

In This Together



6 Considerations Before Your Group Meets In-Person

Adapted from the Kensington Church COVID-19 Operating Strategy Playbook
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K E N S I N G T O N
C H U R C H

Since the very beginning of the COVID-19 crisis Kensington leadership has made a commitment to follow the guiding of the Holy Spirit and to make the most vulnerable in our community a priority. As an Executive Leadership Team, we have gathered data from a multitude of sources and continue to monitor trends and listen to updates from our government leaders. Our decision making, though sometimes affected by governmental laws, has not been driven by the regulations. We were one of the first churches in our region, maybe the country, to close our doors and create online services. This was decided before the strict regulations were put into place. We did this by listening to what the Spirit was saying and by committing to serving our most vulnerable in our community.

Followers of Jesus know one big truth; the church is not a building it is the people. We did not stop being the church or worshipping God because we stopped meeting physically. In fact, in some ways we have seen Kensington be the church more in these last couple months than perhaps in the months leading up to the sheltering in place mandate. We are proud of how our community has responded and look forward to us being the church more in the future by continuing to serve those in need in our region, country and the world.

As we begin to gather physically again in our buildings, we will take the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of all. **As our groups begin to physically gather again, we encourage you to take similar precautions to ensure the safety of your group members.** We love this community and value each and every one of you.

Kensington developed a multi-layered approach to prevent the COVID-19 virus from entering its facilities and we encourage you to do the same in your home environment. These considerations are strongly recommended and offered as a guide. **Please note, moving your group from meeting virtually to in-person is at your discretion.** Our goal is to help you keep yourself and your group members safe. *

**Although Kensington implemented a thorough COVID-19 prevention program for its facilities, and provides recommendations for your small group, it's important to always follow applicable national and local COVID-19 isolation/quarantine protocols.*

Pre-Screening

- What is the comfort level of your group members? Do you have any at-risk or high-risk individuals in your group?
- Ask group members to pay attention to how they are feeling. Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms as described by the CDC (Fever or chills, Cough, Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, Fatigue, Muscle or body aches, Headache, New loss of taste or smell, Sore throat, Congestion or runny nose, Nausea or vomiting, Diarrhea) at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html> should stay home.
- Have any group members traveled internationally by air or returned from a cruise in the last 14 days?
- Have any group members had close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days, or have you been awaiting results of a COVID-19 test?

Physical Distancing and Ventilation:

Physical distancing, also called “social distancing,” is the act of keeping six feet (two meters) of distance between yourself and other people. So, why six feet? Thanks to gravity, the droplets we each expel when we breathe, talk, cough or sneeze, will likely travel less than six feet before falling to the ground or surfaces below face level. Physical distancing, in combination with minimizing touchpoints and utilizing controlled airflow, is crucial in preventing the spread of COVID-19.



Inside Gatherings versus Outside Gatherings

We recommend meeting outside over the summer months and re-evaluating in the fall. Per CDC guidelines, “Smaller outdoor and in-person gatherings in which individuals from different households remain spaced at least 6 feet apart, wear cloth face coverings, do not

share objects, and come from the same local area (e.g., community, town, city, or county)” are less risk than indoor in-person gatherings of the same nature. We are fortunate to be able to take advantage of beautiful summer weather currently.

Safety Measures

We know you want your home to be a welcoming environment and it might seem in contrast but consider these measures as appropriate to keep everyone safe: wear a face mask, wash or sanitize your hands frequently, maintain physical distancing, and keep your environment clean. No doubt the opinions of these precautions will vary within your group. Emotions can even run high. In **1 Peter 5:8** it says: *“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”* One of our enemy’s oldest, most effective tricks is division. He will use disagreements, pride, and hurtful rhetoric to separate God’s people.

Managing Stress and Anxiety

Many aspects of the COVID-19 outbreak can cause stress and anxiety. Fear of the disease, dealing with the unknown, social isolation and financial stress can all become overwhelming very quickly and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Managing stress can help you, the people you care about and your community be resilient and thrive. Some ways to cope include:

- Learn from reputable resources like the CDC about the disease and how to protect yourself and your family
- Avoid binging on the news, social media and television
- Take care of yourself by eating healthy, getting regular exercise, trying to obtain good sleep each night and avoiding alcohol and drugs
- Take breaks and do an activity you and your family enjoy
- Connect with others by giving them a call
- Prayer and Small Group connections



Communication

Communicate humbly, gently, and clearly. Looking down on others, gossiping, and avoiding difficult conversations will erode trust fast. It's better to extend grace by finding points of agreement, believing the best about your group members, and trusting that the Holy Spirit is working in their hearts. Start by discussing these two questions with your group:

- When you think about meeting together in person, does anything make you feel nervous, fearful, or uncomfortable?
- What are some practical ways as a group we can consider one another's interests above our own?

“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” **Romans 12:10**

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” **Ephesians 4:2-3**

When we live out these verses, we create the kind of “normal” that God calls us to in community with others.

Scripture Referenced in this Document:

Romans 12:10

Ephesians 4:2-3

1 Peter 5:8

[Click a reference to read the full chapter.](#)

