



Church ^{of the} Redeemer

PARISH DAY SCHOOL

Dear Redeemer Community,

After a sudden school shutdown last March, on Wednesday, September 2 Redeemer Parish Day School opened its doors for the 69th year to begin a new program year. Our 80 families, 112 students ages 2 through 6, and 17 faculty members are experiencing what is likely the most gratifying back to school period in our history.

While we recognize that opening school amid COVID-19 presents risk, journalist Christine VanDeVelde's recent article in the Wall Street Journal profoundly resonated with us. She argues that "In the contentious debate over opening schools, there is almost no mention of the youngest learners—children 2 to 5, who attend day care, nursery schools or prekindergarten programs. That's a terrible omission. What those children need to accomplish can't be done in isolation or in front of a laptop, and it has to be done during a brief developmental window that closes around age 5 and never opens again... When children play together, they practice life and become at home in the physical and social world. When they organize a game of "cheetahs in the jungle" or haggle over how to share a wheelbarrow, they are learning to take turns, follow rules, communicate and persuade peers in the face of conflict. These skills can't be taught. They are learned through concrete interaction with peers, not siblings and not parents...A child's most important educational experience occurs before age 6. By that age, 90% of brain development will have occurred."

Preschool is a time of explosive growth, making our work at the Parish Day School crucial. Our dedicated and experienced group of educators, facilities designed for young learners, and acres of outdoor learning and play space have been pivotal to our reopening and to continuing our mission to foster the healthy growth and development of the whole child, while cultivating awareness and sensitivity towards others through personal interactions. Preschool strengthens a child's growing independence and confidence, providing an engaging experience where children develop a deep love for learning. COVID-19 or not, our young learners thrive in an environment like ours. After months of planning and restructuring our program due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the students and teachers are doing an incredible job adapting to new routines and procedures, while embracing the laughter, joy, and busyness of preschool. In so many ways, PDS has never been stronger or better.

We continue to be thankful to our parents for all they are doing to support our work at PDS. While we recognize the future remains uncertain, for now, we are grateful for the days we are spending together in school. Mr. Vu, a member of our facilities' team, summed it up best when he looked around at the children and teachers playing and learning outside and declared, "This is lovely!"

Mary Knott
Redeemer Parish Day School Director