

SO BE BOLD. Christ's Love Abounds!

A PRELIMINARY PLAN FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN A NEW TIME



FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

How will we be able to carry on providing religious education when gatherings may not be possible now or at various times in the future? So much has occurred during these past few months that led us to take on new and different roles and responsibilities. Recall that many official Church documents related to religious education and faith formation written by previous recent Popes, including Pope Francis, stress the importance of parents as first and primary educators of their children in the Catholic Faith. This responsibility is nothing new and has little to do with the current health situation. Recently, Pope Francis told parents at a gathering that children “are the most precious gift you have received,” noting that it was their commitment and generosity that would help their children grow in faith and character. The Church also indicates that adult faith formation is to be provided for all to further equip parents and guardians in. The old saying goes, “You can’t give what you don’t have.” It’s not always an easy process to bring the Faith to others, but it is an essential responsibility and most important gift for all parents and guardians. Your parish and the Diocese of Brooklyn stands ready to assist you in this important work.

The Church has been collaborating with families in the past through programs of religious education where much of the learning took place in gathered parish or school settings, with the parish or school catechist as the one who ‘is able to echo God’s Word’. **These times call for new measures where formal religious education, including Sacramental preparation, can proceed in any circumstance.** Distance Learning Religious Education, combined with gathered settings when possible, is called Blended Learning and will provide for ongoing formation under any circumstance. Parish catechists and catechetical leaders will assist you in your role of assisting your child(ren) learn their Faith as they have in the past, not only in preparation for the Sacraments, but as a means of growing as missionary disciples, a mission to which we are all called. The parish catechists and catechetical leaders will always be there to support and encourage you.

Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, realistically points out that we will have to rely on different means and ways to convey the Faith:

Let us believe the Gospel when it tells us that the kingdom of God is already present in this world and is growing, here and there, and in different ways: like the small seed which grows into a great tree (cf. Mt 13:31-32), like the measure of leaven that makes the dough rise (cf. Mt 13:33) and like the good seed that grows amid the weeds (cf. Mt 13, 24-30) and can always pleasantly surprise us. The kingdom is here, it returns, it struggles to flourish anew.

Although many parents and guardians are not teachers by training, all parents and guardians are catechists by Baptism. Parents and guardians are not expected to know everything about the Faith or the best methods for teaching or catechizing. Your parish and the Diocese of Brooklyn’s Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis will provide the necessary resources and training that will help us do the best we can and grow in our ability to do better as time goes on. Practical resources are available and updated regularly at <https://dioceseofbrooklyn.org/get-involved/religious-education-resources/>

Stay tuned for more information and we look forward to collaborating with you.