



# Religious Education Program Handbook 2023-2024



ST. IGNATIUS  
OF LOYOLA  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

## **St. Ignatius Loyola Parish**

### **Pastor**

Fr. Francis Therese Krautter, CSJ  
fr.francis@loyoladenver.org

### **Parochial Vicar**

Fr. John Therese Creus, CSJ  
fr.john@loyoladenver.org

### **Parish Office**

2309 Gaylord Street  
Denver CO 80205  
303.322.8042  
parish@loyoladenver.org

### **Family Center**

2244 Vine Street

## **Religious Education Coordinator**

Toni Armstead  
303.283.8995  
toni@loyoladenver.org

## **Director of Faith Formation & Religious Education**

Dr. Camarin Porter  
303.630-9480  
camarin@loyoladenver.org

## **RE 2023-2024 School Year**

September 17th, 2023 to May 5th, 2023

## **First Reconciliation**

Saturday, Feb. 17th, 2024 (time TBD)

## **Confirmation & First Eucharist (Restored Order)\***

June 2024 (date & time TBD)

## **RE Class Times**

8:45-9:45 a.m. (before the 10:00 Mass)

Kindergarten meets in the Gesu Room (Brady Hall)

Grades 1-8 meet in the Family Center classrooms

10:00-11:00 a.m. (during the 10:00 Mass)

Children's Church meets in the Gesu Room (Brady Hall)

BH = Brady Hall (church basement) FC = Family Center (2244 Vine St.)

## New this year....

This year the list begins with our pastor, Fr. Francis, and parochial vicar, Fr. John. Last June, we celebrated the end of the Jesuit era in our parish, and the following weekend we welcomed Fr. Francis and Fr. John from the Congregation of St. John (CSJ).

Our overall goals remain the same as last year: ensuring transparency and safety, and supporting parents in their roles their child(ren)'s primary catechists.

This year only our second and third-grade classes will ask parents to use **Google Classrooms**. Access information for those online classrooms, as well as online resources and digital editions of our textbooks, are available on the cover sheet in your family's RE folder.

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We hope that families will find this handbook a convenient guide for the year. Please remember our online site for RE. (No log-in codes needed this year):

<https://loyoladenver.org/parent-portal>

You can find videos and other resources, including downloadable coloring pages from thecatholickid.com here:

<https://loyoladenver.org/online-resources-for-parents>

\*For anyone needing an explanation or reminder about what Restored Order means for sacramental preparation, see:

<https://loyoladenver.org/restored-order>



*“How precious is the family as the privileged place for transmitting the faith”*

**Pope Francis**

## **RE Family Ministry**

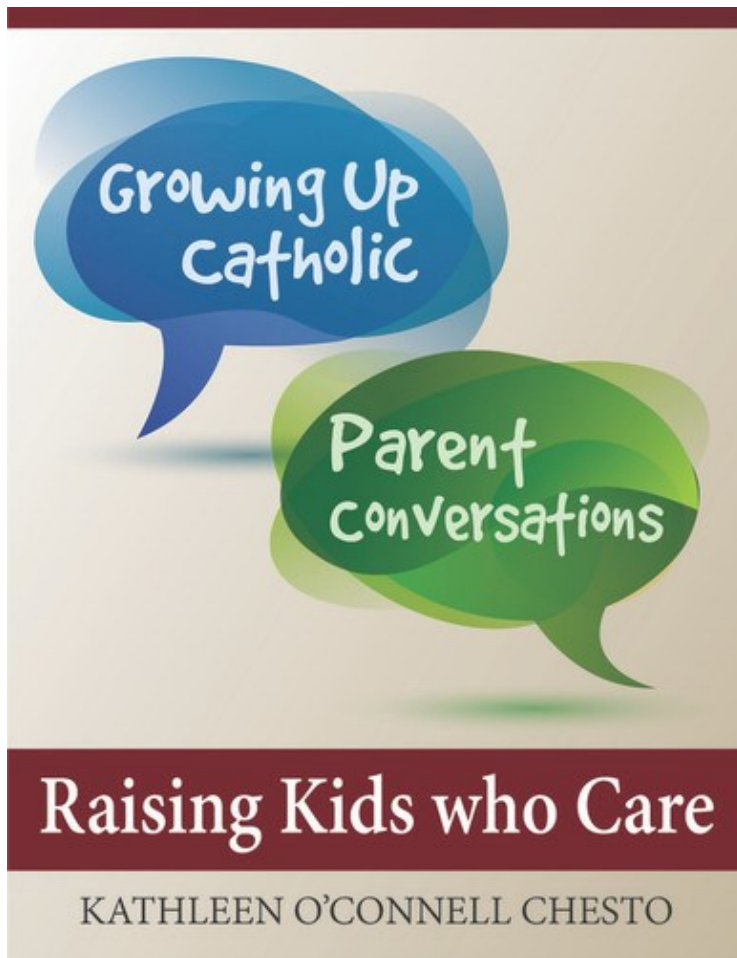
This ministry serves families by providing space for education, collaboration, service, and relationship-building. Parish and Ignatian Spirituality Program staff members and volunteers will organize optional monthly Sunday meetings and events.

We invite parents to meet in Brady Hall for a combination of social time and topical discussions on the following Sundays:

Sept. 24th  
Oct. 22nd  
Nov. 12th  
Dec. 10th  
Jan. 21st  
Feb. 25th  
March 17th  
April 21st

**8:50-9:40 a.m. in Brady Hall**

*Learn about our discussion materials on the following page.*



This year the monthly Family Ministry sessions will provide parents with copies of a lesson from the Growing Up Catholic: Parent Conversations series from The Pastoral Center.

This lesson, “Raising Kids Who Care” focuses on building a habit of empathy in kids of all ages.

If you would like to lead one or more of the monthly session discussions, email [camarin@loyoladenver.org](mailto:camarin@loyoladenver.org).

“This small group series leads parents through conversations about how families can become more balanced, empathetic, and loving. Weaving in familiar examples, recent wisdom from Pope Francis, and insights from our faith tradition, this series will kick off rich, lively discussions and give parents practical tools to bring home with them.” (<https://pastoral.center/growing-up-catholic-raising-kids-who-care>)

The sessions include:

1. **Wasting Time with Family** - How to live in relationship as a family / How to help our children grow in empathy
2. **Rules, Rules, Rules** - Finding the right balance in setting rules / An inductive process that motivates children to do the right thing
3. **Habits of the Heart** - Household rituals and responsibilities / The importance of forgiveness and reconciliation in families
4. **Decision Making & Prayer** - Helping children develop the life skill of making decisions / Making time and space to listen
5. **Self Esteem & Failure** - Why failure is important / Insights on honesty and lying
6. **Seek First the Kingdom** - Dealing with stress and anxiety / Building in rest and quiet

## Meet Loyola's 2023-2024 Catechists!

**Angelita Sims** (Children's Church)

**Ann Cohen** (Children's Church & 5th Grade)

**Veronica Taylor** (Kindergarten)

**Lisa Thompson** (1st Grade)

**Sharon Woodruff** (2nd Grade)

**Vanessa Martin-Wegryn** (3rd Grade)

**Natalie Sivak** (4th Grade)

**Michael Eden** (5th Grade)

**Ian Dalton** (6-8th Grade)

Long-term catechists **Peter Gohl** and **Carl Fritz** will be substitutes this year.

**Toni Armstead** (RE Coordinator & substitute catechist)

**Camarin Porter** (DFF/DRE, Family Catechesis catechist, & Family Ministry Coordinator)

*Please see the RE Monthly Bulletin for September for catechist bios.*

## RE Program Mission Statement

As a community called together and sustained by Ignatian values, our Religious Education leaders and catechists recognize the special place that children, teens, and parents of the parish have in our community, and the unique opportunities available for families to learn and embody the Catholic faith and the life-long calls to:

Be curious about society and show compassion for the world and all of its unique and diverse living beings.

Embrace the sacred and find God in all things, through thoughtful observation, study, and even imagination.

Show empathy for everyone you encounter; have love for their minds, bodies, and spirits; and maintain a desire to encounter them with open-mindedness and generosity.

Develop humility and a habit of seeing your own condition and others' within a broader context of social structures and inequities. Look for and imagine opportunities for transformative social change through your actions.

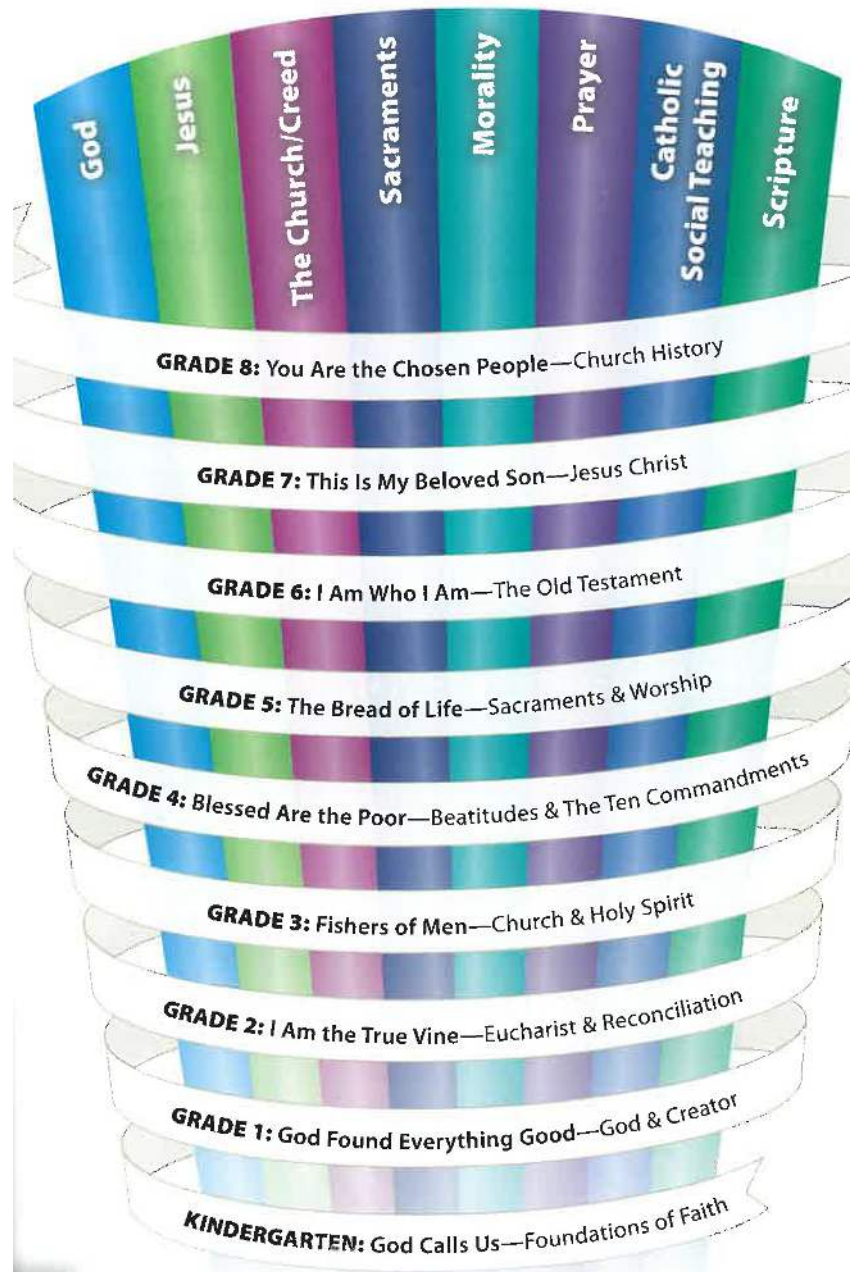
Serve others with a sense of solidarity and sensitivity for the shared human condition. Find strength and guidance in the transformative power of God's love.

## Our RE and Sacramental Prep Texts

Loyola's RE program for Restored Order (RO) is structured around the *Finding God* curriculum from Loyola Press. We use other supplemental texts from Loyola Press for sacramental preparation.

Parents can access online resources through the Loyola Press *Finding God* site. Digital editions of the K-8th-grade textbooks are available in the Loyola Press Digital Library. See the class information sheets in your family's folder for links and access information.

Sign up for the optional *Finding God* e-newsletter:  
<https://tinyurl.com/5fue7753>





## LOYOLA FAMILY CATECHESIS

HOME SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR

BAPTISM RECONCILIATION

CONFIRMATION FIRST EUCHARIST



In 2021, Pope Francis recognized the ancient and vital role of catechists by inaugurating the lay Ministry of Catechists. In his apostolic letter [\*Antiquum ministerium\*](#), he described catechists as individuals of "deep faith [and] authentic witnesses of holiness." He also noted "the particular responsibility of parents for the Christian formation of their children..." As your child's earliest catechist, you as a parent already form their faith through home discussions, prayers, and your daily model of the faith-in-action.

Loyola remains a unique RE program, as a mid-size parish offering in-person classes for pre-K through 8th grade. All registered kids join classes with their age-mates, to create bonded communities of classmates and friends over the course of the year. Our catechists for second and third-grade provide sacramental preparation for Reconciliation, Confirmation, and First Eucharist, in addition to the regular RE curriculum for children that age. As our parish continues to receive the blessing of new members and growth, we have begun making changes to accommodate our classroom space in the FC.

Sacramental preparation for children outside of Restored Order (RO) and those who cannot regularly attend class takes place through Family Catechesis at home. For example, children and teens past third-grade who need the sacrament of Confirmation will work one-on-one with their parents at home each week, with guidance from catechists, the CRE, or the DFF. They will still attend Sunday classes with their age groups, and receive the rich experience of Religious Education classes infused with Ignatian perspectives on spirituality, service, and justice. *(continued next page)*

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At all parishes without attached schools, RE is a standalone program with its own curriculum, separate from sacramental preparation. Our RE classes teach students the history, ethics, and other foundational lessons about the Church. They also create a unique space for kids and teens to bond and learn from each other and their catechists as they grow in their understanding of the faith.

Although the Archdiocese of Denver has instituted the Restored Order for sacraments, parishes still need to accommodate families who move to the area from non-RO regions. Likewise, they also serve families whose children are simply beginning or continuing sacramental prep at an older age for a variety of reasons. No matter their circumstances, children can receive preparation for their sacraments and enter into full communion with the church at Loyola.

Faith formation is always a family affair, though, no matter the RE program structure. As noted above, our goals this year are to ensure transparency between catechists and parents, and to encourage and facilitate faith discussions at home. For families with kids or teens older than third-grade needing Reconciliation, Confirmation, and/or First Eucharist, you will:

- work one-on-one with your child(ren) at home on weekly sacramental prep lessons (estimated at one roughly one hour each week).
- use a textbook and online resources from Loyola Press to guide your weekly lessons.
- meet with the Family Catechesis catechists for support throughout the year.

Loyola's RE staff are here to offer resources and guidance, and to assess each child's progress as they move closer to receiving their sacraments in spring. We hope this change for older children enriches your experience as a parent catechist, and helps you grow in faith with your children.

## RE Policies

1. Because we have children in our program with severe **nut and other allergies**, do not let your child(ren) bring food from home into the FC.
2. Please email your catechist as soon as possible after determining that your child(ren) will **miss a class**.
3. **Only authorized adults are allowed inside the Family Center on Sunday mornings.** “Authorized” adults are the immediate parents or legal guardians of a child enrolled in our program OR other adults specified by named on the RE Registration Form as having permission to pick-up a child. To add or remove someone from “authorized” status, please email [camarin@loyoladenver.org](mailto:camarin@loyoladenver.org).
4. Please come into the covered porch or the foyer of the FC to **drop off** your child(ren). Parents or other authorized adults should accompany kids at all times to and from the church or their cars. Traffic moves quickly along 23rd Street, even on Sunday mornings. Please cross the street at the crosswalk, and use caution. Do not assume drivers will slow down or stop simply because you are waiting to cross.
5. Please come into the yard or the foyer of the FC to **pick up** your child(ren). *Please observe this policy.* Children will only be released to parents or other adults specifically listed by name on your child(ren)’s RE registration form.
6. Please remain vigilant about the **risks of flu, RSV, and COVID** and keep children at home if they are experiencing coughing, sneezing, congestion, or other potentially contagious symptoms. Masks are not required but are strongly recommended during cold and flu season. Contact Toni, Camarin, or a catechist if a member of your family tests positive for Covid this year.

## RE Policies (*continued*)

7. **Do not share other parents' contact information** with anyone outside of the RE program. If you would like to contact other parents and do not know them, please approach them in person or ask Toni or Camarin to connect you with them by email.
8. If you suspect that someone in your family may seek **unauthorized access** to the Family Center or attempt to talk to or pick-up your child, please alert the RE staff and Fr. Francis.
8. For sacramental preparation, please **provide requested documents**, e.g. Baptismal Certificates, Godparent and Sponsor forms, etc., in a timely manner. Your child's sacraments may be delayed by a year if our RE staff does not receive these documents or if your child is not fully prepared.
9. If possible, please ask your child to take a **potty break** before leaving for class.
10. Since our Family Center does not have a water fountain or a kitchen with dishes, please send your child to class with a **filled, reusable bottle** if they will need or want to drink water during class.

# **“Protecting God’s Children”**

## **VIRTUS Safe Environment Training**

The Archdiocese provides mandated VIRTUS® Teaching Safety-Empowering God's Children (EGC) program for training all children in K-12 in parish RE classes and in Catholic schools. The VIRTUS® training is grade and age-appropriate. There are six total lessons in the complete EGC training program. The Archdiocese of Denver runs on a six-year program cycle, meaning that children study one designated lesson each year. **For 2023-2024 it is Lesson 4 "Secrets, Surprises, and Promises."** (Please note: the Pre-K lesson for Children's Church students is the same each year: Lesson 1 "Basic Rules for Safety")

**This training will take place at home, with parents going through the online material together with their child(ren).**

1. Read the EGC VIRTUS Parent Letter--Loyola, which gives a brief overview of the training opportunity. Email or call the Director of Faith Formation with any questions. *Note, if you previously opted out of the training when you registered your child(children), you may go ahead with the training if you have changed your mind since then.*

For parents who opt to provide the training to their child(ren), please follow the guidance below. For parents who *opt out* of providing the training, please complete the parent letter and submit it as directed.

2. Read the **VIRTUS Program Overview** brochure in your family’s RE folder. This text is for parents only, not children.
3. Soon after the RE year begins, you will receive an email with the VIRTUS lesson file(s) for your child(ren). As your child's catechist, you can proceed through the lesson at your own pace, e.g. in one sitting or over one or more days. While this safety lesson is brief, it should provide a good opportunity to discuss personal boundaries and consent with your child(ren).

The lesson document has two sections: the instructions for you, the parents and the material and activities you'll work on with your child(ren).

4. When you've completed the lesson, please complete and sign the EGC VIRTUS Parent Letter--Loyola and submit it by mail, email, in-person, or dropping it off at the parish office. Please aim to complete the training and return the form by December 31, 2023.

If you have questions at any point before, during, or after the training, please contact Camarin by email at [camarin@loyoladenver.org](mailto:camarin@loyoladenver.org) or phone (quicker response) 303.630.9480.