

# Diocese of Scranton Guidelines for Parish Summer Festivals, Events and Fundraisers during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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*Parishes in the Diocese of Scranton can proceed with planning summer events and other activities. While these gatherings can be wonderful community-building opportunities, it is important that these functions be planned and carried out safely. Flexibility should be built into any planning process given the unpredictable nature of the COVID-19 virus.*

*All events should follow safety protocols established by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The Diocese of Scranton strongly recommends that festival activities be held outdoors. While hosting parish festivals and picnics represents another step towards normalcy, parishes need to proceed with caution, keeping health and safety as a top priority.*

*The information below, taken from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, is provided to be used as suggested guidance for planning events.*

## **RISK FACTORS TO CONSIDER:**

- **Develop a COVID-19 safety plan for the event/festival** – This may include having an individual or team designated to make sure safety protocols are developed and implemented, provide signage with the requirements and expectations of guests.
- **Number of COVID-19 cases in your community** – High or increasing levels of COVID-19 cases in the event location increase the risk of infection and spread among attendees.
- **Setting of the event** – The Diocese of Scranton strongly recommends that events take place outdoors as much as possible. Indoor events, especially in places with poor ventilation, pose more risk than outdoor events.
- **Length of the event** – Events that last longer pose more risk than shorter events. Being within six feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more (over a 24-hour period) greatly increases the risk of becoming infected.
- **Number and crowding of people at the event** – Events with more people increase the likelihood of being exposed. The size of the event should be determined based on whether attendees from different households can stay at maintain six feet physical distance.
- **Behavior of attendees during an event** – Events where people engage in behaviors during as singing, shouting, alcohol consumption, or not maintaining physical distancing can increase risk of infection.

## **MASKING:**

- All parish volunteers, in any capacity, should be expected to wear masks because of the potential interaction with the general public. This is for the safety of each volunteer and for reducing the possibility of viral spread.
- Even if held outdoors, parish picnics and festivals would be considered a “large event” by the CDC and therefore masks for guests would be recommended as the “safest” option.

- Any events or functions which must take place inside will require masks and physical distancing to the greatest degree possible.

### **PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

- Parishes should use all available space to help attendees maintain physical distancing as much as possible.
- Parishes are encouraged to provide signage reminding attendees upon arrival to maintain proper physical distancing.
- Discourage attendees and staff from greeting others with physical contact (for example, handshakes).
- Most parish picnics and festivals require advance food preparation. Volunteers are encouraged to maintain proper distancing during any preparation activities that take place.

### **FOOD SERVICE:**

- Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that handling food is associated with directly spreading COVID-19. However, people sharing utensils or congregating around food service areas can pose a risk. Limit food or beverage service in areas in which people are more likely to congregate as that may encourage unmasked interactions. Parishes can consider keeping food offerings to “take out” options.
- Use touchless payment options as much as possible, if available.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that people remain at least six feet apart when waiting in line to order or pick up food.
- Use disposable food service items including utensils and dishes. Avoid offering any self-serve food or drink stations.

### **CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROTOCOLS:**

- Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily. Clean shared objects frequently based on level of use – for example, tables, countertops or condiment holders.
- If you are providing portable toilets, consider increasing the number provided and increase the spacing between them to reduce the likelihood of lines.

Additional information on safety considerations for events can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>