

# DIOCESE OF COVINGTON



OFFICE of  
CATECHESIS &  
EVANGELIZATION

## **Safety Requirements and Guidelines for FAITH FORMATION MINISTRIES AND PROGRAMS During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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# Introduction

Dear Pastors and Parish Leaders,

Our mission as the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization is to support you in your work to spread and strengthen the Faith in our diocese. In light of the pandemic, many of you have asked for guidance on how to conduct certain ministries

**At this time, Faith Formation ministries are **Not Permitted to meet in person**. Instead they should be conducted to the best of their ability via a distanced-based ministry model.**

We understand how frustrating this feels. The work of the Church must go on, but at this time we must do everything in our power to keep our Church's open for worship and to protect the most vulnerable among us. We have worked hard to develop the following guidelines to assist you so that you can minister to your people as *effectively* as possible given the challenging circumstances.

Given the rapidly changing nature of the current situation, the guidelines set forth in this document are subject to change. Deference should always be given to the most recent communications from the Diocese of Covington. Visit [CovDio.org](http://CovDio.org) frequently to remain updated.

## What are "Faith Formation Ministries?"

- Youth Ministry
- Young Adult Ministries
- Adult Faith Formation Programs
- Prayer Groups
- Small Groups, Etc.

If you are unsure if your ministry falls underneath the category of "Faith Formation" please contact the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization by calling (859) 392-1500 or e-mailing [LTaylor@Covdio.org](mailto:LTaylor@Covdio.org).

## Requirements vs. Guidelines.

Throughout this document an important distinction is made between *requirements* and *guidelines*. **Requirements** are obligatory policies and compliance with them is expected. **Guidelines** are suggested best practices to enact whenever possible and prudent.

## Part 1: Distanced-Based Ministry: Requirements

At this time, all Faith Formation Ministries and Programs **are required to** adopt a distance-based ministry model. The requirements and guidelines regarding distance-based ministry are described in Part 1.

## Part 2: Resources and Guidelines

As a response to the quarantines and the pandemic, many high quality Catholic resources have been made readily available for parishes to use to try to keep their parishioners engaged in the life of the Church.

Moreover, many dioceses, parishes and ministries have developed best practices for keeping parishioners engaged despite the widespread fear, confusion and isolation. We have sought to gather some of these resources and best practices and describe them for you in Part 2 (Page 6).

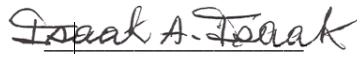
Please know that we are here to serve you. If you have any questions or concerns or if there is anything we can do to support you in these challenging times, please contact us by e-mailing [ltaylor@covdio.org](mailto:ltaylor@covdio.org) or calling (859) 392-1500 and asking for the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization.

Thank you for all you do!

In Christ,



David Cooley  
Co-Director,  
Office Manager



Isaak A. Isaak,  
Co-Director



Brad Torline  
Associate Director

## Part 1: Distanced-Based Ministry

At this time, all Faith Formation Ministries and Programs **are required to** adopt a distance-based ministry model. The following are the diocesan requirements and guidelines for operated Faith Formation ministries via a distanced-based model.



# REQUIREMENTS

Obligatory: Compliance is Expected



### Safe Environment Requirements

1. Diocesan Safe Environment Policies still apply even when using a distance-based ministry model:
  - ALL volunteers and catechists, even if conducting their ministry virtually, must be VIRTUS trained and current.
  - Whenever conducting a Virtual Video Meeting with underage individuals at least 2 VIRTUS trained and current individuals must be in attendance at all times.
    - Even if all individuals are overage it is still highly recommended that 2 VIRTUS trained adults be present
  - For more information see <https://covidio.org/safe-environment/>
  - Never record or share videos of underage individuals without explicit, written permission from their parents or guardians.

## Part 2: Resources and Best Practices

### Introduction:

Even amidst the challenges of a distanced-based approach to ministry, we want you to be equipped to effectively reach your people. As a response to the quarantines and the pandemic, many high quality Catholic resources have been made more readily available for parishes to help them keep their parishioners engaged in the life of the Church. Moreover, many dioceses, parishes, and ministries have developed best practices for keeping parishioners engaged despite the widespread fear, confusion, and isolation. We have sought to gather some of these resources and best practices and list them for you here.



### Live streaming:

One of the most effective ways to minister distantly is through live streaming-i.e. through live video and audio over the internet. Although not as optimal as in-person ministry, live streaming is the most effective way to be as “present” as possible virtually. Whether it is Mass, a bible study, a book study, a prayer group, or RCIA, if distance-based ministry becomes a necessity, **our first suggestion is to move to live streaming your event or ministry.** Below are some resources on how to effectively livestream your liturgy or event.

- Live streaming Meetings (From Parish Council to AA Support to Bible Studies and CCD classes!)
  - BlueJeans: <https://www.bluejeans.com/>
  - Google Meet: <https://apps.google.com/meet/>
  - GoToMeeting: <https://www.gotomeeting.com/>
  - Skype: <https://www.skype.com/en/>
  
- Live streaming Liturgies or Events
  - <http://www.usccb.org/about/communications/upload/how-to-livestream-mass.pdf>
  - <https://www.spiritjuicestudios.com/how-to-live-stream-mass-from-your-phone/>
    - Though about Mass specifically, the principles in this tutorial apply to live streaming any ministry or event
  - Facebook Live: <https://blog.techsoup.org/posts/how-to-broadcast-a-facebook-live-event-in-7-easy-steps>
  - Vimeo: [www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com)

## Pre-Recording Video Technology:

- Youtube: [www.Youtube.com](http://www.Youtube.com)
- Vimeo: [www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com)
- **Reminder: Even prerecorded communication should never be sent directly to any underage individual unless safe environment approved. For CCD Catechists any prerecorded lectures should be sent through the Spirit of Truth Digital App. Contact Sophia Institute for guidance on how to prerecord and share lectures: 1-800-888-9344**
- **Reminder: Photographs and videos of Underage Youth Should NEVER be recorded and published online (without parental consent).**

## Utilizing Social Media:

Social Media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter), can be an effective way to:

- Stay in contact with your community,
- Support your community
- Keep your community engaged in the Faith
- Help your community still feel connected with your ministry and parish.

Consider recruiting a volunteer to serve your parish or ministry as Social Media Coordinator by:

- Creating and managing your social media accounts
- Posting daily and Sunday liturgies
- Sharing important updates (Church hours, Pandemic Updates, etc.)
- Livestreaming adoration
- Sharing pictures of the parish & community grounds
- Posting encouraging video messages and updates from the pastor, parish and ministry leaders
- Posting quotes from daily readings, daily saints, novenas, or a quality Catholic book or resource
- Suggest quality Catholic books and free online resources
- And more!

## Important Reminders:

- **Underage individuals can never be contacted directly via social media.**
- Be extremely cautious of hackers by:
  - Using strong passwords, never sharing them, and changing them frequently
  - Never clicking a suspicious link sent to you via social media messengers
  - Making no more than one or two people you trust admins of your social media
  - Removing people as admins when they no longer serve the role
- If you think your social media accounts were hacked see the following links:
  - <https://www.facebook.com/help/738660629556925>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/help/1216349518398524>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/help/203305893040179/?ref=u2u>

If you would like assistance utilizing social media to engage your community, please contact Brad Torline, Associate Director of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization at [btorline@covdio.org](mailto:btorline@covdio.org) or (859) 392-1500.

### Call, E-mail, or Physical Mail Campaign:

If public masses must be restricted again or if you notice that your parish or ministry's attendance level has dramatically reduced, you may consider conducting a call, email, or physical mail campaign. Several Dioceses and Parishes have been suggesting such campaigns in order to reach the people of their community, assure them the Church is praying for them, let them know the hours the Church is open, and ask for their prayer intentions. If you are interested in doing a campaign like this and would like suggestions and assistance, please contact the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization by calling 859-392-1500 and asking for Brad Torline.

### FREE Online Faith Formation Resources:

The following are quality, engaging, and dependable Catholic Faith Formation resources with free online content. If a distanced-based ministry model becomes necessary, we recommend sharing these resources with your community through social media, your parish bulletins, or even through a call or e-mail campaign. We highly recommend organizing video meetings to discuss the resources after people have watched them (See Page 7).

- FREE ONLINE CATHOLIC VIDEO CONTENT: (13 and older)
  - Word on Fire Videos:
    - <https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/video/>
    - <https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/lecture/>
    - <https://www.wordonfire.org/>
  - Pints With Aquinas Videos: <https://pintswithaquinas.com/episodes/>
  - Thomistic Institute: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/>
    - Thomistic Institute YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd55APptap1Ve7Jwqa8OcBA>
  - Institute of Catholic Culture: <https://instituteofcatholicculture.org/>
  - WildGooseTV: <https://wildgoose.tv/>
  - Ascension Presents YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVdGX3N-WIJ5nUvklBTNhAw>
  - St. Paul Center: <https://stpaulcenter.com/audio-video/all-resources/>
  - Catholic Answer: <https://www.catholic.com/>
  - Formed (Free if your parish has an account, contact pastor): <https://formed.org/>
- FREE ONLINE CATHOLIC VIDEO CONTENT FOR CHILDREN
  - Dynamic Catholic *Blessed* Videos: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/blessed/program-view/>
    - These videos are part of a first reconciliation and first Communion prep program, but they are suitable for any child in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade or under.
- FREE ONLINE CATHOLIC VIDEO CONTENT FOR YOUTH GROUPS
  - Fr. Mike Schmitz Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH>
  - Pints With Aquinas Videos: <https://pintswithaquinas.com/episodes/>
  - Dynamic Catholic *Decision Point*: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/confirmation>
    - These videos are part of a Confirmation Program but are good for middle school aged youth
  - Ascension Press' *Chosen*; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHXkiejiHtc&list=PLU5wQ9pCtomTl8YODXZzoniLXXGQInRS>
    - These videos are part of a Confirmation Program but are good for middle school aged youth.
  - LifeTeen: <https://lifeteen.com/>



- FREE VIDEO CONTENT FOR COUPLES
  - Dynamic Catholic *Better Together* Videos: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/better-together>
    - These videos are part of a marriage prep. Program but are good for any couple.
  
- PODCASTS (Found on Apple Podcasts App, Google Play Music, Spotify, etc.)
  - Catholic Soup Podcast with Msgr. Cleves and Deacon David Proffitt
  - Pint's with Aquinas Podcast
  - Catholic Stuff You Should Know Podcast
  - Thomistic Institute Podcast
  - Institute of Catholic Culture Podcast
  - Classical Theism Podcast
  - Catholic Answers Focus
  - Catholic Answers Live
  
- FREE HIGH QUALITY ONLINE READING CONTENT
  - Magnificat: <https://us.magnificat.net/free>
  - Peter Kreeft: <http://peterkreeft.com/>
  - Word on Fire
    - <https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/article/>
    - <https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/blog/>
  - Catholic Answers: <https://www.catholic.com/>
  - Diocese of Covington's Messenger Online: <https://covdio.org/messenger/>

## Conclusion

### **Conclusion: An Opportunity to Evangelize**

Google reported that internet searches related to “prayer” *skyrocketed* this year during the worst weeks of the pandemic. Times of crisis tend to really humble us. They remind us of our mortality and transience. As C.S. Lewis once put it, times of suffering can serve as “God’s megaphone to a deaf world.” The current situation may actually be one of the best opportunities we’ve had in a long time to evangelize and catechize the people around us. During times of instability, the 2000 year permanence of our Church becomes more appealing. During times of fear and despair, the hope that can only be found in Jesus becomes irresistible. Don’t get discouraged. Let’s do everything we can to reach out to our people in these difficult times. Let’s rise to challenge, trusting in God and never forgetting, “that all things work together for good for those who love God” (Rm 8:28).

We are here to serve you. If you have any questions, concerns, or if there is anything the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization can do to help you do not hesitate to contact us by calling (859) 392-1500 or e-mailing [ltaylor@covdio.org](mailto:ltaylor@covdio.org).