



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

July 17, 2020

Dear parents,

Catholic education rests on the belief that parents are the primary educators of their children, and that our schools are educational ministries to support you in your role as the primary educator of your child. We seek to support you in the formation of your children as they grow in wisdom and friendship with the Lord. And you and your children are important and beloved members of our Catholic school community. We also know you are able to discern best what your children and families need, especially during times of unrest, like the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that our schools are communities of charity and solidarity, called to seek and protect the good, safety, health, and well-being of our children and families, especially the most vulnerable in our community (i.e. the elderly or immunocompromised). Although we are opening our schools for in-person learning this fall, we recognize there may be unique family needs that would make parents desire a Catholic education for their children but in an out-of-school environment.

We are excited to announce a new, **fulltime distance learning option for students in kindergarten through 8th grade, St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum**, managed by the Office of Catholic Schools, available for any family who may not want to send their children to in-school learning this upcoming school year. This program will be a support for local schools that will enable interested families to remain enrolled at their current school during the pandemic and receive all curriculum and instruction digitally. St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum option aims to support schools and parents in forming children in an inherently Catholic curricular option, while the family remains a part of the school community at which they are enrolled.

What are the advantages of choosing St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum (SICC) option?

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted a lot of what many parents hoped for in their children's Catholic education—a chance to learn in a Catholic community and be formed in a Catholic worldview. Many parents still desire that but have reason for not wanting their child to attend school in-person at this time. Though there are many online schools available for families to choose for their children, SICC will provide a curriculum in alignment with the Archdiocese of Denver curriculum standards and expectations. This means that there won't be a disruption in what children who have attended Catholic schools will be learning when they receive instruction in SICC. SICC allows a family to still be enrolled in a physical Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Denver, but receive digital curriculum and instruction in a



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manner that will allow for a seamless transition back to the physical classroom when parents discern to do so in the best interest of their child and family.

Who will be teaching at SICC?

The Office of Catholic Schools has hired a strong leader to oversee SICC, and is forming a talented team of experienced teachers with expertise in digital teaching, along with a team of tutors with experience in providing one-on-one support and formation for students. Teachers will provide lessons in content, and tutors will be available every afternoon (see schedule below) for students to receive one-on-one help and support in their learning. Tutors will only be assigned 5 students so they are available to give adequate time to each student who needs help.

What will be taught at SICC?

Curriculum content will be offered in English, math, history, science, art, and catechesis/theology. Just as in in-person schools in the Archdiocese of Denver, all courses are ordered toward the intellectual formation of students, and taught from a Catholic worldview to form students in content, skills, and intellectual habits and dispositions that we know are necessary for the formation of students as disciples of Jesus Christ, with the values you desire for your children taught in each day of coursework.

Curriculum will be aligned with Archdiocese of Denver academic and catechesis/theology content standards.

Mostly recorded digital lessons, with some use of live digital lessons, will use core instructional practices to draw students into an understanding of the content, carefully designed by the teacher to be engaging and allow opportunities to check for understanding.

What is the daily structure of SICC? Will students be on a screen all day?

The daily schedule at SICC is as follows:

- Monday through Thursday:
 - o 8am-8:20am – Morning Prayer and Meeting via live Zoom
 - o 8:30am-10:45am: Curriculum Content Direct Instruction via pre-recorded or live Zoom
 - o 10:45-11:30am: Morning Play/Reading/Study independently
 - o 11:30am-12pm: Lunch
 - o 12:10-2:10pm: Tutoring/Independent Work Time via live Zoom
 - o 2:10-2:20pm: Submission of Daily Assignments
 - o 2:20-2:30pm: Closing Community Prayer via live Zoom
- Friday:
 - o 8am-8:20am – Morning Prayer and Meeting via live Zoom
 - o 8:30-9:30am: Art Lesson
 - o 9:30-10:45am: Assignments/Reading
 - o 10:45-11:30am: Morning Play/Reading/Study independently
 - o 11:30am-12pm: Lunch
 - o 12:10-2:10pm: Tutoring/Independent Work Time via live Zoom
 - o 2:10-2:20pm: Submission of Daily Assignments
 - o 2:20-2:30pm: Closing Community Prayer via live Zoom

How are students graded if enrolled in SICC?

Unlike many other online schools, which simply assess via timed tests, assessment for SICC will be narrative-based, and will be based on progression towards understanding the standards and/or text. The narrative-based assessment approach is to facilitate the close conversation that will occur between the teachers, tutors, and in-person classroom teachers. The narrative will go into a cumulative folder at the school at which the student is enrolled. In this configuration there will not be traditional letter grades except for students in 8th grade, who will receive a letter grade at the end of their time in SICC to facilitate matriculation to high school.

Student responsibility and effort will be monitored as well.

What learning platforms will be used in SICC?

SICC will use FACTS Management Student Information System, Google Classroom and Google Suite products or Microsoft 365 products, and Zoom.

What are the dates SICC will be offered?

SICC will be offered for the 2020-2021 school year. Families can enroll in SICC beginning July 20, 2020, after conversation with their school principal, indicating to the principal their intent to enroll in SICC. Final Registration for St. Isidore will be August 3, 2020. The first day of school for St. Isidore will be August 21 for a half day welcome and introductions with teachers and tutors. The first full day of learning begins August 24 with a half day of introductory and logistic materials, and a full day start on August 25, 2020.

SICC will offer curriculum in quarters. Quarters will be offered the following dates:

- Quarter 1: August 24 - October 16, 2020
- Quarter 2: October 19 - December 18, 2020
- Quarter 3: January 4 - March 5, 2021
- Quarter 4: March 8 – June 4, 2021

Parents can choose to have their child return to in-person learning at the end of a given quarter (refer to dates above). Parents will be asked to reenroll in St. Isidore for an upcoming quarter 4 weeks before the end of a current quarter. Once a family chooses to move from St. Isidore back to in-person learning at their school, we do ask that parents commit to in-school learning. Unfortunately, going back and forth between in-school learning and St. Isidore could be a disruption to student learning. Nevertheless, exemptions to this rule will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis given unique family needs and circumstances.

What is the cost of St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum?

St. Isidore is an extension of your current Catholic school – an online option for our parents who strongly desire to have their children learn in a Catholic community, remain connected to their current school, and be formed in a Catholic worldview and values, but are still not comfortable having their children attend school in-person at this time. The education and faith formation will be provided by skilled teachers and your child will benefit from tutors at a 1-5 ratio, ensuring specialized help should your child need it. You'll also continue to benefit from the nimbleness of the small sizes in Catholic education, both in the system and in the classroom. As a result of all that will be provided through this online option, the tuition will remain consistent with the tuition rate at your current school.

What do I need to commit to as the parent when I choose this online schooling option?

Parents choosing St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum option are asked to:


- Support the student schedule needs at home.
- Support and engage in family faith formation in catechesis.
- Support student learning in organization of materials, support student in the student's formation in reflection of self and needs, support student in pursuing tutoring for questions, support student in monitoring digital content consumption and healthy balancing screen time with non-screen time, support student in any required assignments that are given directly to engage parents in discussion.
- Assessment conversations involving the student (for older students), parents, teachers, and tutors will take place at the end of each quarter and parents commit to dedicating time for these conversations. Any retention or non-promotion conversations will occur by the end of the 3rd quarter.
- Support student with necessary internet connection and technology, communicating quickly to school leader if assistance is needed.
- Authorization for student to use Google products **or** Microsoft 365, Zoom, and FACTS.
- Monitor daily communication from tutor, and regular contact from contact teacher, which will include a nightly summary of learning and suggested questions that parents can ask their child about the day's learning.
- Nightly communication with student to deepen student understanding, clarify misunderstandings, and to connect over the child's intellectual formation.

If you have further questions, please contact your school principal. If you discern that the St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum digital distance learning option is the right fit for your student and your family for this academic term, we welcome you to register. After discussing with your school principal, please go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SICC-Registration-2021SY> to register for St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum option.

Yours in Christ,



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