

# Atrium Reopening Cleaning and Disinfecting Considerations and Supplies List

There are many resources that are now available for the cleaning and disinfecting of share space that can serve us as we consider returning to the atrium this fall. We need to be clear on the aim and use of what is available and what will best serve the safety and health of the children.

- **Cleaning:** Refers to the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. It does not kill germs, but by removing some of them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection. Wear reusable or disposable gloves for routine cleaning and disinfection.
  - Clean surfaces using soap and water, then use disinfectant. Cleaning with soap and water reduces number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces.
  - Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. High touch surfaces include:
    - Tables, chair back, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.
  
- **Disinfecting:** Refers to using chemicals, for example, EPA-registered disinfectants, to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface *after* cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.
  - Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Read EPA's infographic on how to use these disinfectant products safely and effectively.
  - Many products recommend:
    - Keeping surface wet for a period of time (see product label)
    - Precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product
  - Diluted household bleach solutions may also be used if appropriate for the surface.
    - Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection and has a sodium hypochlorite concentration of 5%–6%. Ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Some bleaches, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing or for whitening, may not be suitable for disinfection.
    - Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.



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- Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Leave solution on the surface for at least 1 minute.
- To make a bleach solution, mix:
  - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of room temperature water
- OR
  - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of room temperature water
  - Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.
- Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol may also be used.

**If we return to the Atrium in the Fall, we should expect to clean more often than usual and abide by some good practices:**

- Before reopening, check your water system, HVAC, Gas, and other systems that have been shut down for a long period.
- Atria should prepare to clean contact surfaces (such as sinks, toilets, doorknobs, light switches, etc.) at least before after and during the atrium session. (This is not the official recommendation, but instead a framework to help you think about how to manage higher frequency cleaning).
- Atria should prepare for children to be able to wash their hands immediately after arriving and before going home or at least every two hours.
- Catechists should make an effort to disinfect each table or high touch surface as often as possible. Prior to the next group of children coming into the atrium, have each child disinfect their table and the catechists can disinfect each table prior to admittance of the next group of children.
- Make sure the children's hands are clean before a presentation, so that they touch the materials with clean hands. Set procedures to clean the materials frequently.
- Exercises of Practical Life and other practical work might need to be very limited and might simply connect all activities to the practical aspects of our work in the atrium.
- Additionally, atria will need to prepare to:
  - Reinforce no sharing of foods or drinks
  - Help children in keeping their hands to themselves
  - Maintain 6 feet of distance within the atrium and other spaces they may gather.

The CDC has an excellent web pages on cleaning and disinfecting environments and Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>



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The EPA has a resource regarding Six Steps for Safe & Effective Disinfectant Use

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-04/documents/disinfectants-onepager.pdf>

**Cleaning Supplies and Amount (start with 1.5 x the community size unless otherwise noted):**

- Hand Sanitizer
  - At least 3 bottles per classroom and a surplus
- Masks if required
  - Surgical/cloth
  - N-95 (.25 x the community size)
- Gloves
  - Various Sizes
- Lysol Wipes
  - At least 2 canisters per atrium, and surplus
- Infrared Thermometers (1 per 100 children)

**Some other possibilities to consider:**

- **Sanitizer stations:**
  - Similar to how hospitals operate
  - You must, “scrub in,” and “scrub out.”
  - When each child, catechist, or parent enters a room they must hand sanitize their hands, as well as when they leave the room.
- **UV Lights:**
  - Companies that specialize in UV products exclusively have come out with new products in the last few months marketed for use against COVID-19, though no conclusive research has been done.
  - There are some safety concerns. Researchers have already started examining ways to harness the destructive properties of UV light while suppressing the dangers.
  - <https://www.webmd.com/lung/news/20200519/coronavirus-puts-uv-in-the-disinfectant-spotlight>
- **Disinfectant Sprayers:**
  - Operate similar to insect sprayers
  - Spray disinfectant that does not need to be wiped after being sprayed
  - Disinfectant and sanitizes against SARS-COV-2

The EPA has more information on the antimicrobial products you can use. Here are a few that are common. Please remember to read and follow the packages directions:

- Clorox Multi Surface Cleaner + Bleach
- Clorox Disinfecting Wipes
- Lysol Heavy-Duty cleaner Disinfectant Concentrate



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- Lysol clean & Fresh Multi Surface Cleaner
- Purell Professional Surface Disinfectant Wipes
- Sani-Prime Germicidal Spray

### Cleaning Specific Atrium Materials:

- **FABRIC:** Folding cloth, altar linens, prayer cloths, vestments of the priest, chasubles from liturgical colors, and rugs. There is not much research about how long the virus lives on fabric, but it is probably not as long as on hard surfaces. The soft, porous surfaces found in clothing may help prevent the spread. Health professionals explain the virus is likely to get caught in the fibers of the fabric, preventing it from spreading. Avoid shaking dirty laundry. This will minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air. Most items can be laundered at the warmest temperature safe for the fabric. Fabrics, such as, the liturgical colors may be more difficult to wash daily, so back to hand washing before and after working with the materials can be the safest response.
- **LAND and WATER GLOBE:** We contacted Nienhuis Montessori concerning the sandpaper globe, and while we realize that not everyone has purchased a land and water globe from Nienhuis, and some of us have made our own globe, they offered us these ideas for cleaning and sanitizing: Use Pledge to clean, because it is not super harsh. To disinfect, use Lysol wipes. We asked about Lysol spray, and she said a spray is TOO wet. In fact, be careful that your Lysol wipes are not too wet. You want them damp, of course, but not TOO wet, just a little damp.
- **PAPER BASE MATERIALS** such as Bibles, Little Gospels, and tracing packets may hold the virus anywhere from a few hours to a few days. Disinfecting books and paper would be difficult. A solution may be to have a rotating supply of bibles and other paper materials.
- **WOOD MATERIAL** The sheepfold, the merchant's house, dioramas, the Liturgical calendar, etc. Use Pledge to clean because it is not super harsh. To disinfect, use Lysol wipes. Remember to only use damp cloth, nothing too wet. Are your wood items sealed? If not, you may want to do that now.
- **COLORED PENCILS** Can be first cleaned with soap and hot water, then Lysol wipes to disinfect.
- **PLASTIC TRAYS, LAMINATED ITEMS** timelines, mute strips, charts, etc. Some of you may not have laminated items in your atrium. If you do, those items may be wiped down with a Lysol wipe. Plastic trays can be washed with soapy water then disinfected.



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- **PAINTED FIGURES**, The Good Shepherd and the sheep, the merchant, the bridesmaids, the Good Samaritan, the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, etc.  
can be carefully wiped done with a damp soapy cloth or a disinfectant sprayed on to a cloth. Always be cautious since everyone's materials are different. Sealed wood pieces are easier to clean and tend to last longer.
- **SCULPEY** Infancy Narrative or Cenacle figures, etc. We have contacted Sculpey and their recommendation is to use a cleaning spray with a trigger (non-aerosol) on the item and then hand wash with soap and water and dry. They do not have any information on the effects of cleaning products used on the figures over time.
- **BRASS ITEMS** brass polishing, candle holders, altar work items  
Option 1: There are some types of metals that are commonly used in doorknobs and handles that sterilize themselves over a certain amount of time. These tend to be knobs that contain copper, like brass. Brass knobs disinfect themselves after about seven or eight hours, compared to aluminum and stainless steel, which never do disinfect themselves. This is why people often opt for unvarnished brass doorknobs over aluminum or stainless-steel doorknobs—they simply don't require as much cleaning and disinfecting.  
Option 2: May be wiped down with a Lysol wipe.
- **THE RAISED SURFACE MAP** is a much-loved material, and the children show us by running their hands over the hills and mountains. Everyone's raised surface map is made differently, some out of clay, others out of paper mache. You will want to be extremely careful with what you use. Sprays may be too wet, wiping it may remove some of the painted material. Whatever you use, try the product on a corner of the map, to see how it works for you. Once again handwashing is a must.

*Take care with your materials and any chemicals you may use on them. We are only offering suggestions we have found researching to properly clean and disinfect. Be sure to test anything you use on a small surface first!*



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