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WELCOME!

Thank you for enlisting the service of Precious Lambs Preschool to care for your child. The teachers are excited to work with every parent to provide the best possible Christian preschool experience for every child. The teachers hope that, together with parents, children's faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior is nourished. The prayer of Precious Lambs Preschool is that God's will be done and His name be glorified.

This handbook includes basic information about Precious Lambs Preschool. It has been developed to give parents an understanding of what they can expect and what the Preschool expects of parents. Parents are encouraged to contact the Director with questions, concerns or comments.

WHO ARE WE?

Precious Lambs Preschool is owned and operated by St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, and is directly supervised by St. Paul's Board of Christian Education. Our church and school are members of a larger church body called the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, which has been providing quality Christian education for over 150 years. We are one of the Largest Private / Christian School Systems in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics) and have:

- 400 Early Childhood Ministries
- 345 Lutheran Elementary Schools
- 26 Lutheran High Schools
- 2 Colleges
- 1 Theological Seminary

Precious Lambs Preschool is a faith-based, licensing exempt preschool program, and is committed to ongoing self-monitoring that meets or exceeds state licensing regulations.

Precious Lambs Preschool is an accredited preschool through the Association of Christian Schools International, and received its accreditation status in June 2007.

SCHOOL HISTORY

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church was established in 1974. In 1994 the congregation built an addition to the church to serve as an educational wing for a new elementary school, which was dedicated on July 31, 1994. Though at that time many of St. Paul's members were of retirement age, they were motivated to share their faith with children and their families in accordance with Jesus' words to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). In 1994 the congregation also called the first Principal of the school, Mr. John Melso, and began the school year with 17 students in grades K-8.

In 1998 St. Paul's called Miss Sherri Sukow (now Lueck) to teach Kindergarten and part-time preschool. Preschool was later taught by Mrs. Carole Melso for the 2000-01 school year, and by Mrs. Roberta Mele' from 2001 to 2003. Mrs. Kay-Lynn Johnston, the present PreK-4 teacher and Director, was called the summer of 2003. Mrs. Sharon Welfel, the teacher's assistant from 2003-08, was hired to teach PreK-3 and PreK-4 beginning in fall 2008.

During the 2003-04 school year, grades K-8 were privileged to move into a new educational unit on the church property. Preschool classes continue to be held in the original educational wing of the church. The expansion of our elementary school in 2011 allowed for a separate Kindergarten class, which now shares this wing with the preschool.

MISSION

“Preparing children for this life and eternity by offering a superior academic and spiritual education.”

It is the mission of Precious Lambs Preschool to support and encourage parents in their God-given responsibility to educate and spiritually train their child. We provide young children a safe, loving Christian environment where they are prepared physically, socially, emotionally and educationally for future learning experiences, and where they are disciplined spiritually to live for Christ.

VISION

Precious Lambs Preschool is known for its superior spiritual and academic education whose students:

- know and appreciate Christ’s love for them;
- demonstrate Christ’s love toward others in their speech and behavior;
- find their self-worth in Christ and what he has done and continues to do for them;
- recognize that God gives them their talents and abilities, and that they can use these to glorify him;
- are well prepared for future learning experiences in Kindergarten and the early elementary grades;
- have compassion and respect for their fellow man;
- have an appreciation for God’s gift of good health and make God-pleasing decisions that promote a healthy lifestyle.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

At Precious Lambs Preschool we believe that the Bible is the true, unchanging Word of God and is the final authority in all matters of life. (II Timothy 3:16-17) When all learning and living takes place in light of this scriptural viewpoint, children are prepared to fulfill God’s will for their lives and are trained for a life of Christian service in a non-Christian world. (Proverbs 22:6 and II Tim. 3:15)

We believe that God created human life to be developmental and that the educational process must nurture the development of the whole child. The classroom environment must be flexible in allowing children to go through the predictable stages of growth and maturation on individual timetables, and also allow for the unique characteristics, learning styles, and family experiences of each child. Children are active learners and learn best through concrete, quality play experiences which are facilitated through purposeful planning and modeling by caring adults.

Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”

II Timothy 3:15-17 (NIV)

“15 And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

CORE VALUES

The members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church have established a preschool in order to bring children to Jesus at a young age so they might learn to know His love for them and trust in Him as their Savior. Jesus said, *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."* (Mark 10:14) By these words Jesus indicated His love for little children and His desire that they be brought to Him so He could bless them.

Precious Lambs Preschool believes the Bible is the true Word of God and written on its pages is God's plan to save His children. Through Bible lessons children learn that by nature we all are sinful and in need of forgiveness. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16) We teach that God brings all people to this life-saving faith in Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Precious Lambs Preschool believes all children are a gift from God to families, and He has given parents the main responsibility for the nurturing and training of their children. *"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."* (Ephesians 6:4) It is our privilege to share in this God-given responsibility with parents. Precious Lambs Preschool loves and values each child and is prepared to support and encourage parents in this most important task.

We believe that children learn in individual ways and according to their unique development. Our goal is that children develop their full God-given potential and become life-long learners. This can best be achieved by providing rich experiences for children and opportunities for age-appropriate play, hands-on activities, problem-solving and reflection.

We believe by integrating God's Word into all areas of curriculum and by receiving Christian guidance and positive role-modeling from their teachers that the children will grow in their faith and Christian living, and demonstrate this in their own behaviors and attitudes.

Precious Lambs Preschool is delighted to share their faith, love, and knowledge with preschool children and their families.

STATEMENT ON FAMILY VALUES:

The faculty and staff of St. Paul's Lutheran School agree with and model to students and other staff Christian principles of morality and family life. Among these is the belief that marriage is a divine institution between one man and one woman.



PROGRAM GOALS

Through their experiences at Precious Lambs Preschool our children will:

Spiritual Development

- know Bible stories
- know who God is and that he cares about us
- know who Jesus is and what he's done for us
- know that they can speak to Jesus in prayer
- understand that there is certainty after death
- know there's never a problem so great that we can't handle it
- know that they are never alone

Social-Emotional Development

- understand their feelings and express them in words
- demonstrate growing independence and confidence in their abilities
- develop responsibility for themselves and their environment
- show curiosity and a desire to learn
- learn to play, work, and communicate with peers and adults
- show love and respect for all people

Cognitive Development

- expand logical and mathematical thinking
- acquire problem solving skills
- make choices and plans, and bring them to completion
- gain knowledge and concepts about the world
- develop in their ability to understand language and to communicate
- develop an interest in books and reading in various ways
- demonstrate writing in various ways
- use creativity and imagination
- appreciate and express themselves in art, music and movement



Physical Development

- learn to care for their own bodies
- develop good nutrition habits
- observe safety precautions
- use large motor skills with confidence, control and coordination
- refine small motor skills by using small muscles:
 - to coordinate eye-hand movements
 - for self-help skills
 - to use drawing and writing tools

Family Development

- grow spiritually as a family
- draw closer to other families
- share in maintaining a partnership between home and Precious Lambs Preschool

CURRICULUM

Parents often have questions and concerns about preschool curriculum. Many people tend to equate a school's curriculum with a published set of materials that lead a teacher from one lesson to the next. These may include pre-made materials like worksheets, or cut and paste activities. Many preschools use such curriculums, but research disagrees that these create the best results in children. We have chosen to utilize research-based curricula that is flexible to meet the unique needs of the children in each classroom, and which use open-ended activities in which the children are active, participatory learners. Our curriculum is based on our Christian faith, our understanding of child development, current research in early childhood education, and our knowledge of each individual child, his interests, needs, abilities, and background. As such, we believe the curriculum of Precious Lambs Preschool is designed to meet the spiritual, physical, cognitive and social-emotional developmental needs of our children.

"Curriculum" in our early childhood setting is everything that we do throughout the day. In addition to addressing traditional academic subjects, it promotes independence, curiosity, decision making, cooperation, persistence, creativity and problem solving in young children. Our day consists of active and quiet times; individual, small, and large group experiences; and indoor and outdoor play.

During Bible Time children learn about Jesus through Bible stories, verses, songs, and prayer. This is a large group activity that also fosters children's listening, comprehension, and verbal skills. By teaching the Bible in a child's language through fun activities children find joy in learning God's Word. Doing things the "Jesus Way" is how they will want to respond to God's love. We want each child to develop to his full potential to fulfill God's will on earth.

The rich classroom environment allows children to be comfortable and practice skills they have learned, and encourages them to try new experiences. Children will develop the skills, attitudes and concepts that will enable them to make sense of the world, be successful and therefore develop a true feeling of self-worth. Following a daily routine helps children feel secure by giving them a sense of control as they come to know what to expect.

The teachers act as facilitators in this child-centered classroom as they guide and supervise play to foster learning. Children are encouraged to make choices, engage in active learning, and build relationships with peers and teachers. The learning centers are filled with concrete, process oriented experiences for children. Through supervised play children become better thinkers and problem solvers and develop creativity.

Other small and large group times involve children in teacher-initiated experiences. These are scheduled throughout the day and may include listening to stories, playing a game, cooking, singing, learning a finger play, experiencing music movement, or planning and sharing.

We believe this curriculum will create capable learners who are able to think for themselves, solve problems, and live as children of God. Their faith in Jesus our Savior will be strengthened through his Holy Word. Children will be challenged to use language and to construct meaning from print. They will stretch their ability to think logically, solve problems, see relationships, and to use their senses. It is the integration of a day of preschool experiences that helps children learn and builds a foundation for further education in reading and math.

Interest Areas are an essential part of the total curriculum. Although each area serves to help children meet the goals in all areas of development, this list will accentuate developmental goals that are particular to specific interest areas.

In the **House Area** children

- learn about themselves, families, and their community
- take on a role or occupation and imitate behavior
- make-believe and use their imagination
- engage in socio-dramatic play
- develop social skills as they share, negotiate, compromise, and appreciate others
- develop abstract thinking skills by recalling and visualizing experiences to re-create



In the **Construction Area** children:

- grow in strength and coordination as they carry and place large and small blocks and props
- experiment with construction
- use blocks, animal and people figures, and vehicles for dramatic play
- develop abstract thinking skills as they re-create pictures of the concrete world
- develop math concepts as they count, sort, weigh, match, compare, order, measure and balance



In the **Reading and Writing Area** children:

- develop an interest in reading
- enjoy stories, poems, rhymes, and music through books, tapes, CD's, flannelboards and puppets
- develop an understanding that written words are symbols and a means of communication
- increase vocabulary
- gain information and knowledge from books

In the **Sand/Water Area** children:

- develop small motor control and eye-hand coordination
- have a tactile experience with a variety of materials
- engage in dramatic play using props
- explore science concepts of cause and effect and make comparisons
- learn about size, shape, volume and quantity



In the **Art Area** children:

- engage in the process of working with art and writing materials
- express feelings and ideas
- have sensory experiences
- develop small motor skills
- experiment with color, shape, line, size and texture
- use language to enhance their work

In the **Toy Area** children:

- use self-correcting toys to build independence
- use open-ended toys to improve small motor skills and eye-hand coordination
- use collectibles to practice sorting, matching, classifying, comparing, sequencing, and patterning
- use cooperative games to develop visual discrimination skills, counting and numeral recognition
- develop social skills as they share and take turns playing a cooperative game

In the **Discovery Area** children:

- develop new vocabulary as they discuss investigations, ask questions and share experiences
- use tools and materials to explore and discover how the world works
- use thinking skills to investigate, explore, discover, make predictions, solve problems
- use senses to touch, feel, taste, smell and see
- develop dexterity and eye-hand coordination

In the **Outdoor Area** children:

- develop large muscle skills of balance, coordination and spatial awareness
- develop small muscle skills
- dig and construct in sandbox play
- experience a quiet play area for art, music, games or dramatic play
- learn about science and nature



DISCIPLINE

Preschoolers are practicing independence and assertiveness. They are learning how to use words for their feelings, needs and desires. They are learning how to be part of a group. They are building relationships. Preschoolers are beginning to understand that what they say and do affects others. A healthy sense of self-control over their lives, and a positive self-esteem comes from learning to solve problems, deal with social conflict, and make choices and decisions.

Teachers guide these young Christians in learning about making God-pleasing choices. The Christian teacher's foundation for guidance is having faith in Jesus as their Savior. Children will want to love others through words and actions because of what Jesus has done for them. Teachers guide children through this Biblical perspective using their understanding of child development, their knowledge of the individual child, and implementing appropriate expectations.

Christian guidance occurs when a teacher develops a positive relationship with each child and interacts with them rather than manages their behavior. Teachers make positive comments about children's experiences. Teachers show love and concern for children by letting them know what is expected and setting appropriate limits. Teachers are consistent, give clear directions, and state rules positively and firmly. Teachers try to anticipate problems and plan accordingly.

Teachers encourage children to think for themselves, correct their own mistakes, and solve their own problems. The techniques of redirection and negotiation are used to change children's behavior and assist in conflict resolution. The teacher may work with all the children involved in a conflict, only the child who needs help, or just be nearby to support children in their own negotiations. Time out will be used only for behavior that is repeatedly aggressive or unsafe.

Persistent behavior problems will be brought to the attention of the parent, so that both may work together for positive changes. Learning to get along with others and accept limits takes time and adult patience.

Teachers' attention will be focused on the problem behavior and not the child. No one will do anything that could break the spirit of a child, be humiliating, frightening or abusive. No one will use food, rest, toileting or physical punishment to manipulate a child.



NON-DISCRIMINATION

In the Bible God tells us that He *"...wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."* (1 Tim. 2:4) All children are welcome to enroll in Precious Lambs Preschool without reference to race, religion, national or ethnic origin or gender.

ADMISSION

Precious Lambs Preschool is a school-year preschool program for all children who are at least three years old, and who are fully toilet-trained and self-sufficient in the bathroom. (*This means no pull-ups or diapers will be worn during the Preschool program*)

All children will be enrolled for a probationary period of six weeks. If after six weeks there are no reasons to exclude them from attendance, they will be fully admitted.

Children shall be enrolled for the school year on a first-come, first-served basis.

EXCLUSION

Reasons a child may be excluded from admission or attendance in the preschool program:

- The child appears ill, overtired, or unable to participate in the daily program.
- Child is not developmentally ready for the preschool curriculum or routine.
- Child is not toilet trained.
- Preschool cannot meet the needs of the child with reasonable accommodations.
- Parents do not observe the policies outlined in the Preschool Parent Manual.
- Non-payment or late payment of fees. (See Financial Policies)

Procedure for temporary exclusion:

- Parent will be asked to take an ill child from the Preschool immediately if present, or within one hour of notification if not present.
- Parent will be asked to pick up a disruptive child as soon as possible.
- Director will inform the parents verbally or in writing concerning the reason for the exclusion, the date exclusion will begin and the conditions necessary for the child to return to Preschool. There will be no adjustment in tuition.

Procedure for permanent exclusion:

Children who, in the professional opinion of their teacher and the Director or school principal, exhibit behavior

- which is physically harmful to other children; or
- which causes willful or malicious damage to the school or school property; or
- which is unreasonably disruptive of the daily program; or
- which exhibits disrespect toward adults; or
- which shows willful disregard for the morals and conventions of a Christian school may be subject to, but in extreme cases not limited to:
 1. Notification of parents by the Director or principal.
 2. A one day suspension with notification of the parents.
 3. A three day suspension **and** a mandatory conference with the parents if the problem continues.
 4. Permanent expulsion from the school if the problem continues. This will be after review of the case by St. Paul's Board of Christian Education. The parents shall be required to be at this review or the child will automatically be expelled from the preschool.

This policy has been adopted to maintain a healthy Christian atmosphere within our preschool. It also aims to promote the best possible environment for learning and teaching. Any severe case may directly lead to expulsion. If the child is permanently excluded, unused tuition will be refunded.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

1 – The registration procedure begins when you set up an appointment to meet with the Preschool Director for a tour of the facility and to discuss your questions about the Preschool program. The Director will give you a copy of the Preschool Parent Manual and an Intent of Enrollment form.

2 - After reviewing the Parent Manual, return the Intent of Enrollment form to start the admissions procedure. Once your form is returned to the Preschool, you will receive an email from TADS providing you with a link for electronic registration and payment of tuition.

3 – Enrollments are accepted in the order in which applications are received.

4 – The St. Paul’s Board of Christian Education reviews all applications for enrollment. In the event that the Board of Christian Education declines to accept an application for enrollment, that application fee will be refunded. However, the fee is not refundable if the application is retracted by the applicant.

5 - Once the maximum number of preschool students has been reached, your name may be put on the waiting list by filling out an Intent of Enrollment form. Applicants on the waiting list will be notified of any vacancies in the order in which intent to enroll was received.

6 - By completing the enrollment forms and submitting the application fee or VPK voucher through TADS, parents agree to abide by the policies of the Preschool.

7 – All parents who are not members of St. Paul’s are strongly encouraged to attend a brief Bible Information Class with our Pastor. This will enable the parents to fully understand the religion curriculum of our Preschool, and then also support it in their homes.

8 – Complete and submit these forms *within 30 days of enrollment*:

- **Copy of Birth Certificate**
- **Florida Certificate of Immunization (blue)*** - Immunizations must be documented on DH Form 680 and must be signed by a practicing physician in the State of Florida. DH Form 680 may be obtained from a private physician or the local county Health Department.
- **Student Health Examination (goldenrod)*** - The Student Health Examination must be documented on DH Form 3040 and must be completed by a person given statutory authority to perform health examinations. DH Form 3040 may be obtained from a private physician or the local county Health Department. The examination is valid for 2 years from the date it was received. However, upon admission the examination must have been received within the past year.

*Parents may consult their private physician or contact:

Citrus County Health Department, 3700 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto (352) 527-0068

CONFIDENTIALITY

Children’s records are open only to the Teacher, the Director or Principal, an authorized employee of the Department of Children and Family Services, an authorized employee of ACSI, or the child’s parent or legal guardian. Information parents share with the Director or Teacher will be kept confidential. Only pertinent information will be reported to the necessary authorities.

DAILY ATTENDANCE

Sign in/out: Every child must be signed in and out each day by the parents or another authorized adult.

VPK Attendance Policy Requirements:

Parents of VPK students understand that in order for their child to participate in Precious Lambs Preschool VPK Program, they are required to:

- Have their child in attendance at the preschool at least one program day per calendar month, or their child will be suspended from VPK services.
- Limit their child's absences to those allowed by Florida Administrative Code:
 1. Illness or injury of the child
 2. Major illness or injury of a child's family member
 3. Medical appointments of students
 4. Head lice – a maximum of 2 days for each occurrence
 5. Death in the family of the student
 6. Compliance with a court order (e.g., visitation, subpoena)
 7. Special education or related services as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1401 (2004) for the child's disability; 8. Observance of a religious holiday or service, or because the child's or parent's religion forbids secular activity on the instructional day
 9. Family vacation, not to exceed 5 excused absences per program year; or
 10. Extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the child and the child's parent.
- Provide written documentation after every absence, including the date(s) and reason for the absence.
- Have their child in regular daily attendance during the program hours established by the preschool.
- Bring their child to preschool between 8:00 and 8:30 AM and pick up their child no sooner than 12:15 and no later than 12:30 every day.
- Verify, each month, their child's VPK attendance during the previous month.
- Purchase a Precious Lambs T-shirt for their child to wear while on school field trips.
- Abide by the dress code as written in the preschool's Parent Manual.
- Attend all scheduled Parent-Teacher conferences.

ABSENCE POLICY

Notify the Preschool as soon as possible when your child is going to be absent.



A parental note is needed when the child returns to school excusing the child from Preschool. This note shall include

- date the excuse is written
- date(s) of the absence
- reason for the absence
- parent's signature

DAILY DISMISSAL

For the children's safety, they will only be released to parents with legal custody or to legal guardians. Children *will be released* to persons listed in writing on the emergency card when the parents give written or verbal (phone call) instruction to do so. Children *will be released* to persons not on the emergency card when the parents give written instruction to do so. PLEASE NOTE: Children *will not be released* to persons not listed on the emergency card when the parents give only verbal (phone call) instructions.

Teachers must know the adult or must see photo ID before releasing the child. Be sure that the pick up person comes with a driver's license for proper identification.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE ROUTINE

Arrival:

- Be sure you have brought all the belongings your child needs for the day. (See What to Bring/What to Wear)
- Observe speed limit signs and drive slowly as soon as you enter the church property. Park on the sidewalk side of the parking lot. Turn the engine off on your vehicle.
- Walk your child into the preschool and help him/her to unpack and put away his/her belongings.
- Sign your child "in" on the daily attendance sheet with the time and your name.
- Encourage your child's independence, but give the necessary assistance when arriving and departing.
- Upon arrival, help your child follow the posted arrival procedures. Then leave your child with the teacher, making contact with the teacher to ensure the teacher knows your child is there.

Departure:

- Children will be dismissed from the playground at 12:15, weather permitting. Please wait by the playground fence until dismissal. The teachers will help all children gather their belongings to take home before dismissing them to you.
- Upon departure you will sign your child "out" on the daily attendance sheet. These procedures have been established for the safety of the child. We need to ensure that children are safely delivered into your hands as well as convey information about the day.
- Take your child's belongings home daily: daily folder, lunch box, water bottle and any soiled clothes to be laundered.
- Check the Family Communication Center at the Preschool upon arrival for important information.



DAILY HOURS OF OPERATION

Preschool Doors Open:	8:00 A.M.	Monday - Friday
Instructional Hours:	8:30 A.M. – 12:15 P.M.	Monday - Friday
Extended Care	12:15 P.M. – 3:15 P.M.	

CALENDAR

The Preschool follows the St. Paul's Lutheran School school year calendar. Preschool will be closed in observance of holidays, teacher conferences, and in-service days as indicated on St. Paul's Lutheran School Calendar.

There is no fee reduction for any Preschool closings. Tuition costs reflect these closings.

WHAT TO BRING

DAILY:

- Bring a **complete set of extra clothing** including shirt, pants, socks and underwear in a ziplock bag with the child's name on the bag. Be sure to update the outfits when your child grows into a larger size or when the weather changes.
- Bring a **daily snack and drink in a lunch box with an ice pack**.
- Bring a **school-age backpack** to carry belongings to and from Preschool, roomy enough to include a 2-pocket folder, snack container, water bottles, and extra clothing. The 2-pocket folder will be provided by the preschool and will be used to transport the monthly calendar, notes and papers to be brought to and from home. The teacher and parent are both expected to check these folders every day. Christ Light messages, newsletters and special notices are examples of items teachers will be sending home.
- Bring a separate **drinking water bottle with a closable spout** and **labeled clearly with the child's name** each day to be taken to the playground. The bottle will be taken home daily to be washed and returned filled the next day.
- **Do not bring toys, guns or money.** It is more difficult to teach children to share when the toy belongs to someone special. Action figures and toy weapons are never appropriate for preschool.

EXTENDED CARE:

- Children staying for extended care will need a **lunch in a lunch box with an ice pack**.
- Children staying for extended care will need a **blanket (twin size or smaller) stored in a pillow case**. The blanket will be used under and over the child. They may also bring a **favorite stuffed animal and a child-sized pillow**. These items will need to be taken home weekly and laundered.

All items (zip lock bag, outdoor clothing, lunch box, backpack, water bottle) need to be visibly labeled with your child's name.

WHAT TO WEAR

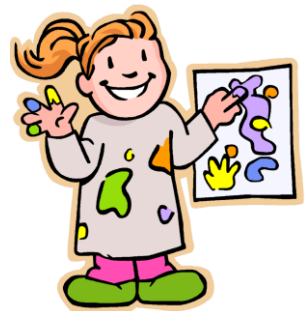
Preschool children need to wear clothes that are clean, comfortable and modest. ***They must wear clothes that they can independently manage in the bathroom and are not concerned about when playing with messy materials.*** Plan for the weather. We will go outside daily, weather permitting. When it is hot, children will be comfortable in shorts and short-sleeved shirts. When it is cool, children will need jackets. Some children will also be more comfortable wearing a sweater or light jacket in the air conditioning.

Children may not wear their caps, hats, mittens or sunglasses indoors, though these may be worn when we go outside. Please use discretion when allowing children to wear jewelry. Necklaces, rings, bracelets, watches and earrings that are large, loose and dangling may present a distraction or a safety concern, and may be removed from the child at the discretion of the teacher.

Children need to wear socks and play shoes with non-skid soles (no sandals). Their shoes need to be safe for movement activities both inside and outside.

Precious Lambs Preschool Dress Code:

- **Pants and shorts**
 - No holes, patched or frayed edges
 - Regular fit: no form-fitting or baggies
 - Shorts must be of conservative length using a fingertip length guideline
 - Pants and shorts must fully cover the buttocks area
 - No belts that cannot be managed independently by the child
- **Shirts and blouses**
 - Long enough to cover the midriff
 - Patterns, designs and emblems allowed
 - No advertising, logos, or commercial interests allowed, with the exception of St. Paul's/Precious Lambs T-shirts, which are allowed
 - Must have sleeves
 - Sweaters and sweatshirts may be worn on cool days
- **Skirts and dresses**
 - Conservative length (fingertip guideline)
 - No slits or open backs
 - Must have sleeves
 - Girls must wear shorts or leggings under their skirts and dresses to cover their underwear
- **Shoes and socks**
 - Socks must be worn with shoes
 - Shoes should have non-skid soles, safe for inside and out
 - Shoes must be of a style that stays on the foot while running and active – NO SANDALS, CROCS, OPEN-TOED, or OPEN-BACK shoes
 - Shoes must cover the entire foot (example: sneakers)



All parents are required to purchase a Precious Lambs T-shirt for use on special days. The Preschool will notify you when the T-shirts will need to be worn, and children are welcome to wear them on any school day.



SNACKS and LUNCHES

The **daily morning snack will be provided by the parent.** The child needs to bring a snack of at least two food groups that meets USDA requirements. (Refer to the USDA guidelines in this handbook for those requirements.) Snacks need to be in a lunch box or insulated bag (not a paper or plastic bag) with an ice pack inside for proper storage. Lunch boxes are to be placed in the child's cubby in their locker in the hallway.

Snacks will not include foods such as pastries, donuts, cakes, cupcakes, candy, gum, soda, chips or imitation fruit drinks. *Snacks will include* these types of nutritious foods:

fruit	cereals	crackers	muffins	granola bars
fruit juice	bread	vegetables	milk	trail/granola mix
popcorn	jello	pudding	raisins	cheese
yogurt	pretzels	sandwiches		cookies (sparingly)

Food Allergies: In the case of severe food allergy in a child, we will require for the safety and welfare of that child that no children in Preschool will bring a snack containing the offending food.

Lunch during Extended Care: Lunch will be supplied by the parent. The child needs to bring a lunch that meets USDA requirements. Refer to the USDA guidelines in this manual for those requirements. Lunches need to be in a lunch box or insulated bag (not a paper or plastic bag) with an ice pack inside for proper storage. Lunch boxes will be stored in each child's cubby.

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS



The Preschool will provide a special snack for every child's birthday. The Preschool thanks parents in advance for not bringing in birthday snacks. Celebrations are special learning experiences for all children. Children will be actively involved in the plans as well as the preparation and clean up.

No one wants to knowingly disappoint a child. Therefore, the Preschool asks parents to be very discreet when sending out birthday invitations to classmates. First names of children will be given out upon request. Invitations for classmates need to be given to teachers. The teachers will put the invitation in the children's folders to go home to parents.

Our Christmas and Easter celebrations will be centered on the true significance of these holidays for Christians. Jesus' birth will be the center of Christmas. Jesus' death and resurrection will be the center of Easter. On October 31 we will observe Reformation Day and celebrate the gift of God's Word.

SAMPLE DAILY PRESCHOOL ROUTINE

8:00 Arrival
8:30 Greeting Time
8:45 Plan – Work – Clean Up - Recall
9:50 Snack Time
10:15 Bible Time

10:30 Small Groups
10:50 Large Group
11:10 Story Time
11:30 Outdoor Time
12:15 Dismissal



SAYING GOODBYE AT PRESCHOOL

The first day of Preschool is exciting for your child, but it can also be filled with anxieties of separation and new experiences. Let your child know that you are enthusiastic about the coming events, and they will be, too. Dealing with change and new experiences is a life long skill that takes practice. Life is filled with hellos and good-byes! Be kind to yourself, too. Remember, you are also experiencing a separation. Here are some ideas that will help to make a smooth transition from home to Preschool:

- Create a routine at home as you prepare for Preschool
- Talk to your child and let them know what is going to happen – “You’re going to stay at preschool while I go to...”
- Follow the same routine each morning when you arrive, (put belongings away, use the toilet and wash hands, sign in, wave goodbye from the window). Create a routine for going home when you pick up your child from Preschool, too.
- Allow a few extra minutes to spend with your child on the first few days.
- Talk together with your child’s teacher. Let your child see that you are all friends.
- Getting your child involved in an activity usually lessens the anxiety.
- Assure your child that you will come back to pick them up. One of their greatest fears is that you won’t come back. Tell them when that will be. Use an activity for a reference point, such as “I’ll be back when you finish your snack.”
- Don’t sneak away, even if it seems easier for you. Leaving unnoticed will violate your child’s trust.
- Create a ritual for saying goodbye. Ask your child what they want to do. Do they want to have two hugs, three kisses, or rub noses?
- *Once you start to leave, don’t stop.* It’s important that you follow through even if your child cries. We will comfort your child.
- Feel free to call later in the morning to see how your child is doing.
- Many children adapt quickly to the routine. However, it is perfectly normal for some children to take several days, or even weeks, to adapt. Some children adjust well at first and then later experience anxiety.

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOS/TAPES



Children may be photographed, audio taped, and videotaped for use within our Preschool either for educational, promotional or advertising purposes. Parents are required to sign a Personal Release Agreement which will give St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School the right to record and reproduce on film, tape, print, audio, or web materials the physical and/or vocal image and words of the student.



FAMILIES AS PARTNERS

PROCEDURES

Records

For your child's safety, keep your child's registration information updated. Whenever you have a change of address, employment, phone number or emergency information, be sure to let the Director know.

Policies

Each parent receives the policies of the preschool in their copy of the Preschool Parent Manual. Complete extra copies of these will also be kept in the Preschool office for your reference.

Complaints, Grievances and Questions

At times parents may have concerns or complaints. God's Word gives us guidance in how to handle these situations (Matthew 18 and I Corinthians 13).

- Speak first to the teacher with whom you have a concern or complaint before speaking with anyone else.
- If the issue has not been resolved, speak with the preschool director. If that does not resolve the issue, speak with the school principal.
- If you still feel that your issue is not resolved, speak with the Board of Christian Education chairman.
- All requests to speak directly with the members of the Board of Christian Education at one of their meetings in order to express a complaint or grievance must be submitted in writing to the BOCE chairman at least one week prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Board. The written request should include the nature of the complaint or grievance along with specific times and dates when the previous steps were taken with the individuals who could not adequately resolve the problem.

Any questions you have regarding enrollment, payments or school policy should be addressed to the preschool director. Questions involving the regular workings of the classroom or pertaining to your child's time in the classroom should be directed to the lead teacher in that classroom.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

God's Word

The Gospel of Jesus as our only Lord and Savior is God's power to create faith and give forgiveness. The Gospel message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ runs like a golden thread through our entire curriculum. Therefore, Bible information classes explaining the basics of the Bible are taught by the Pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. In these classes you will learn about the very basic teachings of the Bible, the ones we will be teaching your children. The

Preschool encourages all parents to take advantage of this opportunity to learn about or review God's Word. Our pastor or teachers will let you know about the dates and times of the classes,

Visiting the Preschool

It is expected that parents will make an appointment to visit the Preschool with their child when they are considering enrolling their child. After children are enrolled, parents are welcome to visit their children anytime. The Preschool encourages parents to speak to the Director and take advantage of this welcome in a manner that fits their individual schedule.

Conferences

Informal "chats" will be ongoing. Parents may request a conference at any time. However, parents will be invited to two conferences during the school year as scheduled on the St. Paul's/Precious Lambs school calendar. These conferences are for the purpose of discussing your child's preschool progress and may take place at the home or preschool, whatever is more convenient for the parent.

Home Visits

The preschool teachers would like to visit each child in their home before that child starts school. There are many good reasons to do so, and all the stakeholders in the child's education benefit from these personal visits. The teachers are interested in each child's success. They are eager to build a relationship with the parents, and connect with them in their shared interest of the child. Interacting with a child on his own turf gives teachers a better idea as to the child's interests and activities, which may then be incorporated into the program. Parents benefit by receiving information about things like the first week of school, coming events, and classroom routines. In all of this, children probably gain the most from these visits. They have a chance to get to know their teacher in the safety and familiarity of their own home, which then assists their transition into the classroom. The teachers usually bring something for the child to bring back to school on their first day, which serves as a concrete connection to the program and makes entering the classroom easier for the child.



Singing in Church and Special Programs

Singing in church and other special programs have been scheduled throughout the year. These dates are available in advance on the St. Paul's school calendar. All children are expected to be present when their class is singing. Please talk to your child's teacher if this causes any hindrance to your faithful service of the Savior.

Family Programs

Throughout the year parents will have opportunity to attend regularly scheduled parent programs. These will revolve around topics of interest concerning different aspects of family life, parenting, and education, and may include outside speakers, video presentations, and forum discussions. Input from parents will be sought regarding areas of need or interest by means of parent surveys.

Field Trips and Special Days

Educational and fun *field trips* will be scheduled throughout the school year. Parents will be notified in advance and are asked to fill out a form giving their child permission to attend each trip. Parents are also invited to chaperone and help transport the children on these days. We look forward to having our parents and families join us on these outings. The Preschool also enjoys *Special Days* with the preschoolers and their families. These are activities which are planned to celebrate holidays and other special times. Parents and immediate family members are always encouraged to join at these events.

Volunteer

There are many opportunities throughout the year for parents to volunteer. Those who are willing and have the time to help are encouraged to speak to the Director about available opportunities. Your interest and help is encouraged and welcomed.

Book Club Orders

Approximately once a month Scholastic Book Club order forms will come home with your child. Parents may place orders for books through the school or online. The children benefit from owning their own books to read at home. The Preschool benefits from your purchases by earning bonus points toward free books and classroom materials. *Please make any checks payable to your child's teacher, not to the Book Club.*

Donations

The preschool and St. Paul's Lutheran School accepts items including but not limited to: Box Tops for Education, Campbell's labels, aluminum cans, old cell phones, old ink cartridges and empty Capri Sun drink pouches which are recycled for funds that assist with non-budgeted needs.

You may also support the Preschool with donations of quality toys and books, or donations of paper and other useable recyclable materials. Please ask us if we can use the item before bringing it to Preschool.

Evaluation of the preschool

Each year families will have opportunities to evaluate the Preschool program using short survey forms. Your feedback is essential. It lets us know what we are doing right, as well as things that need to be changed or improved.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION



Family Communication Center

At the entrance to the preschool are two bulletin boards. These are used to convey messages to parents on a daily basis. Some of the items that will be posted include: weekly plans, special events, weekly newsletter, "good news" about exciting things that will happen or have happened, monthly calendar, sign-up sheets, etc. Parents are expected to check the boards upon arrival and again at departure.

Backpack Communication

Information for your child will be put in a two-pocket folder so that they may bring it home daily in their backpack. The teacher and parent are both expected to check these folders every day. Christ Light messages, newsletters, special notices and children's work are examples of items teachers will be sending home.

Monthly Calendar

At the beginning of each month parents will receive a calendar letting them know what is to come. A duplicate calendar will be secured in the child's folder for daily parent referral.

Weekly Preschool Newsletter

At the beginning of each week parents will receive the Preschool newsletter, Lambs' Tales. This weekly news will share with parents the words to songs and finger plays that the children are learning, and a recap of activities enjoyed the previous week. It will also indicate the new weeks' plans and coming events. The weekly newsletter will come to you either as a paper copy or online, according to your preference.

Weekly St. Paul's School Newsletter

Each Wednesday parents will receive the St. Paul's School Newsletter highlighting news of the entire school, including preschool. This newsletter will come to you either as a paper copy or online, according to your preference.

Christ Light

At the beginning of each week parents will receive a detailed explanation of the Bible story the children will be learning that week with a color picture and application ideas for parents to use at home.

Children at Work

Photos or artwork displays may be found in the classrooms or hallway. Videos and snapshots of children may be emailed to their families. Photos of preschoolers at work may also be posted on the St. Paul's website, www.stpauls.edu.

EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS

The preschoolers practice fire drills monthly, and a tornado drill and lockdown drill once during the school year. In the unlikely event of these being real emergencies, procedures are in place for the safety and care of all children.

Emergency Evacuation of the Preschool

In any situation that requires the emergency evacuation of the Preschool, all preschool students will be relocated to the gymnasium/auditorium of St. Paul's Lutheran School located across and down the driveway from the Preschool.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The school may close due to bad weather; parents will be notified when school sessions will resume. In any other situation deemed an emergency by the principal, the school will be closed and the parents will be notified. Stay tuned to local television and radio stations for more information. Parents should call their child's teacher if they desire more information.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE or NEGLECT

Anyone working in the Preschool who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused, abandoned or neglected is a mandated reporter and is required by Florida law to contact the Department of Children and Families central abuse hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE).

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Drive Slowly

Drive slowly as soon as you enter the church property.

Records

Children entering preschool for the first time must provide the preschool with a copy of the child's birth certificate, an Application for Enrollment, original copies of a Florida Certificate of Immunization (DH 680) showing that all required immunizations have been obtained, and a current Student Health Examination (DH 3040) signed by a licensed medical professional. These health certificates must be on file within 30 days of enrollment, and remain in the child's file while enrolled. These medical records are property of the parent or legal guardian when the child withdraws from the facility and are transferable if the child attends another facility.

Allergies

Doctors and parents will inform the Preschool of the child's allergies on the Student Health Examination form and the Emergency Contact and Medical Information form.

Illness

It is in the best interest of your child and the other children and staff of the Preschool to keep your child at home when they have symptoms of illness. Please understand that this procedure is not enforced to inconvenience you, but rather has been put in place for the welfare of the students and staff.

Some reasons for a child to remain at home or to be sent home are fever (100 degrees), vomiting, skin rash or sores, inflamed or swollen eyes, diarrhea, dark urine and/or gray or white stool, yellowish skin or eyes, severe coughing, difficult or rapid breathing, stiff neck, sore throat, headache, head lice, or any other unusual sign of symptom of illness.

A child may return to the Preschool when they are free of symptoms for 24 hours and/or 24 hours after prescribed medication has begun. A child who has had head lice may return after treatment has removed all lice, lice eggs, and egg cases. The Preschool requires a note from a physician or the Health Department verifying a child to be free of lice, eggs and nits (egg cases) before the child can return to school.

Should a teacher observe that a child has signs of illness while at preschool, the parent or a parent-designated person, when the parent cannot be reached, will be notified immediately and requested to make arrangements for transportation home within 1 hour. The ill child will be isolated and supervised until pickup. A written report (FYI or Medical Referral) will be given to the parent upon pickup.

In the event that a child has a *communicable disease*, they may not attend the Preschool. The Preschool must be informed of the disease so notice of possible exposure can be given to all families enrolled and the local county health department. A memo will be posted in the parent communication center. *The child's name will be kept confidential*. A child with a communicable disease will be readmitted to the Preschool only after allowing for the longest usual incubation of the disease or with a signed statement from their physician. The returning child needs to be well enough to participate in all activities, including those outside. Communicable diseases include, but are not limited to: chicken pox, German measles, infectious hepatitis, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, or meningitis.

Medication

Only when truly necessary, doctor prescribed medication will be administered by the staff with written consent of the custodial parent or legal guardian. Teachers will not administer over-the-counter medication, unless prescribed by a physician. The first dose of any medication will not be given at preschool. The first dose of any new medication should be given at home to allow the parent/guardian to observe the child for any type of unusual reaction.

The medication must be in the original container with a child resistant cap. The label must state the child's name, date, name of the medication, the physician's name, dosage and directions for administration.

The parent must fill out a Medication Administration Record (Regular or "As Needed"). Staff will see that the Medication Administration Record is correctly filled out by using the Medication Administration Safety Checklist. The Medication Administration Record will be kept with the medication in the medication container and initialed by two staff when administering the medication.

The Medication Administration Record must document the child's name, date, name of the medication, physician's name, directions for administering (including dosage to be given, time to be given and other specific directions as needed), and signature of the parent/guardian.

Staff will log the child's name onto the Child Care Medication Use Log. The child's name will be highlighted on the log when the medication is discontinued. The Medication Administration Record will be put in the child's file after the last day the child received the medication.

All medication is to be stored in a separate container, labeled "medication" and kept out of the reach of children. Medication needing refrigeration shall be kept in the refrigerator in a separate container clearly labeled "medication". A list of the children's special restrictions to medication and allergies will be kept in the medication container at all times.

Medications that are no longer in use will be returned to the parent. Containers of medication are never to be given to a child to return to the parent or for any reason.

Accidents/Incidents

Parents will be notified immediately if their child is injured seriously enough to require professional medical treatment. Parents will be notified when they pick up their child if their child has sustained a minor injury. Written permission from the parent to call a child's physician or refer the child for medical care in case of injury shall be on file at the Preschool.

A closed container labeled "First Aid" containing soap, band-aids, disposable latex gloves, cotton balls, sterile gauze pads and rolls, adhesive tape, tweezers, an ice bag or cold pack, a surface thermometer, and emergency numbers will be available to treat minor injuries. The kit will be accessible to teachers, but kept out of the reach of children.

Superficial wounds shall be cleaned with soap and water only, and protected with a Band-Aid or a bandage. Ice may be applied. First Aid procedures shall be followed for serious injuries.

Suspected poisoning shall be treated only after consultation with a poison control center.

An Accident/Incident report will be written for every accident or incident regardless how minor. These reports will be signed and dated by the teacher and the parent and kept for the records.

All accidents and incidents must also be recorded in the Accident/Incident Log Book and reviewed monthly to insure the safety of the children.

Emergency Contacts

Emergency Ambulance, Fire, Police	911 (Non-emergency 1-352-637-4121)
Poison Control Center	1-800-222-1222
Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline	1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)
Citrus Memorial Hospital, 502 W. Highland Blvd., Inverness, Florida	1-352-726-1551

EXTENDED CARE

Preschool Extended Care will be offered again this school year as need allows. This is a separate program from morning preschool, and so is paid separately from the regular preschool day. At present, the hours of extended care will be from 12:15 until 3:15. During this time, the children will follow a schedule which includes a lunch provided by the parents, nap time, and planned activities. These will be arranged into a regular daily extended care schedule.

Children are very active at preschool and therefore are required to have a nap or rest period during extended care each afternoon. The preschool will provide each child with a cot and a quiet setting.

Each child will need to bring a *blanket (twin size or smaller) from home in a pillow case* with their name written on all items. The blanket will be used under and over the child. Naptime bedding will need to be taken home to be laundered on the last day of the week the child attends, or more often if necessary. Children may also bring a *child-sized pillow* and a favorite stuffed animal. Please do not bring toys to school.

A child who does not sleep after 30 minutes and a child who awakens early shall be permitted to have quiet time through the use of equipment or activities that will not disturb the other children.

Extended care will be offered on a daily basis. However, if a pattern develops when certain days are not regularly used, then no staff will be scheduled for those afternoons, and extended care will not be offered as 'drop-in' care on those days.

Parents shall pick up their child from extended care by 3:15 PM . Late fees shall apply as per the Parental Agreement for late pick-up.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Non-Refundable Application/Registration Fee

An Application/Registration Fee of \$100.00 is required at the time an application is filed in order for a student to be put on the list for enrollment. The non-refundable application fee will be deducted from your overall tuition for the school year, and monthly tuition will be determined based on the remainder. The exception to this is children enrolling as VPK students. *The VPK Child Eligibility and Enrollment Certificate is required in lieu of the application fee and tuition payment for those children who are participating in the Florida VPK program.*

Tuition

Procedure Regarding Collection of Tuition

All registration and tuition payments will be through the TADS tuition management. Every family, including those using the VPK program, is expected to register with TADS electronically.

Any family who pays off their years' tuition in one or two payments will not have to pay the TADS enrollment fee. All tuition payments will be made through TADS.

Tuition payments not received by the 15th of each month will be assessed a late fee. If payment has not been received by TADS by the 15th of the next month, your child's enrollment will be reviewed at the next Board of Christian Education meeting, and could be discontinued if payment remains outstanding.

Extended Care Fees

- All preschool extended care fees are to be paid in advance of the care, whether monthly, weekly or daily. The monthly and weekly fees will be determined prior to the beginning of the month to reflect actual days that extended care will be offered. (For instance: some months, like December, will be shorter due to holiday breaks and thus will not have as many days of extended care as other months.)
- The daily fee applies to any portion of the afternoon that the child will be in extended care.
- No discounts or credits will be given on any unused portion of a week's or month's extended care for illness or emergency center closing.

2012-13 Program Schedule

PreK-3: 2 or 3 half days

PreK-3/PreK-4: 5 half days

Yearly Preschool Tuition Schedule

Please inquire about tuition at 352-489-3027.