

**SACRED FOOTSTEPS
CATHOLIC YOUTH PROGRAM
PARENT HANDBOOK**



**Train up a child in the way he should go;
even when he is old he will not depart. (Proverbs 22:6)**

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 through the loving care of their teachers and fellow students. Giving our children key skills to develop a love for truth, goodness and beauty, while pursuing excellence in academics - encouraging the development of math, reading and writing skills, as well as a wonder and appreciation for science, art, and the story of God's heart being poured out to us in the story of Salvation History.

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.

Academic Program Details:

- **Pre-K Program:** SHA has a beautiful Pre-K curriculum that integrates the entire Salvation History story into the school year. The salvation history story is many times integrated into the PreK academic portions such as reading, math and writing. The development of fine-motor skills are also encouraged through many Montessorri type activities, crafts, and art projects! With our classical focus on songs and memory, we integrate numerous songs into the curriculum - your children will come home singing so many fun spiritual and academic songs!
 - **Chapel:** Pre-K Chapel is truly a beautiful experience! Our goal is to help our children 1) be inspired by beautiful saint and bible stories that lift their minds to greatness and virtue and excellent living, 2) to hear and enjoy God's Word, 3) listen for Jesus[s voice speak specifically to them during quiet-time, 4) learn to vocalize and share their prayers and talk to God with others, and 5) sing God's praises together in beautiful children's praise and bible songs!
 - **Phonics:** SF Pre-K program uses a variety of resources including Jolly Phonics and Hooked on Phonics to introduce and practice letter sounds. When children

know their letter sounds, they are then ready to blend sounds to begin reading!

- **Handwriting:** We utilize Handwriting Without Tears songs and workbooks, as well as triangle pencil/pens, to teach correct handwriting grips. We always teach parents methods to help re-inforce or re-create good handwriting habits at home!
- **Math:** We utilize a variety of math resources including Right Start Math and Primary Mathematics, emphasizing the use of manipulatives to engage our students in hands-on learning and enjoyment of math concepts!
- **Literature:** SHA's focus on beautiful and inspiring literature give our children a "feast" of ideas to broaden their experience of the goodness of life and love. We choose the best and most beautiful Pre-K literature to inspire our children to love goodness, truth and beauty, and indulge their minds in the goodness of life. We utilize such resources as 5 in a Row and the The Virtues Books to give your children the best of literature.
- **Arts and crafts:** We use a variety of materials such as paint, glue, glitter, tissue paper, and other materials to encourage children to develop their creativity and artistic talents. Children LOVE this part of class!
- **Science:** We utilize a variety of hands-on experiments to encourage children's curiosity as they explore the wonders of God's world and how it works! We get messy with all kinds of fun edible and non-edible ingredients to explore and learn science!

Junior Kinder Uplift: Junior Kinders are children who turn 5 by December, 2021, and are academically and socially/emotionally ready for a more advanced curriculum/group! Junior Kinders will join Pre-K for age-appropriate activities such as Chapel, Art, Literature, and Salvation History. Junior Kinders will engage in Kindergarten or modified Kindergarten level curriculum, separate from the Pre-K children, for phonics, handwriting, and math sections.

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 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 \$289.00 per month for 4 days/week, and \$170.00/month for 2 days/week for Sept – May. If there are any partial months in the School Year, they will be announced at the beginning of the year, and will be pro-rated. Checks are 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.

- **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. If there are any partial months in the School Year, they will be announced at the beginning of the year, and will be pro-rated. Checks are 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.

- **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.

Discounts: We do sometimes offer compensated positions based on a first-come, first-serve basis! Please check with Administration right away if you are interested in a compensated role. This would be an Administrative Role or School Cleaning role currently. Additionally, SHA is working to create a Financial Assistance Program - please inquire to Administration if you are interested in this possible program.

Required Volunteer Hours: We do ask each family to sign up for a minimum of 9 Volunteer Hours per School Year and 12 Volunteer Hours/School Year for 4-day/week Junior Kinder Parents. Please see Parent Compensated and Volunteer Roles list available in July 2021. Your participation in these Volunteer Roles 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 by the mandatory August 2021 Parent Meeting. 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.

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
5. Additional Items may be assigned at the Parent Meeting.

Purchases/Recommendations

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

Highly Encouraged: 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, or anytime by a teacher or staff member. 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*.

SHA/SF Sugar Policy

Sacred Heart Academy/Sacred Footsteps School Policies do not allow us to serve sugar or sugary drinks during class-time to respect various student's diet restrictions and the research regarding negative effects to the immune system and academic alertness. Our teacher may occasionally send home something with sugar for kids to eat at home with parent permission. For birthdays, you are welcome to send healthy treats (baked items such as muffins made without sugar, or fruit or cheese options) in with your child for distribution at Snack or Lunch-time with Teacher permission, OR to send a sugary treat in a bag to be sent home with their class-mates to be eaten at parent discretion. Thank you for helping us keep everyone healthy!

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 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!

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 (Illness Policies will be updated by the August 2021 Mandatory Parent Meeting.)

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 has non-clear discharge, please keep your student home. However, students with a stuffy nose and clear drainage or a very

mild cough may attend school. Please call your doctor for body rashes to locate the source (allergies would not be problematic, but a strep-throat rash would necessitate remaining home.)

3. 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.