



TIDBITS



First Presbyterian Church Weekday School
May 2008

From the Director

It is hard to believe that our school year is coming to an end! It has been such a successful and happy school year, and we are so grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of your child's life this year. As the flowers have begun to bloom, we think about how much the children have blossomed at the Weekday School during the past nine months and marvel at how much growth has taken place for all of them!

It has been such a joy to see the Toddlers change from babies into "little people" and become so comfortable at school, adjust to mommy leaving them and learning to trust and love their teachers, to become aware of other children and engage in parallel play, to play on the playground, paint at the easel, draw with crayons, and to develop their language skills and begin to talk.

It has been exciting to observe the Twos become so independent and to see their individual personalities emerge, to watch them run and play fearlessly on the playground, to begin to play cooperatively with their friends, to enjoy creative art activities, to master puzzles and manipulatives, and to turn their jargon into short sentences and really begin to communicate with each other.

It has been wonderful to see the Threes become so self-reliant and develop many self-help skills, to share ideas and form friendships with their peers, to get involved in imaginary play, to talk in long sentences and express themselves so well, to learn so many songs and enjoy dancing and motions to music, to become creative in their art, to master difficult puzzles and challenging manipulatives, and to fully enjoy their time on the playground, learning to climb structures and pump the swings and run and chase.

It has been a year of amazing growth for the children in the Fours and TK classes as they have developed strong friendships, used their endless imaginations to play together, and enjoyed numerous play dates with their friends. They have impressed us with their language skills as they tell long stories and describe everything in great detail, create beautiful art work, write their names and expand their literacy skills, build elaborate structures and master challenging manipulatives and 48-piece puzzles. They love playground time when they play with such intensity and imagination, zoom across the monkey bars and pump the swings to the sky. They have acquired wings to soar them to new heights!

Not only have your children grown and learned so much this year, but they have given so much to each of us who work at the Weekday School. They have showered us with love and affection, amazed us with their insights, confronted us with their honesty, challenged us with their intelligence and abilities, delighted us with their humor, funny expressions, and hilarious antics. They have inspired us with their enthusiasm and taught us to appreciate the little things in life and to appreciate the importance of the present moment. We witness every day how true it is that children learn so much through play and how much work is involved in their play. And we know how important it is to celebrate each child for who they are today, not who they will be someday. We will truly cherish the memories of each child who has touched our lives, and we are grateful that we have had the opportunity to share in their growth and development this year.

~Janis

Thank you:

Teacher Appreciation: Big thanks to those parents who sent in special treats for our April and May Staff meetings, and to Jack's Mom, Marty Griffin and her troupe of helpers who sent all the teachers and staff home with beautiful Mother's Day bouquets. The children arrived at school smiling with their flowers, and the bouquets were special Mother's Day gifts for us!

To the Parents: Thank you for making our school so special by serving as substitute teachers and carpool helpers, by volunteering for field trips and school-wide special events, by showing your appreciation of the teachers in so many lovely ways, for being so patient during our carpool time. We are grateful for the many ways you have supported our school this year!

To the church: Thank you for enabling our school to run so smoothly by providing administrative assistance, custodial help, cleaning service, and financial support and recognizing the importance of preschool education.

To the teachers: The children have been so blessed by the loving, nurturing care of their teachers, by the thoughtful, creative planning done each day for the classes, by the enthusiasm and dedication that the teachers display in their work. Each child has a place in their hearts, and the children know how much they are valued by these special adults in their lives.

How To Raise A Happy Child

Every parent wants their child to be happy, but how to give your child the gift of lasting happiness is the question. One of our WDS parents recently shared an article with us on this topic, which lists five steps to "lifelong joy" for your child:

1. Connection and relationships are the key to a happy childhood. Connection, in the form of unconditional love, helps to foster self-confidence. Relationships with adults, as well as friendships with peers, builds a foundation for happiness.
2. Foster a "can-do" attitude that helps children learn to deal with disappointment, defeat, rejection, and pain. A child learns from the important adults in their lives how to handle these situations and can learn that "you never give up when the going gets tough."
3. Play is the most important "work" your child can do because play is the time children engage fully with what they are doing. Unstructured play develops imagination, teaches problem-solving skills, and strengthens social skills. Structured play, provided by teachers and coaches, allows children to practice skills and learn how to receive help.
4. Create opportunities for mastery through age-appropriate activities and expectations. Each time a child masters a skill, the thrill of accomplishment builds confidence, leadership qualities, initiative, and a strong work ethic. Success builds on success and boosts self-esteem. It is not praise that builds self-esteem, but mastery.
5. Provide recognition so that a child feels valued by others, both family and friends. Feeling valued by others means so much and builds self-esteem.

A happy person has a general feeling that life is going well and feels connected to others. Happiness is the capacity to enjoy what you have, rather than always wanting what you don't have. You can't buy happiness – it is learned and earned!

Notes and Reminders

Parent Surveys: Thanks to so many of you for completing and returning your survey. If you have not yet returned yours, there is still time to do so. We value your feedback, and your candid responses help us to become a better school each year. Thank you for the many kind remarks you have made in your surveys and for the helpful suggestions you have included.

Uptown Fun: There are spaces available in both weeks, and you may still register. Call if you need a new form. The weeks are July 21-25 and July 28-Aug. 1.

Lost and Found: We have a large Lost and Found bin in the 1st floor elevator hallway. Please check it for any items you may be missing.

FOB return: Families not returning to the WDS next year must return their FOB to the church. You will be charged \$20 if it is not returned. Thank you for your help.

June 1 Reminder: All forms (except the medical form) for the next school year are due at the WDS by June 1. A payment for September's tuition is also due on June 1. You will receive another packet of information in late July regarding beginning of school details.

Bank Draft Option: You can still sign up for Bank Drafting for your tuition payments due October-April. Contact Madeline for more information. Remember, activity fees are not drafted and are due in September.

Summer Hours for WDS: While the classrooms will be quiet much of the summer, Janis and Madeline will be busy at the school. So do not hesitate to contact us if you need something. Please inform us of any address and phone number changes that occur over the summer. Our Parent Handbook will be printed at the end of August, and we want everyone's information in that book to be up-to-date. You may call the main school number any time, and your phone message will be returned promptly. You may also e-mail either Janis or Madeline: jrikard@firstpres-charlotte.org or mdrake@firstpres-charlotte.org

The last Day of School is Thursday May 29. Please note there is a 12:00 dismissal time on this day to allow the teachers extra time for end of the year jobs. We appreciate you adjusting your schedules .

Need an extra hand this summer? We have started a list of teachers (and teachers' teenagers) who will be available this summer for babysitting. Please email Madeline to request one and she will email it to you.

Special Events At The Weekday School

Springtime has been full of special events at our school:

Our 4s and TK children were spectacular in their musical performance, "Make A Joyful Noise", presented to their parents in the sanctuary on April 18. And...our 3s children were amazing as they sang their hearts out for their parents in "A Gift of Music" in the Fellowship Hall on May 9. After both programs, the parents and children enjoyed a wonderful luncheon together in the Fellowship Hall. Thanks to Libby Bell and her committee for coordinating the 4s/TK event and to Jane Hunter and her volunteers for coordinating the 3s event. Also, our second annual "Field Day" on May 6 was a huge success! All of the 4s and TK classes had a fabulous time participating in games and eating popsicles on the front lawn. Thanks to Martha Mallory and the parent volunteers for making it a memorable event!

Don't forget...The children in the 4s and TK classes will have their end-of-school picnic with their families on the front lawn of the church on Saturday, May 31. This event is always one of the highlights of our year and is so much fun for the whole family. The front lawn is turned into a carnival with an inflatable jump castle, inflatable 18' slide, obstacle course, and sno cones, with other games as well. Enjoy fried chicken from The Chicken Box, or bring your own picnic. Please RSVP by Tuesday, May 27.

Please update your WDS Parent Handbook by making these changes and additions to the following:



Have a safe and fun
summer!!

