

## **Suggested “Alternate Solutions” for Confirmation Preparation Policies:**

Regarding Confirmation Policy §1900, the “readiness of candidates calls for a change of heart to know and love Jesus Christ. This is brought about by spiritual faith encounters at Liturgical celebrations, devotional prayer at home and in community, reflection, retreats, faith sharing, and journaling. Extended experiential learning is developed by the way of meaningful activities, parental involvement, family engagement and support, inspirational sharing of encounters of Jesus in the Bible of teachings, healings, missionary zeal, and the lived experiences of disciples and followers of Jesus Christ.”

*During this time of canceled public masses, sacramental celebrations, religious education programs, faith formation, and youth ministry throughout the Archdiocese, the preparation to ensure the readiness of candidates for the future celebration of confirmation is encouraged by way of digital formation when possible. If digital formation is not possible for your community, we recommend rescheduling your confirmation with enough time to hold the necessary catechetical sessions before the sacramental celebration takes place. If your confirmation ceremonies need to be postponed or cancelled, then that will be communicated through the office of the bishop for your vicariate.*

While keeping in mind the Archdiocesan Confirmation Policy and Guidelines, we offer suggested alternate solutions for confirmation preparation during this particular time of suspended public masses and sacramental celebration, suspended formation in person gatherings, and general social distancing.

### **A) Digital Formation and Communication**

Please see these [recommendations and resources](#) to continue your sacramental preparation program at-home and connect with families via digital communication.

### **B) Annual Retreat**

Archdiocesan Confirmation Policy states “Confirmation preparation shall include designated time reserved for prayer, reflection, and discernment which may be in the form of an annual retreat”. (1900.5) While it is not possible to physically gather for retreats, it is still possible to designate time for the candidates to enter fully into prayer and reflection.

1. Two options for structuring your retreat:
  - a. Designate a time for your class to login together. Show a video or post a text for everyone to look over together. Then use a chat platform (such as Google Hangout) to discuss content together in real time.
  - b. Create a retreat that students can do in their own time. Have students submit their responses to reflection questions via an online form (Google forms is a good option).
2. Building your retreat experience for your group:
  - a. Start with a theme.
  - b. Find some videos and prayer activities, create reflection questions to help them process. Encouraging your students to reflect on the content you present is the most important part.
  - c. Invite them into discernment and reflection with very specific directives. Help them react to the content, not just consume it.

### **Retreat Resources**

**Free films to watch**

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#### [ODB Restored: Stories of Encounter](#)

A six-part docuseries on individuals who had radical encounters with Christ and went on to make a real difference in the world. This series provides vivid and deeply human role models for all who desire life in Christ. Every subject of this series is a moving example of Christ's perfect love for the poor, the lost, and the weak. They can inspire anyone who wants to do something good to take the leap. All our subjects did was let their great love move them to action.

#### [The Bible Project](#)

Beautifully illustrated short videos focused on themes or books of the Bible. Their mission is helping people experience the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus. Recommended Confirmation videos: The Holy Spirit, Holiness, Justice. Also suggested, start with a video on a particular book of the Bible and then give your students a small passage from that book to read and reflect on. Caution: the videos are produced by a Protestant group. While most of the theology is correct for Catholics, make sure to preview each video and be ready to explain any discrepancies.

#### [Sofia Institute Sketchpad](#)

Founded by Catholic educators who want something different — inspiring professional development programs and classroom-ready materials that more effectively engage students, these short videos explain and illustrate sacramental theology.

#### [Your Confirmation Curriculum](#)

Are you using Ascension's *Chosen* curriculum? Life Teen's *Purpose*? Have you used all their videos? See if there's a lesson you haven't used yet, or even if they offer a retreat-type lesson. The advantage is that this will be familiar and comes with reflection questions.

### **Prayer Resources**

#### [VCat: Prayer](#)

Video catechism from the diocese of Wheeling-Charleston made specifically for teens. The prayer videos in particular are short and offer a download-able discussion guide for leaders

#### [Upper Room Prayer Ministry](#)

Online prayer community. The prayer wall offers a step-by-step guide for your teens to follow to pray for other people and have their own intentions prayed for

#### [Pray as You Go](#)

British Jesuits offer a 15-minute reflection each day. Invite your teens to find a quiet place to listen to the Scripture, music and reflection.

### **C) Missionary Service**

Archdiocesan Confirmation Policy states: "Confirmation preparation shall include service initiatives that foster missionary discipleship through the integration of community outreach and evangelization." (1900.4) While the service initiatives that the students had originally planned will likely no longer be feasible to do, this time of uncertainty calls us to love our neighbor more creatively.

1. We encourage you to inform your students and families of the ways in which they can reach out to others in this time of isolation:
  - a. Offer to jobs for neighbors around you and in your parish community who are more vulnerable to the virus. This could include taking trash out to the curb on collection days or doing yard work. Measures like this should only be taken if it is safe to do so without risking close contact.
  - b. Use virtual communication or make cards for the elderly or others that are homebound to help them feel more connected to the community even when they cannot be connected in person
  - c. Donate or facilitate online donations to a local food bank or social service agency. In this time of uncertainty, people are clinging to resources to help them feel secure. Remember those people who cannot provide this security for themselves and rely on the generosity of others.
  - d. Create an online public safety campaign to encourage peers to follow recommended guidelines for social distancing during this time.
2. This could also be an opportunity to plan future service initiatives for the time of transition

- a. Create an online public safety campaign to encourage peers to follow recommended guidelines for social distancing during this time.
2. This could also be an opportunity to plan future service initiatives for the time of transition from our current reality back to normal
  - a. Brainstorm who in your community will need support as the Archdiocese makes this transition.
  - b. Plan ways to welcome all those in your community to gather together again as one.

#### **D) Participation in the Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

The Archdiocesan Confirmation Guidelines stat that candidates “must be in the state of grace” (II.a. – p.4) prior to receiving the sacrament of confirmation and that parishes should be sure to offer sacrament of reconciliation prior to the celebration of confirmation. In addition, the guidelines stress the importance of encountering Christ and receiving nourishment through prayer and worship (X. 3 – pg. 9). While physical participation must be limited, there are still ways to stay connected to the sacraments of Eucharist and reconciliation.

1. While Catholics in the Archdiocese are dispensed from the obligation of attending Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation, we encourage you to inform your students and their families of ways in which they can still participate in the prayers of the mass:
  - a. Sending weekly Gospel readings and reflections to your students and families.  
Consider using this at-home prayer service guide ([English](#) / [Spanish](#)).
  - b. Email parents weekly talking points on the Sunday mass readings to help them engage their children in conversation.
  - c. Remind parents that Cardinal Cupich has asked churches to remain open for private prayer, and encourage them to bring their children to church for a time of private prayer at least on Sundays.
  - d. Share links of live-streamed, online masses with your students and their families ([Sunday Mass at Holy Name Cathedral and weekday Mass at St. James Chapel](#)).
2. This is also a time to encourage private prayer and devotions to help students grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ:
  - a. Offer a selection of Scriptural reflection passages for private prayer.
  - b. Share links of live-streamed and/or audio devotional prayers such as the Holy Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.
3. During the season of Lent, many parishes in the Archdiocese will be offering times for individual confessions:
  - a. Share information with your students and their parents on local parishes where priests are continuing to offer individual confessions.
  - b. Email students and parents templates for an examination of conscience.
  - c. Make it a priority in your parish to offer the sacrament of reconciliation for all confirmation candidates during the week prior to the celebration of confirmation.