

Children's Ministry Prep

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Stepping up your cleaning and disinfecting practices can help minimize the spread of infectious diseases like COVID-19 when you return to children and youth ministry activities. The coronavirus can be spread by touching a contaminated surface – it may be viable for hours to days on chairs, desks, counters, door handles, toys, and more. Experts say that cleaning of surfaces followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in community settings.

Ministries are encouraged to keep informed about your local and state government guidelines regarding when and how to get operations back to normal.

What's Your Game Plan?

As you plan to improve your cleaning and disinfecting procedures, ask your team questions to develop a robust process. The following questions can help you get started.

- What is our current cleaning and disinfecting process for the children's ministry rooms? What additional cleaning measures do we need to take?
- Are we aware of the most recent CDC guidance regarding cleaning and disinfecting?
- Do we have the necessary supplies to clean and disinfect surfaces? Some items include gloves, masks, cleaners, disinfecting wipes, and disinfecting sprays.
- Does our cleaning process concentrate on wiping down high-touch surfaces?
Common surfaces include:
 - changing areas
 - counters
 - tables
 - chairs

The information provided in this article is intended to be helpful, but it does not constitute legal advice and is not a substitute for the advice from a licensed attorney in your area. We strongly encourage you to regularly consult with a local attorney as part of your risk management program.

- swings
- cribs
- activity saucers
- door handles
- light switches
- television remote controls
- Are we going to remove high-touch items from the rooms like books, crayons, and toys?
- Does our check-in and check-out process allow for volunteers to handle equipment to avoid multiple people touching computers or touch-screen devices?

Cleaning Products

Using the right disinfecting product is important. It is expected that many existing disinfectants will be effective against the virus. The EPA publishes a [list of products](#) that meet the criteria for use against coronaviruses.

[CDC Guidance* on Cleaning and Disinfecting Surfaces:](#)

If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

- Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach should be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:

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- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- [Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims](#) are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

Cleaning Communicates Care

It's a good idea to communicate your updated cleaning procedures. "It's not going to cost much more to take your cleaning to the next level, but it will help give people peace of mind and communicates care," said Tim Cool, chief solutions officer with Cool Solutions Group LLC. Make sure to clearly communicate the steps you've taken to protect and care for your people.

When communicating with your families, include information about what you're doing to clean and disinfect your children and youth ministry facilities. Use signage and announcements that outline what you're cleaning and frequency. It is important to note that while your ministry is taking care in its cleaning efforts to protect children, the risk of exposure cannot be eliminated. It may also be a good idea to highlight the additional steps you're taking to encourage hygiene. For example, point out additional hand sanitizers, remind families of cough and handwashing etiquette, let them know about any changes to customary ministry activities, and encourage the use of gloves and face coverings for kids older than two years.

Additional Resources:

- The Coronavirus and Your Church
Facility: <https://www.smartchurchsolutions.com/blog/the-coronavirus-and-your-church-facility>
- IBHS – 6 Ways to Prevent a Virus from Disrupting Your Business: https://ibhs.org/wp-content/uploads/wpmembers/files/Business-Protection_Virus-Preparedness_IBHS.pdf

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