

SAINT PETER SCHOOL

Kindergarten Program

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Kindergarten Philosophy

The Kindergarten program at St. Peter School was established in 1975. It was established to provide young children with a solid foundation in the Catholic faith and in core academic areas such as reading and mathematics.

Spiritual Development

At St. Peter School young children continue to learn about their rich Roman Catholic heritage in our full-day kindergarten program. The teaching of religion is at the heart of the program and is incorporated in each child's daily experience. The program is child-centered, using movement, dramatic play, music and art to enhance various themes. The program enables each child to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

Physical Development

Kindergarten-age children are growing rapidly; developing fine and large motor control, and are beginning to establish self-help skills. Through physical activity and structured physical education classes the children gain self-control of their body and muscles, and hand-eye coordination.

Social & Emotional Development

The Kindergarten children are afforded daily opportunities to develop social skills such as sharing, self-control, helping, negotiating, respect, communicating and self-confidence.

Cognitive Development

The Kindergarten program is organized to provide children with positive, meaningful cognitive experiences, which strengthen sensory awareness, curiosity, problem-solving skills, and language development.

Faith Formation

A variety of resources are utilized to introduce kindergarten children to the four pillars of the Catholic Church: Creed, Sacraments, Christian Life and Prayer.

- I. Creed: To relate everyday events of their lives to the Gospel.
 - Through Bible stories, interactive songs, finger plays and storytelling the children establish themselves as stewards of creation.

- II. Sacrament: To participate in the social and worship life of our faith community.
 - The kindergarten children worship with our parish and school community on a regular basis.

- III. Christian Life: To participate in community outreach; to model loving service to others.
 - The children demonstrate love of God and others by recognizing their call to serve God in discipleship.

- IV. Prayer: To participate in children's liturgy, spontaneous and daily prayer and devotion.
 - A prayer table is established in the classroom and is utilized to reflect the symbolism of church and liturgical seasons. Prayer and worship is at the heart of the kindergarten program.

The present religion program used in Kindergarten is: *We Believe: God Made the World* by Sadlier

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

St. Peter School is in the process of implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English/Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. The new standards will be applied gradually over the next few years as curriculum frameworks, instructional materials, and assessments based on the CCSS are adopted by the Diocese.

In Kindergarten, there are many similarities to the ELA standards that are in place currently, but there are some notable differences. For instance, in the CCSS, the standards in Kindergarten through grade six are divided into strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. The CCSS often extend or enhance the content of the Rhode Island English Language Arts standards. For example, the CCSS focus more on informational text and content-related vocabulary, opinion pieces, informative/explanatory writing, and collaborative conversations on texts and grade-level topics.

There are many similarities between the CCSS and the current mathematics standards, but there are also a few important differences. For instance, the CCSS are organized by “domains,” that add grade-level focus and differ slightly by grade. The domains for Kindergarten are Counting and Cardinality, Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Number and Operations in Base Ten, Measurement and Data, and Geometry.

About the Standards

www.corestandards.org

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts, to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce.

The NGA Center and CCSSO received initial feedback on the draft standards from national organizations representing, but not limited to, teachers, postsecondary educators (including community colleges), civil rights groups, English language learners, and students with disabilities. Following the initial round of feedback, the draft standards were opened for public comment, receiving nearly 10,000 responses.

The standards are informed by the highest, most effective models from states across the country and countries around the world, and provide teachers and parents with a common understanding of what students are expected to learn. Consistent standards will provide appropriate benchmarks for all students, regardless of where they live.

These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. The standards:

- Are aligned with college and work expectations;
- Are clear, understandable and consistent;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Are informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- Are evidence-based

Just as media and technology are integrated in school and life in the twenty-first century, skills related to media use (both critical analysis and production of media) are integrated throughout the standards.

You can find a complete list of the Kindergarten Common Core State Standards at the above-mentioned website as well.

www.corestandards.org

A.) Reading and Language Arts

The intent of the Kindergarten reading program is to enable students to become familiar with basic reading skills involving phonemic awareness, concepts about print, phonics and decoding, vocabulary and comprehension. Through the use of a variety of instructional materials, including word and picture books, leveled readers, letter/word/picture cards and poems, just to name a few, the students learn about the alphabet, begin to make letter/sound associations, recognize high-frequency words, show understanding of written text by recalling events from a story, become familiar with print concepts (i.e. left-to-right directionality) and begin to develop an appreciation for books by realizing they are used to provide information and pleasure. The meaningful literacy activities that the students are engaged in allow for the establishment of important classroom behaviors and routines.

The intent of the Kindergarten language arts program is to enable students to become familiar with skills involving listening, speaking, viewing and writing. Through teacher modeling, the students are consistently engaged in activities that promote these skills. Some examples are listening to stories and poems, reciting rhymes and songs, recognizing environmental print and through written expression. This program allows students to gain a sense of understanding that language, written and oral, is the fundamental way of communication. Through a variety of activities, including dramatic role-playing, the students will learn to use language effectively to express feelings, to inform, explain and carry on conversations. The students are consistently encouraged to practice good listening skills, along with contributing to written activities by forming letters correctly and writing independently. The meaningful literacy activities that the students are engaged in allow for the establishment of important classroom behaviors and routines.

The following are some examples of the concepts presented:

Phonemic Awareness

- recognize and produce rhyming words
- recognize and identify the beginning and ending sounds of a spoken word
- associate letter symbols with letter sounds
- associate sounds with written words
- hears and discriminates syllables in words
- demonstrates blending and segmenting of sounds to read word families

Concepts about Print

- distinguish between a letter, word and sentence
- match spoken words to print
- practice left-to-right/top-to-bottom directionality
- recognizes parts of a book: cover, title, author, illustrator, title page, first and last words on page

Phonics/Decoding Skills and Vocabulary

- recognize all upper and lowercase letters
- recognition of own name in print
- recognition of names of peers
- reads some environmental and functional print
- reads color words: red, blue, yellow, green, orange, purple, black and brown
- reads number words: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten

- reads basic sight words
- uses rhyme chunks to decode new words

Comprehension

- retells a story in sequence with a beginning, middle and end
- makes predictions based on illustrations and predictability of story
- demonstrates comprehension of text through literal questions/inferences/cause and effect

Written Expression

- uses illustrations and inventive (phonetic) spelling to write a story
- uses storybook language (i.e. Once upon a time...)
- copies print from classroom sources
- begins to apply appropriate structure to writing (i.e. beginning a sentence with a capital letter, punctuation, finger spacing)

Oral Expression (Speaking)

- effectively communicate through oral expression
- communicates orally in age-appropriate complete sentences

Handwriting/Fine-Motor Skills

- demonstrates fine-motor coordination through coloring, cutting, gluing
- writes first and last name from a model, then independently
- uses appropriate tripod grasp for writing/correct grip for cutting

The current reading/language arts program used in Kindergarten is: Houghton Mifflin *Reading*

B.) Mathematics

Our math program, which is currently *Saxon Math*, is a developmentally appropriate program that encourages the exploration of mathematical ideas and stimulates curiosity about how mathematics relates to daily life. Mathematical thinking and reasoning and problem solving are fostered through hands-on activities using math manipulatives where the children develop, explore, test, discuss, and apply mathematical concepts.

The following are some examples of the concepts presented:

Numbers and Operations

- count by 1's, 2's, 5's, 10's and backwards
- one-to-one correspondence
- equalization of set
- exploration of problem solving strategies
- ordinal numbers
- pairing of numbers
- representation of number sets
- joining and separating of sets
- comparison of more/fewer/same; larger/smaller; longer/shorter, etc. through observation and construction with concrete objects
- understanding of the concept of zero as a number
- representation of number quantities of 0-31 using numerals
- identify, count and know the value of money: pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters
- solve simple addition and subtraction problems
- identify and write numbers to 31
- identification of the fractional part of one-half as a fair share

Measurement

- collecting and recording of quantitative data using tally marks and data
- sequencing of time (today, tomorrow, yesterday), days of the week, months of the year
- know all four seasons and can identify the components of a calendar
- identification of measurement vocabulary
- measurement using non-standard units
- identification of time to the hour using a digital and analog clock
- compares and orders objects by weight (mass)
- compares length/height of different objects

Geometry

- Identify and reproduce basic shapes
- Recognize objects that are specific shapes

Patterns, Algebra, and Functions

- Identifies, describes and extends patterns in shapes, colors, designs and numbers (i.e. AB, ABB, AABB, ABC)
- Uses a number line

Statistics, Data Analysis and Probability

- sorts and classifies objects by size, shape, color
- able to read and interpret simple graphs (i.e. real, bar, pictograph)
- identify most, fewest, same on a graph

C.) Science

Science concepts are integrated with other areas of the curriculum so that the children experience them in common, everyday occurrences. The intent of the Kindergarten science program is to allow the children to utilize a variety of strategies and skills to investigate age-appropriate scientific problems and give them a strong foundation of scientific concepts.

The following are some examples of the concepts presented:

Life Science

- classify objects as living or non-living
- identify the five senses and determine how they help us fulfill our survival needs
- compare animals

Physical Science

- sort objects according to different physical properties
- explore the concepts of vibration and sound

Earth/Space Science

- discuss and discover changes in seasons/weather patterns

D.) Social Studies

The main focus of the social studies program at this level is to expand the world of family and community. Social studies is fully integrated with reading/language arts and seasonal themes.

Additional Information

The Kindergartners are also given opportunities to travel to different classrooms in the school to participate in other school-related activities: Art (once, every other week), Physical Education (twice a week), Science (once a week), Computer (once a week), Music (once a week) and Spanish (once a week by a volunteer).

They have a morning snack accompanied by outdoor play in our early childhood-friendly playground (weather-permitting), lunch in the cafeteria and a short afternoon rest (approximately 30 minutes at the very end of the day.)

Please Note: The above documentation is presented in accordance with guidelines presented by the State of Rhode Island Early Learning Standards. The goals will be exercised through developmentally appropriate practice in agreement with age-appropriate experiences. The CCSS are gradually being introduced and practiced among all grade levels.