

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Job Aid

(Target Audience: Cleaner/Usher/Priest)

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



In conjunction with:

Diocese of Rockford

Diocese of Joliet

Diocese of Peoria

Diocese of Springfield

Diocese of Belleville



Please check with your local Diocese for any changes to this document

These guidelines for the Sacrament of Reconciliation in a Church reflect the updated guidance by government officials, healthcare professionals, and Church authorities.

These guidelines are based on current requirements for groups no greater than 10 in the church at any time. This is exclusive of all ministers and an usher or greeter.

Parishes should adapt only as necessary, *however, being careful not to violate social distancing, face covering, and disinfection practices.*

Parishes or pastors may **NOT** alter number of allowed worshippers, social distancing, face covering, or disinfection guidelines contained here.

Step by Step

Conducting the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession

General Notes:

- Penitents must wear face masks or facial coverings the entire time he or she is in the church. Per IDPH and CDC guidelines, those with breathing difficulties can be exempted from this requirement, but those individuals must observe the strictest of social distancing from anyone not living in their domicile.
- The priest should wear a mask for the entire time he is hearing confessions.
- In order to maintain social distancing, the traditional Confessional is not to be used. Instead, a space or spaces in the church should be designated to celebrate the rite, such as is often done during celebrations of Communal Reconciliation (Form II).

Preparing for Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession

TASK #1

Placing Church Markers

Step 1: Place markers on the floor (and in pews if being used) to indicate where penitents and the usher are to wait.

Note: Social distancing guidelines must be followed, and all penitents must wear a mask or facial covering through the entire Sacrament. (See Physical Space Guide)



TASK #2

Preparing the New Confessional Space

Step 1: Set chairs for priest and penitent, obeying guidelines for social distancing. Select chairs that can be easily disinfected and reduces surfaces for physical contact. Avoid chairs with arm rests or fabric coverings.



Step 2: Place screen between chairs to ensure anonymity of penitent.



Step 3: Place another chair facing the priest (but at least 6 feet away from him) for use by penitents who desire face to face.



Conducting the Sacrament of Reconciliation: Only elements or tasks adjusted for safe practices are outlined here. All other elements of the rite are performed as already known.

TASK #1

Escorting the Penitent to a Seat

Step 1: Usher approaches first/next penitent and asks penitent whether anonymity is requested or not.

Step 2: Based on response, Usher directs penitent to the appropriate chair.

Step 3: Usher returns to his or her original spot to allow privacy for the penitent

TASK #2

Hearing the Confession

Step 1: Priest hears confession and communicates penance to penitent

NOTE: Priest must request that penance be fulfilled outside the church. No penitent is permitted to remain in the church to fulfill the penance.

Priest signals usher that they may approach to escort the penitent at the end of the rite



Post-Rite Activities

TASK #1

Escorting the Penitent out of the Church

Step 1: At the end of the rite, upon signal from the priest, usher moves to greet the penitent (keeping at least 6 feet away)

Step 2: Usher directs penitent to leave the church via an outside aisle (avoiding those waiting for confession)

TASK #2

Disinfect the Church

Step 1: Disinfect pews and kneelers using the process outlined in the Disinfecting Job Aid

Step 2: Disinfect Church doors using the process outlined in the Disinfecting Job Aid

Step 3: Disinfect chairs and screen using the process outlined in the Disinfecting Job Aid

Step 4: After all attendees have left the building, disinfect the restrooms using the process outlined in the Disinfecting Job Aid

Checklist

Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession

Preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession

TASK	Complete	DESCRIPTION
Place markers on the floor to indicate proper social distancing for penitent, Priest and usher?	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Set chair for priest	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Set chair for penitent	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	At least 6 ft. from priest's chair
Place screen between chairs	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Place 2 nd chair for penitent 6 ft in front of priest's chair	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	For those not desiring anonymity

Conduct the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession

TASK	Complete	DESCRIPTION
Usher approaches first/next penitent	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	Must maintain 6ft social distance
Usher asks penitent whether he/she desires anonymity	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Usher escorts penitent to appropriate chair	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Usher returns to original spot	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Priest hears confession	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Priest determines penance and instructs penitent to fulfill it outside of the church	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	Penance should be fulfilled outside of the church
Usher greets penitent following confession	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	Must maintain 6 ft social distance
Usher directs penitent to exit the church using an outside aisle	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Process is repeated for each remaining penitent	Completed: <input type="checkbox"/>	