



Guidelines for Developing an Emergency Plan For Parish Faith Formation Programs

Emergency Contact information

1. It is recommended that the parish utilize a Faith Formation Emergency Contact Form (see page 3), which is to be kept on hand when classes are in session. The form includes information such as local and state emergency phone numbers. Fire and other emergency procedures can be attached to the Contact Information Sheet.

If parish faith formation sessions are held in a public school building, the public school or SAU may have compiled this information. The catechetical leader should obtain a copy from the public school or SAU and revise it as necessary for parish faith formation use.

2. Each family should provide emergency contact information prior to the start of faith formation sessions so that parents/guardians can be reached in case of emergency. This information should include phone numbers of parents/guardians and at least one alternate contact. Another item to consider including on the contact information form is information which is relevant to rendering medical care if the child needs emergency medical treatment such as: medical conditions, special needs or disabilities, and allergies. The emergency contact information forms should be maintained in the parish faith formation office, and a copy should be provided to the child's catechist.

Fire

The parish should establish a fire drill procedure. It is recommended that fire drills be conducted at least once per year. Fire drill procedures should be reviewed with parish catechists at an orientation meeting each fall. Fire drill procedures should include a provision requiring staff to remove attendance records and emergency contact information forms during an evacuation in order to account for all students and adults in the building.

If the parish faith formation program is held in a school building, fire evacuation procedures are already established and are posted near the door of each room.

If the program is located in another type of building, fire evacuation procedures should be established and posted inside each room.

Weather emergency

Each parish should establish a weather cancellation policy. Typically, if school is cancelled for the day, then faith formation sessions are also cancelled. Closures should be reported to local media.

General Building Safety

1. Doors to parish faith formation buildings should be locked or monitored while classes are in session.
2. Each parish should establish its own guidelines regarding parent access to rooms. When establishing these policies, the parish should take into consideration the age of the students and the type of facility in which the sessions are held.

Lockdown

Some emergencies may require a “lockdown.” Examples of situations requiring lockdown are a person in the vicinity with a weapon or a regional disaster. Usually, the police or other emergency personnel will order or recommend a lockdown. In the case of a lockdown:

- Local authorities (police, fire) take charge;
- Students remain in locked rooms or other protected rooms;
- The building is secured;
- Parents may be instructed to stay away from the building, as emergency personnel may be hindered and students may be at further risk if crowds gather;
- Consider restricting the use of cell phones.

The parish should keep a supply of bottled water on hand for emergency situations. Other items to consider purchasing are flashlights, walkie-talkies, blankets, and non-perishable food items such as energy bars.

If parish faith formation sessions are conducted in a school building, the school may have emergency provisions on hand. The catechetical leader should obtain a copy of the school’s emergency plan in order to be familiar with the location of supplies.

Communication

The parish should communicate its emergency procedures to parents and explain the expected role of parents in case of an emergency. Generally, parents should be directed not to call or go to the building in an emergency, as this may impede emergency response services.

<Insert Parish Name>
PARISH FAITH FORMATION
EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION FORM
<Insert program year>

Catechetical Leader: _____

Phone Number(s): (office) _____ (home) _____ (cell) _____

Fire/Ambulance/Police

Emergency 911

Local Fire Dept. _____

Local Police _____

Location (s) of fire extinguishers:

Evacuation group meeting location:

Public Utilities

Electric Company

Contact person _____ Phone number _____

Gas Company

Contact person _____ Phone number _____

Water Company

Contact person _____ Phone number _____

Other Emergency Contacts

Poison control: 1-800-562-8236

State and Local Emergency Management: 1-800-852-3792

NH Division for Children, Youth and Families: 1-800-894-5533

Weather Cancellation: WMUR-TV _____ WZID (95.7 FM) _____

Detailed fire and evacuation procedures and the parish faith formation emergency plan are attached to this cover sheet.

Sample Parish Faith Formation Emergency Plan

This plan may be adapted for parish use.

Catechetical Leader:

Phone Number(s): (office) _____ (home) _____ (cell) _____

Orientation

The catechetical leader conducts an orientation meeting for parish catechists each fall, before sessions begin. During this meeting, emergency procedures are reviewed and catechists are provided with a copy of the Parish Faith Formation General Emergency Contact Information, a copy of this Parish Faith Formation Emergency Plan, emergency contact information for each student in the catechist's class, and any important information regarding a student's medical needs.

Fire

Fire drills are conducted twice per year. A diagram of the building with the location of the nearest exit is posted inside the door of each room. A review of fire drill procedures occurs annually at the catechist orientation meeting.

When a fire, fire drill, or other evacuation occurs, each catechist leads his/her class to the designated meeting place. Each catechist takes his/her class list and daily attendance sheet from the building. The hall monitor takes the staff and visitor list from the building. Students wait in silence while catechists re-check attendance to make sure that everyone is accounted for. Information is reported to the hall monitor.

Weather emergency

If school is cancelled or dismissed early due to inclement weather, parish faith formation sessions are also cancelled for the day.

If it is snowing at 1:00 p.m., or if a weather advisory is in effect at 1:00 p.m., then parish faith formation sessions are cancelled for the day.

Weather-related closures are announced on our parish website (www.parish.org); on WMUR (Channel 9), and on the following radio stations: WZID (95.7 FM); WTSN (1030 AM); WOKQ (103.5 FM).

General Building Safety

For the safety of our students, doors to parish faith formation buildings are locked once sessions have begun. A monitor is posted at the main door of the building and a hallway monitor is also on duty. Students who are late will be allowed access to the building by the door monitor and should proceed directly to their room. If a parent wants to escort his/her child into the building after sessions have begun, he/she will be accompanied by the hall monitor.

Parents/guardians may not remain in the hallways while parish faith formation sessions are being held. If a parent wishes to observe his/her student's session, arrangements should be made in advance by contacting the Catechetical Leader.

Lockdown

In the case of a regional or local disaster, an intruder in the building, a report of a person in the vicinity of the building with a weapon, or other similar emergency, a "Lockdown" will occur.

When a lockdown occurs, the following takes place:

- Local authorities (police, fire) take charge.
- The building remains locked.
- Building monitors ensure that students leave hallways or bathrooms and return to a nearby classroom.
- The door to each room is locked, shades are drawn, lights turned off, and students are instructed to stay away from the windows. Students remain in their rooms until further notice.
- Should it become necessary for students to leave their rooms, the hall monitor will communicate this information. In this case, students will be moved to _____ or to the designated off-site evacuation location.
- Students are instructed to turn off their cell phones.
- Parents are instructed to stay away from the building until further notice.
- Students will be released once the situation is resolved.

Flashlights, bottled water, and energy bars are located in each room in the supply closet in a box marked *Emergency Supplies*.

Sample Home Announcement

<Insert Parish Letterhead>

Re: Parish Faith Formation Safety and Emergency Procedures

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Our parish is committed to the safety of children. As part of this commitment, we have recently developed a Parish Faith Formation Emergency Plan. Some highlights of the plan are listed below.

- Each family is asked to complete an emergency contact form. The contact information will be kept on file in the parish faith formation office and a copy will be provided to your child's catechist.
- The parish faith formation building will be locked once sessions have begun. Adults, other than parish faith formation personnel, may not remain in the hallways while sessions are being held. A door monitor and a hall monitor will be on duty at all times. Should your child arrive late for a session, the door monitor will allow him/her into the building. If you wish to escort your child into the building after sessions have begun, you will be accompanied by the hall monitor.
- Fire drills will be conducted twice per year.
- Incident Weather: If school is cancelled or dismissed early due to weather, then parish faith formation sessions are also cancelled for the day. If it is snowing at 1:00 p.m., or if a weather advisory is in effect at 1:00 p.m., then parish faith formation sessions are cancelled for the day. Weather-related closures are announced on our parish website (www.parish.org); on WMUR-TV (Channel 9), and on the following radio stations: WZID (95.7 FM), WTSN (1030 AM), WOKQ (103.5 FM).

- We have established a “lockdown” plan to be implemented in the case of a serious emergency. Should a lockdown become necessary or ordered by public authorities, rooms will be secured and students will remain in the building until the emergency has passed. Should this occur, you are asked to stay away from the building so as not to impede the emergency response process. Students will be released to you once the situation has been resolved.

Please keep this information for future reference. Should you have questions, or if you would like further information, you may contact me at _____.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Catechetical Leader