

**Light of Christ  
Lutheran Preschool**

**Parent Handbook**

2010-2011

## **Mission Statement**

Light of Christ Lutheran Preschool radiates the love of Christ Jesus to everyone we touch. Through a carefully planned curriculum and a dedicated staff and congregation, the Preschool serves as a center for service to God. We all grow and flourish in response to God's welcoming call.

## **Light of Christ Lutheran Preschool**

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## **Policy of Non-Discrimination**

Light of Christ Lutheran Preschool admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarships, and other school-administered programs.

## **Philosophy**

The Philosophy of our Preschool centers in Christ Jesus' welcoming call to families: "Bring the children to Me!" We believe that our Christ-centered faith and the teachings of our church provide the strongest foundation for preschool education. Confident in that strong foundation, we assist parents by offering developmentally appropriate religious and early childhood learning that best prepares our youngest citizens for productive futures. Our curriculum is structured, yet flexible to accommodate the many hands-on learning activities and spontaneous teaching opportunities.

Christian education in our Preschool begins with the acknowledgement that all our strengths and abilities come as a gift from God's love. Despite our sinful nature, God chooses each person individually as "numbered in His kingdom." In response to God's love, we create a non-competitive environment for play-based early childhood learning. Our staff daily models Jesus' love and forgiveness to the children. We teach appropriate behavior through modeling and redirection.

Young children - and the parents and teachers who guide and teach them - will find opportunities in our school for social, intellectual, physical, spiritual emotional and creative growth.

## **Admission Policies**

Our school is open to children ages 2.6 to 6 years without regard to race, color, national and ethnic origin, whose parents desire a preschool experience that is taught from a Christian perspective. We will reasonably accommodate children with disabilities in order to integrate them into our program. Individual consideration will reflect on the child's limitations and the limitations of our facility.

It is important that your child is able to toilet independently and wear regular underwear before attending our preschool. Pull-ups are not acceptable at preschool. We realize that occasionally an accident can happen, but children who are consistently unable to toilet independently will be asked to remain at home until more control is developed.

Our child care center has on its site microwave ovens and a cellular antenna.

## Hours of Operation

School Year Program:

Monday through Friday 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

### Preschool Classes for 3 and 4 year olds:

- 3-Day Program - Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9 am - 12 noon
- 3-Day Program - Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9 am - 3 pm
- 3-Day Program - Monday, Wednesday & Friday 12:30 - 3:30 pm (for 4's)
- 2-Day Program - Tuesday & Thursday 9 am - 12 noon
- 2-Day Program - Tuesday & Thursday 9 am - 3 pm
- 2-Day Program - Tuesday & Thursday 12:30 - 3:30 pm (for 3's)

### Pre K Classes for 5 year olds:

- 5-Day Program - Monday through Friday 9 am - 12 noon
- 5-Day Program - Monday through Friday 9 am - 3 pm
- 3-Day Program - Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9 am - 12 noon
- 3-Day Program - Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9 am - 3 pm
- 2-Day Program - Tuesday & Thursday 9 am - 12 noon
- 2-Day Program - Tuesday & Thursday 9 am - 3 pm

## Lunch Box

Lunch Box is 45 minutes of additional time for lunch and play. It is offered Monday through Friday unless otherwise specified. It immediately follows morning preschool from 12 noon to 12:45 pm. Send your child's lunch each day you plan to use Lunch Box. Preschool staff members will supervise the children as they eat lunch together and then play on the playground. The fee is \$5.00 per day. Sign up is available each morning before the start of preschool. We can accommodate 24 children per day. **No** reservations can be made over the phone.

## Preschool Plus

Light of Christ Preschool offers Preschool Plus (an extended preschool day) for those families who are interested in a longer preschool program. Preschool Plus meets from 12 noon to 3 pm, immediately following the morning sessions. It includes Lunch Box (from 12 - 12:45), a  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour rest time, and a curriculum of enrichment activities that coordinate with our morning thematic units. An afternoon snack is also provided.

Preschool Plus is limited to 12 children each day with a teacher and an aide. Advance sign up and payment is required. The fee is \$25.00 per day.

## Fees

A non-refundable Annual Registration Fee is due for all students.

Members of Light of Christ receive a 10% discount in tuition.

Families with multiple children attending our preschool receive a 10% tuition discount for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> children.

### **Tuition Payments:**

Tuition is a yearly fee, payable by the year, half year, or in monthly installments. Tuition is based on 10 payments. There are 9 whole payments and 1 half payment. Payment #1 is due June 1<sup>st</sup> and payments #2 thru #9 are due the first week of each month from October thru May. June is a half payment (payment # 10).

**This first payment will not be refunded unless proof of moving out of the area is shown.** The school will retain 25% if a refund is made. It is important that you have this payment in by the stated day in June so that another child, on the waiting list, will not be put into your child's place.

### **Withdrawal:**

**Written withdrawal for a refund of the first tuition payment is required by August 1, 2009. Withdrawals after this date will forfeit this tuition payment.** Two weeks notice must be given if a child is withdrawn from the school during the school year. Tuition must be paid through the two-week period, and **no tuition will be refunded if the two weeks notice is not given.** If a child is withdrawn after April 1<sup>st</sup> the full tuition for the school year is required to fulfill the contractual agreement we have with our staff.

### **Payment Procedure:**

**No statements will be sent.** Parents are expected to make payments no later than the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month. Any financial problems need to be discussed with the director as they arise. These problems can be worked out, and will be handled in a confidential manner. There is a \$5.00 charge for any returned check.

### **Holidays, Vacations, Missed Days:**

The total tuition fee is required whether the child is present in the school or not. There will be **no refunds given for time missed** (illness, vacation, etc.) nor can a child make-up the time. Our beginning and ending days vary from the Irvine School District schedule. In addition, the school reserves the right to close school for staff conferences and in-service training.

## Forms

In order to meet state licensing regulations it is mandatory that **all forms be completed and returned to us by the first day of school**. Entrance will be postponed if all forms are not turned in. If you move, change phone numbers, begin a new job, add someone who is allowed to pick up your child, or in any way change the data you have given us on these forms, please notify the preschool office. Because we use this information to reach you in case of emergency, it is **extremely important** that we have accurate information at all times.

## Child Pick-Up

Your child **will not be released** to a person (other than parent or legal guardian) who is not listed on your emergency information sheet. If someone else is picking your child up after school, we must have this information **in writing** from you, the parent. The person picking your child up may be asked to show proper identification. If a non-custodial parent is not to pick up your child, we must have an official restraining order or other legal paperwork in our files.

## Sign-In and Sign-Out

California State Licensing requires that each child be signed **in** and **out** each time the child attends. Parents/Guardians are required to sign their **full legal signature**. Sign-in sheets for children enrolled in AM or PM classes are located on the podiums at the playground and in the Pre-K classroom.

If you have arranged for someone else to pick up your child, you may write that name on your child's emergency form, or you may write a separate, dated note to the teacher. We cannot release your child into any other person's custody without your permission.

## Program Schedule

Morning classes begin at 9:00 am and afternoon classes begin at 12:30. Our staff members have assigned tasks and classroom preparation each day, so the gate will remain locked until 9:00 am.

Morning classes end at 12 noon, Lunch Box ends at 12:45 pm, Preschool Plus ends at 3:00 pm and afternoon classes end at 3:30 pm. **Children become apprehensive if you are late in picking them up. Your promptness is appreciated. If you know that you will be late, please call so that we can reassure your child.**

## Parent Visitors

Parents are always welcome at Light of Christ Preschool. During the school year we schedule events for you and your family to become involved and opportunities to visit the school. The first few days of school are not the best days for any parent to decide to observe. It is best to say a loving "good-bye" to a tearful child and then leave. You will be called if your child cannot be consoled and assimilated into the classroom activities.

Other than the first few days, you may choose to come in and observe for short periods of time on almost any school day. If you have a skill or talent which could be shared with a group of children, talk to your child's teacher and schedule a "teaching" day. Remember, you can come anytime to our school unannounced. Open House, Christmas Programs, and Parent Conferences are printed on the school year calendar, which is given out the first week of school. All activities will be announced in the weekly newsletter which is sent home with every child.

## Clothing

We encourage children to bring a jacket or sweater on all but the hottest days.  
**ALL REMOVABLE CLOTHING SHOULD BE MARKED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.**

**SCHOOL CAN AND WILL BE MESSY. PLEASE SEND CHILDREN IN CLOTHES THAT CAN GET DIRTY OR SPLASHED WITH PAINT.**

Please dress children in clothing that is easy to take down and pull up to make independent toileting possible. Suspenders, leotards, belts, and bib overalls are difficult for small hands to manage on their own.

Preschool activities such as climbing and running require sure footing. We ask that children wear **low-top tennis shoes**. Children should not wear cowboy boots, flip flops (or sandals with no back strap), dance shoes or dress shoes because they are uncomfortable, slippery and can be unsafe at school.

## Health Requirements & Procedures

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to us. We want to protect your child and the other young children in our program. State law requires that we have only healthy children in attendance. Children who are ill or who show symptoms listed below cannot be allowed to remain in class. Germs travel quickly among young children. By keeping your ill child at home, infections are not being spread to others and your child is not being exposed to others while his/her resistance to infection is low.

**1) Sick Children:** Parents/Guardians will not be permitted to bring sick children to school. Children who appear ill when they arrive will not be admitted.

**2) KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME IF HE/SHE:**

- Has a fever or has had one in the previous 24 hours.
- Has vomited in the last 24 hours.
- Is taking an antibiotic and has not been on the antibiotic for 24 hours.
- Has diarrhea, even if caused by taking an antibiotic in the last 24 hours.
- Has diarrhea with increased water in stool and/or decreased form that cannot be contained by use of the toilet.
- Has eye discharge or crust. A child with conjunctivitis must stay out for 24 hours after prescription medication starts and until all redness and discharge is gone.
- Has croup. A child with croup must stay out until fever and cough are gone.
- Has a constant cough.
- Is fussy, cranky, and generally not him/herself.
- Has a constant runny nose.
- Has an undiagnosed body rash. A note from the doctor is required to return.
- Child has symptoms of possible communicable disease; these are sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain, and/or fever.
- Has a doctor's appointment for suspected illness; please do not bring your child to school prior to the appointment.
- Has head lice. (Child should remain home until treatment is completed and all lice and nits are gone.)
- Has ringworm. (Ringworm should be treated by a doctor and is contagious until 24-48 hours after treatment or unless covered by clothing.)

Please report contagious diseases immediately so that parents of other children in our facility can be alerted. Remember to report absences to the Preschool office.

We prefer not to administer medicine to your child. If it is necessary, state law requires that you bring this to the attention of the Preschool Director so proper arrangements can be made. A signed medical release form from your doctor is required before any and all medication can be given. Medical release forms are available in the Preschool office.

If you are administering medications at home it is helpful to inform your child's teacher in case of unusual behavior or any adverse reactions to the medication.

## Emergency Plan

In case of a natural disaster (fire, earthquake, or flooding) all children will remain on the preschool campus until they are picked up by parents or authorized persons. If our buildings are unsafe, a Command Center will be set up behind the school playground, near the parking lot. Staff and children will gather here to wait for parents. **IN CASE OF A DISASTER, PLEASE COME DIRECTLY TO THE PRESCHOOL TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD.** All children must be signed out by parents or authorized persons before leaving campus. Staff members will supervise the children until all have been picked up.

Light of Christ Preschool is prepared for emergencies. We have food and water, medical supplies, extra clothing, blankets, and search and rescue equipment on hand. Our teachers and aides have CPR and first aid training. Current emergency numbers for each child are kept together for quick reference. We have monthly fire drills and regular earthquake drills with the children.

Our Crisis Plan for the preschool is reviewed yearly by the staff, and each staff member has an assigned responsibility in case of a disaster.

## Curriculum

### **"Jesus Time"**

Bible lessons for the young child center on Jesus as our Savior and emphasize that God loves and cares for us. We regularly use songs, prayers, finger plays, flannel graphs, puppets and CD's in our instruction. All children in our program participate in a monthly chapel service. Our preschool children occasionally sing at Sunday morning worship services here at Light of Christ Lutheran Church.

### **Learning Centers & Activities**

Inside Play - We encourage small motor development through manipulative materials such as blocks, puzzles, learning games, toys and art activities (cutting, gluing, coloring, painting, printing, play dough, weaving). Socialization skills and school readiness are developed in a comfortable learning environment and are compatible with children's interests and abilities.

Outside Play - We encourage large motor development through active participation in such activities as painting, digging, climbing, balancing, riding tricycles, using toys, playing with the parachute, and bouncing, catching and throwing playground balls.

Specific motor skills are practiced weekly.

Group Time - During group time each day, children are in their individual classrooms with their own teacher. Activities include opening and closing routines, share time, "helper chart" duties, stories, finger plays, songs, and various theme-related events. Children develop patience and learn to take turns as they participate in a group setting.

Sharing - Every week we have a day for the children to bring something from home to show their friends and teachers. It is fun for your child to share something special and to practice language skills at the same time! **Sharing Days are Thursdays and Fridays.**

When children arrive that day, they will find a large sharing bin in their classroom labeled with their teacher's name. Place the sharing item (only one please) in that bin. **We ask that you NEVER send guns of any kind. Please also leave swords and other weapon type toys at home. These do not belong at school!**

Be sure to mark your child's name on the item that is brought to share. If you decide to bring your pet to school, please tell your teacher several days ahead of time so that you and the teacher can decide on the best time for this special visitor.

## **Snacks**

Parents will be asked to bring snack for 2 days during the school year. On those 2 days you will provide snack for all of the preschool classes - approximately 50 children each day. You will receive a schedule the month before you are asked to provide snack.

We encourage you to send nutritious snacks. Each day we serve cold water. We occasionally serve milk. To avoid common allergies, **DO NOT SEND SNACKS WITH PEANUT BUTTER, NUTS OR CHOCOLATE.** You will receive guidelines for snacks with your snack calendar. We provide the daily paper products.

If you forget your snack day, there is a per day charge of \$25.00. If you are absent, or on vacation during your snack period, you are still responsible for providing the snack for your 2 days. If your snack days are scheduled at an inconvenient time for you, you may switch with another family or send the necessary money to cover your snack days.

## **Birthdays & Special Days**

We will celebrate your child's birthday or special day (half birthday) during the school year. You will receive a calendar the month we celebrate your child's day here at preschool.

During opening on a birthday or special day we sing "Happy Birthday" or "Happy Special Day" to the child. Your child will receive a crown, card, and small gift to commemorate this exciting day. Parents are welcome to stay for our opening on their child's birthday or special day.

If you would like to send party napkins, cups, or plates for your child's class, feel free to do so. This is optional.

You will not be scheduled to provide snack on your child's birthday or special day. You are welcome to send home a small birthday treat or "goodie bag" for the children in your child's class. This, too, is optional.

## **Parties**

At holiday times during the year our snack time becomes a party time by having special plates, napkins, cups, and stickers for the children. A sign-up sheet will be posted in each classroom (AM or PM) listing the needed party supplies. Parents may sign up to bring 12 (more for Pre-K) of the various party items.

We celebrate the following holidays with parties:

**Halloween**

**Thanksgiving**

**Christmas**

**Valentine's Day**

**Easter**

## **Discipline/Guidance**

Part of early childhood training is developing self-control. We believe that busy, interested children seldom have behavioral problems. However, when inappropriate behavior occurs the teacher may redirect the child's behavior. Children are encouraged to "use their words" to verbalize displeasure with a classmate's behavior in place of hitting or pushing. The children are also taught to listen and respect their friend's request. "Time out" is used only as a last resort. We emphasize that each child is loved and cared about at all times. Our preschool staff believes it is important to model the kindness and forgiveness that we encourage the children to practice as they interact with each other.

A teacher may need to talk with a parent if unacceptable behavior continues. This allows the home and school to work together in resolving the situation. If this step does not solve the behavior issue, the Preschool Director will request a meeting with the teacher and parents to develop a plan which will enable the child to make appropriate behavioral choices.

Staff members NEVER use corporal punishment at Light of Christ Preschool.

## **Holiday Schedule**

A calendar is given to each family listing special preschool events and school holidays throughout the school year.

NOTE: The Preschool will be closed for the following:

- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Thanksgiving (1 week)
- Christmas and New Year's Day (2 weeks)
- Easter (1 week)
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Teacher In-Service Days

Please refer to the detailed calendar you received this school year for actual dates and scheduled events. Additional calendars are available in the Preschool office.

## **Keeping Preschool Families Informed**

Weekly preschool newsletters will be placed in each child's cubbie on the last school day of the week. These newsletters list our current curriculum themes, weekly Bible stories, and the monthly math and science skills. Our newsletters also inform you of classroom activities and upcoming events. Please read every note that comes home with your child.

Check the bulletin boards frequently for additional information regarding our curriculum and classroom activities. Weekly lesson plans are displayed in each classroom.

If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please feel free to contact your teacher by phone or personally. Should you wish to speak to the Director, feel free to contact her at the Preschool office. We encourage open communication with our preschool families!

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

One parent/teacher conference is scheduled every school year in early spring to discuss the development of each child and to assess kindergarten readiness.

Portfolios are prepared for each child by their first teacher. These portfolios showcase the child's development with a collection of work samples, language stories and photos. Each year that your child attends preschool at Light of Christ, additional work samples and photos are added to the portfolio, illustrating the child's developmental progress. Parents view and discuss their child's portfolio at each parent/teacher conference. The portfolio is given to the family when the child leaves Light of Christ Preschool.

Parents are welcome to arrange informal conferences with teachers before or after school hours at any time throughout the year. Teachers will also schedule special conference times when necessary to address particular issues.