

SACRED FOOTSTEPS CATHOLIC YOUTH PROGRAM PARENT HANDBOOK



Mission and Curriculum

Mission: To assist children in forming a living relationship with Jesus through learning to hear from Jesus in Scripture, surrounding our children in a safe and healthy social environment that assists them to flourish emotionally, socially, academically, and spiritually. Surrounding our children with an excellent academic environment that encourages math development, reading, and writing skills.

Goals

The Spiritual, Social, and Emotional Goals of Sacred Footsteps Catholic Youth Program include:

1. **Introduce children into a living relationship with Jesus** by teaching children to listen to Jesus in the scripture, through the methods of Lectio Divina, (both Ignatian contemplation [imagination] and Teresian meditation [mental]), where they learn the methods of listening to Jesus in scripture, and can spiritually model for each-other!
2. **Disciple our children** through the mentorship and witness of our teachers who model a Christian walk for our children.
3. **Experience shared prayer and song, and a rich introduction to the liturgical life of the Church through crafts, activities, and a focus on each liturgical season.**
4. **Experience the “Heart of the Father”** from their teachers and fellow students at all times, the great love of Jesus heart for students!
5. **Begin to understand the Salvation History Story** – our curriculum moves from Creation to Jesus, covering each major event of Salvation History through story, art, crafts, and integrated into the reading, writing and math activities!

6. **Exhibit a deep respect and reverence for God** and all things of God and our Church.
7. **Experience learning activities of all kinds**, including art, writing, crafts and sensory experiences (Montessori based work with rice/sand/puff-balls/tweezers, and all sorts of activities that develop concentration and fine-motor skills) that help cement the day's learning objectives.
8. **Experience and learn healthy social relationships** through modeling and real-time instruction from teachers, assistants, and parent-volunteers, as well as from each-other. Be surrounded by children growing up in households that share the same faith and virtues/values.
9. **Learn the virtues (through a monthly curriculum)**, both human and theological, that help us to enjoy life more, live closer to God, and fulfill our God-given task on this earth.
10. **Develop a wonder of God's creation** and increase observation skills of His creation through scientific experiments and demonstrations, and through learning of every kind.
11. **Teach students to display a deep respect for teachers and fellow students** that shows profoundly through thoughtful and virtuous language.
12. **Practice the habits of attention, order, neatness, and self-control.** A popular educator said we should spend one-third of our time developing good habits. When we wash our hands, we teach the kids to say the first half of the Our Father while scrubbing their hands with soap before rinsing their hands. We carefully and orderly put our items back where they belong when completed. We line up for leaving and entering areas, etc.
13. **Practice and display kindness to teachers and fellow students.**
14. **Practice and exhibit immediate obedience with a cheerful attitude.**

15. **Practice and show an attitude of service and helpfulness to other students and to all teachers.**

Curriculum

We offer a Christ-centered and developmentally appropriate program for children aged three and a half through five years old in our Pre-K program, and 5 to 6 years old in our Junior Kinder Program. Our teachers use hands-on, visual, and auditory resources to teach our students salvation history, art, math, science and handwriting through Chapel time, circle time, desk-time, centers and free play. We also utilize songs, movement, chants, rhythm, and games.

Curriculum:

Language Arts:

- Students will have a solid understanding of phonological and phonemic awareness by providing many opportunities to learn the alphabetic principle (sounds and symbols that represent the alphabet) that will be taught fun, interactively, specifically, and intentional. Not all children will be at the same level, so scaffolding is used to assist each child to thrive in reading and writing from where they are.
- Ideology: Print represents the words that we speak. As you know, this concept goes both ways; the words we speak are turned into print, and print can be turned into speech, **encoding (handwriting) and decoding (reading)**. We use a variety of resources including Hooked on Phonics to introduce letter sounds, and then blending, to reading! **Handwriting:** We utilize Handwriting Without Tears songs and workbooks, as well as triangle pencil/pens, to teach correct handwriting grips.

Math: We utilize a variety of math resources including Right Start Math and Primary Mathematics using manipulatives as teaching tools to engage students in hands-on learning of mathematics. We use them to introduce, practice, or remediate a concept. We use them in all areas of math instruction-teaching numbers and operations, algebra, geometry, measurement, and so on.

Staff:

Our staff consists of a Director, Co-Director, Lead Teachers, and several Classroom Assistants.

Director: Jennifer Powell

Co-Director: Jolene Wells

Lead Teachers: Sarah Brown, Jolene Wells, Amanda Jones

Communication

Communication between home and school is vital to a successful youth program.

Our program communicates with parents through real-time conversations on-site with our Co-Director and Lead Teacher, and through e-mail. Phone calls can be done whenever desired/necessary as well!

Monthly Newsletters come out for each school updating parents on learning objectives in the classroom, special days, and suggested home activities.

Other school updates will be sent through email!

Financial

Junior Kinder Tuition: Tuition is \$253.00 per month for 4 days/week, \$190.00/month for 3 days/week, and \$155.00/month for 2 days/week for Sept – May. August payment is a ½ month - checks made out to “Treasure in Heaven”.

Please note: We do not charge by “day”. Each month paid is a payment on your child’s total year’s tuition, with the cost averaged for months with more school days, and months with fewer school days. August is the only month that is adjusted.

- **Discount:** We issue a 5% discount on the total tuition amount when payment is made in full for the whole school year. This discount is applied if paid in full on the first day of school in August only.
- **Monthly Payment Option:** Tuition is due on the first school day of the month. Tuition after the first school day of each month incurs a \$10.00 late fee.

Pre K Tuition: Tuition is \$155.00 per month Sept – May. August payment is only \$50.00 for a ¼ month - checks made out to “Treasure in Heaven”.

Please note: We do not charge by “day”. Each month paid is a payment on your child’s total year’s tuition, with the cost averaged for months with more school days, and months with fewer school days. August is the only month that is adjusted.

- **Discount:** We issue a 5% discount on the total tuition amount when payment is made in full for the whole school year. This discount is applied if paid in full on the first day of school in August only.
- **Monthly Payment Option:** Tuition is due on the first school day of the month. Tuition after the first school day of each month incurs a \$10.00 late fee.

Fundraising: You may fundraise part, or all your tuition! We are a non-profit, and all donations to the school are tax-deductible for your donors. We have ideas too, and you may join with other parents to fundraise! Funds are due at the same time as regular tuition, in the same manner, as cash or a check made out to Treasure in Heaven.

Supply Fee: There is a \$20 supply fee per semester for Junior Kinder, \$15 for Pre-K, due with the first month’s tuition at the beginning of each semester. The supply fee is to help provide for school supplies and materials for the classroom. There is also a \$20.00 Snack Fee for Junior Kinder, \$15 for Pre-K, per Semester to pay for healthy snacks each school day.

Discounts: We have several compensated positions based on a first-come, first-serve basis! Please see the Parent Compensated and Volunteer Roles list. We do need all SF compensated Roles filled, so please sign-up if you are able!

Required Volunteer Hours: We do ask each family to sign up for a minimum of 9 SF Volunteer Hours - (Please see Parent Compensated and Volunteer Roles list) to help our school run smoothly and help us build community as we work side-by-side with each other and get involved in our children’s education! Sign-up is due upon enrollment. Thank you for your assistance in these vital roles!

Calendar: Please refer to school calendar* for start and end dates as well as any school holidays.

***Note** - Sacred Footsteps graciously avoids scheduling school on Holy Days to allow families to celebrate together and attend Mass at the best times for their family. Please check the school calendar for any Holy Day Celebrations affecting our current school year.

Bring to School

- 1) Paint Shirt the first week of School to remain at the School
- 2) Labeled backpack for children to bring home items they create in school.
- 3) 2-Pocket Labeled Folder
- 4) Labeled Water Bottle

Purchases/Recommendations

You are encouraged to purchase a *Handwriting Without Tears* Preschool Student Workbook to follow along/practice on non-preschool days!

Please practice handwriting two to three other times per week with your child! We will show you the proper handwriting technique at the August Parent Meeting. The Junior Kinder Program may have some additional recommended or required purchases.

Please read to your child at least 15 minutes per day. Excellent Book Lists can be found in the book by William Kilpatrick, *Books that Build Moral Character*.

Food/Snacks

In general, our school does not serve sugar or sugary drinks during class-time to respect various student's diet restrictions, and the research regarding negative effects to immune system and academic alertness. This guideline is buy-passed for special holidays/occasions and/or our teacher may occasionally send home something with sugar for kids to eat at home with parent permission.

Positive Discipline Policy

Our teachers utilize the Love and Logic® classroom approach. Love and Logic teachers are "strict" but "loving". The immediate consequences of the Love and Logic approach allow our teachers and assistants to remain calm, peaceful and loving at all times. This also creates a classroom where

one student does not end up monopolizing precious teaching time, and yet is given the opportunity to learn from the experience and practice the opposite virtue.

This method also allows quieter students to receive equal academic attention, and maintains a peaceful classroom environment! Love and Logic techniques are also used to help students think independently to solve their own problems with spills/messes and reconciliation/communication issues with other students or teachers in class, at snack, and on the Recess grounds!

We do modify the Love & Logic approach with the compassion recommended by *Shepherding Your Child's Heart* (Tedd Tripp). We also utilize the principles of loving and character-building communication with students recommended by *Shepherding Your Child's Heart*, helping students to build the intrinsic desire to do good, and be good by relying on God and calling upon God. This applies especially to re-focus time, and helping students create a permanent change in behavior (desire for the good of the other, asking God to help with anger, explaining how we must be obedient to God, so to parents/teachers).

We utilize the 3-part apology for reconciliation and forgiveness (I am sorry, Please forgive me, How can I make it better, and a reconciliation hug if appropriate.) This tool helps build good-will and friendship and truly restores a relationship to more than it was before!

The focus is building intrinsic motivation to be good and do good, and to please God! Tangible Rewards may be seen as a bribe (appeal to their idols and focus on extrinsic motivation), so our focus as a school on tangible rewards is "surprise" rewards for good behavior to re-inforce the main focus of building intrinsic motivation!

We utilize the following steps to encourage positive behavior:

- 1) Remind kids of the virtue with a soft voice
- 2) Empathy
- 3) Refocus
- 4) Teaching and practicing the opposite virtue
- 5) Asking Jesus to help them
- 6) 3-part apology to reconcile

School Virtues - JOLES

Our Mission is to work together to learn to love God more each day, and assist our children in loving God more every day and becoming saints together!

What does a World-Class Disciple of Jesus look like?

1) J - Joy - Joyful Heart

- a. Joyous attitude toward all

2) O - Obedient Heart - Respect

- a. Obedience happily and immediately to your teachers
- b. Respectful language to all, “please”, “thank you”
- c. Respect of property and school guidelines

3) L - Love for Jesus – Closeness to Jesus, Eagerness to Pray

4) E - Excitement to Learn

- a. Eager attitude toward learning, Willing to try something new

5) S - A Serving Heart - Serving Heart

- a. Being the First to help a fellow student
- b. Caring about the needs of others
- c. Offering to Help

Illness:

If your student is sick, please keep your student home to avoid getting others sick. Please follow the following guidelines:

1. Student must be free from fever (100 or over), diarrhea

and vomiting (2 or more times) for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

2. If a cough is severe or a student is not acting normal or has trouble breathing, the student must stay home. However, students with a stuffy nose and clear drainage or a mild cough may attend school.
3. A body rash without fever or behavior changes usually does not necessitate staying home from school – please call your doctor for rashes.
4. If your student does not feel well enough to take part in normal activities, please keep your student at home.

Inclement Weather Policy

Sacred Footsteps follows the Windsor School District cancellation policies when it comes to inclement weather. We will also send an email and/or text to parents if we cancel or delay school due to weather. If you do not receive an email or text, please assume that School IS being conducted, but always please only come to school if you can arrive safely!

We do plan on having recess outside as long as the wind chill isn't too cold so please remember to always send a winter coat with a hat and mittens for your child.