

# Physical Space

## Development Guide

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 physical space 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 disinfecting practices.*

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

# How to Develop Your Plan

## Physical Space

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### General Notes:

One of the primary ways to reduce the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus is to maintain recommended social distancing (currently recommended to be 6' in all directions) at all times. Prior to opening, parishes should determine and visibly mark appropriate seating, standing and waiting areas throughout the church, and also determine the most effective interior traffic circulation patterns to ensure that capacity limits are adhered to and interaction among parishioners and between parishioners and staff is limited.

Proper distancing must be maintained at all times--while seated, when entering and exiting the church, and when standing and/or waiting. *However, social distancing guidelines do not apply to related family members living in the same household, who can be seated together.* Note: Families that are seated together may require you to make adjustments to the existing seating arrangements to accommodate the social distancing guidance. Greeters and ushers will be necessary to manage social distancing guidelines.

The parish must have tape marks on the floor and in pews to assist in the movement and positioning of parishioners to ensure compliance with Physical Distancing guidelines and to keep everyone safe.

This document is to be used to assist in the preparation of the parish for the reopening to the community.

It is recommended that you have a space plan developed and that the church is marked for social distancing appropriately well in advance in order to ensure the parish is ready to conduct sacraments and rituals in a safe manner and that volunteers can be trained and understand their roles and flow of parishioners.

### Supplies Needed:

- Colored painter's tape (potentially more than one color if desired)
- Tape Measure
- Directional Signage

## Marking the Pews

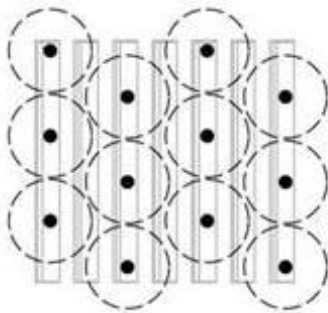
While each church building is unique, seating configurations will generally fit one of only a few patterns.

During Phase 1 and 1A which is now, the capacity limit is 10 persons plus ministers. Even these numbers must maintain social distancing so seating should be marked off.

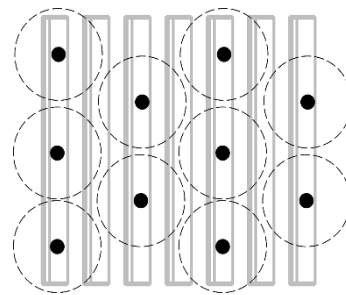
For Phase 2 when it arrives, estimated allowable capacity under social distancing guidelines may be around 15-20% of total seating capacity for the church building. Prepare now for this range of numbers.

- It is important to remember that 6' must be maintained between parishioners, not only side-to-side, but front to back, diagonally, and across aisles.
- As a result, in most cases only every other row will be available for seating (vacant row in between) and seating will be offset from row-to-row.
- Typical seating layouts will be 3-2-3, 3-3-3, or 2-2-2, depending on pew length.

Sample 3-3-3 Layout



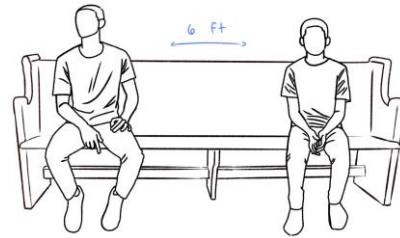
Sample 3-2-3 Layout



## TASK #1

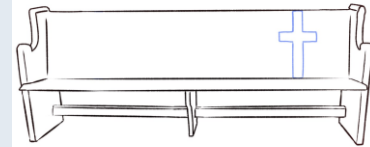
### Marking the Pews

**Step 1:** Measure each of the pews to determine how many parishioners can safely fit in each pew.

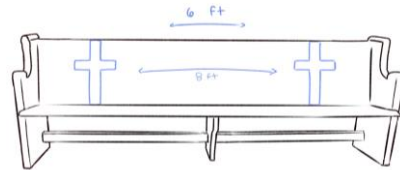


**Step 2:** Mark the seat backrest with a cross in painter's tape to designate where the parishioner will be seated.

*Note: You need to provide an additional 2 feet of space for the parishioners to sit comfortably within the pew. Six feet of space is required per social distancing rules between parishioners, plus a foot on either side of the cross.*



**Step 3:** Measure eight feet and place another cross with painter's tape.



**Step 4:** Continue this process until the pew has no additional space available.

# Methodology to Determine Seating Pattern: Planning It Out

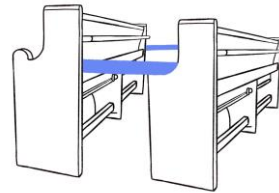
- Leave the front row vacant.
- Use the next three rows to determine a sample layout:
- First determine how many seats can be utilized in a single pew
- Next determine how far apart seats must be front-to-back/diagonally to stay 6 feet apart
- Mark seats with a vertical piece of painter's tape down the front of the seat backrest, wrapping around the top of the seat, for easy identification from the front or behind
- Tape off the entrances to the unused rows
- Repeat the pattern throughout the church

## TASK #1

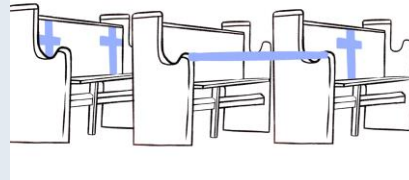
### Seating Pattern

**Step 1:** Skip a row of pews and put a line of tape across the entrance to designate the pew as unavailable for seating.

*Note: This will provide the proper social distancing in front of and behind each parishioner.*



**Step 2:** Stagger the seating to avoid having people sitting in a single file in order to increase the social distancing.



**Step 3:** Be clear when seating participants that they need to sit on the cross to ensure compliance with social distancing.



**NEEDS TO BE SIX FEET APART**

## Seating Families

Actual seating patterns will change in response to related family members sitting together. For instance, a family of four seated together will likely require that the neighboring seats remain vacant. Ushers should be aware of the impact of seating groups together to avoid delays in seating during any services.

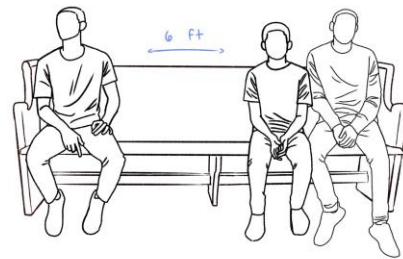
It could be useful to designate certain sections of the church seating for families.

### TASK #1

#### Seating Families

A family can be seated together if they have been quarantining together. Special care must be made to ensure that the family is 6 feet from other parishioners.

*Note: A family may require an entire pew to accommodate social distancing.*



# Floor Markings

## Main entrance/Narthex

- Mark the center of the main entrance and continue to place markings every 6 feet until you reach the main entrance of the church
- If bathrooms or other lines/queuing are anticipated in the Narthex/entrance vestibule, appropriate spacing should be marked on the floor throughout the area

## Main Aisle

- Mark with the spot at the front of the main aisle where the pastor will stand to deliver Communion or other liturgical services
- Mark the center of the aisle at the first row, ensuring a minimum of 6' is provided between that mark and where the Pastor or eucharistic minister will stand to deliver communion
- Continue to mark additional spaces, at least 6' apart, down the center of the aisle behind the initial mark.

## Front of the church

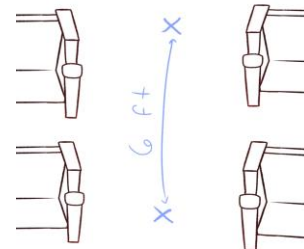
- Mark where the pastor will stand to deliver communion or during baptisms, weddings, or funeral services. To the extent these services will be conducted elsewhere in the church, adjust accordingly.
- Providing 6' of distance, mark where family members or other participants will stand.

### TASK #1

#### Visual Cues

Floor markings need to be made throughout the parish to provide visual cues to the parishioners. This will allow you to more easily communicate where people need to stand during entry, exit, rite, and sacrament.

*Note: Predetermine where everyone would need to sit or stand for each rite or sacrament and leave those cues in place.*





## TASK #2

### Visual Cues for Sacrament and Rites

Additional floor markings for each sacrament or rite needs to be determined based on your parish setup. This includes the markings for the parishioners, usher, greeter, volunteers, and priest/deacon.

*Note: Predetermine where everyone would need to sit or stand for each rite or sacrament and leave those cues in place.*