

Kindergarten
At



"Learning, growing and sharing together."

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them for the kingdom
of God belongs to such as these.

Mark 10:14

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.
Impress them on your children.

Deuteronomy 6:6. 7 a

Dear Family:

I am sure it is hard for you to believe that your child is starting kindergarten. Regardless of whether your child is the oldest or the youngest in the family, the emotions that come with sending your child to full-day schooling are intense. May you experience the fullness of God's peace.

We have prepared the following handbook to help you prepare for this stepping stone in the life of your child. It is our goal to help you and your child make a smooth transition from home to school. We trust you will find the material helpful and that your child's beginning days of school will be a pleasant and happy experience for all of you.

Language development is an important component of our kindergarten program. Our phonics based curriculum gives children lots of practice working with letters and sounds building within them a strong foundation for reading and writing and more in the years ahead! In our kindergarten program students will also discover more about God's world as they learn about people, plants, and animals. As they are introduced to many new skills and concepts they will learn to interact with others in a Christian manner. They will also be encouraged to develop his/her talents to praise God and worship Him. Each child will learn about God's Word and who they are as a child of God.

West Stafford, President and CEO of Compassion International has written, *"Nurturing a child's sense of personal worth and therefore hope and dreams for a wonderful future is perhaps the most important responsibility of every grownup in a child's life...Formed in the image of almighty God, this child is already equipped with gifts to bring to the world. What happens in the next moments, hours, days, and years determines whether that God-given potential will be realized or lost to us all."*

Too Small to Ignore (2005, 36).

At Sonrise our entire staff is committed to partnering with families to help children to fully reach their God-given potential. We trust our small class sizes and family-like atmosphere will provide an environment that will allow your child to grow and reach their full potential.

Blessings,

Julie A. Scrivens

Curriculum

Our kindergarten program uses workbooks published through the Christian publishing company A Beka Book. These are coloured workbooks that allow children to develop their printing skills as they introduce number, letters, and reading readiness skills. Teachers also plan many engaging lessons and activities to correspond with workbook lessons. The A Beka Book Program uses a phonics approach to reading. Instruction is presented in **six easy steps**:

- short vowels
- consonants
- blends
- one-vowel words
- long vowels and the two-vowel rule
- special phonics sounds.

Junior Kindergarten

Junior Kindergarten students will learn the social dynamics of being at school, such as sharing with classmates, following routines, and developing listening skills.

Academic aims for our Junior Kindergarten program include:

- Identification of colours and shapes
- Know numbers 0 to 19 by rote counting and recognition
- Know alphabet by rote and recognition
- Blending of letter ba, be, bi, bo, bu
- Reading of one vowel words
- Printing of numbers and letters
- Understanding of left to right progression
- Development of classification skills
- Understanding of sequencing of events

Senior Kindergarten

Senior Kindergarten students will review and build upon skills learned in Junior Kindergarten as they learn the foundational skills needed to prepare them for grade one. They will also be encouraged to continue developing their social skills, including cooperation and showing kindness to others.

Academic aims for our Senior Kindergarten program include:

- Reading of two vowel words with special sounds
- Recognition of colours and colour words
- Knowing how to tell simple time
- Counting by 5's and 10's
- Recognition of numbers 0 to 100
- Learning to add and subtract
- Development of Creative writing skills

The Full School Experience

Kindergarten students also get the opportunity to be part of activities involving the entire school family. Once a week they join older students in a time of worship and singing in our weekly chapel services. They will also have the opportunity to join other students as we go skating, bowling, and swimming together. Once a term we have school wide theme days where we have lunch together and afternoon activities all centred on a specific theme. Also on a term basis we have an Afternoon Live Talent Show where many of our kindergarten students through the years have bravely taken the stage to sing or share another talent. All of these activities help to develop the family-like atmosphere we aim to provide as a school.

Working Together

We want to make your child's first experience of school to be positive and rewarding. Call the teacher at school if you have any questions or if your child has a problem. School is a co-operative venture. We desire to work alongside you and partner with you as your child develops.

Helpful Hints about School

- Because children at this level need to eat more frequently, they should have two healthy lunches.
- Each child should have a knapsack or a book bag to carry items to and from school.
- Encourage your child to bring in items for “Show and Tell.” You may even practice the “telling” part at home ahead of time.
- Each child is asked to bring a pair of indoor shoes to be left at school.
- Please show an interest in your child’s school work. Display papers and art work for awhile. Ask questions about the work. Show that it is important.
- Make sure your child can open his lunch pail and is able to handle a thermos bottle or drinking box.
- Watch each night for your child’s agenda book. Please use it to keep in contact with your child’s teacher and express any needs for the day.
- Each Wednesday the school publishes a weekly newsletter. It will keep you informed about future events in the life of our school.
- Carefully label any clothes, books, games, and toys that your child may bring in from home.

Things to Bring On Your First Day of Kindergarten:

- Indoor shoes
- Small blanket or towel for quiet time
- Extra set of clothes
- Crayons and/or pencil crayons
- Pencil case
- A healthy snack and lunch with drinks
- A big smile!

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

Your child has been getting ready for a long time in everything he does. Now in the weeks or months before he goes off to school, you can help to guide his energetic sense of discovery in ways that will prepare your child for the spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development that will continue and prosper in the coming year in Kindergarten.

The preparation time for school is not a matter of overhauling your child in order to deliver a perfect little learner at the school door, but a time during which you encourage the development of basic habits and sensitivities that will be useful in the development of the unique person God has created and entrusted to you. All the preparation should come casually, not as a drill, and preferably during the course of a day's events. Lots of praise for honest efforts and jobs well done are important ingredients for school preparation.

Readiness for school can be developed in the following six areas:

1. **Visual-Motor (Eye and Hand Co-ordination)**

Provide your child with constructive manipulative toys such as crayons, blocks and other building materials, clay, beads, scissors, tinker toys, Lego, all varieties of paper, puzzles, balls and music. Cutting and pasting are also important. Try to determine which hand your child prefers. If he is left-handed provide him with a child's "Lefty" scissors.

2. **Listening (For Sounds, Paying Attention)**

Help your child to use words to describe shapes and sizes, colours, likenesses, differences, rhymes, opposites. Ask him to describe what he is hearing, i.e. a train whistle, a car, a bird singing, etc. Teach your child to follow directions. Keep directions simple and be sure he does what you tell him to do. Help your child develop skills in listening and being attentive to stories, instructions, etc.

3. **Language (Vocabulary Development)**

Help your child to learn his proper name, age, address, telephone number and birth date. Encourage him to ask questions. Show respect for your child's ideas. Encourage your child's curiosity and interest. As much as possible avoid baby talk. This becomes an obstacle to the child when he is in school.

4. **Desire to Read**

You can help create the desire to read by reading to your child every day. Encourage his interest in reading in other ways also, i.e. reading traffic signs, recognizing labels, etc. Introduce your child to numbers and letters as his interests and awareness develop. As you help him to write his name, teach him to use lower case letters for all but the first letter of his name. Teach your child the alphabet song if he is interested. Above all you want your child to understand why it is important to read and be interested to do so.

5. Numeracy Skills

Learning to count is a very abstract art and achievement. Rattling off the numbers from one to ten or one to one hundred by rote does not implant a very deep idea of what mathematics is. Hands-on and eyes-on experience of the number system is very important. The ambitious child may even trace or copy the numbers onto blank paper. There is, however, no shame in not being able to get this far, and there is no fun in it if it becomes too much work. Don't hesitate to use fingers and toes for counting. And remember that a child should not only learn the name of a number, but the amount it represents and its symbol.

6. Social and Emotional

Experience is the best teacher! Take your child on a trip to the library, stores, airport, zoo, etc. Expose him to and make him aware of the world about him first-hand. Teach him the way to school, about traffic lights, and a healthy caution about strangers, to protect himself. Develop your child's social habits and skills such as saying "please" and "thank you", what it means to play fairly with others, share what he has, keep his word, how to work and play in a group. Help him to feel comfortable away from mother and home. Encourage special friendships with one or two close friends to give him more confidence about leaving home. Limit TV to programs that will be of benefit to your child. Watch TV with him whenever you can and talk about what you are watching. His judgments on the value of what he sees might surprise you.

Helpful Habits

The following are some helpful habits that you can develop in your child that will be of benefit to him in school.

1. Help Your Child Develop His Five Senses

How to see. Help him to notice things around him, to be perceptive. Explain to him what he sees in nature, i.e., notice that leaves of different trees have different shapes, buildings vary in size, colours have different shades, bright and dull, pale and deep, etc. Play games such as "What is missing?". For example, draw a stick figure with missing parts to see what is absent, or leave out pieces of a picture puzzle.

How to hear. Encourage him to listen for sounds in nature, and all around him and to describe them with proper words. You can help your child to notice by playing listening games. For example, "Close your eyes, what do you hear?" If you have a musical instrument around the house let him listen to simple melodies and repeat them. There are also many excellent children's CD's and DVD's available.

How to use and develop his sense of taste and smell. At least three times per day you have an excellent opportunity to help him learn about taste and smell: breakfast, lunch and dinner. Let him help you occasionally with meal preparations. Many foods smell different before and after cooking. Questions such as, "Is it sweet or sour or bitter?" could be asked.

Let your child touch things and help him to distinguish between rough and smooth, cold and hot, hard and soft, etc. Again, guessing games can be great fun. Varieties of cloth, textures of paper, wood, leather, glass, etc. provide you with numerous examples. Ground coffee, before and after serving its purpose, has quite a different texture.

2. Responsibility

Teach your child to put away his toys and hang up his clothes. Let him do simple chores. Show him how to accept responsibilities such as setting the table, emptying the garbage, cleaning the yard. These activities prepare the way for many setting-up, cleaning-up, and errand running jobs to come in school. Be sure the chores as simple enough for him to do successfully. Praise him for a job well done.

3. Consideration

Show your child how to be considerate of others. Let him know about how you feel about such things as sharing toys with other children, waiting his turn, etc. Teach him to be kind and helpful to other people and to animals.

4. Rest

Your child needs adequate rest. Be sure he gets plenty of sleep and time to relax and be quiet. Help your child to start each day well rested. A minimum of ten hours of sleep, with a regular bedtime and rising time, is very healthful for your child.

5. Proper Diet

Every child feels better when he eats properly. Nourishing breakfasts and lunches are an important ingredient to make his days at Kindergarten happy and successful.

6. Neatness and Manners

Teach your child to be neat about his toilet habits, eating habits, and other health related habits, such as covering his mouth when coughing, not putting objects in his mouth, flushing the toilet, etc. Keep him away from children who are sick and please keep him at home if he is ill.

7. Dress

Help your child learn to dress himself. Clothing should be large enough, simple and in good repair. Practice at home. Zipping lessons, buttons, tie shoes, etc.

