

## **Faith Formation Q&A**

### ***Guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic***

#### **Parish Operations:**

Q: How can parish employees obtain an archdiocesan email account?

A: Any archdiocesan employee can be assigned an archchicago.org email address. Contact your parish business manager or operations director for more information. If more information is needed, please contact your vicariate [Lifelong Formation Coordinator](#) who can direct you to IT Services for the Archdiocese.

Q: Should part-time and hourly employees be working at this time?

A: Employees should contact their pastor or supervisor with questions regarding work during the current situation. While there are correlations between active engagement with parishioners during this time and giving, each parish needs to weigh its pastoral response with fiscal responsibility. Pastors and supervisors can contact your vicariate [Human Resources](#) representative for guidance.

Q: How can volunteer ministers without an archdiocesan email address contact families?

A: Seek your pastor or supervisor's approval for a preferred communication method using the [Social Media Request Form](#). Each parish should develop a communication strategy and determine who should be contacting parishioners on behalf of each ministry.

#### **Virtual Engagement and Safe Environment**

Q: Can video chat be facilitated with minors.

A: Video chats with minors are subject to the [Special Rules for Use of Group Messaging Apps](#) issued by archdiocesan Legal Services. If you are going to utilize video chats with minors, please ensure that the use of the platform is approved by your pastor (use this [form](#)), video is only used with a group and not for one-on-one meetings, parents have access to and can observe the sessions, and that the application's private messaging feature is disabled.

Q: How can we communicate with parents via phone and still protect our personal phone number?

A: For messaging, using a group messaging application such as Remind, GroupMe, or WhatsApp is suggested. For phone calls, applications such as Google Voice can assign you a phone number and allow you to control when you receive calls.

#### **Sacramental Preparation**

Q: When can we plan for the administration of the sacraments to resume?

A: The administration of sacraments such as First Communion and Confirmation cannot be scheduled until there is clear guidance that large public gatherings are safe. Be open and honest with individuals and families in preparation to receive sacraments that you are not able to offer a timeline and reassure them that normal activity will eventually resume. Utilize these [suggested resources](#) to help ensure that preparation continues virtually and at home.

Q: Will Confirmation ceremonies be cancelled?

A: The bishop of each Vicariate will inform pastors of any cancelled Confirmation ceremonies. If you are unsure of the status of your vicariate's Confirmation ceremony, please consult your pastor.

Q: How should we approach First Communion during this time?

A: Use this time to help families prepare their children. In addition to the suggested resources for sacramental preparation, help parents talk to their children about the Eucharist and encourage them to have children call family members to ask about their First Communion. If you do not want to delay administration of the sacrament longer than necessary, you may consider allowing children to make their First Communion with their family throughout summer and fall once normal activities resume, rather than rescheduling a large ceremony.

Q: What are your recommendations for adolescent Confirmation preparation during this time?

A: In addition to utilizing the suggested resources, you may consider utilizing youth ministry in the fall as additional time and space to prepare youth to be confirmed. Prepare youth and families for the possibility that the youth may not be confirmed this spring, but reassure them that you will help them grow in closeness to Jesus and His Church. Special guidance for facilitating Confirmation preparation, including meeting requirements for retreats, missionary service and participation in the Mass can be found here ([Link](#)).

### **Ongoing Resourcing**

Q: Is there a platform for catechetical leaders to share resources?

A: Contact your [Lifelong Formation Coordinator](#) or the archdiocesan [Senior Coordinator for Youth Ministry](#) for information on weekly online forums to share resources and support one another. We will work to put more resources online.