



Parent Handbook

2012-13

St. Luke's Memorial Episcopal Church
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MISSION STATEMENT:

Our mission at St. Luke's Preschool is to provide superior early childhood education in a loving, Christian environment. We offer a solid academic foundation during these key developmental years to help our children kindle interests, acquire basic skills, and enjoy their learning experience. Our goal is that they develop to their fullest potential intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

OBJECTIVES:

- Recognize each child as one of God's people.
- Encourage a positive self-image.
- Provide a warm, caring environment in which children feel secure and can develop a sense of trust and confidence.
- Guide each individual child's spiritual, physical, cognitive and social-emotional development.

CURRICULUM:

St. Luke's Preschool will be using a theme-based curriculum for the twos, threes, fours and Pre-K classes. Our classes provide individual attention by teachers, as well as teacher-directed and student-initiated activities. We incorporate socialization skills, learning through play, art, music, literature, cooking, science exploration, mathematical thinking skills, language development, listening skills and Christian concepts and values into our program.

CLASS OFFERINGS:

During the 2010-2011 school year, St. Luke's Preschool will have four different class offerings. Our 2 ½ year old class will meet either Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30-11:30. To be eligible for this class, children must be 2 ½ as of August 31st. This class will have no more than 6 students. Our 3 year old class will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00am-11:30am. To be eligible, children must be 3 years of age by August 31st of the school year to enroll. We strive to maintain a ratio of one adult to every 8 children in this class and it will hold no more than 16 students. Those enrolled in our 4-year-old class must be 4 as of August 31st. This class will meet on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9:00 – 11:30. We will maintain at least a 1:10 adult to child ratio in this class with no more than 20 students. Our Pre-kindergarten class, will be held Monday through Thursdays from 9am – 1pm. The PreK class size will be limited to 12 students and children must be 4 years of age as of June 1st to enroll in this class. Students in this class will bring their lunch and eat at school. Congregation members may serve as volunteers from time to time in this class.

A non-refundable fee of \$75 is required at the time of registration.

TUITION:

Monthly tuition is due by the 5th day of each month. Checks can be made out to *St. Luke's Preschool*. Tuition payments can either be mailed to the school or given directly to a staff member. Tuition paid up front for the year will receive a 10% discount. If the child withdraws from the program, tuition will be refunded for all but the current month the child is enrolled.

If tuition is not received by the tenth of the month, a reminder will be sent along with a bill for tuition plus 5%. If tuition is not received by the 20th of the month, a bill for tuition plus 10% will be assessed. If payment is more than six weeks late, the child will be removed from the preschool roster. Bounced checks will incur a \$35 fee. Bounced checks will be submitted once. If the check bounces again, tuition plus costs will need to be paid in cash. **Tuition late fees must be added on to the regular amount of tuition when submitting payment if written notice is given.** The preschool bookkeeper will not make personal phone calls to remind families of late tuition.

Please notify the teachers if you will be going on an extended trip. To keep your child's spot in the class, tuition must be paid during your leave of absence. You may choose to dis-enroll your child when leaving and re-enroll upon your return, but your child's spot in the class is not guaranteed. A two-week notice is required for withdrawal from the program to accommodate other families on the waiting list. Tuition is nonrefundable if a child leaves the program during the month. If the first month's tuition is already paid and the child withdraws from the program, the family forfeits that tuition.

Families with more than one child enrolled receive a 10% discount on tuition for the second child.

TOILET TRAINING:

We are not staffed to handle children who are not toilet trained. Children who are not toilet trained will be asked to dis-enroll from the school until their training is complete and will be put on the established waiting list for the class. Re-enrollment will occur when the training is complete and an opening for the child is available.

Parents are asked to be sure that their children can handle their own toileting needs (i.e. wiping self, manipulating buttons, snaps...) prior to beginning preschool. Staff will walk children to the restroom and wait at the door while the children use the bathroom. Stepstools will be available for use by the children in each restroom.

DISCIPLINE:

Children act out in ways that attempt to get their needs met. When a child displays inappropriate behavior, a more appropriate behavior will be taught, encouraged, practiced and reinforced. Our goal is to ensure that children

understand the rationale for correct behavior. Staff will notify parents when they see it necessary for follow up at home.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL:

Children should not arrive before 8:55 a.m. (9:25 for the 2 ½ year old class) so that the teachers have sufficient time to prepare the room each day. The teachers will open the doors to the classroom at 9 a.m. (or 9:25 for the 2 ½ year old class). Students will be dismissed one by one at 11:30 a.m. (or 1pm for the PreK class). Children will only be released to parents/ guardians or those listed on their registration/emergency form. *If another person is to pick up your child, the teacher must receive a note including the person's name and the parent's signature.* If a person unknown to the teacher is picking up the child, he/she may be asked for identification.

Parent/ guardians are responsible for personally escorting the child to the preschool room at the beginning of class and for picking them up at the room at the end of the day. Children may not be dropped off at the front entrance of the building to proceed downstairs alone. *Children will not be permitted to proceed unaccompanied on the stairs, in the church building, or in the parking lot at any time. They are the responsibility of the caregiving adult after being released by the teacher. Children should not play on the church grounds out of view of the caregiving adult before or after class.*

Any legal/child custody documents must be submitted to the director.

Please remember that arrival and dismissal is a time for your child to develop independence and responsibility. Once your child is familiar with routines, please encourage him/her to remove and hang up his/her own coat and backpack.

ABSENTEEISM:

We wish to be notified of absences, whether short term or extended. You may call the preschool office at (253) 759-3519 and leave a message. Please call before 9:15 a.m. on days your child will be gone.

LATE PICK-UP:

If at all possible, please call us to tell us that you will be late so that we may comfort your child until you come. Situations of habitual lateness in picking up will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

DAILY SCHEDULE:

The following schedule may vary from day to day depending on the children's needs, weather, and the type of activities planned.

9:00-9:15	Arrival and free play time at Learning Centers
9:15-9:30	Circle time and Group Activities

9:30-10:40	Art, Centers, Cooking, Science, Music, Chapel, Outdoor Play or Indoor Games (gross motor activities)
10:40-11:10	Clean-up, Snack Preparation, Quiet Time, Snack
11:10-11:30	Closing Activities

SCHOOL CALENDAR:

St. Luke's Preschool will follow the Tacoma School District calendar for most days off and holidays. Please see our yearly and monthly calendar for specific dates. If there is a one-hour late start for Tacoma, St. Luke's Preschool will start one hour late. If there is a two-hour delay or if Tacoma cancels classes, St. Luke's 3's and 4's classes will be canceled, while our PreK class will begin at 11am. Every effort will be made to reschedule these missed classes.

SNACKS:

St. Luke's will provide a healthy snack to children on the days they attend class. Please be sure that the teacher is aware of any allergies and dietary restrictions prior to the start of the school year. Children with strict restrictions may be asked to provide their own snacks. A snack schedule will be posted outside each classroom.

CELEBRATIONS:

Each child will have their birthday celebrated at school. "Un-birthdays" will be celebrated for students with summer birthdays. Parents are asked to provide a birthday snack, juice, and party napkins for their child's special day. We ask that special party gift bags not be sent to school. Invitations for home parties may be distributed **only** if there is one for each child in the class.

HOLIDAYS:

Christian holidays and national or community traditions will be observed. These days will be noted on the calendar we send home at the beginning of each month.

WORSHIP EXPERIENCES:

Prayers and songs about Jesus are integrated with daily activities. Bible stories are part of the curriculum. We will observe and discuss events and seasons of the church year. Each class will join our Rector or Preschool Director in our Children's Chapel or sanctuary for an object lesson and worship. This is our "Chapel" time.

ITEMS FROM HOME/SHARING:

Comfort items (blanket, teddy bear, etc.) may be brought to school if they are needed. We will encourage children to leave these items in their cubbies for as much of the day as possible. Guidelines for sharing toys at school will be established by the Lead Teachers at the beginning of the school year. ***Toys with violent themes, guns or weapons are not permitted.*** If fragile items are

brought, they should be given to the teacher. Toys with small parts could be a choking hazard.

HEALTH AND MEDICATIONS:

Each child's health is important to us. We make every attempt to maintain high sanitation standards and emphasize healthy habits and cleanliness routines. We ask that each child use hand sanitizer or wash hands before entering the classroom on school days. Out of consideration for the teachers and the other children, we request that you keep your child at home if she/he is not feeling well. A child who is ill does not feel like participating in preschool activities and requires constant monitoring from the staff. If a child becomes ill, is feverish, or vomiting at school, you will be called. The child will be separated from the others as much as possible until you arrive. ***After an illness, please do not send your child to school until she/he has been free of fever or vomiting for 24 hours.*** If your child is suspected of having highly infectious diseases such as pink eye, chicken pox, impetigo, strep throat, or head lice, you will be called. The lack of any symptoms or a doctor's note indicating that the child is no longer contagious will be necessary for return to the classroom. If your child is sick, please do not send them back to school unless they can participate in all classroom activities, including going outside.

Please inform the teacher if your child is medicated. Antihistamines, decongestants, and antibiotics can alter a child's behavior. If your child has a life threatening condition, please leave detailed written instructions signed by your doctor.

FIELD TRIPS:

Field trips, which enhance class themes and activities, will be planned during the year for our 3's, 4's and PreK classes. A field trip permission slip will be on file for all students. Parent drivers and chaperones will be arranged prior to each trip. Children will be required to sit in age-appropriate car seats, to be provided by parents. A map or directions will be provided. *If at all possible, siblings are encouraged to not attend field trips, as our focus needs to be on the safety of the students which each of the parents are responsible for.* Please inform the teachers if your child is unable to come on the field trip at the last minute, so the remainder of the class does not delay its tour.

GOODBYES:

Some apprehension in new surroundings is normal for children as well as parents and separation can be difficult. The process requires much parental patience and consistency. Be assured that we will be positive and supportive and that tears usually do not last. Reassure and encourage your child - stay in the room for a brief time if necessary - but please show the confidence you have in his/her ability to handle the situation. Feel free to come into the room to see special projects or your child's favorite items before and/or after class. Showing

interest and pleasure in the classroom and fellow students helps your child feel more comfortable.

VOLUNTEERING AND VISITING:

Parents should feel free to spend time in the classroom. Important insights can be gained from such visits and it is FUN! You may just observe, but being involved with the children or in their activities is most beneficial. Volunteers from the congregation may be in the classroom from time to time. These volunteers will be identified with a nametag. Volunteers will also be needed on field trips and to donate items for holiday parties.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATIONS:

Families will receive a monthly class calendar and preschool newsletter. Preschool families may also request to receive St. Luke's Memorial Episcopal Church's monthly newsletter, *The Bridge*.

Informative notes may be sent home or posted on the hallway bulletin board as needed. Parents should feel free to call or email staff or to make appointments as desired. Parents are encouraged to speak with the staff about any concern, comment, or question. *Arrival and dismissal times are not good for lengthy discussions, as the focus then will be on the children.* Time can be set aside before or after school for parents and staff to meet. Phone conversations or e-mail communications may also be helpful. A written report as to your child's progress will be provided to parents during parent conferences held in March, prior to kindergarten registration, for parents from our 4's and PreK classes. Progress reports can be provided for other students upon parental request.

REGISTRATION IN THE SPRING:

Information about registration for the next school year will be sent to families in January or February. Registration will be conducted in February or March on a first-come, first-served basis. Church families and current families enroll first, followed by families on a waiting list and then the community if spaces are still available.

WHAT TO WEAR:

WE LIKE TO GET MESSY AT PRESCHOOL! When dressing your child for school, please consider the variety of activities that we have. We use washable paints, markers and stamp pads and use cover-ups for painting, but clothes still may come home with hard-to-remove spots. Clothes should be comfortable and washable with fasteners which children can manipulate. Sandals are dangerous in the gravel area outside. Cowboy boots and other shoes with slippery soles are not safe on play equipment or in active group play. *On days when your child wears winter boots, please send shoes also.*

During the first week of school send a change of clothes which can be left at school (include underwear and socks). Please label all outer clothing. We will

keep a small supply of emergency clothing, but children usually prefer to wear something of their own.

Please remember that we try to spend some time outdoors every day - even in wet and winter weather. We usually go outside unless it is extremely cold, windy, or wet. Frequently children move from house to car without going outside, so it is easy to forget jackets, hats, mittens, or boots in the winter. In the fall and spring, temperatures change quickly, so you may want to send a lighter sweater or jacket along if your child wears a heavy coat in the morning. *Please send a school bag or backpack of some sort for sending items home. This can be as simple as a grocery bag.*

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT:

We want our environment to be a safe haven physically, as well as emotionally, for the students. We will not tolerate parents who use foul or abusive language, spanking, or threats to other children on site. We will not release the child to any adult who is suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Parents who transport a student from another family are responsible for their safety coming and going from school. Any suspicion of child abuse or neglect requires mandatory reporting by our teaching and support staff, which will be documented closely. *Please DO NOT LEAVE SIBLINGS UNATTENDED IN CARS WHILE YOU BRING YOUR CHILD TO CLASS.*

SCHOLARSHIPS:

St. Luke's Preschool has a scholarship fund. Applications are available through the Preschool Director and will be reviewed by our Scholarship Committee. Parents must submit registration paperwork and \$75 registration fee to the Preschool Director prior to requesting scholarship assistance. Submitting an application does not guarantee a scholarship. Scholarship requests may not exceed 50% of the total cost of St. Luke's Preschool tuition. Scholarships are awarded for the current school year only. Families with students in attendance for more than one year may reapply each year.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

St. Luke's Preschool is inclusive and welcomes diversity. Students with special needs identified through Child Find or public or private schools or agencies may be enrolled following agreement among school, parents and physicians or therapists that the needs of the student can be met without compromising the needs of other students enrolled. Student progress toward identified goals will be monitored regularly to assure that the goals of the student and of St. Luke's Preschool are achieved. St. Luke's Preschool staff are trained and experienced teachers of normally developing young children and are not certified special education teachers. They teach to a variety of levels and are skilled at accelerating students at various stages on a developmental continuum. If it is determined that a student falls significantly outside the normal range of

development, the St. Luke's staff will work with the family of the student to guide them to the professionals who can assess and design an appropriate learning program. That program may or may not be delivered at St. Luke's depending on the needs of the student. In the State of Washington, students enrolled in private schools have the right of access to services and programs at the public school located in the attendance area of the family based on street address. Services, for which a student qualifies, including assessment services, are free of charge at the public school.

PRESCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

St. Luke's Preschool is a ministry of St. Luke's Memorial Episcopal Church. It is organized, administered and operated by a professional staff working under the guidance of our Preschool Advisory Committee, Vestry, and Rector. *We are delighted that you have chosen to place your child in our care!!*

Jesus said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." – Mark 10:14