



2023-2024
Orientation Booklet



1155 Walnut Bottom Road
Carlisle, PA 17015
717-243-1863

Dear Family,

Welcome to Joyful Steps Preschool! We are honored to work with your child this year. Our purpose is to provide a Christian environment where your child can grow socially, emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually. Our weekly themes and developmentally appropriate activities will help to achieve this, and we hope they will assist you as you teach your child at home. You are your child's first and most important teacher! Therefore, at Joyful Steps Preschool, we would like to work in partnership with you to provide the best possible start for your child. Our primary objective is to ensure a happy, healthy and secure atmosphere for your child under the guidance of committed Christian teachers. We want your child to experience the joy of learning at our preschool while following the footsteps of Jesus and, in the process, become a lifetime learner.

This Orientation Booklet provides information about our program. We hope it answers many questions or concerns you may have.

Pre-3 y.o. T/Th (Kittens) & W/F (Puppies)

Mrs. Pam Myers: Teacher

Mrs. Courtney Redding: Assistant

3-4 y.o. M/W/F (Butterflies) & T/Th (Bumblebees)

Mrs. Sara Walker: Teacher

Mrs. Jessica Smith: Assistant

4-5 y.o. M/W/F (Teddy Bears)

Mrs. Amy Colestock: Teacher

Mrs. Summer Howard: Assistant

4-5 y.o. T/Th (Pandas)

Mrs. Julie Friscia: Teacher

Mrs. Summer Howard: Assistant

M-F (All Classes)

Mrs. Nellie Miller: Multi-Class Assistant

Mrs. Pam Felix: Preschool Director

717-243-1863

pam@tmh.church

joyfulsteps.net

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Preparing for School

CLOTHING

Please have your child wear comfortable clothing to school. We get messy at preschool and cannot guarantee keeping clothes free of paint, glue or soil. Sneakers are very good for the playground and indoor play areas. Flip-flops, dress shoes or loose sandals do not work well on the playground, especially with climbing the ladders, so we ask that you do not dress your child in these. We also ask that you **mark names in coats, hats and mittens/gloves**. It is easy to get these items mixed-up with others.



★ Please note that the wearing of hats/caps inside the church and classroom is discouraged. Thank you for reminding your child to remove these items once at school.

Please send along a change of underwear in a zipped bag marked with your child's name, just in case your child doesn't make it to the bathroom in time. These will be stored in your child's bucket. We do have extra shirts and pants at school if your child gets extra messy; please wash and return these items. **We expect children in the 3-4 & 4-5 y.o. classes to be potty trained, having minimal accidents. We do not have the facilities or staff to change children in these classes on a regular basis.**

ILLNESS

If your child is not feeling well, please do not bring him/her to school! Please email/call and let us know; we wonder where children are when they do not arrive.



When your child has a **fever of 100°F or higher, is vomiting, has diarrhea, is congested, coughing, has an unexplained rash, or has other symptoms of something that may be contagious, please keep him/her home.** **If your child becomes sick at school, you will be called to come and pick up your child.**

Your child may return to preschool if he/she:

- Has resolved symptoms
- Has been fever-free for at least 24 hours, *without* the use of fever-reducing medicines
- Has gone 24 hours after beginning antibiotics
- Is not exhibiting symptoms related to a contagious infection
- Is feeling well enough to comfortably participate in preschool activities
- Additional information can be found here:

<https://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/stay-home-cold-flu#1>

CLASS SCHEDULES

Sample Schedule (actual times vary from class to class):

9:00-10:00	Centers and Free Play (planned & free choice activities)
10:00-10:25	Circle Time (morning meeting, theme activities, sharing)
10:25-10:40	Gross Motor Activities
10:40-11:00	Storytime (literacy activities)
11:00-11:10	Snack
11:10-11:30	Culminating Activities, Review of the Day
11:30	Dismissal



ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL:

Please **ENTER** and **EXIT** from the Auditorium doors, closest to the playground on the left side of the church. Those who push a stroller or have difficulty climbing steps are permitted to use the elevator located just inside the doors. The elevator should **ONLY** be used for such instances!

PLEASE refrain from entering the church until 8:55 a.m. **Thank you for entering the Auditorium doors BETWEEN 8:55 and 9:00 a.m.**

Classroom doors will open at 9:00 a.m. Waiting in the hallway near the outside windows offers more space to spread out.

Please share these times with anyone dropping off your child(ren).

The Auditorium doors will be locked at 9:15 a.m. Any drop-offs after this time will need to be buzzed in at the front church office doors. **The Auditorium doors will be opened by 11:25 a.m. for dismissal.** If a child is to be picked up early for some reason, prior arrangements should be made with both the classroom teacher and director.

Please share these times with anyone dropping off or picking up your child(ren).



LATE PICK-UP POLICY

We understand that sometimes circumstances beyond control prevent families from picking up children on time. **Please call the preschool at 717-243-1863 if such a situation should cause the late pick-up of your child.** If a call is not placed and the reason for a delayed pick-up is unknown, undue stress and inconvenience is placed not only on your child, but on the preschool staff as well. If picking up your child late becomes a habit, penalties will apply at the director's discretion.

CALENDAR/CLOSINGS/DELAYS

A general calendar outlining our school year will be provided to you separately. Please stay tuned to monthly email news for updates and additional scheduling details.

We try to follow the Carlisle Area School District for weather-related closings/delays. If Carlisle Area School District is closed for inclement weather/power outage, we will be closed. **When Carlisle Area School District announces a delay, our preschool will be delayed. On those days, we will begin school at 10:00 a.m. and end at 12:00 p.m.**



If you have questions as to whether school is in session, please call the church office at 717-243-1863 before leaving home. In the event that weather conditions become hazardous while your child is at school, we encourage you to pick up your child early.

★ **Please note that we *do not* follow Carlisle Area School District's in-service, early dismissal, conference or make-up day schedule.**

During the School Day

SEPARATION ANXIETY

For some, this will be the first time your child has separated from you for any length of time. This may be a stressful time for you and your child. Even some returning students may have a little anxiety and some separation issues for a short time. Try to establish a routine of saying goodbye with your child. **Making it fairly quickly and not drawing it out will make it easier both for you and your child.** If you are having a problem, please alert a teacher to help. If there are tears when you leave, they usually clear up quickly. Please feel free to call us if you wonder how your child is adjusting. We hope to make transitions and separation as easy as possible for both of you.



COMMUNICATION

Communication is important to us! Newsletters will be distributed to each class via email to inform parents of classroom themes and activities, as well as upcoming events. Teachers will also utilize ClassDojo to give you a peek into our classrooms from time to time. During the course of the year, there will be sign-ups posted online via SignUpGenius for special events, field trips, conferences, etc.

CHURCH/PRESCHOOL ACCESS

Please keep in mind that the doors to TMH church are kept locked throughout the day. If you must drop something off, please do so during the church office hours:

Monday-Thursday: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Friday: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

You will need to be buzzed into the front doors near the church office by office staff.



TOYS

Refrain from sending toys or other personal items to preschool, unless specifically invited to do so by your teacher. Please check your child's bucket before leaving home, just in case something slips inside without your knowledge!

SNACKS/BIRTHDAYS

☆ **Please provide a healthy snack for your child each day.** Limit snack to small amounts avoiding high sugar foods. Snacks that are salty, crunchy, veggies and fruit (please cut grapes in half) are preferred. It's beneficial to let your child help choose a snack, while encouraging healthy food choices.



☆ **Please provide a clean water bottle for your child each day. Water bottles should be labeled with your child's name.**

Your child's birthday is a time to celebrate! Teachers try to make birthdays a special day in the classroom for the children. **We ask that commercially pre-packaged birthday treats be brought to school to share with classmates, if desired.** Such treats can include snack-sized bags of cookies, fruit snacks, etc., or pre-sealed store-bought muffins, doughnut holes, etc. Thank you!

LUNCH BUNCH

Starting in October, Lunch Bunch will be offered once a month on **selected Wednesdays/Thursdays** for children in our *Teddy Bear and Panda classes*. * Children either stay after class from **11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** or can be dropped off at Joyful Steps for this time period. Preschool teachers and/or parents supervise the children in the 4-5 y.o. classroom while they play, eat their packed lunches, listen to stories, sing and have a time of gross motor activity.

The cost of Lunch Bunch is \$20.00 per child and due at sign-up time. Please submit cash in a clearly marked envelope that includes your child's name OR checks, payable to Joyful Steps Preschool.



**Beginning in January, Lunch Bunch will also be offered to children in the Butterfly and Bumblebee classes.*

Lunch Bunch is an excellent opportunity for your child to get used to staying a little longer at school and learning to negotiate his/her lunch with assistance. Children enjoy this extra bit of time to play and eat lunch with others. Please provide a packed lunch from home. We are unable to refrigerate lunches, so an ice pack is helpful.

Sign-ups will be available online via SignUpGenius. Please look for these sign-ups in upcoming e-newsletters. **Thank you for affording other children a chance to attend by alternating your Lunch Bunch sign-up times.**

FIELD TRIPS

Fall and Spring field trips will be held during preschool hours for our 4-5 y.o. classes and are planned for such places as Paulus Farm Market, Chick-fil-A, etc.

Watch for online chaperone sign-ups! Please be sure to have current background clearances on file at Joyful Steps before committing to be a chaperone.

☆ Families are asked to provide transportation to/from field trip locations.

Note: Joyful Steps Preschool has a policy of no siblings attending field trips. This is a special time for the child who is enrolled in our preschool, and it can be a very special together time for you and your child for that day.



CHILDREN'S CHAPEL

Children's Chapel is held at varying times throughout the school year. This is a time when church staff, preschool teachers or community volunteers teach us about God's great love. Simple Bible stories and songs are offered during this time. Please let us know if you would like to volunteer for our Children's Chapel times. We'd love to have you share with us!



THEMES

Our program puts a strong emphasis on each child's literacy development. A sampling of themes listed below are enhanced with quality children's literature.

September

ALL ABOUT ME

BEARS

APPLES

October

FIRE SAFETY

LEAVES

PUMPKINS

COLORS & SHAPES

GOODNIGHT/SILLY MONSTERS

November

TRANSPORTATION

THANKSGIVING

December

GINGERBREAD

CHRISTMAS

January

WINTER/SNOW

POLAR ANIMALS/ICE

QUILTS

February

HOT CHOCOLATE

GROUNDHOG DAY/SHADOWS

FRIENDS

VALENTINES

DINOSAURS

DR. SEUSS

March

SPRING

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

WIND/KITES

PETS

April

EASTER

RAIN/WORMS

May

FLOWERS

BUGS

POND/OCEAN

DISCIPLINE

Parents often wonder about our discipline procedures. We try to practice preventive discipline as much as possible, by carefully planning class time, keeping to a predictable schedule and redirecting inappropriate behavior. We believe very strongly in specific, positive reinforcement—catching them being good! Our activities are developmentally appropriate and most everything in the classroom is designed for children to use. We do have a few rules which we develop with the children, such as walking instead of running, keeping hands to yourself, etc. We use warnings and choices, and as a last resort, we use “taking a break” (usually 1-2 minutes). We then talk with the child to make sure he/she understands what to do and why. For running and physical harm, we may need to raise our voices, especially if we are across the room. The classroom is often humming with activity, and we may need to quickly get a child’s attention if he/she is putting him/herself or another child in danger.

☆ If a child's behavior becomes detrimental to the child, classmates, teachers or the classroom environment, a request will be made to discuss the situation with the child's parents. A plan will be developed to address the behavior. Progress will be monitored and reviewed by the staff and parents of the child. If, after all attempts at resolving the behavior have been tried and it is determined that the child's needs cannot be met by this program, alternative settings will be considered, including expulsion from this program.

SAFETY

Please be extra alert when entering or exiting the church parking lots. **DRIVE SLOWLY!** Always be mindful that small children may not be visible between parked cars.



Please be aware of your child’s whereabouts, keeping him/her by your side at all times. **ALWAYS** walk with your child(ren) when coming or going. Please **DO NOT** allow your child(ren) to run ahead of you.

Please **DO NOT** leave children in parked cars when dropping off or picking up your preschool child. Asking a friend to stay with your child(ren) in the car is advised instead.

DISMISSING CHILDREN

We expect parents/guardians to pick up their children and may ask to see ID until we get to know you. We need prior **WRITTEN or EMAIL NOTIFICATION** from you if you will not be picking up your child. Also, if someone is **never** to pick up your child, please let us know the name(s) and provide a photo, if possible. It is important to us that your child be picked up only by someone who has your permission. If an emergency arises, please call the church office at 717-243-1863.

ADULT CONDUCT

We highly encourage interaction among our preschool families and feel blessed that many friendships develop over the course of the year. In your daily conversations with each other, please remember to be respectful and ever-mindful that little ears may be listening...and eyes watching. Our language and behavior should model the values of our school and the church as a whole. Thank you for your cooperation with this matter.

Throughout the School Year

KEEPING US INFORMED

Please keep us informed of a change in your child's health, address, phone number or family situation. **We also need to know about any diagnosed allergies your child may have to things such as food, medicine, animals or the outdoors.** If your child has a severe diagnosed allergy, you will need to complete an allergy form and provide the appropriate medicine to be kept in the preschool office, together with instructions for dispensing any medicine for allergic reactions.

☆ Please note: We only dispense medication during school hours in emergency situations in response to symptoms, e.g.: allergic reactions.

Children like to share enjoyable family events, such as a trip, wedding, or visit to grandma, etc. Let us know, so that we can help him/her share it at circle time. Also, stressful times such as a death or illness in the family or even a difficult morning can be distressing to your child. Please inform us so we can give a little extra tender loving care.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

One of our goals is to have your child as ready as he/she can be to enter the more structured kindergarten classroom. We follow state guidelines, and regularly consult with area kindergarten teachers to learn what skills/abilities they desire for children entering kindergarten.

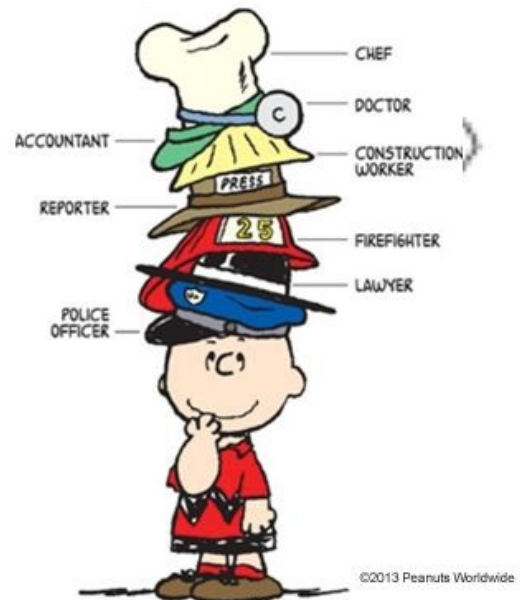


HOME REINFORCEMENT

We only have your child for a short time and try to pack a lot of learning into that time frame. However, some extra reinforcement is often needed. We may send some take-home projects with your child. These are activities which can be done with your help and are theme-related (often literacy extensions). Please have fun working with your child on these projects. The United Way Success by Six calendar is an important resource which provides daily kindergarten readiness activities you can do with your child. It includes a kindergarten readiness checklist at the back. This calendar is an excellent resource to assist you in helping your child prepare for kindergarten. Also, please do not hesitate to consult your child's teacher for additional kindergarten readiness ideas.

PARENT PARTICIPATION/CLEARANCES

Parent participation is welcomed and encouraged, especially after the first four weeks of school, when most children have adjusted to the new school year. Please feel free to discuss with your child's teacher when you might help in the classroom, read a book to the class or share a hobby/skill/talent. There are several times throughout the year when we ask for volunteers to assist with holiday activities. We are also always looking for those willing to substitute for an absent teacher, sometimes at a moment's notice. Please let us know if you would like to be added to our substitute list.



☆ According to the **Child Protective Services Law**, if you plan to volunteer or substitute, you will need to provide background clearance documentation.

All of these background clearance reports are obtained by each requesting person. **Below you will find links where you can find instructions to complete this process.**

Currently, the following background reports will need to be renewed every **FIVE** years. Also, since these are state-mandated reports, they are identical to the ones requested by churches, public/private schools and other organizations. So, keeping your original documents handy for future reference is a good idea.

If you plan to substitute or volunteer for our classes in the upcoming school year (and beyond), please complete the necessary background clearances NOW. (It sometimes takes several weeks to receive reports.) Once you receive cleared reports, please **bring a copy of them to preschool**, so we can keep them on file. Then, when the time comes for you to join our classes, you will be ready!

- **Child Abuse Clearance:** www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS/Public/Home
- **State Criminal History:** <https://epatch.pa.gov/>
- **FBI Fingerprint Clearance** (☞ *NOT required for volunteers who have lived in PA for ALL of the past 10 years!*) : <https://uenroll.identogo.com/>

Register for the FBI Fingerprint Clearance using DHS VOLUNTEER SERVICE CODE: 1KG6ZJ. Once registered you will need to proceed to a fingerprint location with your registration paperwork.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

In October/November and April/May, we will conduct school-wide parent-teacher conferences to give you an idea of how your child is progressing. Please watch for online sign-up notices to schedule a conference time. Also, there will be opportunities for you to touch base with your child's teacher throughout the year.

Please contact us with questions or concerns along the way.



TUITION

Tuition is always due by the 10th DAY of each month and paid one month ahead! For example, September tuition is due by August 10, October tuition is due by September 10, etc. No payment is needed in May, since May's tuition will have already been paid by April 10.



☆ Please note that if the 10th day of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, payment will be expected by the very next school day. See Late Tuition Policy.

Tuition checks should be made payable to “**Joyful Steps Preschool**” and given to the director/teacher, dropped in the Joyful Steps mailbox located in the preschool hallway, or mailed to the church by the due date. **Please place all cash tuition payments in an envelope clearly marked with your child's name.**

If you feel you need tuition assistance, please talk with Mrs. Pam. We have a scholarship fund to help those in need. All names of scholarship recipients are kept confidential.

Tuition fees are as follows:

3 days/week: \$180.00 per month (Monday/Wednesday/Friday)

2 days/week: \$130.00 per month (Tuesday/Thursday or Wednesday/Friday)

LATE TUITION POLICY

In order to efficiently maintain office records and provide adequate funds to pay our staff, timely tuition payments are required. **Tuition payments are ALWAYS due one month in advance and by the 10th of each month** (as detailed above).

If tuition payments are not submitted by the 10th of each month (or the very next school day if the 10th falls on a weekend or holiday), late tuition fees will apply as follows:

- **Late Payment *AFTER* the 10th of the month = \$10.00 late fee**
- **Late Payment *ON/AFTER* the 1st of the NEXT month = \$20.00 late fee**

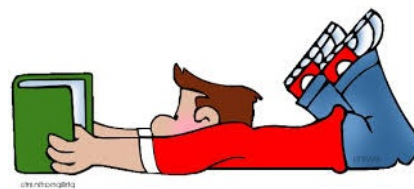
SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUB ORDERS

We will periodically submit Scholastic Book Club orders. Please place orders online, using the link below.

Our preschool access code is **KY6VD**.

These are books you may order for your family, while providing free books for our school library.

<https://orders.scholastic.com/KY6VD>



FUNDRAISERS



Our fundraisers are simple and very advantageous to our preschool if everyone participates!

- The **RaiseRight Gift Card** fundraiser will begin before Thanksgiving. A wide variety of merchants participate in this program, offering many options for purchasing gift cards—just like the ones you pick up at local stores—for your own family or as gifts for others. Our school receives **FREE MONEY** from all cards purchased. Please consider purchasing your holiday gift cards through this fundraiser. The gift cards will arrive before Christmas for your gift-giving convenience. **We need your help to make this fundraiser a big success again this year!**



- **Weis4School:** Please scan the barcode here at checkout to help us start earning each time you shop at Weis Markets.



- **Additional Fundraisers:** Bruster's, Hoss's and/or others, if needed.

Thank you for supporting us!

CHURCH BOARD

We are responsible to The Meeting House Church Board. If you have any questions or concerns for the Board, please speak to your child's teacher or the director.

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

Please feel free to contact us with questions or concerns you may have throughout the year. Even if it seems minor, if your child shares a concern with you, please let us know. We can't always see everything that goes on in the classroom. You may contact Mrs. Pam in the preschool office, by email: pam@tmh.church, or by phone: 717-243-1863

Thank you for being part of our Joyful Steps Family!

We look forward to a great year!

