

EDUCATION MINISTRIES

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“In all things, give thanks.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Some of the most important skills that we target in preschool are those related to social-emotional growth. These skills include things such as how to manage emotions, form relationships, establish goals, maintain a strong sense of self, and learn empathy for others. Social-emotional skill development has been shown to directly correlate to academic success later in school.

Learning how to use manners in our daily interactions is an important social-emotional skill. With that in mind, throughout the preschool, teachers specifically focus on one specific manner/etiquette topic each month. For October, our staff are intensifying their teaching of the usage of ‘please’ and ‘thank you’. As you might imagine, young children become quite familiar with these words very early. As teachers, we not only teach the meanings and when to use these words, but we try to continually provide models for our students. When children see our example, they are more likely to copy and practice it. If we are true followers of Christ, then we strive to be good people who respect others enough to make requests kindly and also then be appreciative when someone reciprocates that kindness.

I certainly have many reasons to often say ‘thank you’. God blesses me each day with opportunities for which I am thankful. Most recently, an ongoing proj-

ect to update our playgrounds has come together. We had previously developed a 5-year plan to renovate our playgrounds. Since we have both a 2-year old and 3-5-year old playground, you might wonder if we were being overly optimistic in our plan. Due to the abundant generosity of our families, we were, however, able to start a designated savings account with proceeds raised, for the past two years, from our annual fundraiser, the Harvest Moon Festival. We have also been the lucky recipients of a charitable grant from the O’Shaughnessy Foundation for two consecutive years. To date, we have been able to raise \$61,000 of the estimated \$175,000 that would have been needed to completely re-do our playgrounds. To our families, both past and present, and to the family who nominated us for the grant, I shout a big and heartfelt “THANK YOU”!

Finally, it is with overwhelming enthusiasm and elation that I say “THANK YOU” to a parish family who has very generously agreed to donate the remaining money for our playground remodel! This will allow us to complete the renovations all at once and make it possible to install new poured rubber surfacing for both playgrounds. We will also be able to include other equipment options that will allow children of all abilities to enjoy the playground. This family has children who attended our preschool; they strongly support the wonderful program that we

have here and wanted to increase what we can offer. This donor family saw the opportunity to enable us to reach our goal faster than we would have ever been able to do. Needless to say, their kindness and charity are incredible, but what is even more astounding is that they give this gift humbly and quietly with the only thanks being the knowledge that they are able to enhance the experience of future generations who will attend our preschool. Although money has been transferred and manufacturing is set to begin, I still am in a state of disbelief; I continue to grapple with searching for a word more intense than ‘thank you’! I have come to the conclusion that there are no real words. The best that I will be able to do is to continue my prayer of thanksgiving to God for this unexpectedly generous contribution and for all of the blessings that have come to preschool. I can also choose to continue to be steadfast in my efforts to be an example for our students of what it means to be thankful and to live as God wants us to do.

May all of us do our best to remember to thank our Lord for what He blesses us with every day!

To learn more about the wonderful opportunities that we provide, please visit our website at www.preschool@stfrancis.com or contact Shelley Freeman at: shelley.freeman@stfrancisraleigh.org