



## COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for St. Michael Faith Formation

St. Michael Faith Formation includes the following programs: LIFT Family Formation, First Communion / First Reconciliation Preparation for Children, Impact Ministry for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents, Ignite Confirmation Retreat and Confirmation liturgies, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS), Children's Liturgy of the Word, and Parish Bible Studies. *Please refer to STMA Youth Ministry Preparedness Plan information regarding Discipleship Groups.*

Highlights of the St. Michael Faith Formation Covid-19 Preparedness Plan:

- Except for CGS, all Faith Formation activities will be held in the church, the youth room, the choir room, and the gathering space. Classroom spaces will not be used at this time.
- Meeting times for most Faith Formation activities have been shortened.
- Online video resources will be made available for most Faith Formation programs for those who do not yet feel comfortable meeting together in person.
- Social distancing guidelines and disinfecting protocols will be followed to the best of our ability per the directives of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and the State of Minnesota.
- Students, parents, volunteers, and staff will be required to wear masks or face shields per the governor's order and archdiocesan guidelines. A medical exemption form is available for "individuals who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a developmental, medical or behavioral health condition."
- St. Michael Faith Formation will follow the decisions of St. Michael Catholic School regarding any possible future shutdowns.
- The St. Michael Faith Formation Preparedness Plan will be modified according to the changing conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

St. Michael Faith Formation is committed to providing a safe and healthy ministry environment for all our participants, guests, and visitors. To ensure we have a safe and healthy ministry, St. Michael Faith Formation has developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Director of Evangelization and Faith Formation, the Faith Formation Coordinator and Faith Formation volunteers are responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our ministry programming and in the wider community. This will require full cooperation from all participants, volunteers, and staff. Only through a cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of all persons participating in our programs.

The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is administered by St. Michael Faith Formation staff who maintain the overall authority and responsibility for the plan. However, volunteers and participants are equally responsible for supporting, implementing, complying with, and providing recommendations to further improve all aspects of

this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. St. Michael Faith Formation regards the safety and health of all involved in our programming to be of the highest importance

The St. Michael Faith Formation COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows the guidance of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for COVID-19 as well as the State of Minnesota's relevant and current executive orders.

## Promoting a Safe Environment

- Parents are the first wave in protecting our participants. We ask that if anyone in your household is experiencing any of these symptoms that you stay at home.
  - **Symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever over 100.4, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat or loss of taste or smell. Other less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. Not everyone with COVID-19 has all these symptoms, and some people may not have any symptoms. These symptoms may appear two to 14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.**
  - Again, for the safety of all we ask that if anyone in your family is experiencing the above symptoms that you stay home and do not attend the St. Michael Faith Formation scheduled event. We encourage families in this situation to take advantage of our online video program offerings.
- St. Michael Faith Formation strives to enable physical distancing of at least six feet whenever possible.
- Within our programming, we will strive to create consistent groupings of the same staff, volunteers, and participants. The maximum number of participants per group would be dependent upon the location of the activity.
- Whenever possible, we will offer programming that refrains from intermixing groups. If intermixing of groups is necessary, limit the number of groups that intermix and keep records of staff, volunteers and participants that intermix.
- Except for the CGS atrium, Faith Formation programming will not be using the classroom spaces for programs.
- To the best of our ability, St. Michael Faith Formation will offer online video resources for those who do not yet feel comfortable meeting together in person.
- The length of meeting times for most Faith Formation programming has been reduced to minimize exposure to the spread of illness and to moderate the length of time wearing a face covering.

## Maintain Safe Program Spaces

- St. Michael Faith Formation will:
  - Modify programs where participants are likely to be in very close contact.
  - Avoid community supplies when possible.
  - If shared supplies are necessary, consider using designated bins for clean and used supplies. Consider community supplies as *high-touch* and clean them frequently.
  - Not share equipment between staff, volunteers, and participants when possible.
  - Clean high-touch surfaces between different groups.
  - Honor requests of parents who may have concerns about their children attending the program due to underlying medical conditions of those in their home.
- The CDC lists underlying medical conditions that may increase the risk of serious COVID-19 for people of any age. See People at Increased Risk (CDC) at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html)

## Face Coverings

- With the governor's executive order for face coverings, our bishops' announcement of compliance and the directives of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, St. Michael Faith Formation will follow these guidelines:
  - Students and staff will be required to wear masks or face shields and will maintain a distance of 3 to 6 feet whenever possible (American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendation). *See below for information regarding medical exemptions.*
  - The following face coverings are acceptable at Faith Formation activities: cloth face masks (including gaiter face masks) or face shields.
  - If Governor Walz lifts the mask mandate, we will communicate with families regarding next steps.
- A medical exemption form for students, parents, staff, and volunteers is available upon request for “individuals who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a developmental, medical or behavioral health condition.”
- A face-covering is required when entering or exiting the building, and in all hallways, public spaces, and common areas where multiple people are present if social distancing of six feet is not possible. *This includes when waiting outside to enter the building if physical distancing is not possible.*
- The governor’s Executive Order 20-81 regarding face coverings is online at [www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-81.pdf](http://www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-81.pdf)
- Frequently-asked questions regarding the governor’s Executive Order 20-81 are available online at [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html)

## Minimize Opportunities for Mixing Between Groups

- When possible, St. Michael Faith Formation will follow these recommendations.
  - Minimize crowding at drop-off and pick-up times.
    - Designate times for families to come; consider staggering times if possible.
    - Whenever possible, participant pick-up and drop-off should occur outside.
    - Add visual cues or barriers to direct traffic flow and distancing.
    - Develop signage and processes to minimize interactions of families.
  - Consider dividing participant entry points rather than funneling all participants through the same entry space. These approaches can limit the amount of close contact between participants in high-traffic situations and times.
  - Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers and activities involving external groups or organizations as possible – especially with individuals who are not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, county).
  - Pursue virtual activities in lieu of field trips, assemblies, and special performances, as possible.
  - Avoid taking multiple groups to the bathrooms at once (e.g., avoid having all classes use the bathroom right after lunch or recess).
  - Limit nonessential visitors.
  - Limit the presence of volunteers for activities.
  - Keep groups together; maintain the same groups from day to day. This will help reduce potential exposures and may prevent an entire program from shutting down if exposure occurs.

## Encourage and Reinforce Social Norms and Health Etiquette

- St. Michael Faith Formation will strive to ensure that staff, volunteers, and participants:
  - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after having been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available,

use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Hand Hygiene guidelines are at [www.health.state.mn.us/people/handhygiene/index.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/handhygiene/index.html)

- Always cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in the trash. If they do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into their arm or elbow. See the MDH Cover Your Cough guidelines at [www.health.state.mn.us/people/cyc/index.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/cyc/index.html)
- Consider ways to reinforce good hand hygiene. For example, provide incentives (e.g., creative summer program or camp accolades) for proper and thorough handwashing.
- Have staff, volunteers and participants wash hands or use hand sanitizer if they come into contact or use shared amenities.
- Have hand sanitizer and tissues readily available for use by staff, volunteers, and participants.
- Ensure the availability of appropriate cleaning supplies (e.g., disinfectant wipes) for cleaning of high touch surfaces (see more details below).
- Educate staff, volunteers, and participants on the importance of avoiding touching their faces throughout the day and washing their hands when they do.
- Ensure participants are not sharing water bottles, food, or other items.
- Consider engaging program participants in developing communications or creative strategies to limit the spread of COVID-19.

## Promote Health Checks

- St. Michael Faith Formation will emphasize the importance of daily health checks. Prior to allowing your child or your family to participate in Faith Formation events you are asked to:
  - Take all participants temperatures before coming to the church.
  - Confirm that no family member has a fever, shortness of breath or cough.
- We will follow exclusion guidance and ensure staff and participants stay home when sick. The MDH Decision Tree for People with COVID-19 Symptoms in Youth, Student and Child Care Programs can be found here: [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf)
- Ensure sick policies are supportive of participants and staff staying home when sick.
- Have a plan if staff or participants get sick.
  - Plan to have a room or area that can be used to isolate a symptomatic staff member, volunteer, or participants while they wait to be picked up or are able to leave on their own; ensure there is enough space for multiple people placed at least 6 feet apart (in the case more than one participant becomes ill).
  - Ensure that they have hygiene supplies available, including a cloth mask, facial tissues, and alcohol-based hand rub.
- If we have a participant or staff who is diagnosed with COVID-19, we will reach out to MDH or the local public health agency for further direction.

## Promote a Safe Workplace for Staff and Volunteers

- St. Michael Faith Formation will abide by St. Michael Catholic Church Covid 19 Preparedness Plan to ensure the safety of our staff and apply these plans to our volunteers as well.
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## Links to Important Public Health Documents:

- Considerations for Communities of Faith (CDC) [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fphp%2Ffaith-based.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fphp%2Ffaith-based.html)

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Schools and Childcare Programs <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
- When to Quarantine (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>
- CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/CDC-Activities-Initiatives-for-COVID-19-Response.pdf>
- People at Increased Risk (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>
- Governors Order regarding face coverings: <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-81.pdf>
- Guidance for Gatherings: Faith-based Communities, Places of Worship, and Ceremonies (MDH) <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/guidefaith.pdf>
- Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations under Executive Order 20-81 <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html>
- Frequently asked questions regarding Minnesota Executive Order 20-81 (MDH) <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html>
- Decision Tree for People with COVID-19 Symptoms in Youth, Student, and Child Care Programs (MDH) [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf)
- Cover Your Cough (MDH) [www.health.state.mn.us/people/cyc/index.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/cyc/index.html)
- Hand Hygiene (MDH) [www.health.state.mn.us/people/handhygiene/index.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/handhygiene/index.html)