



PreK 4/5s Newsletter

October 2023

Dear Preschool Parents

This newsletter will give you a little glimpse of some of our Preschool happenings.

Letter of the Week

Our letter of the week study has been going very well. We have met the zoo-phonics animals and letters: H, F and A. The children practice the beginning sound and writing each letter throughout the week. We have a mystery sound/letter bag to help us listen for the specific sound we are working on at school. Important note: it is very valuable to spend just a few minutes each day reviewing the letters taught in Preschool. It really does help.

Did you hear about our coconut tree? The children listened to the story [Chicka Chicka Boom Boom](#) by Bill Martin, Jr. The children have the exciting task of placing the letter of the week onto the classroom coconut tree—which relates perfectly with the story.

Heggerty & Groves Activities

The children will be introduced to rhyming, initial and ending sound exploring, alphabet knowledge and alliteration games alongside the zoo-phonics program. The earliest years of education are very important for children to be exposed to the sounds of our language. Our daily Heggerty & Groves activities will assist your child in being able to hear different sounds, be able to learn the letters of the alphabet and love to learn at Preschool.

Our Projects

Every time the children are involved in a project, they are spending valuable time enhancing important skills. Many times, the fine motor skills involve crayons, scissors, pencils, paint brushes and some out of the ordinary tools. Other skills may be listening to directions, following a step-by-step process or trying something for the first time. Whatever the outcome—your children are so proud of themselves and that makes all of us happy!

Sending Home Your Child's Work

Many times, there will be projects created at school that will be sent home, but it perhaps is not the project of the day. Often the project is still drying or proudly displayed for all to see. In addition, items do get saved for the memory folder or to observe progress during the year.

Snacks

It has been wonderful having healthy and nutritious snacks for the children. I must say – snack time is a favorite part of our afternoon. 😊

Please be sure to send 2/4 food groups for our daily snack. NO beverage, napkins or cups are required. Thank you.

Early Childhood Screening

Early Childhood Screening is completed through the district you reside in and is currently mandatory for all children. Be sure to make an appointment for the screening earlier rather than waiting until your child is closer to the Kindergarten year. It is a very valuable tool for both St. Joseph's teachers and your family. The target age is 3.5, so if your child hasn't been screened yet—I highly encourage you to make the appointment now. It is easy to put it off. The screening dates can sometimes be six weeks out. Thank you so very much.

Donations to Preschool:

Donations help us so much. Twice during the year, you will receive a Signup Genius donation list of items such as food coloring, cotton balls, salt, etc. are very helpful to have in the classroom. This is completely optional for you to participate in and whatever you can help us with is appreciated so much.

You should have received an email inviting you to consider donating odds-n-ends to our Preschool. All the items listed on the wish list will be used with the children sometime during the school year.

Thank you ahead of time for your generous donations. They really do make a difference.

Thank you to our H&S reps who supported us by sending out our wish list. Appreciate all of you so much.

Woodland Forest/Forest Animals

The children just finished learning all about forests and the animals that make their home amongst the trees. I hope you were able to see the watercolor tree the PreK4/5s created with black sharpies, watercolor paint, and paper. The children used simple lines and squiggles to make tree trunks and creative leaves. The artwork was inspired by the book Tree: A Peek-Through Picture Book by Britta Teckentrup. It is a beautiful book that I highly recommend for young children. Other wonderful literature included: In the Forest and The Tree (Look Once, Look Again Science series) by David M. Schwartz, as well as Owl Babies by Martin Waddell and Patrick Benson. A new favorite was discovered titled A Tree is Nice by Janice May Udry. Good literature is so important when reading to children. Maybe a few of the titles can be found at your local library.

Other exciting Forest activities included:

- *Science table: reflections with a large mirror, items from nature with magnifying glasses.
- *Main sensory bin: straw, raffia, fake green grass, tweezers, and fall/forest hidden treasures.
- *Dramatic Play: Pet Shop (ties in nicely with our God Created the World theme—including animals)
- *Light Table: window nature frames, transparent bears, colorful odd-shaped blocks.
- *Classroom Library: regular and big books relating to our theme.
- *Block Areas: wooden blocks and forest animals
duplos, bears, and off-brand magna-tiles
- *Mini Activities: forest animal sorting, play dough and forest cookie cutters, forest puzzles & number games, writing forest animals names on white boards, rabbit fine motor game with tweezers/carrots, bear pattern cards, and much more.

Did you hear about our Roll and Count Forest Animal game? Or Count the Room Forest Animal hunt? Or possibly our Nature Scavenger Hunt? For these activities the children even used a clip board to travel around the room or outside. Pretty cool.

And.... Let's not forget our sweet little hedgehog creations. I cannot tell you how proud my little friends were of their Crayola Model Magic creations. With a little dough and a few pieces of spaghetti noodles. Hooray!



Fall Is Fantastic

This week will be a short week filled with the season of Fall. The children will listen to one of our Repeated Read Aloud titled The Leaves Are Falling One by One by Steve Metzger, and other wonderful books to help us learn about the season. The children will learn about the changing colors on the trees. The children will be painting a tree and adding puzzle pieces for leaves. Very cool. The children will expand their vocabulary with the names of two leaves—maple and oak.

Be sure to praise your child for his/her efforts on cutting, coloring, gluing, painting, name writing and more. The children are so proud of their work. The PreK 4/5s will continue to work on scissors skills and following directions. As always, the children learn chants, fingerplays and rhymes for each theme. You may even hear a few of these tunes at home.

God's Gifts to Us is our faith focus for the month of October. The children will be learning chants, listening to stories, exploring items from nature and more. This is a beautiful time of the year to enjoy firsthand by touching, observing, and becoming more aware of the beauty God created in the world. In addition to noticing the changes in our world around us, the children will be introduced to the Bible in class. I am excited to show the different types of Bibles that are in our classroom. Idea: If your child doesn't have a picture Bible at home to look at – it would be a great Christmas gift.

"How God Made the World" is our Bible story focus for the month. The children will listen to various versions of the story of creation using our Bible Read Aloud, flannel story pieces, and other books. Plus, the children will learn a few creation chants, too.

After MEA break- God Created Everything—even PUMPKINS!

The theme of God's Creation ties in perfectly with our overall Faith Focus theme for the month. In addition to learning about the days of creation—the children will also be exploring with one of God's creations—

PUMPKINS! This is a sure favorite at this time of the year. The children will learn all about the life cycle of the pumpkin. They will be able to re-tell the story of how a pumpkin grows using their own 3D life cycle. There will be exciting opportunities to predict the height, weight and circumference of a real pumpkin. The children will discover first-hand what is inside a pumpkin—seeds and gooey pulp. We plan to observe the pulp over time as it decomposes in a jar! Planting pumpkin seeds is planned, too. We will even measure ourselves to figure out how many pumpkins tall we are and create a class booklet. Our Read Aloud Book is titled I Like Pumpkins by Jerry Smath. This delightful story is about a girl who describes all her favorite things about pumpkins.

In addition, the children have been learning age-appropriate prayers at the beginning and end of our day, as well as during snack time. The children are learning the words and actions to the sign of the cross, too. With routine practice at both home and school, the sign of the cross will become a natural part of your child's prayer ritual.

Monthly Faith Focus Sharing Day (aka- Show-n-Tell):

Each month, as part of our Faith Focus theme, there will be a special day for your child to bring something from home to show-n-tell classmates a little bit about the item. Each child will be able to sit on my sharing stool when it is his/her turn to show what was brought to school.

Our first sharing day will be on **Wednesday, October 25**. The topic of conversation will be to bring one item to preschool from nature. If possible, it would be nice to keep the nature items to add to our science table for exploration. Encourage your child to become aware of the beauty God has given us as the trees are changing colors, leaves and pinecones are falling to the ground and bird nests can be seen as the trees become bare. Keep this in mind as you and your family go for walks on the beautiful days of Fall.

Halloween Fun

The PreK4/5s will be celebrating a fun day in Preschool on Thursday, October 26. The first part of the afternoon will consist of a fashion show, story, snack, chant, and parade in the classroom. The second part of our class will be crafts, games, and activities. It is going to be so much fun.

Halloween Fun Details

Please have your child wear a simple costume to Preschool on Thursday, October 26. Costumes should promote sweetness in an age-appropriate way. The costume should allow your child to use the bathroom independently without too much trouble. In addition, please leave any accessories at home to avoid anything from getting broken or forgotten at school. This day is not meant to promote Halloween, but rather a day for little ones to use their imaginations and to simply to have fun! Please no treats. Thank you for your support.

It is going to be a BOO-TIFUL day!

Remember:

- *MEA break: **no school** on Thursday, October or Friday, October 20. Enjoy a long weekend!
- *See the monthly calendar for letters of the week, days off, color days, etc.
- *Please label all coats, mittens, hats, etc. It would be a good idea to label sweaters and sweatshirts, too.
- *Be sure your child leaves home with a warm coat as the temps are getting cooler. Wind is a factor, too.
- *Try to have your preschooler use the bathroom before leaving home each day.
- *Please have an extra bag (clear Ziploc works well) of clothes in your child's bag.

It has been a positive start to the school year. I have noticed new friendships blossoming and our daily schedule becoming routine. Yippee!

Enjoy the season of Fall.

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