



COVID-19 AND YOUR CHURCH, PRESCHOOL, OR DAYCARE

ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS



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WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China. Symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath and can lead to severe complications including pneumonia and death in more susceptible persons, including older adults, persons with heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease and other long-term health problems. Currently, there is no vaccine or prescribed treatment.

ARE CHURCHES STILL ABLE TO HAVE WORSHIP SERVICES?

At present, large gatherings have been banned by public officials in certain localities. For example, gatherings of more than 1,000 people were recently banned in Santa Clara County, California affecting larger churches for at least a three-week period and a ban of gatherings of 250 more persons is being considered in another locality. Each church should monitor and comply with any and all orders from the local health department. In anticipation of a potential order to limit large gatherings, churches should consider how they can utilize online platforms to broadcast services, connect with their members, and receive contributions.

WHAT SHOULD OUR CHURCH'S RESPONSE BE?

Churches should not make decisions based on fear or misinformation regarding COVID-19; instead, churches, preschools, and daycares should respond with reasonable steps to help prevent or contain the virus.

HOW CAN CHURCHES HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 AND PROTECT THEIR MEMBERS?

1. Implement the use of prepackaged, individual communion sets, rather than employing a common cup or serving communion via intinction.
2. Eliminate handshaking as part of passing the peace, greeting, or fellowship time during the service.
3. Disinfect all doorknobs, handles, and handrails leading into the church and sanctuary before and after the start of each service, along with the rails on the top of pews before and after each service.
4. Disinfect all nursery and preschool toys and surfaces before and after each service.
5. Install hand sanitizing stations at the entry to sanctuary and children's areas.

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SHOULD WE CANCEL MISSIONS TRIPS OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY?

Churches should heed the warnings provided by the Centers for Disease Control regarding international travel and reschedule trips if necessary. The CDC regularly updates its travel risk assessment by country with the updates being accessible on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OUR PRESCHOOL OR DAYCARE?

Preschool and daycare administrators should insist that employees follow the state standards for disinfection of children's areas whether the center is state certified or not. Further, the center should train its employees on the best practices for preventing the spread of COVID-19 to children and their parents and guardians.

IF A CHURCH EMPLOYEE OR MINISTER HAS TRAVELED TO A LEVEL 2 OR 3 COUNTRY, HOW LONG SHOULD THEY REMAIN AT HOME BEFORE RETURNING TO WORK?

The current recommendation is that such employees should remain at home for 14 days before returning to work. It is recommended such employees be allowed to do as much work from home during that time period as possible. You can find a full list of Level 2 and 3 countries at the link here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

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