

Saint Mary's
Catholic School

**Little Blessings Preschool
and Pre-Kindergarten**

417 Chestnut Street
Mt. Carmel, IL 62863
Phone: (618) 263-3183
Fax: (618) 263-3596
Email: smsrocketsoffice@hotmail.com

Principal: Mr. Tyler Buss
Preschool Teacher: Mrs. Abby Eads
PreK Teacher: Mrs. Emily Wilson



Dear Parents:

We are happy to welcome you and your child to St. Mary's Catholic Preschool & Pre-Kindergarten. It is our desire to make your child's transition into school life a pleasant and rewarding experience. We will provide a year of educational fun and engagement for your child.

This handbook contains information about the program. Please save it for future references. Also, a weekly newsletter will be sent home with your child to keep you informed about events during the school year.

The children's time at St. Mary's "Little Blessings" Preschool & Prekindergarten will be primarily a life of guided play. Their spontaneous energy, curiosity, and inventiveness (used in play activities) are sources from which a lifetime of learning develops and therefore will be encouraged.

Education at this early stage will consist of learning physical skills, developing senses, and expanding cognitive abilities. Self-esteem, so essential to the development of each child's learning ability, will be encouraged. The children need to see, touch, and experience to learn effectively. Therefore, "hands-on" activities will be emphasized. Learning will be interesting.

The "Little Blessings" Preschool will be an important part of your child's life. We would appreciate feedback concerning your child's experience in the classroom. Your child's needs are our concerns. If you have any questions, please feel free to phone or to visit the classroom at any time.

Sincerely,

Tyler Buss, SMS Principal

Abby Eads, Teacher

Emily Wilson, Teacher

PHILOSOPHY

St. Mary's Preschool & Prekindergarten program is designed to foster a child's positive self-image and to develop a love of learning. Each child is encouraged to use his or her curiosity to learn, to interact with others, to respect and share ideas, and to develop self-assurance. Through a variety of multi-sensory experiences each child will make discoveries, develop creative talents, and acquire new skills or interests.

Emphasis will be on the personal, social, and emotional growth of each child rather than upon mastery of subject matter. Learning will be fun.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Little Blessings Preschool

Phone: 618-263-3183

St. Mary's School

Fax: 618-263-3596

417 Chestnut St.

Mt. Carmel, IL 62863

STAFF: Pre-K (3-year-olds) Teacher – Mrs. Abby Eads

Pre-K (4-year-olds) Teacher – Mrs. Emily Wilson

HOURS:

Monday-Friday: 8-11am or 8-3pm

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday only: 8-11am

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday only: 8-3pm

TUITION:

Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday from 8-11AM - \$315.40/month (\$3,154.00/year)

Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday from 8-3PM - \$361.70/month (\$3,617.00/year)

½ Day - Monday-Friday from 8AM-11AM - \$397.70/month (\$3,977.00/year)

Full Day - Monday-Friday from 8-3PM - \$511.10/month (\$5,111.00/year)

There will be an extra fee added per day for all half day students who stay from 8-Noon. The first payment is due on the first day of school in August. The remaining payments are due on the first week of each month thereafter. Please inform the principal or secretary if the payment will be late. No refunds of tuition or fees are given if a parent chooses to withdraw a child from the program.

VACATIONS, HOLIDAYS, AND SNOW DAYS: We follow St. Mary's School calendar. When school is canceled due to weather St. Mary's will follow District 348 schedule.

ELIGIBILITY: Preschool & Prekindergarten is open to all 3, 4, 5-year-old children, and to children of all faiths and nationalities. **All children must be completely toilet trained. This means that the child knows how to go to the bathroom without being reminded to do so and does not wear pullups.** Accidents will be handled with a minimum of attention. Please provide an extra set of clothes for emergencies. Also, children may enroll on their third birthday if they are fully potty trained, and if there are openings available. All children should be developmentally ready for a preschool environment and receptive to new experiences. A young child who has trouble adjusting to this new environment, due to his or her maturational level, may be withdrawn from the program.

ADMISSION/REGISTRATION POLICY

Students shall be admitted to St. Mary's Preschool according to the following priority schedule:

- 1 – Returning students
- 2 – Siblings of returning students
- 3 – Children of teachers employed at St. Mary's School

- 4 – Children of St. Mary's Parish families
- 5 – Children of St. Sebastian Parish families
- 6 – Children of Catholic families of other parishes
- 7 – Children of non-Catholic families

The deadline for registration is May 15. Registering after the deadline does not secure a spot. The above priority list does not apply after the registration deadline. You may be put on a waiting list.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Parents and/or guardians who withdraw a child from St. Mary's Preschool, or who do not return the next school year are asked to do the following:

- 1 – Have an exit meeting. Contact the principal directly. Parents will meet with the principal and discuss the reason for withdrawal.
- 2 – Meet all financial obligations at the time of withdrawal.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance is important and expected. Every child needs to form the habit of coming to school daily. A typical school day is filled with learning! Preschool & Prekindergarten children cannot "make up" the learning missed when they are absent from school. The children not only learn a lot from their experiences and discussions in class but also begin to understand the concept of "responsibility." A sick child does not need to be in school. Please do not send him or her if ill.

Please **DO NOT** send your child if he or she has any of the following symptoms:

- Sore Throat
- Earache
- Swollen Glands
- Pink Eye
- Rash
- Diarrhea

- Chicken Pox
- Vomiting (within last 24 hours)
- Cold
- Head Lice
- Respiratory Infection
- Skin Sores
- Measles
- Fever (within last 24 hours)
- Mumps
- Impetigo

A permission slip to return from a doctor or the health department must be presented before the child can return to the classroom.

If it is necessary for your child to be absent from school, please notify the school before class starts. (263-3183). This is for your child's safety.

CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

As mandated by the Diocese, all individuals who have contact with children must attend and complete the Child Protection Training and all follow-up training. This means teachers, aides, coaches, staff members, classroom helpers, drivers, field trip monitors and concession stand workers at games, etc. These mandated reporters must notify DCFS immediately if they suspect any type of abuse.

COMMUNICATION/PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The preschool & prekindergarten program will follow a “daily routine” which will help the children establish security and consistency. We believe that parents are children's first and most important teachers. We strive to become your partners in the educational process. Therefore, we strongly encourage your participation in classroom activities whenever possible. All parents who meet the child protection requirements on a yearly basis are welcome to help. A weekly newsletter will be sent home which reviews the week's activities and outlines upcoming events.

CURRICULUM /PRESCHOOL & PRE KINDERGARTEN

Our preschool & prekindergarten wishes to provide the children with a positive first school experience. We consider our roles as early childhood educators vital in this process and take this responsibility seriously. To accomplish program goals and objectives, the preschool teacher and aides will employ a unit-based curriculum, which is organized around various themes. The daily schedule includes ample amounts of free choice time, small group activities, whole group activities, and both student-directed and teacher-directed learning times. These components together offer all children the opportunity to use and gain mastery of their skills in the areas of physical, social-emotional, cognitive, language and spiritual development.

Preschool Daily Schedule - Mrs. Abby

- 7:30-7:45 - Drop Off in the Gym
- 7:45 - 8:00 - Drop off in the room
- 8:00 - 8:30 - Free Play
- 8:30 - 8:40 - Clean Up
- 8:45 - 8:55 - Morning Movement (Dancing/Yoga)
- 8:55 - 9:00 - Bathroom Break
- 9:00 - 9:15 - Snack
- 9:15 - 9:30 - Morning Meeting
- 9:40 - 10:00 - Recess
- 10:00 - 10:40 - Centers
- 10:40 - 10:50 - Religion/Story Time
- 10:50 - 11:00 - Music/Movement (Bathroom Break)
- 11:05 - 11:30 - Lunch Time
- 11:30 - 12:00 - Recess

- 12:00 - 12:10 - Bathroom Break/Story Time
- 12:10 - 12:30 - Brain Break
- 12:30 - 1:30 - Nap
- 1:30 - 2:00 - Wake up/Snack/Bathroom
- 2:00 - 2:30 - Free Centers/Outside
- 2:30 - 2:40 - Clean-up/Pack up
- 2:45 - Dismissal

Pre-K Schedule - Mrs. Wilson

- 7:30 - 7:45 - Drop off in the Gym. Please wait with your child on the bleachers nearest to the classroom. Running, jumping, climbing, is not allowed for the safety of the children.
- 7:45 - 8:00 - Drop off in our room.
- 8:00 - 8:30 - Free Choice...In striving to provide a developmentally appropriate experience, play will be used as the vehicle for much of the children's learning. Through play, children explore their world, discover how to get along with others, test their skills and muscles, try out new ideas, and feel confident enough to try new activities. Some choices include blocks, math manipulatives, Play-Doh, kitchen center, puzzles, dress up, puppets, drawing, coloring, games, etc.
- 8:30 - 8:45 - Circle Time/Calendar Time...Gathering together as a whole group to participate in interactive activities including calendar, weather, Pledge of Allegiance, prayer, fine and gross motor exercise, and health and safety awareness.
- 8:45 - 9:00 - Music/Yoga for Kids/Exercises

- 9:00 - 9:15 - Breakfast Snack/Restroom...Parents will be assigned days to supply snacks on a rotating basis. Snack calendars will be sent home monthly. We encourage healthy breakfast snacks to be sent in so the children may eat around 9:00. Crackers, fruit, cheese, muffins, breakfast bars, baggies of cereal, are a few nutritional suggestions. Birthdays are recognized in special ways.
- 9:15 - 9:30 - Story Time/Bible Story...Quiet listening is practiced as stories are read. Sharing books and exploring pictures are encouraged as they develop pre-reading skills necessary for students' success. Alphabet and finger plays are incorporated into Story Time.
- 9:30 - 10:00 - Gym/Playground Time...Children will develop large motor skills on the playground equipment, or riding toys
- 10:00 - 10:40 - Centers/Free Choice...A variety of skills will be developed as the children work on readiness skills with small groups. Center time includes activities based on the theme of the week. Activities will involve language (rhymes, letter recognition, storytelling, etc.), math (counting, sorting, patterning, matching, measuring, graphing, etc.), fine motor (cutting, gluing, ripping, puzzles, Play-Doh, painting, lacing, etc.) and science (observing, describing, comparing, experimenting).
- 10:40 - 10:50 - Educational Group Activities
- 10:50 - Get Ready for dismissal or lunch
- 10:55 - Morning Dismissal and Afternoon lunch
- 11:00 - 11:30 - Lunch
- 11:30 - 12:00 - Recess/Free Play
- 12:00 - 12:30 - Storytime/Educational Videos/Bathroom Break
- 12:30 - 1:30 - Rest Time...The growing child needs time to rest and renew. Some children sleep during naptime daily, while others nap occasionally and still others do not sleep at all. The need to restore energy is still present in all

children and so rest/nap time is part of our day. Those who do not sleep will quietly rest for a short time and then partake in enrichment activities suitable for their developmental level. Children may bring their own blanket.

- 1:30 - 2:00 - Wake up with books and quiet center activities
- 2:00 - 2:10 - Snacks
- 2:10 - 2:40 - Centers
- 2:40 - 2:50 - Pack up/Prayer
- 2:50 - Dismissal

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Honesty, sharing and respect for others, as well as property are goals we teach through play. Development of self-discipline naturally grows from these areas. While self-discipline is developing, other measures are sometimes needed to protect the rights of others. Often, simply talking with the child and explaining the problem is all that is necessary. At other times, teachers must use an approach called “1-2-3 Magic” using time out. This involves removing a child from playing for a short period of time. If growth in self-discipline is slow, frequent communication between parent, child and teacher is encouraged to reinforce positive behavior. In the event of violent or extreme disruptive behavior, the child will be sent to the principal's office for a conference on his or her behavior.

The following consequences will occur:

- **First Offense** - Phone call home and time-out in the principal's office.
- **Second Offense** - Parents will be asked to pick up the child and have an in-person conference with the principal.
- **Third Offense** - Child will be suspended from school for an amount determined by principal.

- **Fourth Offense** – Removal from the Preschool/PreK program.

The principal may use her own discretion in disciplinary situations.

DRESS POLICY

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing. Shorts, jeans, slacks, jogging suits, tee shirts, etc. are acceptable. If your child is unable to snap or button his or her pants, we encourage elastic waists, **no overalls, and no snaps at the crotch. Spaghetti strap shirts are not allowed.**

Please make sure your child's clothing fits loosely so that he or she may care for his or her own toilet needs. Children use paint, markers, glue, etc., so please do **not** allow them to wear their very best clothes. Even though paint smocks are used, clothing sometimes becomes soiled. (Washable paints and markers are used whenever possible in the classroom.) Children are encouraged to wear gym shoes (Velcro gym shoes are preferred). **Slick, dressy shoes, shoes with heels, and shoes without backs and flip flops are not allowed for our program. Crocs with Velcro or straps that fasten securely are not allowed.**

LUNCH

Hot lunches are available in the cafeteria. The cafeteria is for your convenience; therefore, you are encouraged to take advantage of this service. The cost for this school year will be \$4.00 per day for students and \$4.50 per day for adults. Additional milk is available for purchase at 40 cents per carton. Preschool and Pre-K are to have white milk only.

Please apply for free and reduced lunches when there is a reduction in family income and the family qualifications. Several federal benefits, such as the financial support for the cafeteria, are contingent upon the number of free and reduced lunches served at St. Mary's. Therefore, the students and school benefits from the free and reduced lunch applications. These forms are available in August. Please contact the school office for them, as this information is confidential.

Students will be obligated to pay for the lunches they have ordered when they tell a teacher they will be eating a “tray lunch” and then either go out for lunch or have another lunch brought in by their parents. They will be obligated to pay as lunch has been prepared for them. Exceptions to this rule are illnesses. Paid lunches will be carried over due to illness or inclement weather.

Students may bring a sack lunch or go home for lunch. Please remember that lunches brought to school or brought in by parents are not to include carbonated beverages/soft drinks. Do not send glass containers in lunch sacks.

Students must have written permission from parents to leave the school premises during lunch hour. The accompanying adult must sign out students in the office. An adult must accompany and sign out in the office any student leaving school for lunch. A parent may take one other child with his or her own out to lunch. The adult must supervise and be responsible for the student/s.

If your child has a food allergy, you must submit a doctor's note to the office and kitchen, so they are aware of this allergy.

Lunch will be paid for by using our FACTS information system.

PARKING

Arrivals: As in the past, the buses will unload in front of the school. Car riders must, for safety reasons, be dropped off at the back parking lot door of the school. Students may enter the classroom between 7:45-8:00 am. If they arrive earlier, students will wait in the gym on the bleachers closest to the classroom until the 7:45 bell rings. Children may not arrive before 7:30am.

Departures: The half-day students will be released at 11:00 at the side Preschool hallway door. All day students will be picked up in the back parking lot at 2:50 so we can get the little ones released before the rest of the school dismisses.

Please do not park in the alley or block the bus lane!

PROGRESS REPORTS & CONFERENCES

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled in October. Should you need additional conferences, please contact the office for an appointment. Progress reports are sent throughout the year.

Supply Lists

- **A full set of extra clothes (including socks & underwear) that are seasonally appropriate.** Please put in a gallon Ziplock bag with your child's name clearly marked on the outside of the bag. This is needed in case of accidents or spills.
- A backpack for carrying papers and notes is needed daily! It should be large enough for a 9 X 12 envelope (**top zip with no flap and no rollers, please.**) **CHECK EACH DAY** for important information! Please read and promptly answer notes.

- A Nap Mat if your child is an All-Day student.
- Supply list will be provided and available on our website, at Walmart and posted on Facebook.

Please do not allow your child to bring toys, books, or any other items from home unless it is for Show and Tell. (The teacher will let you know the policy for Show and Tell.)

Thank you for choosing St. Mary's Catholic Preschool as your child's first educational experience. It is truly an honor to be first in making lasting impressions on your child's initial experience in school. Thank you for entrusting him/her in our care. It is a gift to have their smiles, laughter, and enthusiasm toward life in our class. Once again thanks for all your support and we will take great care of your precious little one.

God Bless,

Mrs. Eads

Mrs. Wilson