

Holy Name of Jesus LITTLE SPARKS preschool

A CATHOLIC PRESCHOOL PROGRAM FOR 3 TO 5 YEAR OLDS
155 COUNTY ROAD 24 WAYZATA, MN 55391

MIKE MOCH, PRINCIPAL

SUMMARY

Holy Name of Jesus School is currently a K-6 elementary school serving 350 students in Wayzata, MN. In an effort to further the mission of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, it is the wish of the school to develop a preschool to serve children ages 3-5 years old. As the school mission states we wish to provide academic excellence while proclaiming, celebrating and living the gospel of Jesus Christ. In an effort to further evangelize young families to our Catholic faith we believe it is important to offer a program that teaches children to know the heart of Christ, see the face of Christ and be the hands of Christ. A Catholic preschool is the much like Sunday School offered at Holy Name. The program includes Christ centered activities and a academic foundation for the future of our children.

GOALS

- Gain parish approval
- Develop Initial Program Cost Budget
- Apply for Program Cost Grant
- Seek state approval for licensing
- Market program offerings
- Staff program

RESULTS

As a result of the project, approval for the preschool was obtained through the parish. The following funding model is what will be used to begin the overall process. The program will begin Fall 2011 with 20 preschool students. A preschool committee has been formed to help develop and build the program in collaboration with the preschool lead teacher.

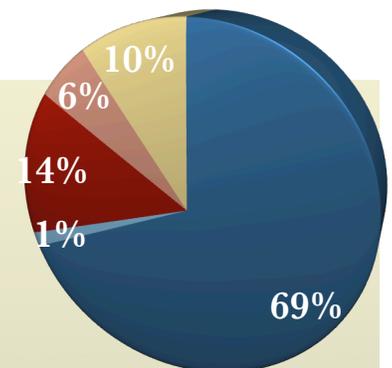
Initial Program Costs

How will the program be funded?

It is the goal of the school to use New Generation funds to help with the start up costs of the program. The proposal contains costs including space adjustments, storage, classroom

materials, and initial staffing costs totaling \$36,000.

- \$25,000 playground
- \$500 licensing fee
- \$5,000 furnishings/curriculum
- \$2,000 program equipment
- \$3,500 staffing



Description of the project focus

Holy Name of Jesus School currently is a school serving students in grades Kindergarten through 6th grade. As a new administrator to the school it was brought to my attention the need to begin a preschool. The preschool concept had been addressed prior in 2006. According to the findings the parish and school did not have the resources or space to provide the program. During the 2010-2011 school year as part of my Van Lunen program, it was my goal to research and explore the obstacles that prevented the program from becoming a reality.

In an effort to further the mission of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, the school chose to explore the potential to develop a preschool to serve children ages 3-5 years old. As the school mission states we wish to provide academic excellence while proclaiming, celebrating and living the gospel of Jesus Christ. In an effort to further evangelize young families to our Catholic faith we believe it is important to offer a program that teaches children to know the heart of Christ, see the face of Christ and be the hands of Christ. The program includes Christ centered activities and an academic foundation for the future of our children.

Description of the method/process by which the project was completed

There were several factors that were included in the process of developing the preschool program for Holy Name of Jesus School (see attached timeline).

- The first step in the process was to gain feedback and buy-in from our current families. As part of this method, our 250 families were surveyed. Of those surveyed (a 94% response rate) 85% would attend the preschool program. The positive results prompted continued research into available space in the church for the preschool program to be housed.
- The research of space started with a current nursery area that is utilized throughout the week and weekends. The attendance levels were considerable low at this point so the proposal included using the current nursery space as home for the preschool. Time was also allocated to research preschools being offered throughout the area, including pricing, program offerings and enrollment. It was determined based on demographic findings that the number of children vs. the number of offerings was greater therefore an additional preschool presented a need for the community as a whole.
- As part of MN Rule 3 (preschool licensing) the space requirements include specific dimensions to serve students. As part of the process I began researching licensing qualifications. The qualifications indicated that the room could serve up to 20 students at one time.
- The next step was to develop a presentation to present to parish staff. As a parish, the staff has seen changes in the past few years. The staff has been open to exploring new ideas and believes in the positive growth of both the parish and school. After presenting the information, I worked with individuals to secure additional space for the current nursery. Overall, the parish staff approved of the addition on certain terms in order to continue to serve all populations of the parish.
- Upon staff approval the fine details began to take place. As part of the initial process, there was a need to develop start up programming costs. The costs include: licensing, space upgrades, furniture, program materials and a new fenced in playground. The program costs were developed and the proposal of funds was drafted.

- In order to gain approval for a large project such as this, the parish council must hear, discern and decide on the outcome. The parish council was presented with the information and unanimously decided upon the approval of the project.
- Once the approval of the project was received, the necessity to secure funding was explored. As a large parish, we are fortunate to have additional funds available for the use of projects and start up costs. A grant proposal was drafted through the New Generation of Ministry Fund. As part of the fund, the program was approved for \$31,500 to support initial start up costs.
- The process of marketing and promoting the program began with the developing a preschool committee of current parents and a teacher. The committee contained stakeholders who have an interest in preschool and a teacher who worked as part of preschool for several years. During this time the group promoted the program to current families, shared information after Mass times and produced a mailing to the greater community.
- During the process of marketing the preschool committee developed an interview panel and promoted the program position. The position would include a lead teacher. The interview process took place to secure the position.

Project results

As a result of the project all timeline requirements were met, and the Little Sparks Preschool program will begin in Fall 2011. From this point the major areas of the project that will be completed are:

- the renovation of the space: new carpet, tile, tables, shelving and materials are now ordered to be installed prior to July 11.
- the playground structure being built. The committee has spent time with two different contractors exploring best choices to engage and stimulate children ages 3-5 years old.
- licensing complete. Licensing includes room inspections, materials dimensions and specific criteria to meet the needs of students ages 3-5 years old.
- It continues to be our goal to market and further develop the program. The program will hold an Open House to meet the new teacher and share the new space on Monday, July 11. As a result we hope to gain more students (at least 20) to begin the school year. Our program offerings include only half days for students, which is somewhat of an inhibitor for dual income families. We are working to explore this need in the future.

Analysis and Commentary on What Was Learned

This process has been exciting and invigorating. First, knowing that the need for a preschool has been long awaited for the benefit of the whole community is inspiring to work hard and learn a great deal about the needs of our children. Second, the idea of starting something completely from scratch was and is nerve racking. The entire community has supported the cause, including the parish, which has made it easier and more fun to pursue. The areas that I have gained most in include:

- Developing a program budget from its inception
- Learning the rules and regulations of preschool programs required by the state of Minnesota
- Understanding play structures and their pros and cons
- Determining the best candidates to help to build a start up program
- Marketing to a specific audience in order to gain momentum for the future

Holy Name of Jesus Little Sparks Preschool Timeline

**** specific areas of need from the committee**

February 2011	
Contact licensing division to request information to be sent to HNOJ to determine specific criteria for licensed preschool	February 4
Research area preschools including St. Bart's, Son Shine Corner, Wayzata Community Church, Step by Step Montessori, Goddard, Primrose to explore viable program options for our considered space **	February 7-11
Compile findings of area preschools, along with specifics regarding licensure. Compile initial start up costs including equipment, licensing and summer lead teacher. Meet with appropriate HNOJ staff that currently use the proposed preschool space to confirm the attendance and use	February 14
SMAC meeting- discuss above progress and gather final input for presentation to Parish Leadership (Director's meeting) **	February 17
Create presentation to present at Director's meeting (Fr. Tim encourages the need for a preschool, background of preschools, the benefits of having programs as part of parish communities- gain approval to pursue fall programming) the presentation will include a draft to use New Generation Ministry funds to help off-set initial start up and summer/fall salary costs/marketing/preschool playground equipment, etc Include first year draft budget including equipment, supplies, salaries and projected enrollment revenue and costs	February 24- 1 pm Director's Meeting
March 2011	
Upon approval, introduce the concept of preschool to school families via Thursday folder insert. Propose a focus group (potential families to consider preschool) to gain insight on specific programming needs and potential scheduling options.	March 3
Focus group meeting- March 15 @ 7 pm Gain necessary feedback and additional supporters Use specific information to help develop Lead Teacher/Director qualifications for the program **	March 15
Prepare focus group findings and overall presentation materials for SMAC/Parish Council Presentation	March 16-18

Present proposal for approval at SMAC/Parish Council Meeting **	March 24
Upon final approval post Lead Teacher/Director position to begin the process of finding a quality staff member to promote and recruit this program	March 28
April 2011	
Create enrollment packets including preschool offerings	April 1
Advertise the new and exciting program to our current families and broader community- offer the opportunity to honor registration fees that were submitted to other preschools **	April 1- 29
Form search/interview committee review and select candidates **	April 11- 22
Select lead teacher/director	April 25
May 2011	
Training of new lead teacher/director	May 2-13
Begin licensing process/continued recruiting/space enhancements including ordering of new equipment	May 16-June 3
Offer several open house opportunities throughout May to encourage transfers and undecided families	May 16-June 3
June/July 2011	
Develop curriculum/recruit/complete licensing requirements	June-July
Continue open house opportunities- offer short summer school classes with topics to encourage interest in the fall programs	July
August 2011	
Final recruitment- plan for final phase of opening/confirm licensure	
September 2011	
Open new preschool!	September 8