

Agape Service Project – Summer 2022 COVID Protocol

We fully understand we are creating protocol in February for summer events. This is our protocol as of February, and if things change/progress closer to the summer, we will revise and publish new protocol.

Briefed Overview of Policies

- All participants will be required to be fully vaccinated
 - *One exception to vaccination policy: youth with medical exemption*
- Negative rapid test no more than 72 hours before departure and wearing masks at all times indoors (expect eating & sleeping) may be required come June
- Standard hygiene practices will be followed
- Pod Groups will be created for transportation & sleeping for the whole week (same people together in cars & sleeping rooms)
- All sleepers will be spaced by 6 feet
- Whenever possible we will operate outside – eating meals, prayer & formation, service activities, etc.
- Youth Minister/Group Leader will be responsible for verifying proof of vaccination of all participants or negative PCR test results of youth with medical exemption

General Overview of Program

- Parish Youth Groups from across the diocese travel to Whatcom County for a 5-day service trip
- Youth & adults sleep on the floor of classrooms, use shared bathrooms, & shower in public facilities
- All meals are provided in-house by the Agape kitchen staff
- Daily prayer, formation, reflection take place at the overnight facility
 - Mass & Adoration are attended at local parishes
- Staff & groups go off-site daily for service projects, engaging in direct service with the farmworker community

Why offer programming?

- **Part of Our Mission** – since 2004 Agape has provided week-long service-immersion experiences to Catholic youth groups and families where participants learn about human dignity, issues affecting migrant farmworkers and why we as Catholics are called to serve. All individuals involved encounter Christ through prayer, community, service, and solidarity. For summers 2020 & 2021, we had to cancel these experiences, deeply impacting our mission.
- **People are Yearning to Serve** – youth, youth groups, and families are experiencing the negative impacts of not being able to live their faith through service, since so many volunteer opportunities have been canceled during COVID. This was evident in our short 3-hour experiences we offered to 10 parishes in 2021. Attendees were so excited to be able to do something to help others and to live their faith. Reopening our faith-in-action programming seems like the next logical step in inviting people back to engage in their faith in-person.
- **Return to Full Outreach Services** – our staff of 5 still operated many of our direct services to the farmworker community during the first two summers of COVID, however being able to

bring back groups of volunteers would enable us to not only return to full services, but also enable our expansion plans to better serve the farmworker community.

- **Financial Impacts** – we are a fully self-funded program and the programmatic income from the fees for youth groups (around \$55,000 annually) covers our summer operating expenses and some of our year-round expenses. It has been a massive financial impact on our program to not have this source of revenue. Another summer of canceling programming would leave us facing another financial deficit, deeply impacting our capacity to serve the farmworker community.

Reasons for Requiring Vaccination for Participation

**We will offer one exception for youth: medical exemption with a note from a physician*

- **Serving Vulnerable Population** – we are not just an overnight camp, we are also a social service working directly with hundreds of people outside of the group cohort who are a vulnerable population – we have both a responsibility to keep them as safe as possible and keep our youth groups as safe as possible (the vaccination status of the farmworkers is unknown)
 - Similar to how the Church requires staff & volunteers interacting with youth (vulnerable population) to be vaccinated, in this situation the youth are the volunteers interacting with the vulnerable population and therefore need to take the extra precaution to be vaccinated
- **Transportation** – participants will be in personal vehicles together for hours at a time; even though masked & increased ventilation with open windows, there will be no social distancing in vehicles
- **Impact on Staff** – if someone tests positive for COVID, this may require Agape Staff to quarantine; we are a small staff of 5, the reduction of even 1 staff member (if not more) would deeply impact our ability to offer direct services to the farmworker community
- **Responsibility** – we acknowledge that participating in Agape is not an essential youth experience, rather a privileged experience – and with that privilege come some responsibilities, including the safety of the population we are serving

Health & Safety Protocol to Make This a Reality

Documents Referenced:

- [Guidance for Child Care, Youth Development, and Day Camps During COVID-19 from September 2021](#)
- [Overnight Group Summer Camps and Similar Activities COVID-19 Requirements from June 2021](#)

All Participants – Staff, Youth, Adult Chaperones

- All participants must be fully vaccinated
 - It will be encouraged that all participants receive a negative rapid test no more than 72 hours before the event
 - The one exemption to the vaccination policy is for a youth who has received a medical exemption with a note from a physician. They are required to receive a negative PCR test no more than 72 hours prior to departure.

- Anyone unable to meet these conditions is not allowed to attend the mission trip.
- For the purposes of this guidance, people are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 ≥ 2 weeks after they have received a second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or ≥ 2 weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson (J&J)/Janssen).
- Verification of vaccination and PCR test results is required. Documentation of COVID-19 vaccination must be an official record, such as COVID-19 vaccination record card, documentation from a healthcare provider electronic health record or state Immunization Information System.
- All participants will rapid test on the 2nd morning of the trip. These rapid tests will be provided by Agape Service Project.
- All participants regardless of vaccination status will be required to wear masks at all times when indoors, unless eating or sleeping
 - A reminder to pack multiple masks will be included on packing list; additional masks will be available at all times
 - Group Leaders will be asked to regulate their own youth groups in the wearing of masks
- Whenever possible we will operate outside – eating meals, prayer & formation, service activities, etc.
- When engaging with the farmworker community, even if outdoors, mask wearing will be required
- Daily symptom screenings are required for all participants

Covid Waiver & Disclosure

- The current Archdiocesan COVID Waiver will be one of our required forms for youth and adult participants
- It is recommended to youth ministers that these protocol and logistics are shared with families, so participants can make fully informed decisions

Staff & Adult Chaperones

- All staff and adult volunteers/chaperones will be required to have proof of vaccination following preexisting Archdiocesan youth group volunteer guidelines

Youth

- Programming is open to middle & high school students (6th-12th grade); Youth sign up to participate through their parish youth group – meaning parish youth minister will be required to document these requirements

Hygiene Practices

- Adequate handwashing facilities will be available or temporary handwashing stations with running water will be provided when at sites without sufficient facilities
- Hand sanitizer will be available at all sites
- Agape staff will routinely disinfect frequently touched areas/surfaces/objects throughout the week

Transportation

- Group transportation from home parishes to Agape in Whatcom County for the week-long experience and to service sites throughout the week will be in chaperone vehicles with multiple youth in a car

- Car groups will be single gender, attempting to create pods of participants who will sleep in the same room and travel in the same car
- Following Washington State DOH guidelines as much as possible ([from Sept. 2021, pg. 13](#)):
 - All participants must wear properly fitted face coverings
 - It will be encouraged to maintain a seat space between riders in bench seats
 - Same car groups will be maintained throughout the entire week
 - Maximize ventilation in the car: open windows whenever safe to do so
 - Hand sanitizer or hand washing will be provided before loading & upon exiting the vehicle
- Agape Staff cannot provide transportation of any group participant

Food & Meals

- Agape will take the extra safety step of hiring a cook for the summer (this is not normal) to ensure minimal & safe contact with food & kitchen space
- Meals will be plated by the kitchen staff in a buffet style
- Weather permitting, all meals will be eaten outdoors. If indoor eating is necessary, individuals will be spaced throughout the dining hall and windows & doors will be open
- Tables will be cleaned and sanitized before and after each meal

Sleeping

- All participants, must have at least 6 feet physical distance from other participants' heads in sleep facilities. Bedding will be arranged head-to toe
- Capacity of the week will be based on square footage of sleeping space
- Air purifiers will be running in each sleep room

Staff

- Staff do not live on site and therefore leave every evening. Per Washington State DOH Guidelines ([pg. 3](#)): "Vaccinated staff may leave the camp on time off as long as camps make them aware of the best practices they can independently follow to mitigate spread during time they spend off camp property."
- Staff will rapid test at the start of each week & on the 2nd morning with the group.

In the Case of Illness

- Covid-19 Symptoms:
 - Fever or chills (+100.4)
 - 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
- Should anyone experience *one* of the symptoms listed above:
 - Notify Agape Staff
 - Monitor
- Should anyone experience *more than one* of the symptoms listed above:
 - Isolate in isolation room on site
 - Group Leader to contact parents and verify permission to test (if under 18)

- Agape Staff will aim to provide rapid testing on site. However, if not available, transportation to acquire a test and any costs associated will be the responsibility of the parish/parents.
 - Agape staff cannot drive participants to testing location
- Should anyone refuse to be tested:
 - Participant will be required to isolate and arrange departure from Agape
- If rapid test is not available:
 - Participant will be required to isolate until test results are received
- If results will not be received by the end of Agape week:
 - Participant will be required to isolate until the end of the program week. Agape will recommend early departure from program via transportation that is separate from youth group. However, parish/parent will ultimately decide on travel arrangements
- Following a positive result:
 - Participant will be required to isolate and arrange departure from camp
 - Agape Staff will notify health department
 - Agape will follow recommendations from the health department (including, but not limited to, an entire group needing to depart programming early)
- Should anyone have to quarantine beyond the duration of program, all travel and housing arrangements and costs will be the responsibility of the parish/parents
 - Supervision will be the responsibility of the parish, as Agape staff will not be available to extend their week beyond the scheduled departure date
- Should a participant under the age of 18 be required to stay beyond the duration of programming, a chaperone arrangement will be the responsibility of the parish