



March 25, 2021
corona@rcab.org

The following guidance is from the Pandemic Response Team:

Clarification on the question of skipping one pew:

Questions were raised at the priest webinar on Monday about the practice of skipping one pew. Here is the protocol, stated perhaps more clearly:

Most parishes can seat people in every other pew, because in most churches, there is very nearly six feet of distance between the back of one pew and the back of another pew with one skipped in the middle. Within the pew, household members can sit close to one another, but everyone else needs to keep six feet distance from one another.

If a pastor feels that this is not a safe practice in his particular church or community, he can space congregants further apart.

Nothing in this should be read to mean that we are going from six feet to three feet for distancing. **Six feet of distance is still the norm.**

The March 22 new State Guidelines:

On March 22, Governor Baker released a new guideline for meetings in public spaces. Effective immediately, 100 people can gather for indoor meetings, and 150 people can gather for outdoor meetings.

In our case, meetings are things like faith formation, youth ministry, Bible studies, council meetings, support groups, and other like events.

This does not apply to worship - all of the previous guidelines still govern worship.

It should be emphasized that in these meetings:

- Six feet of distance must still be maintained between participants
- Masks must be worn covering the mouth and the nose
- Ventilation must be as thorough as possible
- Surfaces should be sanitized after the meeting
- Food should not be served

Notes on Faith Formation:

As parishes are closing out their faith formation year and are adapting to the new policies, we are no longer requiring approved safety plans. **We strongly encourage a parish to have a local safety plan for faith formation, and we are happy to help.** The address covidfaithformation@rcab.org is still active, and is still a good way to get faith formation questions answered or to raise concerns.

Temperature checks are no longer required in parish faith formation programs. The only remaining situation for requiring temperature checks is for Masses in parishes that are in the red zone.

We know that many of you are intent upon making summer plans. We hope that the above guidance helps you in this. We will continue to provide updates as they are available.