



Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland

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DATE: June 17, 2021

TO: Pastors/Administrator; Parish Catechetical Leaders; Youth Ministry Coordinators; RCIA Coordinators; Pastoral Life Coordinators; Priests

FROM: Lori Dahlhoff, EdD, Director of Lifelong Faith Formation 

RE: Faith Formation and the Ending of Maine's State of Civil Emergency

Governor Mills announced that Maine's State of Civil Emergency in response to the Covid-19 pandemic will **end June 30, 2021. Absent any specific extension announcements, the remaining face covering requirements for indoor activities with children and youth expire on that day.** At the same time, both the national and state CDC continue to recommend, though not require, that unvaccinated people – including those under 12 who are not yet eligible for a COVID vaccine – wear face coverings indoors.

What does this mean for parish faith formation efforts? In essence, face coverings and distancing will be optional beginning June 30. If a program begins before June 30, please maintain the same distancing and face covering protocols in place at the start to minimize confusion. **For any faith formation activity for children and teens that begins on or after June 30, parishes are to return to making local decisions regarding how to provide safe and faith-filled experiences for learners of all ages utilizing the typical norms and policies of the diocese.** These include the following recommendations related to Covid-19 exposure:

Parent/Guardian choice regarding face coverings for children/youth: Communicate to parents and guardians that they are the ones to determine whether or not their children/youth wear face coverings while participating in faith formation activities. Take care to remain non-judgmental about families' decisions, neither rewarding nor penalizing people for their choices. Encourage parishioners to exercise this same non-judgmental, charitable attitude.

Mindful sharing of food and drinks: Consider retaining some of the safer practices for sharing food and drink this summer while people adjust to the less-restrictive community standards during the pandemic:

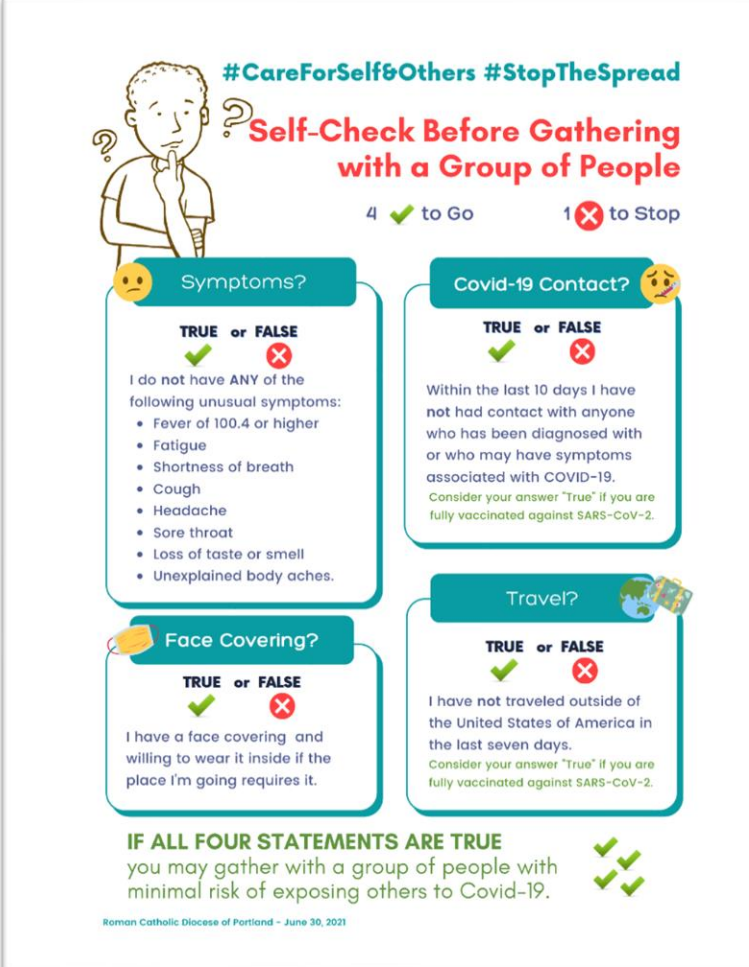
- Eat meals and snacks outdoors or in well-ventilated spaces that allow for some physical distance between individuals from different households
- Provide means for people to safely wash or sanitize hands before and after eating
- Utilize individually packaged or served snacks and beverages
- Avoid multiple people taking unpackaged food or drink from a common container
- Minimize the sharing of serving utensils

- Follow safe-serving practices including wearing gloves when plating food or pouring drinks

Continue self-checks: Ask staff, volunteers, and participants – whether or not they have been fully vaccinated – to continue using the self-check before coming to a parish program. You can find a sample poster to start using June 30 below or [online](#).

Refocus energy toward encountering Christ in the Mass: After giving praise to God for the improving situation and taking some time to rest, work with other parish leaders to invite parishioners back to sharing in the Mass and educating them about the graces of sharing in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, including in the gathered community. A resource page to assist in your local efforts throughout the coming year is available at <https://portlanddiocese.org/BacktoMassResources>.

As always, please contact anyone on the OLFF staff for help in planning and implementing parish faith formation efforts for adults, youth, and children. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, continue to pray for us as we care for one another and echo the Gospel in our corners of the world. Amen.



#CareForSelf&Others #StopTheSpread

Self-Check Before Gathering with a Group of People

4 ✓ to Go 1 ✗ to Stop

Symptoms?

TRUE or FALSE

I do not have ANY of the following unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Unexplained body aches.

Covid-19 Contact?

TRUE or FALSE

Within the last 10 days I have not had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with or who may have symptoms associated with COVID-19.

Consider your answer "True" if you are fully vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2.

Face Covering?

TRUE or FALSE

I have a face covering and willing to wear it inside if the place I'm going requires it.

Travel?

TRUE or FALSE

I have not traveled outside of the United States of America in the last seven days.

Consider your answer "True" if you are fully vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2.

IF ALL FOUR STATEMENTS ARE TRUE
you may gather with a group of people with minimal risk of exposing others to Covid-19.

Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland - June 30, 2021

[Click](#) to find a digital version of this self-check poster for printing or distributing.