



# Religious Education REOPENING PLAN

A Message from the Director of Religious Education:

I am happy to be speaking with all of you again. Well here we are. If you were like me in March, you would not have been thinking that this infection would still be dictating our lives come autumn. Sadly, I was wrong. We now, with patience and perseverance move forward, trying to reconstruct a semblance of normalcy.

Now it is time for our religious education communities to move forward. All of us on the parish staff have been monitoring the Covid situation diligently, taking guidance from Governor DeWine, and the Diocese. Obviously, there are a multitude of opinions and feelings about reopening. Together, we have tried to consider those feelings, while assessing what is right for our religious education communities. Religious education at Communion of Saints looks differently depending on which community we are discussing. Whether it is PSR, YoCos, Breakthrough, lectures, or prayer and social groups, each community has different needs and therefore needs to be assessed differently when creating a plan on how each community will respond to the Covid crisis. In this reopening plan, we will be primarily focusing on the communities that are directed towards our parishes' children.

**Youth Minister, Jon Hawkins** has done a wonderful job with assessing and creating a plan that we are fully confident in to reopen Breakthrough. Attached is his plan for you to review. If you have any questions, please contact Jon. You will find the plan for reopening PSR, in addition. If you have any questions, please contact me.

The Communion of Saints staff is committed to continuing adult education opportunities. Given the nature of those opportunities, information regarding them and how they will be conducted will be done through church announcements, the website, and bulletin announcements. Let us continue to pray for those directly affected by Covid, our parish community, our state, our country, and our world. With God, all things are possible.

Stay blessed,  
Joseph Alto, Director of Religious Education



# Breakthrough Reopening Plan



A Message from the Youth Minister:

It has been difficult to see the path forward as so many have been asked to reinvent the wheel on their daily life. I think especially of those in nursing homes or the homebound for whom this time is the loneliest.

It is a difficult time, but also a time to be stretched and challenged. I want the teens of our parish to see this as a time of grace, as God helps them to grow in their capacity to maintain more distant friendships, seek out for themselves their social needs, and realize that the peace that sustains us in the lonely times comes first from God and second from the moral goodness of our own lives.

There is a way in which it is good to be challenged by the unprecedented context and meet those challenges to the best of our ability.

It is in this spirit that the following plan was devised to bring Confirmation prep to our junior high teens. We will be able to bring the stability of our community and faith traditions to a generation that needs it. And in turn, the teens will be able to see how this stability offers them a sure foundation from which they can put their freedom into something productive and wonderful for the world and people around them. Most of all, I want the teens to shed the sins that are holding them back and grow in faith in Jesus, hope in his promises, and love of God and the people they live with.

God is good. He will see us through. He will prepare the teens of this parish to be the best young men and women they can be to receive His sacrament of Confirmation and glorify Him by the excellence of their lives.

-Jon Hawkins



## 2020-2021 Overview

Many families are making difficult choices right now about how to involve their children in the programs that will help them to grow. To assist this process, Breakthrough will offer online and in-person options for a teen's catechetical formation.

### 1 Online Formation

The online formation option for Breakthrough will be a reflective exercise distributed twice a month. This exercise will involve scripture readings, videos, reflection questions, and an activity. This exercise should be done with a parent or sibling and will take approximately 45min.

### 2 In-Person Formation

The in-person formation option will be an adjusted form of the 2019-2020 Breakthrough program. In-person sessions will be Wednesdays twice a month from 7:00-8:30pm.

## Communication

There have been some updates to the last stated plan:

- In-person Breakthrough sessions are not mandatory
- The October 16-18<sup>th</sup> overnight retreat has been cancelled
- A one day in-person retreat is being planned for December 19<sup>th</sup>.

This document represents the current plan, subject to the changing environment of the pandemic.

Bi-weekly Breakthrough updates will be sent via email on Mondays.

Please let me know ahead of time if your teen will not be able to attend an in-person Breakthrough session.

Information on the 'Breakthrough' page of our parish website will be up to date.

Online Breakthrough lessons will be distributed via email on Mondays twice a month.



It is possible that Breakthrough will move to online formation only, at which point adjustments will be communicated to parents with 1 weeks' notice.

## Health and Safety

### Capacity Limits

The Upper Room will not be used by Breakthrough this Fall due to special restraints and the challenges of disinfecting.

### CoS School Gymnasium:

The regular space of Breakthrough will be the CoS school gymnasium located in between the church and school buildings. The gym can hold over 400 people and gives ample room to provide for social distancing.

### Walsh Hall:

Walsh Hall may also be used for its technology capabilities. Walsh Hall has a capacity of 467 people; We will be able to social distance our teens and volunteers in tables and chairs inside of Walsh Hall.

### St. Ann's Church:

The church can hold 660 people, with room for teens to social distance in the pews during a prayer activity.

### Health Principles

*Physical Distancing:* all teens at Breakthrough will strive to maintain 6ft of distance apart from their peers

*Personal Hygiene:* all teens will apply hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting Breakthrough

*Face Coverings:* all teens will wear clean face coverings when within 6ft of each other or indoors

*Disinfecting:* all objects and spaces used will be disinfected after each Breakthrough session



## Day-of Health Assessment

A teen or volunteer with a temperature over 99°F will not be permitted at Breakthrough. Please confirm that your teen is not exhibiting symptoms such as chills, shortness of breath, fatigue, body ache, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

### Mental Health Resource Links:

[Mental Health Toolkit](#): top ten tips for parents and caregivers

[Thriving at Home](#): a mental wellness workbook

[Red Flags when Social Distancing](#): how this looks and how adults can model

[Long-term Social Development](#): considerations to support youth and teens

# Curriculum

The Breakthrough curriculum is guided by three principles:

1. Teens need to be shown the joy and freedom of the Gospel to prepare their hearts for the sacrament of Confirmation.
2. Teens need to be taught the Catholic faith to help them understand the way God is preparing their minds to receive the Holy Spirit at Confirmation.
3. Teens need to be encouraged to live in the joy of the Gospel in the unique way God is calling each of them to do so.

The formation this year will focus on teaching the teens about the Sacrament of Confirmation by focusing on the way the Sacrament involves our understanding of *1. God, 2. Others, 3. Ourselves.*

This formation structure is intended to teach the facts about Confirmation while also drawing the teens out of self-centeredness and into the fullness of perfection God offers to them. As St. Paul admonishes, “Let us, then, be children no longer, tossed about here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine that originates in human trickery and skill in proposing error. Rather, let us profess the truth in love and grow to full maturity of Christ the head. Through him the whole body



grows, and with the proper functioning of the members joined firmly together by each supporting ligament builds itself up in love.” Ephesians, 4:13.

### **In-Person Application:**

Each Breakthrough event includes: a game, an opening prayer, a witness-lesson, a meditation, and small group discussion. The game breaks the ice. The opening prayer focuses the atmosphere of the evening. The lesson gives the teens the truth with which they will pray. The meditation gives the teens the opportunity to converse with God about what was taught. The discussion brings the teens out of themselves into sharpening conversation, preparing them to go into the world in strength and joy.

### **Online Application:**

Each online Breakthrough lesson includes: a first reading, a second reading, reflection questions, a meditation, and an activity. The readings are meant to complement each other and give a full scope of the lesson being taught. The reflection questions should be done with a parent, sibling, or friend and are designed to help the teen bring the two readings together and begin to personalize the lesson. The meditation brings the teens into conversation with God about what they have read. The activity should be accomplished at some point during the week and is designed to help the teen take the lesson to another person in their life, especially a peer.

Most importantly, online lessons should not be done alone. Faith is an individual’s virtue, but one which grows in the community of believers.

There will be monthly online ‘check-ins’, via Zoom.us, between the teens and the youth minister this Fall. These check-ins will be to assess the teens’ progress and answer any questions teens may have.

## **Retreat**

The October in-person Damascus retreat has been cancelled. It may be rescheduled for the Spring months.

An optional, one-day in-person retreat is being planned for here at St. Ann’s church. The tentative date for this retreat is to be determined, but within in month of February.



## Schedule

The schedule for in-person Breakthrough this Fall:

October 7<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm-8:30pm

October 21<sup>st</sup> 7:00pm-8:30pm

November 4<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm-8:30pm

November 18<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm-8:30pm

December 2<sup>nd</sup> 7:00pm-8:30pm

December 16<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm-8:30pm

## Cost

Cost for 7<sup>th</sup> graders: \$60 per teen

Cost for 8<sup>th</sup> graders: \$110 per teen



## 2020-2021PSR Reopening

I am excited to be back in communication with all of you! My summer was busy! Being asked to serve on Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin School's reopening task force, I spent much time in both virtual meeting and in-person meetings, watching Governor DeWine, discussing matters with the diocese, and reading lots of medical literature (the most boring part). Looking back on that experience, I am very grateful because it not only allowed me to be well prepared for my upcoming school year, but also well prepared when deciding on exactly what to do with PSR. Our community is different, however. Literally, we are a community whose members comprise of students from various public schools, spanning 3 school districts, students from private non-religious schools, and homeschool students. This makes our situation both interesting and difficult when assessing how to approach the year. Given our demographics and that our current Covid situation is a fluid one, I wanted to wait to push back the PSR year to October 4. Here are some of my reasons for making this decision:

1. I wanted to continue to assess the situation past Labor Day
2. Speaking with local public school principals, I wanted to respect the wishes of the Cleveland, Cleveland Heights, and Beachwood school districts, as they are focused on making sure children are not asymptomatic carriers when they transition back to in-person schooling
3. I wanted to respect the wishes of the Communion of Saints grade school, not adding additional stress to the reopening plan
4. I wanted to wait for the conclusion of children making their First Communion this summer
5. I wanted to give you all a break. I cannot imagine how stressful this has all been being parents of children ages 5-12

In the end, I believe it was the best decision. Although it will be different, I am committed to making this year spiritual fulfilling for your family! Please call, email, or text for any questions you may have!

-Joe





## 2020-2021 Overview

Many families are making difficult choices right now about how to involve their children in the programs that will help them to grow. To assist this process, PSR will offer online and in-person options for your child's catechetical formation.

1. **In-person:** We will be offering an in-person option. Both the school building, as well as Walsh Hall will be used for classes. 6ft of social distancing will be followed between both students and teachers. Masks for all students 6 and over must always be worn. Favorite activities such as "snack" will be unfortunately cut this year to ensure your child's safety. All desks and materials will be disinfected both before and after students enter the school building.
2. **Online:** Unfortunately, we do not have the technology to directly live-stream in students. I am currently working on creating a separate PSR website. This site will serve as the online platform. All information regarding lessons will be posted on the site. For this option, parents will need to have a more active role in the education process, as I foresee the parent serving the "instructor" however, most lessons will be interactive enough to where the parent will not need to actually teach the lesson. Monthly check-ins from me or another PSR teacher will be made via Zoom. All materials for the year such as textbooks, and other supplies can be picked up on a date to be determined.

Given this size of our community, if most families choose the online option, I will then determine if in-person classes will still be available. Once that is decided, I will rework the online format to adjust to our needs.

**All in-person classes will be held on Sundays from 10:15-11:30am**

### **Day-of Health Assessment**

A student or volunteer with a temperature over 99.00°F will not be permitted to PSR. Please confirm that your child is not exhibiting symptoms such as chills, shortness of breath, fatigue, body ache, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

If at your local school, a positive case is confirmed, please withhold sending your child to in-person PSR until contact tracing has been done by your local school.



## 2020-2021 PSR Schedule

- Virtual Opening parent information meeting: September 27th at 4pm
- First day of classes October 4th
- NO CLASSES November 29th
- NO CLASSES December 20th
- NO CLASSES December 27th
- NO CLASSES January 3rd
- NO CLASSES January 18th
- NO CLASSES February 15th
- NO CLASSES March 14th
- NO CLASSES April 4th
- Last day of class May 2nd

## Cost

1 child: \$50

2 children: \$100

3 children: \$125

4 or more: \$150