



CHAMBLEE METHODIST KINDERGARTEN

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November 2019

Dear Parents,

As November approaches, we begin a very special season of thankfulness. We will incorporate into our daily plans and activities the feeling of gratitude for our families, homes, churches, friends, food, and school. The children will learn about why we celebrate Thanksgiving and may experience sharing in a couple of ways: some classes may have special Thanksgiving snacks which they will help prepare, and everyone will attend a special Chapel when they may bring food to share with the needy (more about that on the next page). In addition, you will soon receive information about your individual conference with your child's teacher so that you may learn more about how your child spends his/her time when s/he is at school.

October was a busy month as we've welcomed autumn and prepared for Halloween. We especially enjoyed the opportunities to chat with many of you at Donuts for Dads in our 3s, 4s, and 5s classes. On behalf of our staff, we pray that you will have an enjoyable and meaningful Thanksgiving season with your families and friends. We are thankful for you and your children and for God's many blessings among our CMK family.

With Gratitude,

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, November 5 – No School (Election Day)
Wednesday, November 6 – Chapel (bring canned goods)
November 6 and 7 – Speech and Language screening (permission form needed)
Monday, November 11 – The Puppet Guy; in house field trip
November 13 and 14 – Occupational Therapy screening (permission form needed)
Thursday, November 14 – School closes at noon for staff meeting (no lunch bunch)
Sunday, November 17 – Preschool at Church, preschool children will sing at church service
9:00am modern service (nursery available) 11:00 am traditional service (nursery and kid church)
Thursday, November 21 – Chapel (bring canned goods)
November 25 - 29 – School Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
Wednesday, December 4 – Chapel (bring a toy, game or puzzle to donate)
Thursday, December 5 – Noon closing for staff luncheon (no lunch bunch)
Thursday, December 12 – Chapel (bring a toy, game or puzzle to donate)
Saturday, December 14 – CFUMC Breakfast with Santa; 8:30 am Fellowship Hall
Sunday, December 15 – CFUMC Live Nativity; 6:00 pm outside near the activity center
Tuesday, December 17 – last day of school before Christmas vacation (noon closing, no lunch bunch or enrichment classes)

NOVEMBER and DECEMBER CHAPEL SERVICES: A TIME TO REMEMBER OTHERS

For many years CMK has partnered with CFUMC during our November Chapels to remember others who are in need. On November 6 and November 21, food barrels will be placed near the altar so that our students may bring canned goods or other non-perishable items for the needy at Thanksgiving time.

All canned and dried food items are gratefully accepted but suggested donations include: canola oil, sugar, flour, dried beans, rice, instant potatoes, canned meats, canned chicken (larger sizes), peanut butter, jelly, pastas, and pasta sauces (not glass jars). Regular-sized items enable greatest flexibility in packing food boxes. CFUMC sponsors Thanks for Giving food drive and includes donations from local schools and Scout troops.

Other opportunities to participate are to sort food donations (Thursday, Nov.21, 6- 8 pm), check labels (Friday, Nov. 22, 9–11 am) and basket packing (Saturday, Nov. 23, 9 -11am) All ages welcome, supervision required for children.

Our December Chapels will be a time when we partner with Cross Cultural Ministries of Chamblee to provide toys and games to children in the afterschool program (Kindergarten – grade 5.) During our two December chapels we will be collecting new, unwrapped toys and games to be donated. CMK has partnered with this agency for many years and we know that our donated items are going to families in need. More details about this project will be in the December newsletter.

NEWS FROM MUSIC

Mrs. Weaver has been having so much fun with your children in music class! You may have heard hints of songs we are learning, or maybe they've just been re-singing some classics we do like Twinkle Twinkle or You Are My Sunshine. It has been such a joy to see them respond to music, whether enthusiastically playing shakers or moving along to the beats from my drum.

We've been exploring songs about Fall themes such as Johnny Appleseed, 2 Little Pumpkins and Leaves are Falling Down. And for our older friends, we've been learning some Spanish words and songs, so quiz them on *Cabeza, Hombros, Rodillas y Pies!* :)

Here are some lyrics to a few songs we've been singing this fall.

Tic Toc

Tic Toc Tic Toc Goes the Big Clock
Tic Toc Tic Toc Night and Day
Tic Toc Tic Toc Goes the Big Clock
God watches over us night and day

Jesus Love the Little Ones

Jesus Loves the Little Ones like Me, Me, Me
Jesus loves the little ones like me, me, me
Little ones like me, sat upon his knee
Jesus loves the little ones like me, me, me

Jesus loves the little ones like you, you, you
Jesus loves the little ones like you, you, you
Little ones like you, Jesus loves you too
Jesus loves the little ones like you, you, you

Shukuru *

Shukuru, Shukuru Yesu
Shukuru, Shukuru Yesu
(x2)

* A Sudanese Arabic song - 'Thank You Jesus'

PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES

Each year our school sends an evaluation form which gives parents an opportunity to rate CMK in several areas, including quality of care, instruction, classroom activities, communication, playground, and enrichment opportunities to name just a few. Parents are also asked to comment on what they like best about our program and what they would like to see changed or improved. The responses we receive help us maintain and improve the quality of our program. We heard from over 100 parents and really appreciate your candor and suggestions and want you to know that each one was carefully read and considered. Some suggestions were taken to the Kindergarten Board, while others are being reviewed by our staff. Your participation in parent surveys ensures that CMK will continue to provide an atmosphere of love and learning that allows each child to develop to his/her God-given potential. If you would like further conversation about any of your own specific remarks or suggestions, please feel free to contact Mellie.

Affirmations

Many of the surveys included encouraging words of praise. Parents described the staff as "warm, joyful, loving, and nurturing" and noted how the teachers are respectful and kind to the children, pay attention to the children needs'; know the names of children "not just in their own classroom" and appreciate each child for who they are! Many parents commented on the small class sizes, the play-based curriculum and the experience of the staff to deliver age appropriate activities. Many parents like the sense of community at CMK, the extra programs like chapel, music, and movement, and how excited their child is to come to school. Many parents mentioned that their children are more confident and independent while learning a lot of self-help skills. We are pleased that 100% of the responses indicated that the children enjoyed coming to school, felt the activities were age appropriate and parents feel welcome when they visit. The overall quality of the programming and curriculum received a 98% approval rating. Parents approve of the age-appropriate learning activities and are glad that the children are not "pushed" to move ahead of their age-level. We especially appreciate knowing that 100% of those who replied would recommend CMK to friends and neighbors. Many parents mentioned the overall culture of the school being faith-filled, positive for all and

technology free. Parents feel that the environment is structured and organized yet allows for each child to develop at their own pace. "Children feel comfortable to explore and stretch their skills under the careful eye of a loving adult" was a parent comment. Nearly all of the parents who replied feel the tuition rates are reasonable. However, we know that a tuition raise several years in a row is not favorable and we hope to only raise tuition every 2-3 years in the future. Parents also like that the church includes the school families in many activities such as Fall Festival, Trunk of treats, Christmas activities, and the Easter Egg Hunt. We are so grateful for these positive and encouraging comments. Your support of our program is highly valued and so much appreciated; know that we do not take it for granted.

Questions and Concerns

These concerns are the ones mentioned several times. If your concern is not included in the list below, please feel free to ask about your own remarks.

Can the school have longer hours/longer school year?

Our school is not licensed for daycare so we are limited in what we can do. We feel that a longer day (more than 3-hours) would be too much for our younger students, many of whom are in school for the first time. Our school day is very structured and most children are so engaged and focused during the school morning that we find they do better with a 3 hour day. This is also why we don't allow our 2 year old children to participate in enrichment. Since we do maintain consistent enrollment, it would appear that there is still a need or preference for a half-day program. Having the "lunch bunch" hour remain optional seems to work for most families who want their child to stay a bit longer. As you know, our school calendar follows that of DeKalb County schools as well as other local preschools. We, like most area preschools, start after Labor Day and know that when other schools start in early August it seems that we start very late. This start date allows staff members to attend workshops and have pre-planning meetings after their own children have started school. This past August, for instance, our staff could choose from 6 different workshops, all of which were offered on weekdays in late August. Preplanning activities and room prep are very time-consuming, and we continue to think it is best for the staff to be able to do all of this after their own children have started school. Lastly, we hope that parents can use these late August weeks to focus on their preschoolers once the older children are at school and can use this time to set up playdates and family trips as a way to celebrate the end of summer.

It seems like school is closed on certain days of the week more than on others. How does this effect the classrooms and the days they meet?

It might seem that there is one day per week that has more days cancelled but when studying the schedule, each class misses about the same amount of days during the school year. For instance, the Wed/Fri class is cancelled 6 times throughout the year as is the Tues/Thurs class. It may be that Thursday is a day often cancelled but rarely do we cancel a Tuesday. Additionally, for the Christmas break week and the last week of school we have school on Monday and Tuesday only so the Wed/Fri class doesn't come at all that week. If you have concerns about the school year calendar, feel free to contact Mellie.

Can the playgrounds be improved?

The survey showed that 50% of the responders think the playgrounds are good and 48% responded excellent. We know that the playground was an area in which our families wanted to see improvement. We were able to purchase and install a shade structure, which was suggested many times in the survey, and we are currently exploring other ideas to enhance and upgrade our playgrounds. Please know that we do have to be mindful of the church property and work within the fenced areas of each playground. Also know that each playground is annually inspected by a licensed equipment installer to ensure safety. Much of what the inspector looks for is "clearing spaces" between equipment, swings and off the end of slides so we do have to allow for free space. Also, we find that most children love to run during playground time and we value the amount of space that we are able to provide for this purpose. The mulch that we use is the most economical and kid friendly ground cover for a preschool our size. We have investigated a rubber surface area and found it to be very expensive; it also gets very hot in the direct sunlight. As we continue to receive feedback from parents and from the playground inspector we will continue to look for ways to improve the playground economically.

Why isn't communication from school to home more consistent among teachers and classrooms?

With many different classrooms meeting on different days of the week it is difficult to standardize communication. For instance, a weekly update might make more sense for a class that attends school 4-5 days per week, while a class that attends 2 days per week might only need a monthly update. Also, our teachers all have strengths they bring to school; some are

well versed on the computer and managing a password-protected site like Shutterfly, while others feel more comfortable sending a narrative email to parents about classroom happenings. Some parents have asked for an update on every child everyday but doing that would take time away from the students for the teachers to fill out a daily report for each child and we want our classrooms to be busy and full of activities with direct teacher supervision. Please know that as a staff we are collecting data to see how teachers are communicating and we will be talking about ways to improve this process.

Can the church and school improve the security of the building while children are in school?

I have met with several key people at the church and we are currently working to get more security for the building. Several ideas are being strongly considered at this time to upgrade the security of the building during school hours. We continue to keep the side doors locked while children are in the building and continue to monitor who enters the building through cameras and the front desk check-in.

Could there be more opportunities for more enrichment and a longer day for enrichment?

With the change in hours for Kindergarten we knew that we needed to offer more enrichment later in the day. Therefore, this year we added 2 new enrichment classes and 3 more "late" (from 1:00 – 2:00) enrichment classes. We know this is a way to extend the school day for our children and it also allows the Kindergarten class to participate in more enrichment classes.

May we pay tuition by credit card?

This would add an expense for the school that we'd have to pass on to parents, so we continue to request checks or cash. Many parents do have their banks send checks automatically, so that can take less time. It is always an option to prepay several months of tuition at a time if you would like.

Can you send the newsletter and other updates electronically?

Currently we still make print copies of the monthly newsletter and some teachers do send home paper copies of their monthly calendar/newsletter. Your feedback shows that parents still like both paper and email notifications of communication. We do post our newsletter on our website. Additionally, at the beginning of the year we enter both parents email addresses into our communication database. If your spouse is not receiving emails from CMK when you do, please have them check spam or junk folder. We do not have plans to add a text app to our communication plan. Many of those have character limits to their message capability or distribution limits.

What should I expect from the parent-teacher conference? Can they be scheduled longer or after school hours?

The teachers work very hard in giving you information that is pertinent to your child at the parent teacher conference. In fact, in the 2s and 3s classes you can expect to get more information about your child and how he/she interacts with peers within the classroom, the favorite toys he/she plays with and possibly suggestions of things to work on at home. We hope this information is more helpful than some of the information shared in the past. We have always scheduled conference times when your child is in school so that you don't have to get childcare for your child. We find that being able to meet with parents without the distraction of the child enables a better conversation without the distraction of a child. Please know that all teachers are available for a longer conference and are happy to try and accommodate for another time, however evening conferences are harder because the church is not always open.

Thank you all again for your responses to the 2018-2019 school year end of year survey. Your opinions and feedback do make a difference! Please feel free to share your thoughts with us any time during the school year.

PARENT INFORMATION

TAKEN FROM <https://teaching2and3yearolds.com/11-preschool-language-development-activities/>

PRESCHOOL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Play group games that encourage conversation.

Recite favorite fingerplays.

Create story baskets to encourage preschoolers to retell or make up stories.

Make an experience book that encourages children to retell something special they recently participated in.

Sing songs to encourage speech.

Provide listening activities to build language skills.

Build letter sounds by providing rhyming activities. Play games with rhyming words