

Health guidelines for organizing catechetical and pastoral activities in person¹ taking into account public health directives

To resume catechetical activities in a parish environment, adjustments are to be made and applied. All government directives and guidelines in public health need to be strictly followed. Physical distancing and hygiene rules must be complied with, as with any activity and celebration that will be held on the premises of the church and the parish.

The use of posters to encourage hand washing, compliance with cough etiquette or the wearing of a mask (or face cover) is encouraged: <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2020/20-210-154WA.pdf>.

We will not encourage spontaneous gatherings before or after the activities.

Ideally, group activities should be kept to a minimum, in order to encourage activities to be done in family or virtually. In the same spirit, the duration of the activities should be kept to a minimum.

In Preparation for the Meetings

Preparing the Environment

- Draw up a list of catechetical activities normally offered and evaluate the possibility of offering it in family, in person or virtually (via Zoom, Teams, Skype, etc.).
- Contact the volunteers; check their intentions in relation to their commitment and the specific health conditions to be considered. Inform them of the sanitary measures that will be put in place to ensure their safety.
- Contact the participants; check their intentions regarding their participation in the activities and the specific health conditions needed to be considered. Inform them of the sanitary measures that will be put in place to ensure their safety. Plan alternative activities for people who do not feel comfortable with an in-person approach (in family, virtually, postponing for a few months in a year, etc.).
- Calculate the number of children, teens and adults involved in these activities.
- Make an inventory of available premises and their capacity. Whenever possible, provide the largest space.
- Calculate the number of participants per group, considering the rules for physical distancing and the capacity of the premises.
- Train volunteers in the hygiene and distancing measures contained in this document and inform them of the instructions to follow (cf. **Appendix 1**).

¹This guide, as well as the accompanying documents, was prepared by the *Office de catéchèse du Québec*, in collaboration with the Diocese of Montreal. Our thanks go to Ms. Pascale Haddad, director of the Diocesan Office for Faith Education, and Marylène Valade, assistant to the Office of Pastoral Personnel, for their precious contribution to this project. This document can be adapted to each parish environment or diocesan context.

- Inform participants of the hygiene and distancing measures contained in this document and the instructions to follow (cf. **Appendix 2**).
- Plan a longer arrival time depending on the size of the group and the layout of the premises; Avoid the arrival of several groups at the same time as much as possible.
- Ensure the presence of a person in charge at the start of the meetings to check that volunteers and participants comply with the instructions.
- Plan a procedure and designate a person in charge in case should someone show symptoms during the activity (cf. **Appendix 3**).

Site Preparation

- Draw marks on the ground clearly indicating to participants the recommended safety physical distance and the route to follow to get to the premises, washrooms and to the exit.
- Identify the premises (by name or number) in case there are several.
- Place tables and chairs to ensure the recommended safety distance between each participant, except for people in the same household.
- Regularly clean and disinfect tables, chairs and all other surfaces likely to spread contagion.
- Clean and disinfect washrooms regularly.
- Always provide soap and water or hand sanitizers when entering and exiting the building.
- Make masks available on the premises for volunteers and participants.
- Provide an isolation room for anyone who has symptoms and who must wait for the arrival of a relative before being able to leave the premises.
- Provide open garbage bins, or those with a pedal-powered lid.
- Leave the doors open to avoid touching the handles. Wherever possible, leave windows open to provide adequate room ventilation.

Memo—Material to provide

- Box of disposable masks
- Pedal garbage bins with lids
- Trash bins without lids (inside)
- Hand sanitizer product
- Surface disinfectant product
- Direction arrows for the floor
- Hygiene and distancing awareness posters

Preparation of meeting materials

- Each participant is responsible for bringing their own equipment identified with their name; the aim is to avoid spreading contagion through the use of common material.
- All materials for distribution to participants will be prepared in accordance with the required sanitary measures (including the wearing of a mask). Ideally the materials to be distributed will

be laid out 24 hours before the activity without anyone touching them and arranged in such a way that the participants can pick up the materials themselves.

- If possible, opt for alternative teaching methods, avoiding the use of printed material, for example: viewing a slideshow or video, remote role-playing games, project to be carried out at home and presented to the group at a future meeting, etc.

Before each Meeting

The person in charge makes sure that the premises and equipment are adequate: (cf. above **Site and Material Preparation**).

Upon arrival of the volunteers and participants, the person in charge confirms with each volunteer and participant the instructions to be followed: (cf. **Appendices 1 & 2**).

The person in charge takes the presence of the volunteers and ensures that the participants attendances are taken at each activity.

APPENDIX 1: Instructions to be followed by volunteers

- Each volunteer brings their own mask and always wears it from the time they enter the building to the time they leave.
- Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19, flu, fever, who has just returned from a trip, or who has been in recent contact with an infected person is not admitted.
- If you have symptoms before or during the meeting, promptly notify the person in charge.
- Arrive early to facilitate the smooth flow of people.
- Wash and disinfect your hands regularly.
- Bring your own snack and water bottle if necessary.
- Respect physical distancing measures as much as possible.

APPENDIX 2: Instructions to be followed by participants

- Each participant brings their own mask and always wears it from the time they enter the building to the time they leave. Children under 10 years of age may remove their masks during the activity.
- Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19, flu, fever, who has just returned from a trip, or who has been in recent contact with an infected person is not admitted.
- If you have symptoms before or during the meeting, promptly notify the person in charge.
- Arrive early to facilitate the smooth flow of people.
- Bring your own snack and water bottle if necessary.
- Bring your own material and do not share it with others.
- Respect physical distancing measures as much as possible.

APPENDIX 3: Procedure in the event of a person developing symptoms during the activity

When symptoms associated with COVID-19 (fever, cough, difficulty breathing or other symptoms according to the government website) appear during the activity:

- The person with symptoms should be isolated in a room provided for this purpose.
- Only one person in charge takes care of the person with symptoms until a relative comes to pick that person up.
- Once the person with symptoms has left, disinfect the room, surfaces and objects likely to spread contagion.
- Anyone (or their parents) in contact with the symptomatic person should call 1 877 644-4545 for instructions².
- The person in charge warns the other participants or their relatives.

² You can refer to the Covid-19 information page on the Quebec Government website:
<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/general-information-about-coronavirus/>