

ST. JUDE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Overview



The St. Jude Pre-k program follows the Early Education Guidelines for the Diocese of Joliet. Some of those guidelines are outlined here for quick reference. Please refer to the complete document for additional information.

The Pre-k program integrates **play** into the classroom. The early education guidelines describe the importance of play as it pertains to a 3 or 4 year old as this:

An early childhood program which provides opportunities and materials for play can be of immense value to both young children and their teacher.

Play is a vital part of the learning process. *“It is basic to intelligence and a key to facilitating growth and thinking in children.”* (Beginnings, Volume 7, No. 2. NCEA, Washington D.C., Winter, 2004.) Children who actively engage in play experiences which they thoroughly enjoy, learn more about themselves, gain a better understanding of others, discover the workings of the world, further their own language development and learn to better solve problems.

Play helps implement program goals and leads the teacher to a greater understanding of children. The teacher’s role can be that of **observer**, evaluating the children’s behavior or discovering their strengths and weaknesses; **active supporter**, guiding the children to solutions to problems; or **a player**, engaging in play with the children, asking questions thus enabling the teacher to better see the world through the eyes of a child.

Motor skill development includes large motor skills and small motor skills. Large motor skills develop the large muscles of the body as in the legs and arms. Small motor skills develop those muscles responsible for hand-eye coordination and writing. The skills practiced in pre-k include but are not limited to:

- Walking, running, galloping, skipping and jumping
- Balance and agility
- Catching and throwing
- Right or left handedness
- Scissor skills
- Tracing, lacing, buttoning and zipping
- Working with puzzles

Social development encompasses appropriate verbal and physical communication skills as well as interpersonal relationships. Activities encourage the learning of socially acceptable behaviors related to what is considered right and/or wrong.

Activities That Encourage Social Development:

- Structured centers that encourage sharing & teamwork
- Free choice play
- Circle time activities
- Group games
- Daily Prayer/Faith Formation
- Daily class routines

Religious education of the young child is primarily the parent’s responsibility. The teacher can be of great value to the parents on this journey of developing spirituality in their child. Teachers have a great influence on both the child and the parent. By living the example of a truly Christian person, all that is taught of Christ’s message makes greater

sense. Religion is not just a subject that we teach once a day. By experiencing a Christ-centered atmosphere in the classroom, children are encouraged to go out and spread the Good News. Objectives taught include:

- To introduce the children to God, our loving parent, and to Jesus, our friend and teacher
- To introduce the children to the Virgin Mary and the Communion of Saints and to begin explaining their holiness
- To learn to appreciate all of creation as a gift from God and to realize that God asks us to care for the world He gave us
- To explore their own capacity to love and ways to interact respectfully with others
- To tell Bible stories in a sacred and meaningful way, which will encourage a further interest in Christ's message
- To teach the children different ways to pray and talk to God

The foundation for **communication skills** – listening, speaking, reading and writing – is begun long before children enter preschool. The early childhood program opens doors for children to actively participate in an environment, which enables them to expand the language skills to all learning. The language arts program provides experiences, which enhance young children's ability to:

- Listen, follow directions and gain a greater understanding of the world around them
- Express themselves orally
- Distinguish between age-appropriate language patterns and non-sense language
- Interact with others and appreciate their thoughts and ideas
- Think independently and creatively
- Acquire an interest in reading
- Attain skills necessary for dealing with printed symbols
- Associate the spoken word with the printed word

The Arts give children freedom to express themselves. They can experiment with media, with sound and with their ability to move. Exposing children to the great world of sound using various genres of music through rhythm band, singing, dancing, and listening to music makes children participants in the expressive arts. The Pre-k program includes but it not limited to:

- Exploring a wide variety of materials
- Using senses with various media
- Feeling comfortable expressing themselves
- Singing, dancing and playing a simple instrument in a group

Mathematical experiences at the early level develop children's ability to observe the world about them and to communicate what they see. Children use concrete objects and manipulative devices and to participate in activities which will help them develop an understanding of concepts needed to solve simple problems. The mathematical processes are critical thinking, solving problems, reasoning, communicating, making connections, and representing. Mathematical experiences include processes, which enable the young child to:

- Describe objects that are alike or not alike
- Classify objects according to color, shape and size
- Compare objects according to size, length, height, and weight
- Compare objects and numbers as being less or greater than another
- Understand positional relationships and opposites