



Saint Agnes School 530 Lafond Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55103



Friday, May 8, 2020
Easter Season

Dear Preschool families,

I have a very important update for you regarding our Preschool programming. As you are well aware, this current economic crisis has caused many businesses and organizations to review their operations, and this includes Catholic schools.

As we've been planning for school this fall of 2020, we've been evaluating our Preschool programming and model. **We have concluded that we will be transitioning the model of our Preschool's academic program from the Montessori approach to a more traditional preschool model for this coming fall 2020.**

We have made this decision based on a number of factors:

- Admissions: interest and growth of the preschool these past two years;
- Difficulty in identifying clear academic outcomes within Montessori for transitioning to our K-6 grades;
- Challenges in implementing the Montessori philosophy of freedom and discipline;
- Incongruencies with the three-year cycle of Montessori and transitions from Montessori directly into our 1st grade (rather than Kindergarten);
- Various logistical and practical requirements necessary for a Montessori to be more successful.

In addition, we were surprised by the results of the survey administered by Admissions on the preschool in January. Of the respondents (both current and prospective families), we were surprised to learn:

- The vast majority of families chose our preschool primarily due to an interest in our K-12 programming;
- While about half of respondents appreciate the Montessori model (a few very much so), others either did not understand well Montessori or were skeptical of the model's effectiveness;
- A small number of families indicated that they would not attend or recommend our preschool in its current status as Montessori.

Given the practical concerns we've identified and supported by feedback from our current and prospective families, we've decided to make this change and adopt the "Faithful Beginnings" model for our Catholic Preschool. Faithful Beginnings is a more traditional and direct instructional approach to preschool while also incorporating elements of the Montessori method. You can learn more here:

<https://faithful-beginnings.org/>

I want to be clear in that it was unanimous that everyone loves Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and that CGS will continue in Preschool and in grades K-2 at Saint Agnes. There has been no plan

to adjust CGS and we're continuing our plan to expand it into 2nd grade this fall for First Communion preparation.

While we are disappointed with need to change the model, we are excited about the initial response internally as we've discussed it with a handful of faculty members and families. We believe this is in the best interests of our Preschool students and will serve our particular community well and provide a more effective transition to our Kindergarten programming.

Finally, we understand that this may impact some families' enrollment for this coming school year, and we invite you to contact me and Mr. Joseph Olson with your questions and concerns. Please feel free to reach out at any time. **I'd also like to note that Ms. Boris, who's done a wonderful job and worked so hard for your children, will continue to support our current preschoolers with distance learning through the end of this school year.**

Thank you for taking the time to read this message. We look forward to continuing to serve you and your children at Saint Agnes' Preschool.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Adkins". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" written in a larger, more prominent hand than the last name "Adkins".

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