

Kindergarten Overview

Saint Mary School Kindergarten provides a child-centered, developmental program that focuses on the growth of the whole child - social, emotional, intellectual and physical. The goal is to develop a child's knowledge and skills in all curriculum areas. Instruction will provide activities to stimulate, challenge, and meet the abilities and interests of the children. Theme-based learning centers will integrate all areas of the curriculum and expand the children's knowledge of the world and themselves. Each child will have the opportunity to enjoy success by actively participating in hands-on activities and communicating in all formats. The teachers will serve as facilitators and support children in their active engagement in learning tasks.

Our Language Arts Program, Harcourt Brace Story Town, is a research-based, developmental reading and language arts program for pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. The foundation of the program is its high-quality children's literature, as well as informational texts. The program emphasizes explicit, systematic instruction in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing. The goal of literacy is to provide an integrated Language Arts approach where skills are taught in the context of authentic literature. Letters, sounds, and words will be taught in meaningful context suitable to the needs of the students. This program will have a strong emphasis on written and oral communication. The children will complete a multitude of activities that relate to other curriculum areas such as math, science, social studies, religion, art, and music. We plan to engage the children with quality literature and hope to instill within each child a love of reading.

Our new **Writing** program, Empowering Writers, emphasizes the understanding of literature and the purpose of a written piece. Children will write for purpose using specific templates designed for a particular genre (narrative/expository/opinion). Children will also become familiar with transitional words and sequencing of story events. Throughout the year, each child will be given many opportunities to write and share their written pieces.

In our **Math** Program, each child will have the opportunity to build mathematical concepts by manipulating objects through real life experiences. Children will discover that math is incorporated into everyday routines. Concepts we will be covering include counting, patterning, sorting, classifying, graphing, making comparisons, number concepts, and beginning addition and subtraction. Instructions will take place in small and whole group lessons. The children will have an opportunity to apply and extend what has been taught through cooperative group work and at learning centers. This approach stresses understanding of concept development, rather than rote memorization and drill. Keep in mind that most of the learning occurs as your child works in learning situations making personal discoveries and building mathematical concepts at his/her own rate.

Our **Religion** curriculum focuses on having the children grow in their relationship with God. This is accomplished through daily prayer, discussions, and relevant activities associated with the "We Believe" religion program. This curriculum is rooted in Scripture, faithful to the tradition of the Catholic Church, centered on the person of Jesus Christ, and invites a relationship

with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The program also teaches about the Rites of the Church, Saints, and Liturgical Feasts. Our goal is to make these topics developmentally understandable for the children.

Our **Science** Curriculum covers four units:

- Life Science (insects, the human body including the senses, growth, nutrition, and safety)
- Physical Science (matter and energy)
- Earth Science (earth, space, and the weather)

The content of this program aligns with the structure of the National Science Education Standards. Science lessons involve the children in hands-on learning and include opportunities for inquiry, investigation, and experimentation. Children will also be participating in STEM-related activities during centers.

The **Social Studies** curriculum is organized into unit themes:

Culture – Friends, Family, Global Connections

Geography – People, Places and Environment, Power, Authority and Governance

Working Together, Citizenship – Civic Ideal and Practices, Individuals, Groups and Institutions,

Economics – Production, Distribution and Consumption

Things Change - Time, Continuity and Change.

Each unit includes a “Big Idea”, pertinent vocabulary, and literature selections. Resources also include lessons on several holidays.

Technology is integrated across the curriculum in Kindergarten. Students use desktop computers in their classroom during center time that is equipped with grade appropriate software, including the presentation application Kid Pix. Students use the internet by visiting teacher-approved websites that support their curriculum. Engaging lessons on the Mimio, an interactive whiteboard, are specially designed to make students become active participants in their learning.

The Kindergarten curriculum is a guideline of grade level expectations while still meeting the needs of each individual child. As we build a critical foundation for learning, we are also building each child’s self-esteem and confidence. Our overall goal is to provide the children with a joy-filled experience that makes them eagerly anticipate coming to Saint Mary School each day.