



Catholic Diocese of Saginaw

August 18, 2020

Dear Parish Faith Formation Leaders, Pastors and Directors of Parish Life,

I hope this letter finds you well. It most certainly is a busy time as the start of the program year for faith formation and other parish efforts nears, and we are all well aware of how unusual this year is proving to be. It is the unusual nature of this program year that prompts this communication from me.

Along with this letter, you should find two other documents: “Guidelines for Opening the Program Year – Highlights Before the Year Begins” and “Response to COVID-19 Exposure in a Faith Formation Program.” These are offered to aid in your preparations for reopening your programs for children in the coming weeks.

It is the preference of Bishop Gruss to open parish faith formation programs with in-person sessions if possible. Although it is impossible to predict how directives from state and medical authorities may change in the future, these and other guidelines have been assembled and adapted from the best resources available to us at this time, and may be amended as information and directives change.

The attached guidelines have been through a review process with the input of Bishop Gruss, Sister Mary Judith O’Brien, the Faith Formation Advisory Board and a special input task group (all of whom are parish faith formation leaders in various parts of the diocese and settings). Given that virtually every parish in the diocese has participants from multiple school districts and schools within them, you will see specific guidelines that address that challenge. Many of the guidelines are just common sense and based on the best general medical and health department guidelines available at this time. The attached procedures for a COVID-19 exposure are adapted from the parish guidelines sent out earlier. It is important that you become familiar with your local health department’s guidelines as well and keep that phone number available if you have any questions of a medical or health-related nature.

In the coming weeks, I will share additional documents that will focus on helping parish faith formation leaders with essential communications and points of emphasis during the faith formation program year given the ongoing challenge. I have scheduled a session to discuss the attached guidelines for Tuesday, August 25 at 1 PM. Please contact Pat Preston at ppreston@dioceseofsaginaw.org for the link.

I know that the challenges created by the pandemic can be overwhelming. In response, I offer a quote from Pope Francis which Bishop Gruss included in a recent Faith Magazine article “We accompany, we follow Jesus, but above all we know that he accompanies us and carries us on his shoulders. This is our joy, this is the hope that we must bring to this world of ours. Let us bring the joy of the faith to everyone!” [Pope Francis, Palm Sunday, March 24, 2013]

God Bless You,

Peg McEvoy
Coordinator of Faith Formation