

Philosophy

The abundance of life, and the beauty of its surrounding lakes, rivers, hills, valleys, and parks are natural gifts that we celebrate. Our roadways, bridges, and canals connect us to them and to each other. We live among and are influenced by this environment. Among these many treasures are our children, the most precious of all. Our young children bring to their early childhood classrooms an exuberance for life. The teachers in the Early Childhood programs in the Diocese of Rochester welcome the challenge to enhance and enrich this zest for life.

Early Childhood teachers teach to the needs of the whole child, recognizing well that each child develops at his/her own pace. These teachers acknowledge that play is the primary means by which young children discover an understanding of the world about them.

Everything possible is done to ensure that total learning takes place. Early Childhood teachers know well that a knowledgeable, observant manner, along with a constant vigilance, needs to be maintained in order to be able to recognize the spiritual, social-emotional, physical, and intellectual needs of each child.

Our young children are encouraged to think of themselves as competent human beings who have been loved into life by a loving Creator. They are invited to express their feelings safely, to learn to live comfortably with others, to learn to love life, and to welcome new experiences. It is in this environment that our young children will develop a healthy love of self, an awareness of God's love for them, a wholesome respect for all aspects of life, and a genuine love of learning.

In the Catholic school early childhood program, the teacher collaborates with parents in sharing religious beliefs and values. The encouragement and example of these adults are among the most important factors which influence faith development. As collaborator, the teacher fosters a deeper awareness of God's love and presence. The teacher is flexible and supportive in meeting the needs of each new group of children, and offers each child space to experience the joy of learning and the love of God.

As lifelong learners, our young children will continue to grow in wisdom, knowledge and grace, strive to be contributing citizens, and add to the abundance of life in the world, wherever they may live.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM GOALS

PreK-4

The seeds of wonder, discovery and natural curiosity nurtured tenderly during the Early Childhood years will blossom beautifully into a lifelong love of learning.

Rooted in this belief, the Early Childhood PreK-4 Program in the Diocese of Rochester provides the following:

- ◆ *an awareness of God's love as experienced in family and school community.*
- ◆ *a joyful environment.*
- ◆ *the development of a positive self-image.*
- ◆ *the development of a social-interdependence with adults and peers.*
- ◆ *experiences enabling the child to communicate effectively with others.*
- ◆ *the development of motor skills which are directed to proficiency and coordination in action and movement.*
- ◆ *the use of concrete materials and "hands-on" experiences to facilitate learning through discovery.*

Characteristics of Early Childhood Classrooms

- *The experience of faith and God's love is clearly manifested.*
- *The program is organized, carefully supervised, and regularly assessed to assure that the goals are accomplished.*
 - *The program is centered around a specific curriculum or set of principles for learning.*
 - *Competent, dedicated, enthusiastic teachers work to provide individual attention to children.*
 - *Teachers stay informed and continually update themselves regarding the field of Early Childhood.*
 - *Parents and teachers are partners in educating the children.*

