

Youth Ministry  
and Other Faith Formation Activities

COVID 19

Catholic Diocese of Jackson

March 1, 2021



Thankfully, we are seeing a drastic reduction in the number of new COVID 19 cases in Mississippi. With that in mind, we are able to relax some of the COVID 19 restrictions for youth ministry and religious education. In the event we see an increase in the number of positive cases we may need to reinstate more stringent protocols.

- Effective immediately parishes may resume serving prepared food or drink items at youth gatherings. Plates prepared by one or two adults can be served to the youth. No self-service or buffet style service is permitted. Meal service must be distributed with social distancing and sanitization guidelines in place.
- As a parish, you may begin to plan for overnight events. Prior to advertising or planning a youth overnight trip, the adult leaders must provide a safety plan to be approved by the pastor. The plan should take into consideration the following:
  - The location of the event should be within a reasonable drive from the parish.
  - No carpooling to the event. Parents are to drive and pick-up youth to/from the venue.
  - The venue has plenty of sleeping and common space to accommodate the number of youths attending given the need for social distancing and the reduction of occupancy in cabins or sleeping quarters.
  - The venue or adult leaders are able to safely provide food service.
  - A quarantine room is provided should a youth or adult get sick during the trip.
- COVID-19 Form E must be obtained from parents for overnight trips.
- Everyone will wear masks at all times throughout set-up, ministry, and clean up.
- Ministry activities will be set up and executed using social distancing protocols. This includes small group discussions, large group activities, games, and prayer ministry.
- Enhanced regular hand washing will be expected. Hand-sanitizer must also be readily available.

- The parish will take all reasonable steps to assure the health of your youth, adults, and others (e.g., camp staff) who are involved with overnight trips.

Please be mindful that in-person ministry gatherings still require:

- You must have proper sanitation guidelines and protocols in place at the local parish before you can gather youth. You are responsible for adhering to guidelines issued by your municipal or county government if they are more stringent than the State policies. Keep in mind that your event must be in compliance with Statewide and diocesan policy on the day of your event. Regardless of how far in advance you plan an event, you must follow State, local, and diocesan protocols on the day of the event.
- All parish-sponsored youth events should be approved by the Pastor, Parish Administrator, or LEM. All social distancing, sanitation guidelines, and expectations should be clearly communicated to parents in writing prior to any re-opening youth event.
- Keep an attendance sheet for all activities in order to track participation; and, if necessary, provide contact tracing for any individual who tests positive for COVID-19 within 10 days of attending an in-person religious education or youth ministry event.

We recognize the tremendous benefit of our young people being able to gather for their spiritual, social, and emotional well-being. We appreciate that each parish has a set of unique circumstances that dictate how religious education and youth ministry is undertaken during this pandemic. We are here to support you in developing the best plan to meet the needs of your parish.

Please contact Fran Lavelle, [fran.lavelle@jacksondiocese.org](mailto:fran.lavelle@jacksondiocese.org), if you have questions regarding religious education or Abbey Schuhmann, [abbey.schuhmann@jacksondiocese.org](mailto:abbey.schuhmann@jacksondiocese.org), if you have questions regarding youth ministry.