



# DAY AT A TIME



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What does it mean to be DRE during the 2020 COVID crisis? I would call it: DRE = **DARE** to **REMODEL** the **EDUCATION**. Why? Because every day gives me a challenge of changing circumstances and it forces me to remodel plans again and again. It's somehow like the blind leading the blind. Do I have answers? No. Do I know the future? No. Do I see the best choice for the Religious Education program? Not at all. How can I lead, if I don't know the direction? It's difficult, frustrating, and challenging. Can my colleagues (DREs) and I, continue to lead families and children if we don't know where? Yes. We can and we do our best to meet families where they are. To calm fears, ease their struggle, and to share hope. Maybe this is what all children should learn during this year: that God is with us, no matter what.

We were the first Parish in the Archdiocese of Chicago with canceled Confirmation. Like everyone else, we postponed all other Sacraments. Finally, when Churches started slowly to reopen, we could proceed with 1st Reconciliation - 4 families at the time. Later with First Communion: 8 families at the time. Counting spaces and pews, restricting attendance from families, live streaming Masses for those vulnerable at home or those far away. In the end, we were able to celebrate Confirmations: 20 families at the time!

Celebrations were so different and simple. We got so used to having processions with first communicants, or common pictures, kids reading their short parts, bringing gifts to the altar, Confirmation sponsors with their hand on the right shoulder of their confirmands... All of those beautiful traditions were impossible to implement this year. DRE's struggling with preparation is not about logistics only, and how many pews or how far families sit, but how can we make the ceremony special without all those special moments?

The most common phrase I've heard during this time from our diocese leaders was: "Be creative, use your imagination!" You know, it doesn't really help. I think I share the common DREs feelings of being lonely and lost. All the while, we strive to not give up and to believe that the bright day is coming!

I've been really blessed by the presence of my catechists. Many parishes lost volunteers because families are overwhelmed with the current situation. I've been blessed by faithful catechists, who are willing to continue and not give up. Their faith and commitment give me the courage to continue. Just one day at the time. They give me their trust, enabling me lead. With this, I can only say: I'll try my best... one day at the time... with the grace of the One who is with us, no matter what.