

ST. MARY PRESCHOOL



ESCONDIDO



ST. MARY

—CATHOLIC CHURCH | ESCONDIDO—

EXPERIENCING CHRIST—LOVING AND SERVING NEIGHBORS

St. Mary Preschool

Preschool Director: Amanda Harriff

Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your family to St Mary Preschool! We are thrilled to have you join our preschool program and we look forward to the joys and adventures your child will experience. We are proud of the ministry our preschool provides and are excited to partner with you in your child's education at the start of their academic career.

St. Mary is a faith community of children, parents, and teachers working together to provide a parochial education in the Catholic tradition. Our mission is to provide a Christ-centered atmosphere where each child can develop a love for the Lord and learning.

We assist parents in their role as the primary educator of their children by extending, enriching, and encouraging the work they have begun. We encourage growth in self-awareness and build self-esteem through our dynamic education approach which prepares each child for a successful transition into kindergarten.

The St. Mary Preschool family handbook has been designed to give you the information you will need for a smooth and productive year. The handbook will give you pertinent information pertaining to the school, so it is imperative that you read the entire document so that you understand the rules, policies, procedures, and expectations of our school.

Amanda Harriff  
Preschool Director

\*The Director reserves the right to make adjustments to the handbook as deemed appropriate. If there is a discrepancy in the interpretation of the handbook, the final decision will be determined by the Director.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

St Mary Parish Mission Statement	Page 3
Mission Statement/Philosophy/Values/Commitment	Page 4
Admission/Enrollment	Page 5
Financial Requirements	Page 6
Our Program	Page 6
Program Description/Hours	Page 7
Lunch Bunch	Page 8
Drop off/Pick up	Page 9
Communication	Page 10
Discipline	Page 10
Aggressive Behavior Policy	Page 11
Attendance Policy	Page 12
Communicable Disease	Page 12
First Aid/Emergency Procedures	Page 12
Birthday Parties	Page 13
Uniforms	Page 13
Staff	Page 13
School Holiday Schedule	Page 14
Emergencies	Page 14

## St. Mary Parish Mission Statement

St. Mary Parish in Escondido, CA, welcomes everyone to enter God's Covenant of love, forgiveness and healing and in turn follow His Will manifested in Revelation (Scripture, His life and Apostolic Tradition). As such, our Parish provides followers of Jesus Christ, who alone is Savior, the practice of Roman Catholicism witnessing in faith the one true God in the three persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Initiated into the life of God through grace by baptism, we are brothers and sisters in the mystical body of Christ, united in professing the faith in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church established by Jesus and steadfast in our pursuit to know, love and serve God.

Honoring His commandments in particular to *"love Him above all things and neighbor as self"*, and thus strengthen our parish, build up the Universal Church, and mission to extend the Kingdom of God, we pledge to always uphold the fullness of revealed Truth, teach and serve one another by word and deed, and live as faithful stewards of God's gifts contributing our time, talents and treasures. Above all we resolve to conversion and holiness through prayer and sacrifice by *"carrying our cross daily"* to encounter God and exercise faith and hope in His love, mercy and promises taking advantage of all He has provided to aid us toward eternal union with Him in Heaven; namely the Bible (His Word), the Sacraments (His Life), the Church – *Militant, Purgative and Triumphant* (His Body), and Mary (His and our mother).

## MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary Preschool's mission is to provide a Christ-centered environment where each child can develop a love for the Lord and learning.

## PHILOSOPHY

St. Mary preschool students are immersed in a Christ-centered learning environment, grounded in the Catholic faith, which supports the development of the whole child; spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. We acknowledge parents are the primary educators of their children and we partner with parents to provide an outstanding Catholic education. We encourage students to develop their God-given talents by fostering an atmosphere of dignity and respect for all.

## VALUES

We value family and encourage parents and teachers to work together to create the best possible experience for each child.

## COMMITMENT

We provide a safe and loving Catholic environment of love, acceptance, and belonging through scripture and prayer. We assist parents in their role as the primary educators of their children by extending, enriching and encouraging the work they have already begun. We encourage growth in self-awareness and build self-esteem through our dynamic education approach which prepares each child for a successful transition into kindergarten.

## PRIORITIES FOR ADMISSION

- ✓ Students of families in good standing already enrolled at St. Mary Preschool or School.
- ✓ Students of families in good standing at St. Mary Church.
- ✓ Students of families in good standing at other Catholic parishes.
- ✓ All other families who accept the St. Mary Preschool Philosophy.

## AGE FOR ADMISSION

All children must be utilizing independent toileting, no assistance is needed. No diapers or pull-ups.

- ✓ 2 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>, of the academic year
- ✓ 3 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>, of the academic year to enter preschool
- ✓ 4 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>, of the academic year to enter Pre-K

## ENROLLMENT PROCESS

- Parents complete the enrollment contract, and all licensing forms, register for FACTS and pay the registration fee at the time of registration.
- Acceptance is finalized upon Director approval after a one-month probationary period. If determined, anytime throughout the year, that the child's needs cannot be met, the Director will request parents withdraw their child from the program.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of San Diego, mindful of their mission to be a witness to the love of Christ for all, grant admission to students of any race, color, and national and/or ethnic origin. Each is given all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the schools. The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of San Diego do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and/or ethnic origin, age, sex, or disability in the administration of educational policies or programs.

## FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

An annual registration fee per child is due at the time of registration. This fee is non-refundable.

St. Mary Preschool has partnered with FACTS Management to manage tuition payments. FACTS Management allows parents to pay tuition and fees over time, making it easier to afford quality education for their children. Parents agree to enroll with FACTS to have their monthly tuition automatically withdrawn from an account of their choice. There is a one-time FACTS charge of \$55.00.

Please refer to the separate tuition sheet for current rates.

Financial requirements are as follows:

- Payment of tuition in monthly installments through FACTS on the 10<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup>.
- All FACTS requirements and fees associated with failed payments apply.
- Parents picking their children up after the designated program time, will be charged a fee of one dollar per minute. This fee is added to your next monthly tuition payment through FACTS.
- Tuition credits will not be given due to absences, illness, or vacations.

## OUR PROGRAM

St. Mary Preschool program builds your child's self-esteem, confidence, and independence as well as promotes a positive school experience. We balance our academics with each child's developmental stage.

All students will learn about the mass, explore and see the different parts of the church and observe how to worship. Students will attend all school mass on Wednesday mornings starting in October.

On mass day students wear navy blue polos and khaki bottoms. Please have students at school by 7:45 am and attend to their restroom needs prior to the service at 8:00 am. Students will walk to mass with their class. If the student arrives late please sign them in at the preschool front office and bring them to the church.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/SCHOOL HOURS

St. Mary Preschool follows the St. Mary School calendar, with a few minor exceptions. Lunch bunch is an extension of our half-day program, which allows students to eat lunch with their peers and spend additional time developing social skills. Hours of operation are as follows:

- Morning session: 7:30 am–12:00 pm.
- Lunch bunch: 12:00 pm-12:30 pm.
- Full-day session: 7:30 am-4:30 pm.

Parents may choose one of the following schedules:

- 2 Half Days per week or 2 Full Days per week- **Tues/Thurs**
- 3 Half Days per week or 3 Full Days per week- **Mon/Wed/Fri**
- 5 Half Days per week or 5 Full days per week- **Mon-Fri**

Please bring all items labeled on the first day. Recommended items:

- Water bottle
- Snack (one for half-day students, two for full-day students)
- Lunch
- One complete change of clothes to leave at school (does not have to be uniform)
- Cot sheet and blanket (for students who are full-day)  
\*no pillows, please

**\*Please note we are a peanut-free school.**

**\*Our staff cannot wake up your child from rest time per licensing.**



## LUNCH BUNCH

We will utilize this extra time in the day to eat lunch and play outside, but also enhance the child's learning experience by reading, and doing creative music and movement and crafts. Most of all, we have fun!

### **Policies to be aware of:**

1. Lunch bunch is offered M-F, 12:00-12:30. Students must be picked up by 12:30. After 12:30 we will charge a late fee of \$1.00 per minute as our afternoon kids start rest time immediately following lunch.
2. Lunch bunch fee is \$10 per session. Fees will be added to FACTS at the end of each month.
3. There will be a binder on the sign-in table behind the parent folders, specifically for lunch bunch. Everyone will sign in on the same sheet. Please sign in on the days your child will attend.
4. Once your child is signed up for a spot, they are expected to attend. If they do not please note that you will be charged the session fee of \$10.
5. Please pack a healthy lunch/drink for your child. We are a peanut-free school.

## DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURE

The preschool driveway is located on 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

- **The gate will be closed and locked during St. Mary School class and extension time.**
- **The gate will be open in the morning until 7:55 am.**
- **It will reopen again from 2:45 pm -3:20 pm, with the exception of Wednesday when it opens from 11:45 am-12:20 pm.**

\*Please note if you arrive outside the times listed above you may enter the pedestrian gate by the driveway utilizing your code

### **SIGN IN:**

- Take the child to the bathroom
- sign-in with full signature
- walk students into their classroom or playground to meet class
- drop off the water bottle, snack & lunch (placed in the fridge)
- please be sure that your child is under the supervision of a teacher before you leave

### **SIGN OUT:**

- pick up students and items from the classroom or playground
- sign-out with full signature
- check student and parent folders
- please make sure the teacher sees you and your child leave

**\*Please sign in and out. Your signature acts as a transfer of responsibility from you to the preschool and the preschool back to you.**

- Check the top of your child's sign-in sheet and confirm that it says his/her name.
- If you do not sign your child in, you will be called to come back and do so. We cannot have your child here if he/she is not signed in.
- After the first week of school we charge \$10 per missed signature, to your FACTS account. If we get fined by licensing the parent will be responsible for that fee.

Students are released only to those listed on the emergency form and will be required to show a picture ID if we have not met them before.

## COMMUNICATION

Please check the parent bulletin board near the entrance of each classroom for announcements and the monthly calendar. The calendar will be sent home and emailed each month to keep you informed of announcements and school activities. Please see the Director with all questions, comments, or concerns. Teachers will contact parents via email with any student concerns. Please do not try to have a meeting with the teachers while they are with students, make an appointment instead.

## DISCIPLINE

Discipline is used to teach, not punish. Our discipline policy states that children may not be disruptive to our teaching or to the student's learning, safety, or development. As a Catholic preschool, we include the teaching of kindness and gentleness. It is our goal that the children will learn to be kind, gentle, and respectful in their behavior, accept boundaries and develop self-control.

### 1. Positive Guidance

- All children have off days and are learning right from wrong. It is the job of teachers to help them learn, provide positive guidance, and help them to understand how to make safe and healthy choices.

### 2. Redirection

- Teachers will redirect a child's attention, offering a different age-appropriate activity than the one they are struggling with, or having trouble cooperating with peers on.
- Children feel empowered when they make the right choices, and this encourages them to keep on trying.

### 3. Break time

- Taking a break can be an effective preschool discipline policy when redirecting a child or offering positive guidance fails.
- Children who need a break will be supervised at all times.
- Children will only sit for about one minute per their age in years (three minutes for a three-year-old, for example).
- Before being reintroduced to the group, the teacher will have a conversation with the child to brainstorm on ways to do things differently.

### 4. Communication policies

- Parents will be notified in writing in the case of major or reoccurring behavioral challenges.

## AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY

Our policy is to provide a safe and healthy environment for all students and staff. We are aware that it is not uncommon for children to display aggressive behavior in preschool settings. We do not want any of your children to be affected by this behavior. It is our goal that the aggressor is encouraged to use appropriate problem-solving and social skills. Behaviors that are determined by the Teacher and/or Director to be a safety threat to others (biting, hitting, pinching, kicking, pulling hair, etc.) will be handled as such:

### **1<sup>st</sup> Incident:**

- The child will be removed from the area and if needed taken to the office to calm down.
- The teacher/director will complete an incident report and discuss the behavior with the parents.
- All parties involved will receive communication and/or documentation of the incident.
- The teacher will encourage the child to develop problem-solving and social skills.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Incident:**

Same procedure as 1<sup>st</sup> incident with the exception of the following:

- The parent will be required to pick up their child at that time.
- A conference with the parents, teacher, and director will be scheduled to discuss the incident and possible solutions.
- Third incident course of action will be determined at this time and may include the student's removal from the school for a day or longer.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Incident:**

Same procedure as 2<sup>nd</sup> incident along with a predetermined third incident course of action being carried out.

Throughout the entire process, staff will continually work together with parents to assist the child in the development of appropriate behavior. If appropriate, a behavioral observation will be scheduled.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

If a student will be absent from class, please notify the Preschool via email or phone by 9:00 am the day of the absence. The office will notify the teacher of the absence. Please include the reason for the absence- illness, personal, out of town. For illnesses please provide information if they have experienced any of the following:

- A fever of 100 or higher in the past 24 hours
- Vomit or diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Persistent, congested or productive cough
- Colored nasal discharge
- Colored discharge from eyes or eyes are red or swollen
- Are unusually tired, irritable or do not seem like themselves
- Evidence of head lice
- Any medical diagnosis if seen by a professional

We ask that you keep him/her home for **a full 24 hours after vomiting, significant coughing and runny nose, or after the temperature** has returned to normal and your child is symptom-free. There is no tuition credit given due to absences or illness.

\*Please note that instructional hours begin at 8 am and the teachers would appreciate it if your child arrived on time each day to not miss an important part of the day.

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Parents must notify the preschool when their child has a communicable disease. The child will be sent home and able to return once treated and cleared by a medical professional. The school must notify parents if other students have been exposed to the disease.

## FIRST AID/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- All emergency forms will be kept in school files and copies will be in each classroom binder available for immediate use.
- Ouch/incident reports shall be filled out for any accident occurring at school. Reports will be completed and signed by the staff member who witnessed the incident and reviewed by the director. The original will be sent home with the child and a copy is kept in school files.

- First aid kits are in each classroom and school office shall include necessary, basic items as recommended by the Red Cross.

## BIRTHDAY PARTIES

We thank and praise God for all the children in our care. We would like to join you in celebrating your child's birthday. If you would like to bring a special treat, please let your child's teacher know in advance. The treat must be store-bought and peanut free.

## UNIFORMS

School policy requires students to wear uniforms.

### **Uniform requirements are:**

- Navy blue or khaki pants, shorts, skirts
- White/Navy/or Light Blue collared shirt/blouse
- Any color **closed-toed** shoes and socks (no sandals of any type)
- Any color sweaters or jackets

## REQUIREMENT TO REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

All preschool teachers and staff are mandated or required to comply with the suspected child abuse reporting requirements as stated in the Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing, Title 22 Handbook.

## STAFF

Our school maintains high standards which are met by each individual member of our staff. Each teacher has a genuine interest and love for children and is experienced in working with children during their most formative years. Our staff all meet the State of California licensing requirements, are mandated reporters and are CPR and first aid certified.

## SCHOOL HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

St. Mary Preschool Holidays are:

September - Labor Day

October- Diocese Professional Development Day

November – Veterans Day, Thanksgiving week

December – Parish Advent retreat, Christmas Break (2 weeks)

January -Martin Luther King Day

February - Presidents' Day

March or April – Parish Lenten retreat, Easter Break (1 week)

May - Memorial Day

## EMERGENCIES

If the school is closed due to an emergency situation that occurs after school hours, (fire, earthquake, etc.) you may call the Elementary School Office at (760) 743-3431 to obtain a daily pre-recorded message about when classes will resume or any other information we feel parents will need to know. Information may also be available on the local news stations. St. Mary Preschool will follow the same emergency schedule as the Escondido Union K-8 School District.

When an emergency occurs during school, all children will remain at school and parents will be called immediately to come pick up their child. If St. Mary campus becomes unsafe, parents will be notified of the relocation site. Staff will remain with the children until all parents arrive.