 of the Best Free Website Builders to Check Out in 2020](#)
 - [Weebly vs WordPress: Important Differences, Plus Which One to Choose](#)

- Communication Platforms
 - [MailChimp marketing platform](#)
 - [Constant Contact](#)
 - [MailChimp vs Constant Contact](#)
 - [FlockNote](#) Smarter email and texting for your church
- Group texting apps
 - [GroupMe](#)
 - [Telegram](#)
 - [WhatsApp](#)
 - [Viber](#)
- Social Media
 - [Facebook](#)
 - [Instagram](#)
- Online Learning Platforms
 - [Edmodo](#)
 - [Google G Suite for Non Profits](#)
 - [Schoology](#)
- Video Conferencing and Streaming
 - [Zoom Tutorials](#)
 - [Parents' Ultimate Guide to Zoom](#) Common Sense Media
 - [Facebook Live](#)
 - [Facebook Groups](#)

TOPIC FIVE: *What are the best practices we need to form faith in this environment?*

COMMUNICATIONS

[Communications Best Practices During the Covid-19 Pandemic](#)
[5 Best Practices for Crisis: Communications During Covid-19](#)
[Effective Communications During Covid-19: Mastering Your Digital Strategy](#)
[ReOpening The Church: Communication Strategies After COVID-19](#) Vanderbloemen blog
[ReOpening The Church: Communication Strategies After COVID-19](#) Zoom Panel 58:40
[PREPARING Your CHURCH for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) A Step-by-Step, Research-Informed and Faith-Based Planning Manual](#) Wheaton College
[7 Leadership Principles for Managing During the Time of Coronavirus](#) Harvard Business School

FAMILY/PARENT ENGAGEMENT

- Parent/Family Engagement Today
 - [6 Shifts to Better Family Engagement – Search Institute](#)
 - [Engage Every Parent](#) (Book from Search Institute) \$29.95
 - [6 Shifts Needed to Reinvest in Families Infographic](#) Search Institute, PDF
 - [Beyond Singing to the Choir: Rethinking Family Engagement](#) Search Institute
 - [Barriers to Family Engagement](#) Search Institute
 - [From Generation to Generation: How Families Pass on Faith](#) video Christian Smith & Justin Bartkus 1:35:11
 - [Six Keys to Engaging Parents and Families in Parish Faith Formation](#) Joseph D. White, PDF
 - [Parents and Faith Formation](#) Lifelong Faith, PDF
 - [Keeping Parents Engaged After Their Children’s First Sacraments](#) Catechist.com
 - [Engaging Parents When Engaging Parents is Hard](#) Paul Canavese 2020 workshop Growing Up Catholic
- Best Practices Family Faith Formation
 - [Best Practices in Family Faith Formation](#) John Roberto, PDF
 - [Best Practices in Parent Faith Formation](#) Jim Merhaut, PDF
 - [The Church At Home: Celebrating the Liturgy of Domestic Church Life](#) Rachel Popchak & Dr. Greg Popchak
- Easy to use Family Resources during Covid-19
 - [Taking a Family Faith Inventory](#) NFCYM, Strong Catholic Families
 - [Faith-fully Navigating Coronavirus with your Kids](#) Pastoral Center, PDF
 - [Parent resources for Faith at home](#) Diocese of Bridgeport
 - [Resources for Families during the Covid-19 outbreak](#) (Common Sense Media)
 - [Fun and Educational Things to do with the kids while at home](#) (Emily Polovick MOT,OTR/L)
 - [Free online events and activities for kids at home](#) (Common Sense Media)
 - [Ten Ideas for Family Faith Formation](#) John Roberto, PDF
 - [Resources for Family Catechesis: Sharing Faith at Home](#) PDF
 - [Creating Sacred Space in Your Home](#) Diocese of Lansing
 - [How to hold a prayer service at-home](#) Archdiocese of Washington
 - [Live Catholic: Faith Sharing and Praying at Home](#) video 2:12 Dr. Greg Dobie Moser
 - [Live Catholic: Creating A Faith-Nurturing Home](#) video 3:05 Lisa Ainslinger
 - [Live Catholic: Faith Conversations](#) video 3:15 Dr. Margaret McCarty
 - [Saint of the Day](#) Franciscan Communications
 - [Online Catholic Bible](#) USCCB
 - [How to Pray the TV Mass from home](#) Diocese of Sioux Falls
 - [The Why and How of Making a Spiritual Communion](#) Our Sunday Visitor
 - [Spiritual Communion Prayer](#) Diocese of Dallas
 - [Ideas and Recommendations for Families with Children who Have Diverse Learning Needs](#) USCCB, PDF
 - [5 Ways to a Stronger Family](#) video 4:30
 - [The Domestic Church](#) video 4:14

PRAYER FOR COMMUNITIES AND PROGRAMS

[Pope Francis' Urbi et Orbi address on coronavirus and Jesus calming the storm](#) America Magazine

[Be Not Afraid music video](#) from Catholic artists, OCP

[A Prayer Amid a Epidemic](#) by Kerry Weber, PDF, America Magazine

[Text of Pope's Prayer to Mary during coronavirus pandemic](#) English

[Text of Pope's Prayer to Mary during coronavirus pandemic](#) Spanish

[Covid-19 Prayer of Solidarity](#) USCCB

[A Prayer to Combat the Coronavirus Pandemic](#) Ascension Press

[Prayer for a Pandemic](#) Krug the Thinker

[Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy during the Covid-19 Pandemic](#) USCCB, PDF

TOPIC SIX: *How do we move from just surviving COVID to thriving in our ministries?*

COVID-19 has taken us back to the basics, back to our Christian roots. The early Church started with the family. Families gathered in small communities; they prayed together, they ate together, and they served together. The early church did not have large buildings where the faithful gathered, the faithful gathered in small home churches or what we call today, the Domestic Church.

COVID-19 has forced us to look upon the most basic unit in the Church, the family. It is within the family that we first form faith and in the family where our faith is nurtured. We are being urged by the Holy Spirit to evaluate the way in which we nurture and share faith and to embrace new and creative ways to do so when we can't gather on Church property or gather at all.

COVID-19 has given us an opportunity to embrace a new way of making disciples. This way resembles the ancient way that Christianity took hold two centuries ago. Disciples were formed by being in relationship with other disciples. Disciples shared stories of Jesus, the same stories that we have access to in the Sacred Scriptures. The first disciples allowed those scriptures to form their minds and hearts which ultimately changed their decisions, actions, and behaviors.

The way that we move from surviving COVID-19 to thriving in our ministries is to be open to the winds of change. This document contains ideas and resources that will assist you as you move forward into uncharted territory. Let us be the agents of change that will accompany families as they discover or rediscover their faith in Jesus and the Roman Catholic Church. Let us be ministers who will walk with each domestic church as a companion, like the way that Jesus walked with his disciples on the road to Emmaus. Let us continue to tell the stories in Sacred Scripture again and again because those stories are alive in our hearts today.

Families will need us to preach the Gospel in the coming year, but they will also need for us to attend to their basic needs. Many domestic churches are without incomes as lay-offs have been a reality for

so many. Many individuals faced severe anxiety during shelter-in-place and will need mental health services to recover from the fear the pandemic brought. Others were sheltering-in-place with an abuser and need for us to recognize the sin of domestic violence. The Church is uniquely positioned to aid our parishioners as they move forward in faith, hope, and love.

We know that God can bring about new life from dire situations. We are grateful that you are entering into this mission territory with us. Let us continue to be support for each other as we are the disciple makers.

RESOURCES FOR PHYSICAL HEALTH AND HEALING

[NAMI North Texas](#)

[NTBHA.ORG- North Texas Behavioral Health Authority](#)

[Catholiccounselors.com](#)

[National Domestic Violence Helpline – 1-800-799-7233](#)

[Conference on Crimes Against Women](#)

Talks on Domestic Violence, most recent updates on COVID 19, relaxation exercises for anxiety.

Pivoting Towards Relationships

[www.springtideresearch.org](#)