

# 4 favorite lessons from St. Ignatius of Loyola

As we celebrate his feast day, here are some of my favorite lessons from St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus:

1. **Be open to change—and embrace it.** Ignatius wasn't planning for his order to focus on education. He didn't initially see that as his calling. But though he may have opened his first school with reluctance, he embraced his vocation wholeheartedly. So many times in life I have ended up on a path I didn't choose—or didn't choose until another path led nowhere. I learned recently that statues of St. Ignatius often show him with one foot ahead of the other because Jesuits always have to be ready to step forward, away from where they are. I love how St. Ignatius was willing to be open to the possibilities of a different course of action.
2. **People can change, even if that change doesn't come easily.** Ignatius was born to a wealthy family. He became a soldier and was badly injured in battle. He didn't develop a strong relationship with Jesus until later—and it didn't always come easily. He struggled between darkness and light. But he found his way to God. And he helped lead others to Him, too.
3. **Seek God in all things.** It can be easy to get bogged down in the hectic busyness of a day. It can be very difficult, in fact, to see a flat tire or spilled milk as anything other than a hassle. St. Ignatius would encourage us to see God in the person who helps us with the tire or in the child who was giggling too hard to hold a cup of milk properly. Many people speak of finding God in all things, but one of my Jesuit friends says that can feel daunting. He encouraged me to think instead of “seeking” rather than “finding” God in all things. Although that may not always be natural or comfortable, it is always rewarding. And it helps me feel connected to God and to those around me.
4. **Live with gratitude and optimism for the future.** Ignatius encouraged his companions to pray the examen, looking back on the day with gratitude and thinking of what they could do better tomorrow. In our fast-paced world, it can be hard to pause and reflect before launching into the next day. But I

love that approach—and wish I turned to the examen more regularly myself.

**~Prayer of St. Ignatius~**

*Take, Lord, receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding,  
my whole will, all that I have and all that I possess.*

*You gave it all to me, Lord; I give it all back to you.*

*Do with it as you will, according to your good pleasure.*

*Give me your love and your grace; for with this I have all that I need.*

*Amen.*