



Chapel of the Cross Lutheran Preschool

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St. Peters, Missouri

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Welcome

Welcome to Chapel of the Cross Lutheran Church and Preschool. It is a privilege to be considered by families as they choose a preschool community for their children. Children are deeply valued at Chapel of the Cross, and we are committed to providing an excellent educational experience within a Christ-centered environment.

Our dedication to excellence, combined with a caring and nurturing family atmosphere, makes Chapel of the Cross a truly special place. We are honored to partner with families during this important milestone in their child's life and look forward to walking alongside you throughout your child's early learning journey.

Chapel of the Cross believes that worshipping together as a family strengthens and reinforces the faith and values children are learning throughout the week. If your family does not currently have a church home, we warmly invite you to join us for worship and fellowship. Worship services are held on Sunday mornings at 8:00 and 10:15 a.m., with Sunday School and adult Bible classes at 9:15 a.m. Additional services are offered on Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday mornings at 11:00 a.m. You are always welcome to join us for worship or any church-sponsored event.

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Mark Hoehner

Rev. James Uglum

Chapel of the Cross (COTC) Mission Statement

At Chapel of the Cross, our mission is to:

- SHARE the Gospel
- SEEK the Lost
- STUDY God's Word
- STRENGTHEN One Another

Philosophy of COTC Lutheran Preschool

Christian faith and values are intentionally integrated into all areas of development, including intellectual, social-emotional, physical, creative, and spiritual growth. In our daily interactions, teaching, and play, children experience God's love and learn that they are uniquely created and deeply valued by Him.

We believe play is the essential work of young children and a vital part of the learning process. Through purposeful play, children develop foundational skills and understanding that prepare them for future formal learning. Play provides opportunities to explore, discover, problem-solve, and make sense of the world God has created.

We provide a flexible, developmentally appropriate program that honors each child's individual pace of growth while encouraging curiosity, independence, confidence, and a joyful love of learning within a nurturing Christian community.

Statement of Purpose

Chapel of the Cross Lutheran Preschool exists to provide a high-quality early childhood education in a Christ-centered environment. We partner with families to nurture each child's faith, character, and love of learning while encouraging a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

Through purposeful play and hands-on exploration, children build strong foundations for future learning. Our program supports each child's unique pace of development while fostering curiosity, confidence, and joyful engagement in discovery.

Program Goals

Spiritual Development and Moral Formation

Children grow in faith by knowing Jesus as Savior and friend through age-appropriate Bible instruction, worship experiences, prayer, and daily interactions that reflect Christian love and values.

Sensory and Cognitive Development

Hands-on experiences stimulate the senses—hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, and smelling—while promoting curiosity, problem-solving, and early cognitive skills.

Environmental Awareness and Social Studies Foundations

Children explore their classroom and school environment to develop awareness of themselves, others, and the world around them.

Creative Expression and the Arts

Art, music, movement, and imaginative play encourage creativity, self-expression, and fine and gross motor development.

Whole-Child Development

Developmentally appropriate activities support spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth, recognizing the interconnected nature of early childhood development.

Social-Emotional Growth and Self-Concept

Nurturing relationships and consistent guidance help children develop a positive self-concept and a strong sense of belonging.

Social Skills and Group Participation

Children receive guidance as they learn self-regulation, cooperation, and respectful participation in small- and large-group settings.

School Readiness and Learning Foundations

A broad range of experiences builds foundational skills and attitudes necessary for future academic success, including attention, persistence, independence, and a love of learning.

A Strong Foundation for Faith and Learning

At COTC Preschool, we use research-based early childhood teaching practices and developmentally appropriate materials, guided by caring and dedicated teachers, to lay a strong foundation for future school success. Through a Christ-centered approach, we help children discover God's world while nurturing curiosity, wonder, and a joyful love of learning. Our goal is to prepare each child to grow as a confident, eager, and capable learner in the years ahead.

Philosophy and Curriculum

Play as the Core of Learning

Play is the essential work of young children and is central to the curriculum at COTC Preschool. Through purposeful play, children develop skills across all areas of growth, including gross and fine motor development, early math and science concepts, music, language, social studies, creative expression, and religious understanding. Play-based learning allows children to explore, experiment, and make meaningful connections in ways that are both engaging and developmentally appropriate.

Daily Routine

Each day follows a consistent and predictable routine designed to provide security and comfort, while allowing flexibility for exploration and discovery. Our schedule balances indoor and outdoor activities, group and individual experiences, and both child-directed and teacher-guided learning. This approach encourages creativity, independence, collaboration, and a sense of confidence in every child.

Activity Areas

- **Creativity:** Drawing, painting, printing, cutting, pasting, dancing, imaginative play
- **Drama:** Puppetry and dramatic play encouraging storytelling, role-playing, and social interaction
- **Indoor Play:** Block building, housekeeping, puzzles, tactile exploration, and gross motor movement
- **Language Development:** Storytelling, group discussions, listening activities, vocabulary building, role-playing, early literacy experiences
- **Music:** Singing, listening, rhythm activities, musical games, music-based storytelling

- **Outdoor Play:** Running, jumping, climbing, swinging, and other activities supporting gross motor development
- **Early Literacy & Reading Readiness:** Visual discrimination, sequencing, matching, patterning, letter recognition, shared reading, and language experience stories
- **Religious Education:** Bible stories, songs, prayers, art projects, and worship experiences
- **Science:** Hands-on exploration of nature, seasons, Creation, plants and animals, health, simple experiments, cooking activities
- **Social Studies & Social-Emotional Learning:** Family life, church and community, holidays, community helpers, cultural awareness, good manners, and social-emotional skill development

Christian Discipline

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” – Proverbs 22:6

At COTC Preschool, discipline is intended to create a safe, nurturing, Christ-centered learning environment and is viewed as a teaching opportunity that encourages self-control, responsibility, and respect for others. Families and staff work together in supporting children as they feel respected, valued, and loved, which helps them become more cooperative and engaged learners. The approach emphasizes helping children learn to solve problems and make good choices within clear limits, focusing on the prevention of misbehavior. When consequences are needed, they are given with empathy and compassion to support understanding and growth.

Sessions and Enrollment

Age and Eligibility

Children are eligible for preschool if they are three or four years old before August 1, or five after August 1, and are toilet-trained. Three-year-olds attend a minimum of two days per week, and four-year-olds attend a minimum of three days per week. Classrooms are mixed-age, consisting of learners aged three to five. Research shows that mixed-age classrooms foster leadership, pro-social behavior, independence, and cooperative learning, as older children mentor younger peers and all children benefit from collaborative experiences.

Program Options and Hours

COTC Preschool offers flexible attendance options, including full-day and half-day programs, as well as Before and After-Care. Before-Care runs from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. Full-day programs operate from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and Half-day programs from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. After-Care continues from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Before and After-Care are available on a yearly basis as needed.

Drop-In Extended Care Policy

Drop-In Before and After Care is available for families who need occasional childcare outside of their child's regularly scheduled preschool hours, provided that space and staffing allow. Families who wish to use drop-in care must notify the preschool director no later than the day before care is needed. Availability is not guaranteed and is dependent upon staffing and enrollment in the regular extended care program, which will receive priority.

Drop-in care is billed at a rate of \$8 per day for Before Care (7:30–8:00 AM) and \$12 per day for After Care (3:00–4:30 PM). Charges will be applied to the family's tuition account on the day services are used. Frequent use of drop-in care may require families to enroll in the regular monthly extended care program to ensure consistent staffing and scheduling.

All children must be picked up by 4:30 PM. Late pick-ups will result in an additional fee of \$1 per minute past closing time.

Probationary Enrollment

All new students are enrolled on a probationary basis for the first semester. During this time, conferences may be held with the teacher, administrator, and parents if concerns arise regarding a child's progress or adjustment. Continued enrollment may depend on account status, behavior, or the school's ability to meet the child's needs within the program's structure.

Program Scope

COTC Preschool provides a nurturing, developmentally appropriate early childhood education within a traditional classroom setting. While we strive to support each child to the best of our ability, certain services fall outside the scope of our program. These include daily therapeutic services such as speech, occupational, or physical therapy, ongoing one-on-one behavioral or instructional support, medical or health accommodations requiring specialized clinical training, and intensive interventions delivered through a formal special education plan. If developmental concerns arise, the

school may request or require professional screening through the local public school district. Should a child's needs exceed what the program can reasonably support, the school reserves the right to discontinue enrollment.

Tuition

A non-refundable registration fee per child is assessed annually and collected each year at the time of enrollment. The fee is based on the date of enrollment: \$175 from January 1 to March 31, \$200 from April 1 to May 31, and \$225 after June 1. Tuition and monthly fees, including Before and After Care, must be paid through our electronic tuition program on the first of each month from August through May, unless the full tuition is paid in August. A late charge of \$25 will be assessed on the 15th of any month with a balance due, and a \$25 NSF fee will be applied for any returned checks. Accounts must remain current. Failure to make timely payments may result in suspension or termination of enrollment. No credit is provided for absences. Withdrawal from the program or reduction in enrollment requires written notice submitted to the preschool director. If such notice is provided with fewer than seven (7) business days remaining in the current month, the family remains financially responsible for one full month of tuition.

Health and Safety

Immunizations

All immunizations required by the State of Missouri must be completed before attending preschool. Verification forms must be submitted to the director prior to the first day of school. Families may refer to the Missouri Department of Health website for details.

Medications

Medications may be administered by school personnel at the discretion of the preschool only if a signed Medication Request Form is on file from both the parent/guardian and the child's doctor. All medications must be hand-delivered in the original container and must be clearly labeled with the child's name and dosage instructions. Medications must be current and not expired. The preschool reserves the right to refuse to administer any medication that does not meet these requirements.

Illness

Children who are sick should remain at home to prevent the spread of illness. Children may return only after being fever- and symptom-free for at least 24 hours without medication and after at least 24 hours on prescribed antibiotics if applicable. If a child becomes ill at school, staff will contact parents to arrange pick-up if necessary.

Allergies

Parents must notify teachers of food allergies and provide a doctor's note. Allergy information must be updated annually or immediately if a child develops a new allergy or has a change in severity. The school's peanut/tree nut policy is reviewed annually based on classroom needs.

Emergencies

Staff takes all reasonable precautions to ensure safety. In the event of an accident, first aid will be administered and parents/guardians contacted immediately. If parents cannot be reached, designated emergency contacts will be called. Children participate in regular fire and disaster drills.

Weather-Related Closings

Emergency school closings will be communicated via the See Saw app and parent email. Parents are responsible for monitoring these communications. Preschool may be canceled in advance due to deteriorating weather based on safety considerations. Once school is in session, it will not close early, though parents may choose to pick up children early.

Daily Logistics

Clothing

Children should wear clothes appropriate for active play and clothing they can manage independently. Tennis shoes are recommended for safety. Seasonal outerwear and a change of clothes are required for outdoor play and accidental spills. All items should be clearly labeled with the child's name and placed in a gallon Ziplock bag inside their backpack. The school is not responsible for lost, damaged, or soiled clothing.

Arrival and Pick-Up

Preschool opens at 7:30 a.m. for Before Care and 8:00 a.m. for regular arrival. Full-day programs end at 3:00 p.m., after which After Care begins and continues until 4:30 p.m.

Children may only be released to designated adults with written permission and photo ID. Late pick-ups are subject to a fee of \$10 per ten minutes, payable by the parent/guardian.

Lunch and Snacks

Children provide their own snacks, lunch, and water bottles. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing foods that are safe for their child's dietary needs. Staff encourage independence and healthy choices during meal times, but are not responsible for monitoring portion sizes or ensuring that children consume all provided food.

VIP Readers

Family members and loved ones are welcome to read in classrooms after completing the required background check paperwork with the Preschool Director. All visitors must be supervised by school staff at all times and follow all school policies. The school reserves the right to deny access to any visitor for safety reasons.

Parent-Teacher Communication

Open communication between home and school is encouraged. One parent-teacher conference is scheduled each year, with additional conferences available as needed.

Public Relations and Photography

Digital photos of children at play may be used in newsletters, bulletin boards, brochures, or on the church website and Facebook page, only with signed parental/guardian consent. No photographs will be sold. Parents/guardians may request that their child's photos be excluded or removed at any time.

Notice of Non-Discrimination Policy

Chapel of the Cross Lutheran Preschool admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, or religion in the administration of our educational or admission policies.

Handbook Disclaimer

The information contained in this handbook is subject to change at the discretion of COTC Preschool. Policies and procedures may be modified or discontinued at any time. This handbook is provided for informational purposes only and does not create, nor is it

intended to create, a contractual agreement between the preschool and any parent or guardian. COTC Lutheran preschool reserves the right to interpret and apply its policies and make decisions in the best interest of the program and the children it serves.