

July 28, 2009

Dear Parents of Preschoolers,

Sunday School classes for preschool and kindergarten children will begin on Sunday, September 13, 2009. Classes meet during the 8:45 and 11:00 Mass, and we invite all children who are age three (by August 1, 2009) through kindergarten to join us. Children who attend kindergarten at St. John School are also most welcome and encouraged to attend Sunday School. The program is geared for sharing faith development with their peers, and there is no duplication of curriculum.

The curriculum we use is published by Our Sunday Visitor and is titled I Am Special. Throughout the year, this program fosters self-awareness and an appreciation of God's love through His magnificent creation and his loving gifts to us. I Am Special provides learning experiences based on the preschool child's level of understanding and ability to participate. Through the media of stories, songs, finger plays, games, dramatizations, lesson-related prayers and sensory activities, preschool children begin to sense and know God's love for them.

In addition to the weekly lesson, the children come together for a short music lesson of liturgical and Bible school songs. Small children love movement when they sing. The gestures used to enhance song offer an exposure to American Sign Language. Several times throughout the year, the children join the parish family during various segments of Mass and share in the celebration with the music and signs they have learned. We call these liturgies Mass Participation. The preschool program is also celebrated with the larger community during Family Mass, which takes place when we close the program in May.

Above all, we aim to create a pleasant relationship between teacher, parents, and children, which will not only exemplify God's love, but also aids the children in forming patterns of social behavior and Christian attitudes toward others. Enrichment activities and Parent Letters are sent home each week detailing lessons and activities as a tool for parents in sharing the growing faith of their children.

Maybe you, too, would like to join this wonderful program with your child -- as a catechist. The rewards are small, but sweet: a hug from a child; a parent's sincere "Thank You;" the joyful feeling of knowing that you are affecting the faith life of a young child. The plans and materials needed are provided, and we strive to rest your fears and give ongoing support. The only

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requirements are a love of children and a desire to share God's wonders with them. You can indicate your interest to learn more about serving in this ministry at the bottom of the registration form or by contacting me at the parish office.

If you are interested in enrolling your child in our program this year, please fill out and return the enclosed registration form by August 19. For your convenience, registrations will also be accepted after the weekend Masses August 15-16. The registration fee is \$45.00 per child, or \$100.00 for three or more children enrolled in any religious education grade level. However, the registration fee is discounted to \$35.00 per child, or \$90.00 for three or more children if the registration is received by August 19. The registration fee is waived for families whose parent(s) are serving as catechists in any religious education program. The fee is also confidentially lowered or waived for any family for whom it will present a financial hardship.

Please note that in an effort to keep class sizes to fewer than 10 students, Mass preference will be assigned on a first-come basis. 8:45 CLASSES FILL UP FAST! If you are undecided or flexible about Mass-time preference, please consider registering for the 11:00 class.

We look forward to meeting you and your child(ren) this fall and sharing in his/her faith development. Should you have any questions or desire further information, feel free to contact me at the parish office.

Many blessings,

*Cindy Shoulders
Coordinator of Religious Education
and Junior High Youth Ministry*