

St. Cletus School
Preschool – Kindergarten Handbook
FAITH FAMILY FUTURE



700 W. 55th St.
LaGrange, Illinois
708-352-4820
www.stcletusparish.com/school

2011-2012

WELCOME

WELCOME TO ST. CLETUS PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN!

At St. Cletus School our preschoolers discover and learn through the use of themes, activities, and play experiences. They're interactions with each other and with the teachers in the room are often the catalyst for further growth, both academically and socially. Each child is respected as a unique person with special gifts and talents.

Their growth and development, while guided by the teachers at school, is not complete without the involvement of the parents. Thus, we encourage close contact between parent and school to facilitate your child's education. We also advocate visits to school or telephone calls whenever there are questions or concerns.

Starting Kindergarten is a major milestone for both parent and child. By working together, home and school, we can help them adjust quickly and begin a life-long love of learning.

We look forward to a wonderful partnership as we work together to foster spiritual, intellectual, and social development in your child.

Sincerely,

Jeff Taylor, Principal
And Early Childhood Team

PHILOSOPHY

Preschool:

Early childhood is a time of exploration and discovery. We know that young children learn by "hands on" experiences. We strive to enhance each child's growth and development in a stimulating atmosphere of warmth and understanding. Our developmentally appropriate program allows each child to develop as an individual as well as part of a group in a happy, safe, and faith-based environment. Parents are encouraged to participate in the spiritual, intellectual and social development of their children realizing that each child is a unique gift from God.

Kindergarten:

Our kindergarten program is built upon a learning environment that fosters the academic,

social and spiritual growth of each child. In partnership with our school families, we are committed to developing a strong sense of faith, based on Catholic doctrine and Christian values, within our students.

Our kindergarten classrooms are developmentally appropriate, created to challenge and meet the varying academic and social needs of a diverse group of learners. Our hands-on, center-based classrooms allow each child to be an active participant in his/her learning of literacy, science, social studies and math concepts. We will provide our students with experiences that encourage critical thinking, exploration, questioning, speaking, writing and drawing. We aim to create a safe and nurturing learning environment where children can develop social behaviors that benefit BOTH the individual and the group. Within this environment, each child feels valued and successful in his/her learning.

GENERAL POLICIES AND INFORMATION

ADMISSION

Preschool:

A child entering the 3-year-old program must be three years of age before September 1st of that year or four years of age before September 1st of that year for the 4-year-old program. A copy of the certificates of birth and baptism are needed at the time of registration. All students must be fully toilet trained prior to the first day of school.

Kindergarten:

A child entering Kindergarten MUST be five years of age on or before September 1st of that year. St. Cletus School offers an all day program. A morning program is also offered. Those students are in the same class as the all day program, but they leave at 11:30. Parents are best equipped to decide which program is right for their child. Before you choose either program, be assured that the curriculum and skills presented are the same in both sessions. Our goal is to prepare children for first grade.

St. Cletus School admits students of any race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students in the school. All financial matters and transfer information must be completed before a transfer is issued. All records will then be forwarded to the new school upon request.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Preschool: Arrival

Please drop off children for morning or all day Preschool at the Flagpole door, door # 3, or follow the drop off line and a patrol person will assist your child. Each school day, the preschool teacher/assistant will greet the children from 7:50 - 8:00 each morning. For children arriving for afternoon preschool at 12:15, please drop them off at the East door, door #6 where a teacher/assistant will greet them. If you are arriving late, please bring your preschooler into school through the main door, door #2.

Preschool: Departure

For those students leaving at 10:45, please pick up the children at the East door, door #6.

For children leaving at 3:00 pm, please pick them up by the flagpole. You may either park on the church side of the lot, or come to get your child, or you may follow the pick up line and a patrol person will bring your child to your car.

CLASS TIMES**Preschool:**

All day preschool is from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. AM preschool is 8:00 am to 10:45 am. PM preschool is 12:15 pm to 3:00 pm.

Kindergarten:

All day kindergarten is from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm daily. AM Kindergarten is from 8:00 am to 11:30 am daily.

BEFORE AND AFTER CARE PROGRAM

AM Preschool students, full day Preschool, and all Kindergarten students may enroll in our Before Care Program on days they attend school. Before Care opens at 7am.

PM Preschool students and full day Kindergarten students may enroll in our After Care Program on days they attend school. Our After Care Program closes at 5:45pm. A separate registration form is required for before or after care. Forms are available in the school office or on our website.

ATTENDANCE

Please e-mail your child's absence to attendance@stcletusparish.com and CC your child's teacher or call the office (708-352-4820) between 7:45 AM and 8:30 AM if your child will be absent. A child must have a written excuse when returning to school after an absence. If your child becomes ill during school and is unable to take part in class activities, you will be contacted. Please pick up your child immediately in the school office.

VISITATION

We welcome all visitors. Parents are encouraged to visit and observe. Please contact the teacher to set up an appointment. Please keep in mind, however, that many times the children will act differently when parents or other visitors are present. It is important to keep the lines of communication open between the parent and the teacher.

BEHAVIOR POLICY

We will provide an environment where the children enjoy a positive learning experience guided by Christian values. Behavior will be handled in a positive manner. Redirection of activities will always be the first technique attempted by a teacher. Children learn to use their "words" to express their feelings and frustrations. Parents will be notified if excessive inappropriate behavior occurs.

SNACK TIME

Parents are expected to provide weekly snacks for the class on a rotating basis. The parents are given a calendar with their snack date noted. Parents are responsible for a **nutritious** snack, drink, napkins, and cups. If the snack requires plates, forks, etc., please include these.

SCHOOL ATTIRE

The children should come dressed comfortably for school. Keep in mind that we paint, glue and use various art and craft materials. Gym shoes are required as we exercise inside and outside. For the safety of the children, please no flip flops, clogs, or backless shoes.

Kindergarteners are to wear their gym uniform and gym shoes on days when they have gym.

BACK PACKS

Please no wheeled back packs for the little ones as they can be unsafe when walking in a line.

Birthdays and Special Days:

We enjoy celebrating many "Special Days," as well as birthdays and other celebrations. If a child's birthday is in the summer, we will celebrate their half year birthdates. Notification will be sent home with all the details (date, number of treats, etc.).

Parents will also be notified of any other special events. They will be asked to help out by sending something such as napkins, cups, plates, treats, etc. sometime throughout the year for our "Special Days." Some of these "Special Days" are Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, etc.

COMMUNICATION

All news is communicated through your child's back pack or on our website which can be found at www.stcletusparish.com/school. For weekly newsletters please go to "Parents" then Newsletters. Click on either Pre-School or Kindergarten to access news and other information about your child's class.

Every Wednesday the Scoop is published on line with all school news as well as other outside activities available to St. Cletus families. The latest School Scoop can also be found on the school web page.

HEALTH POLICIES AND MEDICATION

A child's progress in school depends greatly upon his/her physical and emotional well-being. All children in the State of Illinois are required to submit evidence of a current physical examination and inoculation against communicable diseases before they are admitted to school.

Health forms will be included in the registration packet and are due on or before the first day of school. Free immunization services are offered at the Lyons Township building located at 6404 Joliet Road in Countryside.

The school has the services of a nurse who maintains individual pupil health records. Please review School Medication Procedures distributed in August.

Hearing and vision tests will be given in school during the first/second quarter.

CURRICULUM

Preschool:

The St. Cletus Preschool provides children with a wide range of experiences and activities designed to encourage and assist in the total development of the whole child. The concept of God's love for us and the unique nature of each individual child will be introduced and reinforced in activities and discussions.

Key areas addressed in our curriculum include:

1. Spiritual and Emotional Growth
2. Social/Interaction Skills
3. Gross and Fine Motor Development
4. Basic Foundation in Academic areas: Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies Readiness.

All activities in our curriculum are age and developmentally appropriate to meet the individual needs of each child. Learning centers are set up for the individual needs, interests, and stages of each child. These areas provide the opportunity for intellectual and physical development while enhancing and reinforcing communication skills and self-esteem.

All children are encouraged to use the many manipulatives: blocks, trucks, dolls, cars, and our various assortments of toys and learning materials. We incorporate music, finger plays, and gross and fine motor skills into our routine.

During each session we learn about God and the world He created. Children enjoy learning short prayers, stories, and songs about Jesus. The preschool attends some school Masses with their 5th grade partners.

There are many ways in which you, as a parent, can enrich and encourage this experience. For example, before preschool begins:

1. Your child should begin to learn safety. He or she should work on learning his/her name (first and last) telephone number and parents' names. This should then be reinforced at home and at school throughout the year.
2. Your child needs to be independent in regard to toilet activities, and should be able to dress himself/herself independently.
3. Read with your child as much as possible. This is a very rewarding and fun experience for both of you. One of the most important things you can do for your child is to instill in them a love for reading.
4. Do not use "baby" talk. This will encourage the development of appropriate language skills in preschool.
5. Provide a wide range of experiences for your child, and then discuss them with your child.

6. Provide opportunities for your child to play, share, and interact with other children. This will assist in developing social skills in preschool.
7. Help your child look forward to preschool as a safe, friendly, happy, and fun place to be.

Kindergarten:

The Kindergarten curriculum is based upon an atmosphere of active learning experiences. Through a variety of activities children learn to think, solve problems, share ideas, and more.

These concepts are fostered through activities like building with blocks, modeling clay, counting beads, and writing stories. They learn through interactive hands-on activities at their own pace.

Students enter the Kindergarten classroom with very different backgrounds and levels of “educational” preparation; therefore, many of the activities are individualized to accommodate the unique needs of each child. While some students enter the classroom with very little interactive experience outside of the family environment, some have been involved in highly structured preschool or daycare programs. Children learn to read somewhere between four and eight years of age.

A goal of Kindergarten is to assist children in developing a “concept of word”: that letters form words and that print has meaning. Frequently reading to and with your child helps develop an awareness of story parts, an ability to make predictions, an understanding of what to expect from a book, and a solid vocabulary to begin reading.

Writing is important in Kindergarten. Children learn to use the appropriate letter formation when printing. It is important that they learn to hold a pencil correctly. They are encouraged to write words using developmental spelling (write down the sounds heard). This not only expands creative writing skills; it provides the necessary momentum for learning letter/sound correlations.

In religion the children learn prayers and songs. They will read stories about families much like the families at St. Cletus. They will also attend school Masses with their 8th grade partners. The children talk about sharing, being kind to one another and helping at home. Basic Catholic doctrine is also introduced.

Our program prepares students for the formal study of math, which begins in first grade. Sorting, grouping, and graphing activities are hands-on designed to familiarize them with math concepts. Classes also introduce science and social studies concepts.

On The First Day of Preschool/Kindergarten:

1. Arrive on time so that your child will not have to wait. A long wait will add to any tension or fears that exist for both of you.

2. Be cheerful when you leave, and do not linger. Any apprehension will be perceived by the child and make parting more difficult. Very often the first day is more difficult for the parents than the child.
3. Build confidence in your child by being on time to pick him/her up when school ends. A small child can become fearful when a parent is not on time.
4. Make sure you discuss any fears your child may have concerning school. The school staff is always available to discuss concerns. Call the office and leave a message or e-mail; the teacher will return your call as soon as possible.

After Preschool/Kindergarten Begins:

1. Make sure your child is well rested and well-nourished before school begins each day.
2. Encourage regular attendance and punctuality. Your child should attend every class day that he/she is well. Since subjects and experiences are taught in sequence, absences interfere with student progress.
3. Check your child's backpack daily. Show interest in the things your child brings home and his/her experiences. Encourage him/her to discuss and explain activities that took place. This helps to build confidence and a positive self-image.
4. Be active in your child's school life. Stay in touch with the teacher and school. Family School Association (FSA) offers many activities throughout the school year. St. Cletus is well known for its active, concerned parents, and prides itself on the exciting, vital interaction that exists between parents and school. There are also many organizations throughout St. Cletus that thrive only through the active participation of our parents. If you would like to volunteer to be more involved, there are countless ways to do so.
5. If your child is in Kindergarten, try dropping your child off in front of school and encourage them to walk up to the flagpole entrance. This is a big step for you and your child. It is part of the growing process.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences:

We provide an opportunity for you to talk privately with us about your child during the first and second semesters. Parents schedule a Parent-Teacher conference twice a year. These conferences are designed to provide specific feedback on your son's or daughter's progress. At this conference, we will address specific questions or concerns you may have. If you have immediate concerns that you feel need to be addressed, please don't hesitate to call us at school and set up an appointment.

Parent-Teacher contact is always welcome. Feel free to contact the teacher with any concerns or helpful information that will help make your child's preschool/kindergarten experience a better one. The teacher will also contact you with any concerns that might arise. Good communication between parents and staff is essential.

Report Cards:

Students in Preschool and kindergarten receive two report cards: one in winter and one in the spring. Please check the school calendar for distribution dates.

SAFETY**Fire Drills and Emergencies:**

We have a safety plan for emergencies, fire evacuation and severe weather occurrence. Fire drills are conducted regularly. Tornado drills are conducted regularly during the appropriate season of the year. A crisis drill is conducted once a year.

If it becomes necessary to close school because of inclement weather conditions or another emergency, you will receive an e-mail, a notice will be posted on the parent page of the school website and the announcement will be made over radio stations WBBM, WGN, WLS or www.emergencyclosings.com as soon as such a decision is made. A phone tree can also be set up in each classroom to get the word out that way.

Parking Lot Procedures:

For the safety of all concerned, please follow the procedures for the drop-off and pick-up of students. Please do not drive through or park in the barricaded area of the black top in front of school during the school day. Barricades will extend the full width of the playground from Stone Avenue to the sidewalk between the church and school. The barricades will be in place from 7:30 AM – 3:30 PM. Parents are welcome to park along Stone Avenue in the angle spots on the east side of Stone Avenue, or across from the Church/Rectory. Proper procedures for drop-off and pick-up are detailed in our Parent / Student Handbook.