

## The Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma's

### Guidelines for Re-Opening In-Person Ministries with Children and Youth

Ministry with children and youth is central to the Sunday experience of many of our families in the Episcopal Church in Oklahoma. We believe the formation of children and youth to be some of the most important work in the Church. These guidelines are meant to assist you in making plans to re-open your children's and youth ministry programs for the Fall of 2020. These guidelines do not apply to church nurseries, which will remain closed. The guidelines are intended to be flexible with respect to differences in community practice, regulations, and experiences. If you have any questions regarding the applications of these guidelines please contact Kate Carney Huston, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry at [KHuston@epiok.org](mailto:KHuston@epiok.org).

- A. If the school(s) in your community remain virtual-only then the church will remain virtual in its offering of children's and youth ministries. In addition to the virtual offerings, a church community may begin to offer outdoor children's and youth ministries.
  - a. The Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma Formation Office currently recommends the following two virtual curricula, both from Illustrated Ministry, known for their intergenerational and interactive components. The Diocese has obtained both curricula for your review and/or use.
    - i. The Compassion Camp (online VBS which is translatable to Sunday mornings)
    - ii. The Beatitudes virtual curriculum.
  - b. Churches engaging in virtual-only ministries for children and youth should maintain an image release and participation waiver on file for each child.
  - c. If a church decides to develop outdoor ministries for children and youth the following guidelines must be met:
    - i. Follow all guidelines as published from the CDC, Oklahoma DHS (where applicable), your local municipal and county governments, and the State Department of Health.
    - ii. Continue to follow all guidelines as published in the Return to In-Person Worship Guidelines from the Diocese of Oklahoma, including social distancing, sanitizing, and the wearing of masks.
    - iii. Churches must social distance, maintaining at least a 6 foot distance outdoors at all times.
    - iv. Churches must maintain a Covid-19 waiver for each child to participate in outdoor children's ministry.
    - v. Churches must maintain an image release waiver on file for each child.
    - vi. Churches should take pictures of all participants and activities to increase the ability for contact tracing if necessary.
    - vii. Churches should maintain regular and rigorous cleaning of all outdoor facilities, including playgrounds. All materials used during ministry for children and youth should be able to be cleaned, disposable, and/or materials that may be taken home. Snacks are not allowed at this time.
    - viii. No singing during ministries for children and youth until congregational singing is allowed.

- ix. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child(ren) have not had Covid-19 symptoms in the past 14 days, have not tested positive for Covid-19 in the past 14 days, or been in close contact with someone who has had Covid-19 or exhibited symptoms in the past 14 days. Parents may be asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding symptoms or past contact.
  - x. Teachers and volunteers aged 65 and older or those who are immunocompromised are not advised to take part in children's and youth ministry at this time. If the only available teachers/volunteers are aged 65 and older or immunocompromised churches will remain virtual-only.
  - xi. Train all children's and youth ministry teachers/volunteers and staff in the above safety actions. We recommend virtual training through Zoom.
- B. If the school(s) in your community have instituted in-person education, it is possible for you to open indoor children's and youth ministries with the following prevention practices.
- a. The Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma highly recommends all ministries with children and youth to be outdoors and to move indoors only during inclement weather or if the needs of individual participants necessitates meeting indoors.
  - b. Maintain a children's ministry virtual offering options for those children and families who are unable to attend in person services and children's ministry.
  - c. Follow all guidelines as published from the CDC, Oklahoma DHS (where applicable), your local municipal and county governments, and the State Department of Health.
  - d. Continue to follow all guidelines as published in the Return to In-Person Worship Guidelines from the Diocese of Oklahoma, including social distancing, sanitizing, and the wearing of masks.
  - e. Churches must
    - i. Maintain social distancing, including a distance of at least 6 feet at check-in between families and in class rooms (at tables or on the floor).
    - ii. Limit the number of children to the number that can properly social distance in the space for children's and youth ministry. Churches may wish to utilize a reservation system for in person attendance.
    - iii. Consider moving classrooms to larger spaces, such as the parish hall.
    - iv. Take temperatures at check-in of all children and teachers/volunteers.
    - v. Provide hand sanitizer at check-in and in the classroom space.
    - vi. Churches must maintain a Covid-19 waiver for each child to participate in outdoor children's ministry.
    - vii. Churches must maintain an image release waiver on file for each child.
    - viii. Churches should take pictures of all participants and activities to increase the ability for contact tracing if necessary.
    - ix. Maintain regular and rigorous cleaning of all outdoor and indoor facilities, including playgrounds and high touch areas such as door knobs, chairs, and tables.
    - x. All toys, books, and art materials should be removed from the rooms. All materials used during children's ministry should be able to be cleaned, disposable, and/or materials that may be taken home. Snacks are not allowed at this time.

- xi. No singing during ministries for children and youth until congregational singing is allowed.
- xii. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child(ren) have not had Covid-19 symptoms in the past 14 days, have not tested positive for Covid-19 in the past 14 days, or been in close contact with someone who has had Covid-19 or exhibited symptoms in the past 14 days. Parents may be asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding symptoms or past contact.
- xiii. Teachers and volunteers aged 65 and older or those who are immunocompromised are not advised to take part in children's and youth ministry at this time. If the only available teachers/volunteers are aged 65 and older or immunocompromised we recommend remaining virtual-only.
- xiv. Train all children's and youth ministry teachers/volunteers and staff in the above safety actions. We recommend virtual training through Zoom.