

What you need to know (COVID-19)

This Religious Instruction Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is to assist places of worship who provide religious instruction to children at their facility during non-school hours or on the weekends. It does not impact or substitute for County of Los Angeles Health Officer Order requirements and is separate from requirements for TK-12 public and private schools. Public Health recommends that communities of faith review and follow LACDPH [Best Practice Guidance for Communities of Faith](#) and this FAQ to lower the risk of exposure to and transmission of COVID-19 and other influenza-like illnesses within their facilities.

1. How is COVID-19 spread?

Like other respiratory illnesses, the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads from person-to-person mainly through respiratory droplets that are released into the air by a person with COVID-19. Respiratory droplets are released into the air when people breathe, speak, sing, cough, laugh, shout, and exercise. These droplets are then breathed in by other people or land on their nose, mouth, or eyes.

There are certain places where COVID-19 spreads more easily:

- Closed, indoor spaces with poor airflow
- Crowded places with many people nearby
- Close contact settings especially where people are talking (or breathing heavily) close together

A person's risk of getting infected goes up the closer they are to someone with COVID-19. Enclosed places with poor air flow can also increase the risk of getting infected. This is because the droplets that have the virus can concentrate in and spread through the air past 6 feet. They can even stay floating in the air after an infected person has left the room. It is also possible, but less common, for the virus to spread by touching a surface with droplets on it and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Some people get infected and spread COVID-19 without ever showing symptoms.

2. How should students be grouped?

Students should be grouped in the same space and in stable groups that are as small and as consistent as possible to limit spread if someone is found to be infected. Students should be grouped with the same instructor as much as possible to minimize mixing. To the extent practicable, keep students from the same household in the same group. If space permits, consider maintaining at least 3-foot distance between students of different households and 6-foot distance between students and the instructor.

3. Is singing allowed as part of religious instruction?

Yes, but additional safety measures should be implemented. Instructors and students must continue to wear a mask even when they are singing, chanting, or engaging in similar activities indoors. Any wind or brass instrument used by an instructor or student must have a bell cover over the output (such as a fabric bell cover) to lessen the expelled aerosols. When singing, chanting, or playing wind instruments indoors, students and instructors should spread out and maintain at least 12 feet of physical distance from each other. Ensure there is good ventilation (see the [Ventilate](#) section of the Best Practice Guidance for Communities of Faith for more details). If singing and chanting occurs outdoors, students and instructors should maintain 6 feet of physical distance from others, and face masks must always remain on.

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4. What infection control precautions should providers of religious instruction continue to take?

There are steps that providers of religious instruction should take to [reduce the risk](#) of COVID-19 transmission for instructors and students.

All participants should:

- **Get vaccinated**, if age 5 and over. It is the best way to protect against COVID-19.
- **Wear a mask that fits and filters well.** Your mask is one of the most powerful tools you have to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.
- **Avoid crowded places.** Being in crowds, especially indoors, puts you at a higher risk. Meet outdoors whenever possible.
- **Practice distancing.** Keep at least 3 feet apart between students and at least 6 feet between instructors and students and others, as much as possible, and further when singing, chanting or playing brass or wind instruments.
- **Wash hands with soap and water and/or use hand sanitizer often**, especially after being in public spaces where surfaces are touched by many people. Avoid eating and touching your face with unwashed hands.
- **Stay home when sick, even with mild symptoms.** If you have symptoms of COVID-19¹, talk to a doctor and get tested. People should stay home and away from others until they get the result of their COVID-19 test or until your provider tells you that you don't have COVID-19. If their COVID-19 test result is positive, they must [isolate](#) (stay home and away from others).

5. Can a Place of Worship provide religious instruction in private homes?

Yes. Religious instruction at persons' homes is allowed. The recommendations in this FAQ should be followed. If possible, outdoor instruction is strongly recommended.

6. Can children eat food and snacks during religious instruction?

Yes. Eating and drinking are permitted. To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission during meals when face masks are removed, eating and drinking should be limited to a designated space that is separate from all other operations, including the instruction. If possible, children should bring their own food and drink and be at least 6 feet from each other when eating. Eating outdoors is safer than eating indoors. If children must eat indoors, increase ventilation in the space and limit the number of children who are eating together at one time by staggering meals. Students should be reminded that they may only remove their masks briefly to eat or to drink, after which it must be immediately put back on.

¹ Symptoms of COVID-19 - Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after being exposed to the virus and may include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, fatigue, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. This list does not include all possible symptoms of COVID-19. Some people with COVID-19 never get symptoms. Visit ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare to learn more about what to do if you are sick.