

## Kindergarten FAQs

### Why should I consider St. Mark kindergarten for my child?

Jesus Christ is the center of our school day, which means we're helping you establish a foundation for making Him the center of your child's life. Our staff fosters a nurturing environment that challenges students to use their gifts to fulfill God's plan for their lives. In addition, our class size is typically far smaller than most other area kindergartens, giving children the personal attention that's so important at this stage of their development.

### What is the background of St. Mark's kindergarten teacher?

After teaching in our preschool for several years, Debi Crawford-Poyner assumed responsibility for our kindergarten class in 1999. Before joining St. Mark, she taught special education for 13 years in various states, including Ohio, Virginia, Colorado, Maryland and Delaware. Mrs. Crawford-Poyner holds a master's degree in special elementary/early childhood education from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and a bachelor's degree in elementary/special education from the University of Millersville in Pennsylvania.

### What math curriculum does St. Mark kindergarten use?

Saxon Math and Everyday Mathematics (the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project) provide our students with fun, real-world ways to experience math. We also use several activities from the Math Their Way series.

### What language curriculum does St. Mark kindergarten use?

Our language arts program integrates social studies, science, Zoo-phonics, Handwriting Without Tears, and oral and written expression. Regular activities include journal writing, children's poetry and literature, invented and correct spelling, and speaking in front of the class.

### What religion curriculum does St. Mark kindergarten use?

Voyages - it's from Concordia Publishing House, the publishing arm of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. We also read from the children's Bible published by Zondervan.

### Do kindergarteners get homework?

A little, just enough to prepare them for what's coming. Homework might consist of educational games, poems or books to read with parents, or activity worksheets that allow students to show their families what they're learning.

### What about art, music and PE?

All are included in the kindergarten week, ensuring a rounded educational experience. Typically, we spend 30 minutes per week in music instruction, 45 minutes per week in art, and 30 minutes twice per week in physical education. We visit the St. Mark library once a week, too.

### Do kindergarteners go on field trips?

Yes, typically three per year - the butterfly exhibit at Meijer Gardens, a Lollipops Concert conducted by the Grand Rapids Symphony, and a play presented by Circle Theater. We also take an occasional walking field trip, perhaps to the local library. Parents are welcome to join us.

### What about snacks?

We ask each child to bring a different snack item each month to share with the class. Examples: three apples, a bunch of grapes, a box of graham crackers. We're careful to avoid anything that might trigger food allergies.

### Do you celebrate birthdays in class?

Yes. Children are invited to bring a treat from home. If edible, we'll distribute it during lunch or snack time. If not, we'll send it home with classmates at the end of the day. Rest assured, we take food allergies into consideration. If your child's birthday is in the summer, we can celebrate it in September, May, or on the half birthday.

### Do you encourage parental involvement?

Do we ever ... parents are welcome to help out during lunch, recess and learning stations. We also invite you to participate in our Parent Teacher League, which meets three times per year.

### How does St. Mark keep kindergarten parents informed?

We send a weekly news bulletin home with students to let you know what's going on in class and what special events are coming up. In addition, parent/teacher conferences are held three times per year and report cards are distributed twice.