

July 2009

Dear Preschool Parents,

We hope that everyone is having a safe and relaxing summer! Back to school time will be here before you know it! Here is the Preschool information about the start of school and some important information about our program.

Below, you will find **the information about the class** in which your child is registered, and the teachers your child will have. If you feel that any of the following information is incorrect, please call Ms. Gaby ASAP at 248.545.6509 or email me at gmbala@wideopenwest.com.

Child's name: _____

Program: Tots (2 ½'s) / Juniors (3's) / Multi-Age (older 3's &4's) / Seniors (4's)

Days: Mon Tues Wed Thurs Fri **Hours:** _____

Teacher: Ms. Gaby / Ms. Heather / Ms. Sarah **Room:** 102 / 103 / 104

Assistant Teacher: Mrs. T / Ms. Rebecca / Ms. Amy / Ms. Deena

* The assistant teachers for Multi-Age and Ms. Gaby's Tots are still being determined.

Meet the Teacher Park Day

We would like to invite you and your preschooler to a very informal (and optional!) day at the park. It is a nice way for your child to meet his/her teacher in a non-threatening environment, and you may be able to meet other children and parents in your child's class. We have chosen the park across from the Salter Community Center (northwest corner of Campbell and Lincoln in Royal Oak) based on its central location and access to restrooms, and we have scheduled on two days to accommodate our growing numbers! The class park times are as follows:

	Wednesday, August 26	Thursday, August 27
9:00-10:00 AM	Ms. Sarah's Junior Classes (T/Th)	Ms. Gaby's Tots Class
10:00-11:00	Ms. Sarah's Multi-Age Class	Ms. Heather's Tots Class
11:00-12:00	Ms. Sarah's Senior Class	Ms. Gaby's Junior Class (M/W/F)
1:00-2:00		Ms. Heather's Senior Classes

There is no raindate for this event. In case of bad weather, we hope that you are able to take advantage of our other "getting acquainted" events!

Preschool Parent Orientation

In order to accommodate our growing numbers, we have scheduled two different orientation nights. This meeting will allow us to go over the handbook, discuss Preschool procedures, and answer any questions or concerns you might have about the start of school. One parent from each family should plan on attending this meeting. We will hold the orientation meetings in the cafeteria (Room 100) of the school. You can drop school supplies off in your child's preschool room before finding a seat in the cafeteria. Please remember to label the bag of supplies with your child's name and make sure any money is in an envelope and labeled.

Wednesday, September 2: Seniors 4:00 PM
 Tots 5:00 PM

Thursday, September 3: Juniors 1:00 PM
 Multi-Age 2:00 PM

Preschool Open House

Another way to help your child transition to our school or to a new teacher is by attending our Open House. You and your child can have an opportunity to visit his/her classroom. The Open House is scheduled for **Thursday, September 10**, and we have set up the following schedule:

CLASS	OPEN HOUSE TIME
Ms. Gaby's Tots	8:00-8:30 AM
T/TH AM Juniors	8:30 - 9:00 AM
Ms. Heather's Tots	9:00- 9:30 AM
M/W/F AM Juniors	9:30 - 10:00 AM
M/W/F AM Seniors	10:00 - 10:30 AM
Multi-Age	10:30-11:00 AM
T/TH PM Juniors	12:30 - 1:00 PM
Ms. Heather's M/W/F PM Seniors	1:00- 1:30 PM
Ms. Sarah's M/W/F PM Seniors	1:30 - 2:00 PM

This Open House is intended for currently registered students of St. Mary Preschool (please do not invite friends) to meet the teachers and visit their classrooms. If you cannot make the scheduled time for your class and you feel that this would be valuable for your child, please call to schedule an alternate time to visit.

St. Mary Elementary School Meet and Greet Orientation

Parent Orientation for St. Mary Elementary School is Wednesday, September 9 at 7:00 PM in the Fellowship Center. (The building in between the Church and the school) Parents of preschoolers who do not have other children attending St. Mary are welcome to attend in order to meet our principal and obtain general information about the school.

St. Mary School Welcome Picnic

The entire St. Mary School community is invited to a family picnic on **Sunday, September 13**. The location, time and additional details will be available at the Parent Orientation. It is always a lot of fun- so save the date!

Start of School for Tots (2 ½ year-olds):

The first day for Tots class will be **Tuesday, September 15**. In order to help your child feel comfortable with our staff and classroom, and to ease the transition to school, we ask that a **parent bring and stay with each child** for their first day of school. Thursday, September 17, the children will begin to stay without a parent.

Start of School for Juniors (3 year-olds):

The first day of school for the Juniors will depend on which class your child is in. Please read the following tables closely to determine your child's schedule. In order to help your child feel comfortable with our staff and classroom, and to ease the transition to school, we ask that a **parent bring and stay with your child for their first day of school**. We will have a **shortened day** for the first few classes, as described below, again to help ease any separation problems. We realize this might be a little chaotic for some, but this will provide the support that many of the children will need as they begin their first school experience. Beginning September 23, all Junior classes will be on our regular schedule of 8:00-11:00 AM for the morning sessions and 12:15-3:15 PM for the afternoon sessions.

MS.GABY'S MON/WED/FRI JUNIORS

DATE	AM HOURS	
Monday, September 14	8:00-10:00	With a parent
Wednesday, September 16	8:00-10:00	Without a parent
Friday, September 18***	8:00-10:00	Without a parent
Monday, September 21	8:00-10:00	Without a parent
Wednesday, September 23	8:00-11:00	Without a parent

***** only for children enrolled in 3 day/week Junior class**

MS.SARAH'S TUES/THURS JUNIORS

DATE	AM HOURS	PM HOURS	
Tuesday, September 15	8:00-10:00	12:15-2:15	With a parent
Thursday, September 17	8:00-10:00	12:15-2:15	Without a parent
Tuesday, September 22	8:00-10:00	12:15-2:15	Without a parent
Thursday, September 24	8:00-11:00	12:15-3:15	Without a parent

Start of School for Multi-Age AND Seniors (4 year-olds):

The first day for the Multi-Age class and the Senior classes will be Monday, September 14. The Multi-Age and Senior classes will be starting right away with their regular class schedule, 8:00-11:00 AM for the morning session or 12:15-3:15 PM for the afternoon sessions. If you feel that your child needs time to transition, please let us know.

Preschool Forms:

Enclosed, you will find the **Preschool Supply List, Child Information Form and School Calendar**. All other registration forms should have been turned in upon registering. Please bring school supplies and the completed Child Information Forms and the Health Appraisal, which should have been filled out by your pediatrician, to either the Preschool Open House or Parent Orientation. Normally, you will not need a special doctor's appointment IF your child has had a well-child visit in the past year AND all immunizations are up to date. New health appraisals are required even if you turned one in last year. (If you turned one in with your registration materials for the 2009/2010 school year, you are all set!)

Food Allergy Action Plan

If you have noted any existing food allergies on your child's registration materials, we have also included a "Food Allergy Action Plan" form in this packet. Please carefully read and accurately fill in this form. A photo of your child should be attached, and it should be signed by his/her physician. Please return the completed form with your child's required Epinephrine and/or Antihistamine in a Ziploc bag, to your child's teacher at either the Parent Orientation or Open House. The Action Plans and medication will be kept in the teacher closet of your child's classroom in case of an emergency.

Preschool Attire:

As you start to do your Back-to-School shopping, please remember that we can get very messy in Preschool. Please dress your child in **clothes that can be easily washed**. We also like the children to be as independent as possible in their dressing and toileting. Therefore, please try to purchase **elastic-waisted pants** and bottoms, and **Velcro shoes**. There's nothing better than hearing "I did it myself!". In addition, both of our playgrounds are covered in woodchips. Please send your child to school in **closed-toe shoes, NOT sandals or slip-ons or Crocs**. We have found that children tend to trip and fall in Crocs.

New Requirements regarding St. Mary safety measures:

It is now required that all adults who regularly enter the school to drop off or pick up students must complete the Volunteer Background Check and must attend a "Protecting God's Children" workshop as explained below. Especially in the preschool, where adults walk into the building and enter the bathrooms to assist our young ones, complying with these procedures ensures the safest possible environment for your child and the other students of St. Mary School. We apologize for any inconvenience caused. Our number one priority is the safety and well-being of our students.

Volunteer Background Check:

All volunteers, staff, and adults regularly present at St. Mary Church and School must pass a quick and easy background check before being allowed to help in the school. It is completely confidential, but we must have the Authorization Form turned in, and the check completed before you will be allowed to volunteer in the preschool. This applies to grandparents and other relatives as well as parents. This form was in the registration packet. Please let us know if you need additional forms, or you can download them at st-mary.org.

Protecting God's Children Workshops

"Protecting God's Children" is a program to increase our awareness of the habits and behaviors of child predators, the warning signs of abuse, and ways to ensure that we, as adults, do not put ourselves in questionable situations. **Workshop participation is required by the Archdiocese of Detroit for all paid staff and every volunteer who works with children on a one-time or regular basis.** It is a one-time commitment; there is no need to renew on a yearly basis. You can go online (www.aodonline.org) to see a complete listing of workshop dates and locations. Each participant must register for the class at www.virtus.org to receive credit. Please remember that our goal in all of this is to ensure the safety of our children.

Preparing your child for Preschool:

There are several things you can do to help ensure that your child's first school experience is a successful one. We encourage you to help your child become more independent in handling his/her needs. Teach them to ask for help when they need it, to work on putting on jackets, to take care of wiping themselves after using the bathroom (this one is often not thought of!), etc. You will often hear us say, "You give it a try, and then let me know if there is something I can do to help you solve your problem."

For some children, the hardest part about school is not separating from parents, but rather becoming used to the group dynamics and routines that are necessary at school. One of the best things that you can do to prepare your child is to play school with them, working in situations in which they have to wait their turn to talk or use a toy, and particularly situations in which they have to stop doing what they are doing because it is time to clean up or move on to another activity. (We use salsa music to signal clean-up time in the preschool rooms!)

There are also many books available that talk about starting school.

Digital Photography & Preschool

Parents, we are listening to you! We have heard your frustration at our continued use of disposable cameras! With the new ease of uploading photo files directly to stores for printing, we think we have come up with a solution to make digital photos workable in the preschool, but we need your help.

We will be looking for one parent from each class to volunteer as the coordinator for your child's class. We will give you the memory card to upload pictures and a list of parents from your class who have volunteered to pay for and pick up classroom pictures. You upload the pictures, contact the next parent on the list and they will pick up and pay for the pictures. We are also beginning to explore the many possibilities available with the use of digital photography, such as starting a preschool photo gallery that parents could access. If this is an area of interest for you, please let us know! If we have more than one parent volunteer as class coordinator, we can split the year up between those parents.

If you do not want to commit to being the coordinator, but would still like to help out, we do need people to pick up the prints. In the past, each family who volunteered to pay for processing was only required to do so once during the school year, depending on the number of families who volunteered.

You can indicate your interest in either the "Class Coordinator" or in picking up prints in the volunteer section of the enclosed "Child Information Sheet". Both of these are great opportunities for parents who might need to help out from home, instead of in the classroom.

And of course, if you or anyone you know might be upgrading to a new digital camera, we would gratefully accept your hand-me-down! We would ideally like to have one for each of the 3 preschool classrooms.

Available Openings:

We still have spots left in some of our afternoon Junior and Senior classes and in our 8-10 AM Tots class. If you know of anyone still looking for a preschool, please have them call or email Ms. Gaby.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call or email. Enjoy the rest of the summer! We'll see you soon!

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