



August 15, 2020

Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum option! We are so excited to have your family using St. Isidore for curriculum and instruction this quarter, and perhaps beyond. It is good to have you here. We are thrilled that you are all remaining part of your local-level Catholic school community, too. Our mission here at St. Isidore is to help support you in the formation of your children as disciples of Jesus Christ by offering curriculum from a Catholic worldview that aims to support your student in their eventual matriculation back to the in-person classroom.

St. Isidore is offered through the Office of Catholic Schools, in partnership with your local-level schools. Your principal should continue to be your point of contact for questions regarding the local-level school, but, our organizational leader for St. Isidore can be your point of contact for questions related to St. Isidore.

St. Isidore's organizational leader is Dr. Carla Dire Capstick. Dr. Capstick has been the principal of Blessed Sacrament Catholic School here in our archdiocese for the last 6 years, and in May she retired from her position there. Dr. Capstick (affectionately known to everyone as Dr. C.) received Bachelor of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from the University of Denver, and a Master of Arts degree and principal licensure from the University of Phoenix. A former U.S. History and AP U.S. Government and Politics teacher, Dr. C. has been an administrator since 2004. Since then, she has served as Dean of Students, Assistant Principal, and Principal. Dr. Capstick has served as faculty at Regis University. As a professional development trainer, Dr. C. has trained teachers across the country. Dr. C. has written curriculum at the national and school district levels in history and government, Response to Intervention, (part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), and pedagogy. At St. Isidore, she will be overseeing the content teachers, communicating with families, and coordinating communication between St. Isidore and local-level schools. We are thrilled she's joining us in our efforts with St. Isidore. She brings a wealth of wisdom and knowledge about Catholic education and meeting the needs of all students. Carla has been busy interviewing teachers and tutors and is looking forward to working with you and your children.



St. Isidore is also blessed to have an assistant organizational leader, Sarah Grey. Sarah has been the principal as Assumption Catholic School in our archdiocese for the last 5 years, worked both as an assistant principal and teacher in the archdiocese for 10 years before her principalship. Sarah is a graduate of the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program through the University of Notre Dame for Catholic school leaders, holds a master's degree in Education, as well as a master's degree in Educational Administration. She's a graduate of the ACE Teaching Fellows program through the University of Notre Dame, and is well-versed in quality instruction, and Catholic school administration. We're grateful to the Lord for bringing Sarah to the work here at St. Isidore. Sarah will largely be overseeing the tutoring team, providing feedback and evaluations of that team, and any questions related to tutors can be directed to Sarah.





### **Change to the First Day of St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum**

St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum option has been incredibly popular! We are thrilled to know so many of you desire to continue a Catholic education for your children, and we are grateful that the Lord invited us to create this option for you. We have been working hard on creating this new option for families, and we are excited to be hiring great teachers and tutors who will be able to support you all in the formation of your children.

When the Office of Catholic Schools created the new online curriculum, we hoped to have 80-100 students enroll in the program and had begun hiring teachers and tutors for those positions. Now, **more than 500 students have registered**. We are excited to have each student enrolled. The large number of students impacts the number of tutors required to meet our promised goal of a 1-5 tutor-to-student ratio. That number also means we've been interviewing and hiring many more teachers and tutors, and now need to work to onboard all of these members of the team, in addition to our students.

With this large increase in the number of students and the need to hire a lot more teachers and tutors than we originally thought, we want to make sure we can still deliver the quality instruction our students deserve and parents expect. With that in mind, **we have made the decision to push back the start of St. Isidore by one week to Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup>**.

Because of the flexibility in our Archdiocesan school calendar, we can utilize things like built-in snow days (not needed when the kids are already at home!) to make up the days in the school year so students will not have to still be in classes into mid-June. By using these flexible days in our calendar, we will end at the same time as the majority of our Catholic schools.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Dr. Carla Capstick at [carla.capstick@archden.org](mailto:carla.capstick@archden.org).

### **First Day of St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum**

The first day of St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum on August 31 will be a half day, 8am-11:30am. Please use the following link to access our day on August 31. We will email a Zoom link to you closer to our first day date.

We recommend a parent/caregiver attend the first day of St. Isidore with students to help the students navigate Zoom, the Learning Management System, and learn more about the teachers and tutors. Please also be on a device that allows for both your video and audio to work so we can see your smiling faces and hear you!

Our first day of St. Isidore will begin at 8am with a community opening prayer asking the Lord to bless our year and guide our hearts and minds in our time together pursuing truth, beauty, and goodness in our learning. We will then have an introduction of our content teachers and St. Isidore leaders, some fun get-to-know-each-other virtual activities, a chance to explore the Learning Management Platform, and a



chance to learn more about your child's tutor! The day will wrap up at 11:30am after a community closing prayer. We are looking forward to seeing your smiling faces for our first day of St. Isidore!

### **Root Beliefs of St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum Option**

The root beliefs guiding SICC are:

- We believe that the only true education is Catholic education because Catholic education can tend to the formation of the whole person.
- We believe that the next best option during an emergency pandemic is to mimic the intellectual formation, teacher-student relationship, and community which happens in an in-person environment as best as possible.
- We believe that parents know best the needs of their children and family.
- We believe that Catholic education supports parents in the formation of their children, but that parents are the primary educators of their children.
- We believe that online teaching must necessarily be kept simple.
- We believe that the communication of content and ideas should help students pursue what is true, good, and beautiful, by building a rich understanding of the story of history and the Church, classic stories, mathematical ideas and principles, the study of the handiwork of God in science, and the grammar of language and ideas.
- Our work in education is to assist parents in the development of the habits and dispositions of the student: to observe, wonder, discover, attend to something with attention, listen, remember, calculate, contemplate, and to love.

### **St. Isidore Content Teachers and Tutors**

We have been working hard hiring a wonderful, experienced team of content teachers to provide the asynchronous content for each grade level. A follow-up email will introduce the teaching team to you all.

Students will have a separate content teacher for each content area in St. Isidore: history, literacy, math, science, art, and catechesis/theology. Each content teacher will record a 25-minute asynchronous lesson for students to watch each day on Monday-Thursday, then on Friday students will get a 45-minute art lesson. We are thrilled to be able to offer a rich art course for students to complement the rigorous and engaging content they'll learn every day, too!

Students will have an afternoon block during which they will meet with their tutors in small groups of 5 students with 1 tutor at a time. The 2-hour block will run from 12:10-2:10pm, and the two-hour block will include direct work with the tutor, as well as time for independent application of the learning.

### **Learning Platform**

We will be using FACTS Learning Management Platform to house all student assignments, videos of content, and to submit student work. FACTS is also St. Isidore's Student Information System, so you will be able to log in to FACTS to see the narrative report on your student's learning each week, as well as communicate with teachers and tutors.

There are some great benefits to using the FACTS Learning Management Platform! They are:



- Assignments are easily viewed in FACTS Family Portal and the FACTS Family App.
- Allows parents to access their student's homework due dates, lesson plans, status of submitted homework, and grades received through FACTS Family Portal.
- Enhances student learning through improved pacing because students learn at their own speed.
- Allows for multiple student engagement techniques to keep students active in their learning
- Accessible through all modern internet browsers, and its responsive design also allows for use on tablets.

We are working on inputting all family information into FACTS, and once we complete that, you will receive an email from FACTS prompting you to create a username and password to log in. If your local-level school also uses FACTS, you will need to create a separate log-in for St. Isidore.

### **St. Isidore Email Address**

Each student will be receiving a St. Isidore email address. This should be the email address that the students use to create a FACTS log in to access the Learning Management System. All teacher-student communication should take place within FACTS though.

The student St. Isidore email address is tied to an Office 365 account, which allows the student to have access to a OneDrive, and Microsoft productivity tools such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote. These apps allow the student to create assignments, and submit them, but also to create shared documents and files to share with their teachers, tutors, or classmates in the case of any collaborative work.

Information from the Archdiocese of Denver IT department will be coming to you shortly to help you

### **Technology Needs**

- Adequate internet connection at home that allows a student to communicate with tutor without internet connectivity issues
- A device that allows a student to do web-based computing with a video camera and ability to communicate with audio
- Laptop or tablet large enough to read, with keyboard comfortable enough to type at the minimum paragraphs for grades 4 and under and three paragraph essays for grades 5 and up
- Ability to snap a picture of student work and ability to upload that student work to web-based Learning Management Platform

**School Supply List**

Kindergarten through 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	2 <sup>nd</sup> through 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	6 <sup>th</sup> through 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. 2 wood Pencils</li> <li>• Pencil sharpener</li> <li>• 1 pink rubber eraser</li> <li>• Box of 24 crayons</li> <li>• 1 set Crayola washable markers – thin</li> <li>• 1 set of Crayola markers – broad line</li> <li>• 1 pack blank paper</li> <li>• 5 <a href="#">Primary Composition Notebooks</a> (example linked here but can be any brand)</li> <li>• 5 folders: one yellow, one green, one red, one purple, and one orange</li> <li>• 1 pack of blank paper-copy or printer paper</li> <li>• 1 blunt child scissors</li> <li>• 1 small Elmer’s glue stick pack of 3 or 5</li> <li>• Small objects to be used for counting/math manipulatives (you can buy formal math counting squares, but also have on-hand materials from around the house such as small beans, cotton balls, math blocks, like-color/size Legos, like-color/size buttons, nuts/bolts)</li> <li>• Rosary</li> <li>• 1 pack of colored pencils</li> <li>• Black Sharpie</li> <li>• 1 8.5x11 or 9x12 in sketch/drawing book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. 2 wood Pencils</li> <li>• Pencil sharpener</li> <li>• 1 pink rubber eraser</li> <li>• Bible</li> <li>• 5 notebooks (composition books or single spiral bound notebooks)</li> <li>• 5 folders: one yellow, one green, one red, one purple, and one orange</li> <li>• 3 packs of 100 index cards</li> <li>• Personal organizer/calendar</li> <li>• 1 small Elmer’s glue stick pack of 3 or 5</li> <li>• 1 pack of blank paper-copy or printer paper</li> <li>• Scissors</li> <li>• Highlighters, 2 different colors</li> <li>• Box of 24 crayons</li> <li>• 1 set Crayola washable markers – thin</li> <li>• Rosary</li> <li>• 1 pack of colored pencils</li> <li>• Black Sharpie</li> <li>• 1 8.5x11 or 9x12 in sketch/drawing book</li> <li>• Graphite pencils sketch set</li> <li>• 1 set of oil pastels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. 2 wood Pencils</li> <li>• Pencil sharpener</li> <li>• 1 pink rubber eraser</li> <li>• Bible</li> <li>• 5 notebooks (composition books or single spiral bound notebooks)</li> <li>• 5 folders: one yellow, one green, one red, one purple, and one orange</li> <li>• 3 packs of 100 index cards</li> <li>• Personal organizer/calendar</li> <li>• 1 small Elmer’s glue stick pack of 3 or 5</li> <li>• Scissors</li> <li>• Highlighters, 2 different colors</li> <li>• 1 set Crayola washable markers – thin</li> <li>• 1 pack of colored pencils</li> <li>• Calculator</li> <li>• 1 package graph paper, or graph paper composition book/notebook</li> <li>• Rosary</li> <li>• Black Sharpie</li> <li>• 1 8.5x11 or 9x12 in sketch/drawing book</li> <li>• Graphite pencils sketch set</li> <li>• 1 set of oil pastels</li> </ul>



## **Daily Schedule**

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 – students need to work through this block on their own, watching each content video
  - o 10:45-11:30am: Morning Leisure Block
  - 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 Leisure Block
  - 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

## **Morning Leisure Block**

We believe our work in education is to assist parents in the development of the habits and dispositions of the student: to observe, wonder, discover, attend to something with attention, listen, remember, calculate, contemplate, and to love. These habits and dispositions are formed in and through that which we study in academic content offerings. But, the formation of our students in these dispositions and habits necessarily happens through engagement with reality in other ways beyond direct instruction. In an in-person learning environment, this happens in the community of the school, at mass, in prayer at school, and within the life of the school beyond the moments of direct instruction (recess, passing periods, the lunchroom, etc.). We believe learning should happen in peaceful leisure: engaging and enjoying in that which is before us, which can happen with academic content, but also from stepping away from direct study. Leisure is necessary for the spiritual life: it is crucial in developing a sense of wonder, and cultivated, can draw us closer to God. Read more about a Catholic understanding of leisure by cutting and pasting the following links in your browser.

<https://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/value-leisure/>

<https://fatima.org/news-views/catholic-apologetics-28/>

<https://www.catholic.org/news/hf/faith/story.php?id=44571>



The intent of the morning leisure block is for students to spend time off of screens and tending to exploration and attention away from direct study. Students will share with their tutor what they did for their leisure time each day.

Suggested activities for the morning leisure block:

- Pray together as a family.
- Recite a rosary by yourself or with someone else at home.
- Take a walk and observe nature.
- For younger students: creative play!
- Exercise: go for a run, take a bike, or scooter ride, lift weights, circuit training, etc.
- Read a great book.
- Engage in an act of service.

### **Setting Up a Learning Space at Home**

It will be important to have a dedicated learning space in your home. This learning space should have a good area for students to store supplies for easy access, a good workspace for watching content on their device and have notebooks and space to write. Student devices should always be able to be seen and heard by the parent/caregiver while students are online to help the student stay safe online. The learning space should also be quiet, and free from other noise in the home. Other people should not be walking into the camera frame during tutoring blocks, as it is distracting (parents are always welcome to be present, but we just ask if they sit off to the side so as not to be on screen. We certainly encourage parents to observe if they desire.) Finally, the learning space should have adequate lighting so that the student can be seen on the camera.

### **Dress Code**

Students should always maintain a modest presence when engaging with tutors and other students online. Students should be properly dressed in casual wear. No pajamas, bathrobes, etc., which would not be worn out of the house. Hair should be neat, and students should not eat during live tutoring time.

### **Important Dates**

- Quarter 1 ends: October 16, 2020
- Quarter 2 ends: December 18, 2020
- Quarter 3 ends: March 5, 2021
- Quarter 4 ends: *Last day of school* June 4, 2021



Discernment out of St. Isidore and back to the in-person classroom, or intent to reenroll for the following quarter, will need to be communicated 3 weeks before the quarter end date. Decisions for the upcoming quarter are due:

- September 25, 2020 for Quarter 1 end date
- November 25, 2020 for Quarter 2 end date
- March 12, 2020 for Quarter 3 end date

We are looking forward to keeping in contact with you as we get closer to the first day of St. Isidore Catholic Curriculum option!

Know that we are praying for each of your families.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Carla Dire Capstick". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Carla Dire Capstick  
St. Isidore Organizational Leader