

### **Our Pre-Kindergarten Mission:**

The Pre-Kindergarten program involves the whole child in the educational process. Developmentally appropriate opportunities for children to grow spiritually, academically, emotionally, socially, and physically are provided in a personal manner to assure that the strengths and needs of each student are addressed. Each child is viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth and development. The curriculum and adults' interaction are responsive to individual differences in ability and interests. Different levels of ability, development, and learning styles are expected, accepted, and used to design appropriate activities. Children develop understanding of concepts about themselves, others, and the world around them through observation, interacting with people and real objects, and seeking solutions to concrete problems. Learning about math, science, social studies, health, language arts and religion are all integrated through meaningful activities such as those when children build with blocks; measure and, water or ingredients for cooking; observe changes in the environment; work with wood and tools; sort objects for purpose; explore animals, plants, water, wheels and gears; sing and listen to music from various cultures; and draw, paint, and work with play dough. Along with routines that are followed that help children keep themselves healthy and safe.

**Art:** The Visual Art Program at Saint John Vianney aims to inspire, challenge, and empower each student through exposure to the arts. It is our goal that students will become life-long learners, appreciators, and supporters of the Fine Arts.

Art creation is the foundation of our program. Students are expected to take pride in their work while developing their craft with patience and perseverance. The curriculum addresses both historical and contemporary practices, exposing students to a wide variety of media, techniques, and processes in two and three dimensional design. Students are taught how to evaluate and analyze art, thus, gaining an appreciation for a wide range of styles, movements, cultures, and historical works of art. Students learn concepts and vocabulary associated with the visual arts, as they are expected to communicate these ideas in visual, oral, and sometimes written form.

The range of art projects is as varied and diverse as the unique individuals that create them. The Visual Arts Program supports all subject areas and incorporates cross curricular instruction as much as possible. From mathematics to religion, the arts span all disciplines and require higher order thinking skills, creative problem solving, self assessment, expression, and awareness. The art curriculum is derived from Diocesan Standards and strives to remain current with state, national and global trends in art education.

**Foreign Language:** The foreign language program in Pre-Kindergarten is designed to allow our students to experience other cultures through literature, music, art, dance, and other entertainment. Students learn and recite proverbs, short poems, songs, prayers and anecdotes, to identify people and objects from oral and written descriptions, to use appropriate gestures and oral expressions for greetings, leave-takings, and common classroom interactions. Our students are introduced to and participate in age-appropriate

cultural activities including games, Catholic Spanish customs, and traditional Spanish celebrations. They begin to recognize and identify people, Spanish saints and objects from oral and written descriptions and use this information in other school subjects.

**Language Arts:** The Language Arts program is designed to help children meet essential objectives that target literacy standards in four key areas, including alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, print awareness, and oral language. When introduced to alphabet knowledge, the children will recognize and identify straight and curved lines, prepare to print by creating straight and curved lines, recognize and identify letters formed with straight lines, curved lines, or both, write letters correctly, identify letter names, name letters of the alphabet, especially those in their own names, begin to distinguish uppercase letters from lowercase letters, and practice sorting letters by different attributes. We then move on to phonological awareness where the children will learn to listen purposefully, listen to and identify sounds in the environment, listen to and identify spoken language sounds in the environment, learn to focus their attention on selective sounds, practice associating a particular sound with its source, identify and produce words that rhyme, begin to identify words that have the same beginning sounds, count or clap the number of syllables in words, count or clap the number of words in spoken sentences, create and invent words by substituting one sound for another, and blend sounds into words. After phonological awareness, the children will be introduced to print awareness, and will understand that the purpose of print is to communicate, begin to understand that print runs from left to right and top to bottom, distinguish between print and pictures, begin to recognize the association between spoken and written words by pointing to print as it is read aloud, understand that letters are grouped to form words, begin to recognize words as a unit of print, begin to understand that sentences are formed with words and that words are separated by spaces, be able to identify the front and the back of a book, understand that a book has a title, an author, and an illustrator and will pretend to read books. Finally, the children will be introduced to oral language and will use language for a variety of purposes, learn and incorporate new vocabulary in spoken communication, use sentences of increasing length (three or more words), link new learning experiences and vocabulary with what is already known about a topic, ask questions and make comments related to the current topic of discussion and will begin to retell the sequence of a story.

The language arts program encompasses listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills necessary for future proficiency in these disciplines. Phonological awareness, letter recognition, vocabulary development, and listening comprehension are explicitly and consistently developed throughout the year.

During the course of the year speaking skills are strengthened through work with singing, rhyming, sharing experiences and ideas, and conversing with peers and adults. Listening skills are strengthened by following oral directions, hearing stories and songs on a daily basis, and then responding orally to the direction, story or song introduced in the lesson demonstrating basic comprehension skills. Reading skills are introduced and developed in letter recognition, common word recognition, syllable identification, blending and segmenting of sounds, producing rhyming words and organizing events in

sequential order. Students will begin to develop age-appropriate strategies that will assist them in reading. Every child will observe and participate in a variety of writing activities focused on meaningful words and print in their environment to include letters, numbers, and high-frequency words. They will begin to develop age-appropriate writing skills such as writing their first and last names, numbers, and simple words, reproducing patterns and developing awareness of relationships of parts and wholes using more abstract figures and discriminating likeness and differences in symbols, figures, and designs with subtle differences in detail and orientation. Each area is designed to enhance the child's confidence in their ability to communicate.

**Library:** During their weekly library visit, the pre-kindergarteners begin to discover the realm of possibilities that can feed one's imaginations. Each child begins to develop the skills essential to becoming an active and thoughtful library user. The class listens to literature for pleasure and information often participating in the storytelling, drama, songs, puppetry, finger plays and poetry, then relating the elements of the literature to personal experiences and predicting the outcomes of each story. Then each child is able to share in the selecting of their own books, verbalizing requests in locating materials, learn the proper procedures to check out their selections at the circulation desk and to return the materials. Each visit is designed to spark the child's imagination, enhance the desire to read and to discover a world beyond their scope of existence.

**Math:** The aim in Pre-Kindergarten is to introduce the children with interesting and exciting opportunities for mathematical thinking. This process tends to be hands on using manipulatives and games to introduce recognition of number concepts, counting, time and measurement, geometry (2-D and 3-D geometric objects), patterns, sorting, graphing and to solve problems. The children will begin with number concepts. The children will: read and order numerals to 20, use language such as before or after to describe numbers on the number line, count objects using one-to-one correspondence and use numbers to describe a set, compare objects to determine the answers to addition and subtraction problems, understand the meaning of the symbols +, - and =, create and act out the number stories using objects, represent equivalent forms of the same number through the use of concrete materials, recognize when an estimate is reasonable and check estimates by counting and will know and compare the values of a penny, nickel, dime and quarter. Following number concepts the children will be introduced to time and measurement. The children will: compare the length, weight, and capacity of objects by making direct comparisons (shorter, taller, longer, heavier), understand how to measure using nonstandard units of measurement, demonstrate an understanding of concepts of time and tools that measure time, identify time (to the nearest hour) of everyday events. After Time and Measurement, the children will be introduced to Geometry concepts and will identify and name common 2-D and 3-D geometric objects, know the attributes of circles, squares, triangles and rectangles (i.e. sides, corners, curves), compare familiar plane and solid objects by common attributes (i.e. position, shape, number of sides, corners), and recognize basic shapes in the environment (i.e. circular clock, square window.) After Geometry, the children will be introduced to concepts of Patterning and will identify, describe, and extend simple patterns using a variety of concrete objects, use concrete objects to create patterns, and use patterns to predict what comes next. Once Patterning

is introduced the children will begin Sorting and will identify, sort and classify objects by attribute and describe the categories and identify objects that do not belong to a particular group. Finally, the children will be introduced to Graphing and will participate in posing information questions, collecting data and recording the results in a chart or graph and will interpret data exhibited in a chart or graph by using words such as most, least and the same. Group discussions about information gathered and recorded allows the children to appreciate different ways of thinking and finding a solution to a problem.

**Music:** The sense of music skills is a sense of rhythm and pitch. In Pre-K students chant, sing songs, and rhythmic activities to develop their singing voice and lend toward group music experiences. Students will explore and experiment with a variety of musical instruments and dance to develop their natural inclination toward self expression, creativity, and reinforces rhythmic skills. Students will learn about songwriting and write lyrics about something dear to them. Students will also write their own melody with chords to accompany their lyrics.

**Physical Education:** Physical Education: The emphasis in PE is on the development of each child's strength, endurance, co-ordination, balance, and large muscle activities such as running, galloping, climbing, throwing, catching, kicking, dancing, bending, etc. Introducing the concept of shared space, equipment, group co-operation, and team effort is an important part of the PreK experience and curriculum.

**Religion:** In all the grades we strive to instill in each child that God loves them. He has created each person out of love and each of us is a part of his Divine Plan. The Pre-K children talk about the Church being God's house and in this house we are a part of the Church family. The saints in heaven are a part of this family too. They have lived their lives modeled after the life of Christ. The saints show us the way to live our lives as Christians and to reach our eternal goal – Heaven.

In the Christian family, the children learn to internalize their faith. They learn their responsibility for living in their family, neighborhood, parish, and community. Children are taught to see themselves as a unique gift of God and having a place in God's family because of His love for them. The children learn how to respond to one another modeling the love of Jesus and learning how to know, love, and serve the Lord in this world so as to be with Him in Heaven. The children learn obedience to their parents and other authorities God places in their lives.

The children learn too that they have feelings and how to respond to others in an appropriate manner. They see Christ in their neighbors no matter what race, creed, or color and treat them respectfully. The children demonstrate honesty, sharing, and the desire to see the needs of others met. They see themselves as being able to make choices and be accountable for those choices.

The children discuss God's call to love one another and practice this love by loving and respecting others. When they hurt someone, they learn to ask for forgiveness and accept forgiveness. They see that forgiveness, joy, and love are part of belonging to a family.

Christian virtues are taught and modeled. The children learn that it is virtuous to be truthful, honest, self-disciplined, have integrity, and compassion.

God is the center of all creation. The children are presented with the truth that God is the creator of all things that are invisible and visible. They see that God's creation is an expression of His love. God creates only that which is good. Out of His great love He sent His only Son to be our redeemer. God reveals Himself to us through Jesus His Son and Jesus shows us the way to be the Father. This love between the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit who guides us to unity and grace carrying out the work of Christ in the world.

The children recognize major titles of Mary. They see in Mary ways of thinking, listening, and praying. The children see the richness of the Liturgical Year and Mary's part in it. The Liturgical Year is Advent time, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Lent, and Easter.

The children learn ways to adore Jesus by making the Sign of the Cross, bowing, speaking, singing, and genuflecting. Also, they learn the basic prayers, i.e. The Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be, Angel of God prayers, and grace before and after meals. Reflecting, thinking, listening and meditating are ways the children experience prayer. Knowing that prayer is a response to God's love for us, opportunities are opened each moment to give God honor and glory.

The Word of God in Sacred Scripture is presented to the children. They hear the stories of the Bible and know that these stories help to show us God's love for us and through His Son, Jesus showed us how to live our faith each day. The children learn to understand that God is always with them and that He will guide them each moment everyday.

**Science:** Children are natural scientists because they are naturally curious. They ask hundreds of questions, love to explore all kinds of materials, and will return to an activity that interests them repeatedly. They are eager to work together to discover the world, animals, plants, the earth and the universe through hands on activities which encourage the discussion and sharing of ideas as they work with various ways to process what they are observing. Activity and conversation fill the room as children participate in the activities to explore, investigate, observe, and describe a wide variety of exercises geared to expand and acquire scientific knowledge. We nurture these natural tendencies in children and help create positive attitudes about science that will last a lifetime.

**Social Studies:** A primary developmental goal for the child at this age is to help young children develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. These learning experiences are organized around the 10 themes put into the context of the social-studies standards. The first theme is Culture because young children are beginning to interact with others, some of whom are like them and some of whom are different; the

concepts of similarities and differences. Young learners establish a sense of order and time through sequencing. They also enjoy hearing stories of the recent past and of long ago which introduces the second standard Time, Continuity, and Change. Children draw upon immediate personal experiences as a basis for exploring geographic concepts and skills. They also express interest in distant and unfamiliar things, so the third standard of People, Places, and Environment are introduced. Individual Development and Identity are developed by observing brothers and sisters, looking at family photos albums, and remembering achievements and anticipating the future are examples of how they can develop their personal identities in the context of families, peers, schools, and communities. Young children are given the opportunity, in the Individual, Groups and Institutions theme, to examine various institutions that affect their lives and influence their thinking. In the theme Power, Authority, and Governance children explore their natural and developing sense of fairness and order as they experience relationships with others. Children need to differentiate between wants and needs. To do this we will explore Production, Distribution, and Consumption. The Science, Technology, and Society theme teaches the children how their daily lives are intertwined with technology. Through exposure to various media and firsthand experiences, young children become aware of and are affected by events on a Global Connection. Finally, activities such as helping to set classroom expectations, examining experiences in relation to ideals, and determine how to balance the needs of individuals and the group serve as an introduction to civic ideas and practices. Through these 10 themes, each child will show an awareness of and respect for desires of others, share and take turns in activities, develop self-discipline and follow established rules. As well as adhere to reasonable classroom rules and routines, develop good table manners using a specific routine, begin awareness of jobs and what is required to perform them, by explaining the responsibility of one's choices help each child enhance their relationships with others

**Technology:** The presence of computers in the classroom gives each child the opportunity to play games that reinforce other disciplines such as reading, math, etc. and to begin teaching simple word processing skills. The children learn to recognize basic computer hardware and the appropriate care and use of the computer.