

Philosophy

Concordia Little Lambs Preschool is a licensed Christian school that prepares children for kindergarten by guiding them through their development as a whole person: spiritually, cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically. We follow the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards in accordance with Developmentally Appropriate Practices as established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We have a short summary of our philosophy followed by a more detailed explanation.

Spiritual

We believe that God wants all people to live in a relationship with Him. We support parents raising their children in the Christian faith by teaching them Bible stories and giving them a moral foundation on which to build a life. We believe that it is the parents' job to teach their children the faith and to choose a church. Concordia Little Lambs Preschool teaches Bible stories without pushing a particular denomination's theology.

The Christian Church passes on the faith through the stories of the Old and New Testaments. By learning these stories, children build a foundation of faith that helps them to understand their place in God's world. Each week we focus on a single story chosen to help the children understand the overarching story of Christianity. Our teachers plan age-appropriate activities in story-telling, dramatic play, creative art, and collaborative writing to help the children learn the events of the stories.

Once day week, the students worship in a chapel service. They sing age-appropriate songs, pray, and hear the story of the week retold by the Pastor.

Each year we study an overview of the Bible from Genesis to the book of Acts. We tell the stories of Jesus' birth for Christmas and his death and resurrection for Easter.

These are the basic Christian Themes we teach each week to our preschoolers:

God created the world.

God takes care of us.

When we hurt others, God forgives us.

Jesus gives us eternal life.

Jesus listens to our prayers.

We love others because he loves us.

Cognitive

Children learn best when they are having fun. Our play-based environment offers young learners developmentally appropriate learning centers to explore the arts, Spanish, dramatic play, math, science, and literacy. We use quality literature to enhance our weekly themes.

Play-Based

Young children learn best in a play-based environment. This is how they naturally explore the world around them and understand how to interact with it. We encourage this kind of natural learning by offering developmentally appropriate learning centers in all of our subject areas. The teacher provides a number of options for play that let them skillfully weave academic concepts into the day for children to explore. This helps to develop a nature sense of

curiosity in the world.

Theme-Based

All classroom activities fit into theme, called curriculum units, that changes at regular intervals throughout the year. For example. One curriculum unit we have used is "All About Me." This curriculum unit is an overall look at a child as a whole individual with several smaller themes: The Five Senses, My Feelings, Our Names, Our Friends, and My Healthy Body. Our activities in the subject areas, such as science and pre-reading, support the current curriculum unit.

Language and Literacy

We read a lot, and children love stories. We use great children's literature to support our curriculum units and develop a life-long love of reading. The children interact with great books by retelling, journalling, creating art and more in support of literacy. Our children have access to a writing center during discovery time where they can explore writing with developmentally appropriate utensils.

Language and Literacy are more than just a subject area. In our classroom, language is a part of every activity. We incorporate pre-reading and pre-writing concepts in all the learning centers. Children are encouraged to make grocery lists in the Home Living center, label block structures in our block area, and write down their scientific discoveries in the science center.

Science

At our daily science centers, students explore the scientific method by making predictions and testing whether those predictions come true. For example, students place carnations in colored water and predict whether the flower will change color. We provide materials so they can document their observations as the child chooses assisted by the teacher. Our focus is the process of science so children can discover concepts through their own observations.

Math

At our math center, students discover math concepts by playing with hands-on math tools. They discover measurement, sorting, number recognition, and more through natural play-based experiences. Every day, our students answer the Question of the Day. They learn how to graph by sorting the class's responses with visual, hands-on tools. We also work on math concepts throughout the day such as when we count the days in our calendar or the number of children when we line up.

Arts

Creative arts are a part of every day. Our focus is on the creative process, where the teacher provides the materials and lets the student create the art. We do not provide models for the children to copy, but let them express their creativity by using the materials on their own.

Spanish

Dramatic Play

Dramatic play corresponds with our curriculum units and gives children the opportunity to be social with their peers. The role-play lets the children work on their social skills in imaginative environments and brings their conception of the outside world into the classroom where they can safely explore. They can problem-solve, explore other's perspectives and more. Dramatic play also supports the other subject areas by bringing them into a real-world application setting. Students work on writing when they take orders in the pizza parlor or work on math

skills when they count change in our grocery store.

Social and Emotional

Our play-based learning centers provide children with opportunities to practice cooperation and conflict resolution skills in a warm Christian environment, focused on the forgiveness we receive in Jesus Christ. We guide children through the process of impulse control, problem solving, and building friendships.

Conflict resolution is an important part of preschool, because children often end up in conflict with each other. We guide the children through “using their words” to share their frustrations and to repair the relationship. For example, if Johnny gets frustrated and knocks over Timmy's blocks, we would encourage Timmy to tell Johnny that he is upset. The teacher would help Johnny decide how to resolve the conflict. We also believe that forgiveness is a tool that Jesus Christ gives us to help solve interpersonal conflict. We encourage our children to ask for and give forgiveness. Through this process, the children learn how to use language to solve their problems.

A play-based environment allows for ample social time while the students are learning. They work on ways to cooperate toward common goals and to control selfish impulses. They learn how to get along in a group, wait their turn, and other necessary social skills. Young children need learn how to accurately identify and emotions in others. We help them to learn the language skills they need to express the emotions that they feel, especially in interpersonal conflict.

Physical

Preschool children are learning to control their muscles in the larger muscle groups as well as in fine motor skills. We give the children plenty of opportunities to exercise both in our indoor and outdoor active play spaces. We focus on fine motor skills in the classroom through fun choice activities.

There are many opportunities for the children to develop large muscle control. Whether we are playing outside, walking to nearby Praksa Park, dancing to music, or climbing on our play equipment in the large muscle room, they are learning how to use the bodies that God gave them. The hands-on environment helps children practice fine motor control in all the activities in which they participate. Using scissors, crayons, puzzles, and more help them to develop the fine motor skills they need to succeed.

Concordia Little Lambs Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin. We see each child as a unique creation of God.