



# PLANNING TO RELAUNCH PUBLIC GATHERINGS

## Questions for Local Churches to Consider

*Compiled by Church Ministries*

### General:

1. Which ministry leaders and workers need to be invited into our conversation about relaunching?
2. What strengths did the COVID-19 crisis reveal in our church's ministry that we should build on?
3. What deficiencies did the crisis reveal in our church's ministry? What do we need to change to be consistently more effective in our ministry? Are there adjustments we need to make to be prepared for similar crises?
4. Should we consider adding one or more services as we relaunch in order to enable social distancing and come under government-imposed crowd limitations?
5. Should we arrange for spaced seating in our worship area?
6. Which events and ministries should relaunch immediately, and which should be delayed to a second or third phase?
7. What will be our corporate prayer practices during the relaunch phases?
8. When will we allow the relaunch of small groups meeting in person, and what precautionary steps will they need to take?
9. How can we equip our members to share the gospel and invite people to worship?
10. Who have we seen stepping up as leaders during this crisis? How can we work with them to develop them in such a role?
11. How will we as a church celebrate baptisms, weddings, and funerals in the various relaunch stages? How can we hold a religious ceremony and still adhere to social distancing requirements and limits on crowd sizes?
12. How will we suggest that people greet one another? Should handshakes and hugs be avoided for the initial season of relaunch?
13. How can we set up an adequate number of hand-washing stations for public services and meetings?
14. What surfaces will need extra cleaning during this time to help ensure people's safety? How will we accommodate this need?
15. What should we do in terms of facility cleaning and communication if there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in our church?
16. Should we consider requesting or requiring that people wear face masks in the initial phases of the relaunch?
17. How will we collect offerings to avoid passing the plate down the rows?
18. Is it wise to serve Communion in the initial phases of our relaunch? How can we do so more safely in the long term?
19. Should we avoid distributing bulletins and use only online and on-screen announcements for the initial season?
20. Is our website and social media presence adequate for the times in which we live? What did we learn about this during the crisis that has ongoing application?
21. Should we avoid serving food or drinks, including coffee, in the initial relaunch phases?
22. Would it be wise to continue providing the Sunday worship experience in some sort of online fashion (livestream or recorded) for the vulnerable, for those who may not be ready to be in a group of people, and as an outreach tool?

23. How will we continue to provide shepherd-care for those who are unable to or are uncomfortable with attending initially when gatherings resume?
24. What are the pastoral guidelines for visiting the sick, shut-ins, hospitals, assisted-living facilities, and homes?
25. How should we continue serving and reaching out to our community post-COVID?
26. How can we prepare ourselves for the possibility that new people will start attending post-COVID, including non-believers, new believers, or those reconnecting to church?
27. What's the best way to communicate to our church family that anyone who is sick or experiencing symptoms must refrain from attending?
28. Should people be asked not to attend for at least 14 days after they have traveled out-of-country?
29. Are there liability issues to consider as we reopen the facilities?
30. What is the communication strategy for each relaunch stage? When, where, and how we will maintain ongoing information sharing with our church and community?
31. What steps should our church take to strengthen our focus on ministries that can still meet in small settings in the event of another virus or a COVID resurgence, rather than focusing mostly on the Sunday gathering?
32. What have we observed in patterns of giving to our church and to missions? How might this best be addressed as we relaunch toward increased gathering?

## Children's Ministry:

1. Should we immediately reopen children's ministries and the nursery, or should these be delayed and phased in? If so, how should they look different?
2. Have we connected with volunteer teams to determine comfort levels of serving when children's ministry is open? Many volunteers may be in risk categories and therefore uncomfortable returning to their normal serving positions.
3. Will we have adequate volunteers to safely accommodate children?
4. If we have a check-in station, how will we make this process as hygienic as possible?
5. What is our communication strategy to both volunteers and parents to make all transitions as smooth as possible?
6. Will we continue to offer diaper changing/ bathroom assistance?
7. Knowing that toddlers and young children cannot maintain social distancing recommendations in public gatherings, how does this affect our programming decisions (ratios, snacks, play areas, etc.)?
8. What steps should be taken to ensure everyone on the team understands proper sanitation procedures within the children's ministry setting (between services, in shared rooms, in bathrooms, etc.)?
9. Who will be responsible for necessary cleaning while Sunday service is in progress or between services?
10. Is our "sick child policy" clearly stated and posted publicly so parents understand when a child cannot be admitted into the children's programming areas? Will we take children's temperatures to control admittance?
11. How will we follow through with policies that may prohibit children from attending? Will they be allowed into adult services if they cannot attend children's programming?
12. How will these policies change the guest experience for families?
13. If numbers need to be restricted to comply with safety recommendations, what will our system be for limiting the number of students in classrooms, and how will we communicate this to parents and volunteers?

## Youth Ministry:

1. What should our timing be in restarting onsite youth ministries, and are there safety precautions that should be taken?
2. Have we identified which ministries and activities we do not want to relaunch and explained why? Have we discussed and cleared this with our church's leadership?
3. Which ministries will relaunch? When and how will they be relaunching?
4. What health and safety practices will be implemented during these ministries, by whom, and how will we enforce and evaluate them?
5. Do our health and safety plans meet local health recommendations or ordinances?
6. What essential activities must take place during a meeting to ensure teens are being disciplined effectively?
7. Where and when will we communicate our relaunch plan, and when will we schedule a planned meeting with parents and volunteers to inform them of our relaunching plan?
8. What is our plan to onboard our volunteers, parents, and teens into the new health and safety practices we established before our relaunch? How will we onboard first-time guests into these practices?
9. What is our contingency plan if someone is feeling ill and must stay home?
10. What is our plan to mitigate health risks while maximizing respect for all ministry participants who may become ill or appear to be ill?
11. What is our plan for going digital if the government reinstates stay-at-home orders in the event of a second wave of the pandemic?
12. What practices and methodologies did we learn during the quarantine that we will sustain beyond the quarantine?

## Helpful Resources:

### "LEADING THE CHURCH IN THE POST-COVID-19 ERA."

**Daniel Yang**

*April 16, 2020*

EquippingU Live webinar (1 hour)

» <https://www.gotostage.com/channel/fc4797f7be164ab68b75126adefe63e2/recording/3561e5e8082449519cf287715a884d32/watch?source=CHANNEL>

### "A VIRUS-INDUCED COURSE CORRECTION."

**Terry Smith**

*April 18, 2020*

Video (8 minutes)

» <https://vimeo.com/411133164/529fb25e13>.



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