

Children's Gatherings Outside During Stage 1B and Stage 2

This document does not pertain to those who are offering direct services for children such as preschool, after school care, or community tutoring. Those offering direct services for children should use the guidelines of the [Regathering Plan](#), paying close attention to Appendix D and E.

In an effort to offer some formational programming for our children, we have asked our School Advisory Task Force to consider ways in which we can begin gathering with children outside while we are in Stages 1B and 2. This will allow for gatherings of children and their formation leaders while putting safety paramount. There is no one size fits all, so we offer these guidelines and recommendations to give you and your local community room to make some of your own determinations for your location.

These guidelines and recommendations offer essential parameters to consider. If you wish to offer a plan that appears to differ in some significant way from these recommendations, we are more than happy to consult with you. In such a case, please direct your communications to Bishop Hodges-Copple. She and members of the team will be more than happy to work with you and help navigate a mutually acceptable plan.

When making your determinations, please consider that there will be some families who are not ready to participate with in-person gatherings, even when held outside. Churches should continue to offer online formation and faith at home resources.

Stage 1B

- Outdoor children's offerings can be held with 15 or fewer children
- Social distancing of at least 6 feet should be enforced
- Markers should be used to ensure 6 foot distancing
- The total number of people gathered including children and adults should be no more than 18
- [Ratios of children to adults should meet the requirements of the Diocese Best Practices, p.27](#)
- Hand sanitizer should be provided and used prior to and following the gathering
- Shared items should not be used; each person should have their own markers, papers, supplies (such as craft materials), etc.
- There should be no handling of balls for games
- There should be no singing or high-intensity physical activities (where breathing becomes labored and/or social distancing is difficult.)
- Best Practices should be followed: number of adults per Diocesan Best Practices, masks to be worn at all times, hand sanitizer available and used, record names of those attending

for contact tracing (pre-registration), prescreening for COVID exposure, and maintaining social/physical distancing throughout the gathering.

Stage 2

- Outdoor children's offerings can increase to a total number of 25 total people, including adults present
- All other protocols for Stage 1B and Best Practices (above) should be followed

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/park-administrators.html>

Be thoughtful about the re-opening and care of playgrounds.

- Consult with public health officials and refer to state and local regulations regarding the appropriate timing of re-opening playgrounds.
- Outdoor areas generally require normal [routine cleaning](#) and do not require disinfection. Spraying disinfectant on sidewalks and in parks is not an efficient use of disinfectant supplies and has not been proven to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to the public. You should continue existing cleaning and hygiene practices for outdoor areas.
- The targeted use of disinfectants can be done effectively, efficiently, and safely on outdoor hard surfaces and objects frequently touched by multiple people (e.g., handrails, benches); make sure disinfectant has thoroughly dried before allowing children to play.
- Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of disinfectants, including storing products securely away from children.