



Good Shepherd Preschool

Home + School Connection

A Monthly Newsletter for Families

16420 S. Westland Dr., Gaithersburg, MD 20877 | 301-963-1955 | gspreschool@outlook.com | gslp-gaithersburg.org

Dec. 2014

Dates to Remember



Christmas Family Chapels:

Tues., Dec. 16 at 11:30 (Note change: Classes 2G, 2P & 9) and 12:45 (Classes 3, 6, & 8)

Wed., Dec. 17 at 10 (Classes 4, 5, & 7)

Raising Children of Faith Workshop:

Wed., Dec. 3 at 9:40 in Room 200

Family Storytime:

Wed., Dec. 10 at 9:30 in Room 200

Staff Meeting:

Wed., Dec. 10. Classes 5 & 7 end at 12; Class 8 and LPE do not meet.

Class Christmas Parties:

Thurs., Dec. 18, and Fri., Dec. 19

Winter Break (GSLP Closed):

Mon., Dec. 22, to Fri., Jan. 2. GSLP reopens Jan. 5.



Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow! Mrs. Parrales's three dipped pine cones in green paint and then dusted them with white glitter to create this wintry forest of pine trees tucked amid cotton-ball snow drifts.

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Monthly Must-Reads



Need to get Christmas shopping done? Check out Parents' Night Out (p. 2). Looking for a Christmas service to attend? See p. 2. Find more info about a great community event that Good Shepherd participates in, Living Nativity, on p. 3. Don't forget to invite your friends to GSLP's family storytime on Dec. 10 (p. 3)! Merry Christmas!

A mission of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (goserve.net).



Learn About Raising Children of Faith

Advent started this past Sunday, the season during which we prepare ourselves to welcome the Baby Jesus at Christmas. This time of reflection may prompt us to reflect on how we are helping our children learn to receive Jesus into their own lives.

Jennifer Coxson, the preschool's Administrative Director, and Frances Foltz, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church's Christian Education Director and leader of our Sunday School and Vacation Bible School programs, will lead this month's workshop for families, **Raising Children of Faith**.

Both mothers of three, these women will discuss their own experiences raising children to embrace Christianity and offer tips and techniques for building your own children's faith during this holiday season and all year long. They will talk about presenting the Gospel in a child-friendly fashion; ways to make church attendance easier for young kids; and toys, videos, and books that encourage faith development. They'll also discuss how to talk about faith with your child.

This workshop will welcome families of all faiths and provide information useful for families of all Christian denominations. It's also a great opportunity to have any questions you have about our church's Sunday School or Vacation Bible School programs answered.

Raising Children of Faith will be offered on **Wednesday, December 3, at 9:40 AM in Room 200**. For Tuesday/Thursday and afternoon class families, bring the kids along with you to the workshop to join in the fun! We'll provide plenty of toys and books to keep young kids occupied.



Good to Know!

Insider Information for GSLP Families

* Just a Reminder! * Our Snow Days Policy *

If Montgomery County Public Schools **close** due to emergency weather conditions, GSLP closes. If MCPS has a **delayed opening**, GSLP opens at 10:30. Afternoon classes meet as usual. Dismissal is unchanged. If MCPS **closes early**, GSLP closes at 12 p.m. Afternoon classes and Lunch Plus Enrichment do not meet.

Check montgomeryschoolmd.org/emergency or local news sources for closure information. GSLP also posts closure information on its website at www.gslp-gaithersburg.org.

Preschool Family Movie Night!

Join us on Friday, December 5, for this **FREE** event! See *How to Train Your Dragon 2* or *The Giver* and enjoy toys such as dinosaurs and construction sets.

6 PM – Pizza dinner in the Lobby (bring a side/dessert)

6:30 PM – Movies in Shepherd's Hall and Sanctuary

RSVP to gspschool@outlook.com!

Book Nook!

Check out these classroom favorites:

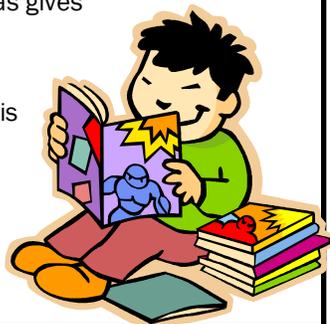
This Is the Star: This book, filled with lovely illustrations, retells the story of the first Christmas through rhyming, repetitive text that children will enjoy reciting right along with you.

The Little Drummer Boy: Ezra Jack Keats, best known for his Caldecott-winning book *The Snowy Day*, illustrates this classic carol about a little boy at the first Christmas.

K is for Kwanzaa: A Kwanzaa Alphabet Book: Celebrate African heritage with this book featuring Kwanzaa traditions and facts from A to Z.

Country Angel Christmas: This story, featuring a group of Country Angels tasked with coordinating Heaven's celebration of Christmas, focuses on three little angels who keep getting pushed aside for getting in the way of the preparations until St. Nicholas gives them a very special job. Young children will relate to this tale.

The Legend of the Poinsettia: This retelling of a Mexican legend features a girl who brings a humble gift to her church's Baby Jesus that turns into something very special.



Angel, Angel, What Chapels You Will See!

We invite families and friends to come see the children act out the story of Jesus' birth at our **Christmas Chapels** on Tues., Dec. 16, and Wed., Dec. 17, in the sanctuary.

Every student has a role, dressing up to play anything from spotted cows and wooly sheep to Mary and Joseph themselves. Don't forget your camera! The children will be busily practicing their holiday songs all month long.

We will offer an informal reception in the lobby outside the sanctuary before each performance to provide time to share holiday greetings with fellow GSLP families and to plan get-togethers for winter break. Merry Christmas!



Celebrate Christmas with Good Shepherd!

Good Shepherd Church will offer a **family-friendly Christmas Eve pageant and service at 5 PM on Dec. 24** in the church sanctuary. Children from preschool through grade 5 will be singing carols to welcome Baby Jesus!

Good Shepherd will also offer a **contemporary service at 7; a music-filled traditional service at 9; and a candlelight service at 11 on Dec. 24**. The church will also offer a **10 AM Christmas carol sing-along service on Dec. 25**. All Good Shepherd Preschool families are invited to attend these joyous celebrations. We hope to see you there!



Parents' Night Out on Sat., Dec. 13, 4-9 PM

Need to do a little Christmas shopping? Good Shepherd Church Youth are volunteering to watch children right here in our fellowship hall on **Sat., Dec. 13, from 4 to 9 PM**. Free will donations support GSLC Youth activities.

We Give Thanks

Say Grace to Recall God's Love this Holiday Season

GSLP kids say grace each day before enjoying their snacks or lunches. Pre-K children learn a new prayer each month, and even our youngest kids learn a simple table grace they may be able to share with you. Here are a few before-meal prayers children learn here at GSLP. Don't forget to end each one with a rousing "Amen!"

*Thank you for the world so sweet. Thank you for the food we eat.
Thank you for the birds that sing. Thank you, God, for everything.*

*Blessings on the leaves and stems, blessings on the root,
Blessings on the blossoms, blessings on the fruit!*

*A B C D E F G,
Thank you God for feeding me!*

Thank you, Jesus, for food and friends.

*We love our bread, we love our butter,
But most of all, we love each other.*

*Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest
And let these gifts to us be blessed.*

*For all food yummy, that fills my tummy,
Thank you, God!*



Thank You for Your Thanksgiving Food Donations



Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Thanksgiving Food Drive. We are always overjoyed to see the generosity of GSLP families at the holidays and throughout the year. The many people who rely on St. Martin's Food Pantry could enjoy a warming Thanksgiving dinner with their families they may not have had otherwise thanks to your giving

hearts. May God keep you in his heart this holiday season!

Community Corner

Creativity Bags Drive in December

GSLP will continue its mission of community outreach this month by collecting colored pencils, paper, kids' scissors, play dough, and more to fill Creativity Bags. GSLP will then give a bag to each child served by the Judy Center. The Judy Center helps almost 100 at-risk children under age 5 get ready for school.

Include your child in the selection of items for the gift bags as much as possible. The Creativity Bags drive is a great opportunity for teaching that giving can be as much fun as receiving during the holiday season.

Please put donations in the boxes located outside classrooms. All items should be new, unwrapped, and in original packaging.

Teachers encourage participation in our outreach programs. Consider making a donation to the Judy Center children in your teacher's honor this year in lieu of sending in a holiday gift. It will be much appreciated!

Visit Bethlehem at Living Nativity

Experience the first Christmas with your family at the Living Nativity, a program put on by the churches along Rt. 355, including Good Shepherd. The program, featuring songs and live animals, runs on Dec. 19 and 20, 6-8:30 PM, and Dec. 21, 2:30-5 PM, at 200 S. Frederick Ave. and Desellum Ave., across from St. Martin of Tours Church. Donations will benefit Gaithersburg HELP.

Family Storytime

Wednesday, December 10
9:30-10:30 AM
Rm. 204/206

Come join us for playtime, songs, and puppets! Parents (or grandparents) and children age 1 to 5 can come together to enjoy this family event.



It's a Beautiful Day in this Neighborhood: Mrs. Munzer's pre-K class learned about communities in November. To show what they learned, they created a community map featuring signs, roads, landmarks, and community buildings such as the library.



O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, How Lovely Are Your Branches: Mrs. Cunningham's class decked out pinecones with sparkly glitter.

Firefighters Teach Children Fire Safety

Big red trucks and excited kids in the GSLP parking lot can only mean it's firefighter visit time again!

The Gaithersburg-Washington Grove Volunteer Fire Department brought their rescue vehicles to school on Nov. 10 and 11 this year. Classes enjoyed a visit with the firefighters, who showed and explained the purpose for all their protective gear to the kids. One firefighter demonstrated how he suited up to go into a burning building, assuring the kids that he was the same friendly person even when covered up by a heavy coat and breathing mask. Kids also got the chance to tour the fire rescue vehicles and learn about some of the many tools these trucks carry.

Students also received some basic instruction in fire safety during the visit. Here's a few tips to reinforce at home:

- In case of a fire, kids should get out of the house and meet their parents at a pre-planned location.
- If kids can't get out, they should close the door and stay low.
- Kids should never hide from rescuers, even if they look scary in their heavy gear and masks.
- If kids' clothes catch on fire, they should stop, drop, and roll to smother the flames.
- Always call 911 from the safety of a neighbor's home.

Now's a great time to create a fire-safety plan for your own family!

Simple Sunflower Butter Cookies for Christmas

You can substitute peanut butter if allergies aren't a concern.

- 1 c. sunflower seed butter
- 1 c. granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Mix the sunflower seed butter, sugar, egg, and vanilla until smooth. Drop spoonfuls of dough onto parchment-lined baking sheets. Bake at 325 degrees for 10 to 15 minutes.



Perishables FAQ

GSLP follows licensing regulations on packaging perishable foods for school lunches. Read about the rules below and email gspschool@outlook.com if you have more questions!

What are perishable foods?

Perishable foods are those lunchbox items that you would keep in the fridge at home. Examples include meat, fish, chicken, tofu, eggs, cheese, yogurt, leftovers, rice, pasta, pizza, salads, and sliced fruits and veggies. The basic rule of thumb is, if you would keep it in cold storage to prevent spoilage, it's perishable.

How should I pack perishables?

Please put all perishable foods together in a zip-top bag or plastic tub labeled with your child's name. Place this bag in your child's lunchbox, which should also be clearly labeled with your child's name so that teachers can match perishable food to boxes at lunchtime.

What does GSLP with my child's perishable foods?

All perishable foods will be placed in a class bin. The filled bin will then go in the school refrigerator until lunchtime. Then, teachers will retrieve the safely chilled items and return them to children's lunchboxes.

I always use an insulated lunch bag and a cold pack for my child's lunch. Do I still have to pack perishables in a special container?

Yes! All perishable foods must be in a separate, labeled bag or container, even if you continue to include a cold pack to keep other items (such as shelf-stable organic milk or applesauce) cool.

Why did GSLP institute this lunch policy?

The MSDE Office of Child Care, which licenses preschool programs throughout the state, requires us to refrigerate perishable items in children's lunches. We are required to follow OCC rules in order to remain a licensed program. OCC rules are created to help ensure your child's health and safety at school.

Panera Bread Gift Vouchers

Just
\$10!



Save
44%

Stop by the office to buy
DOUGH FOR FUNDS STRIPS
for the holidays!

Choose:

A strip of six 3-bagel vouchers - **SAVE UP TO 53 PERCENT OVER REGULAR PRICES!**

or:

A combo strip with vouchers for 1 sourdough baguette, 1 asiago cheese demi, 1 foccacia round, 3 bagels, 1 brownie slice, and 2 cookies - **SAVE UP TO 44 PERCENT OVER REGULAR PRICES!**

Dough for Funds strips are valid at all Maryland Panera Bread locations and make **GREAT HOLIDAY GIFTS** or **STOCKING STUFFERS!**

Support GSLP Scholarships!

Happy Birthday, Jesus! Get Ready to Celebrate!

Christians everywhere will prepare for the birth of Jesus throughout Advent. Good Shepherd Preschool and Church provide many opportunities for children and families to get ready for Christmas.

Each classroom has a nativity play set children can use to retell the Christmas story. Teachers will introduce new songs and fingerplays about Jesus' birth that the children will use when they dramatize the nativity story at the Christmas Chapel (see **p. 2**).

Children will read Christmas-themed books and create holiday crafts this month. Watch hallway art displays for festive new works!

Good Shepherd Church is sending home a Christmas book for each GSLP child. Read it together and use your Advent calendar or wreath to help mark down the days until we welcome Jesus.

Our church has many activities planned to help families celebrate Advent. Check the large bulletin board by Ms. Fischer's office for upcoming event notices, including the joint Living Nativity event on **Dec. 19-21** and an Advent service project and potluck for families of young children on **Dec. 7 from 4 to 6 PM**. Preschool families are warmly invited to join the larger Good Shepherd community at all church holiday activities, including Christmas Eve and Day services (see **p. 2** for more info!)



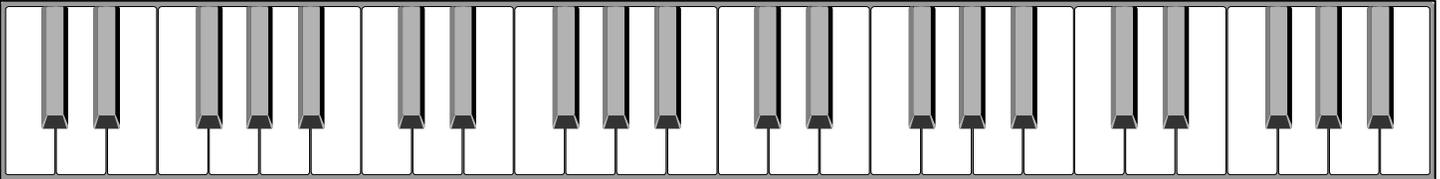
Give What's Truly Important for Christmas This Year

Before fighting your way through the holiday hordes at the big-box retailers this year, think about what you really want your child to receive this Christmas. Some of the best gifts can't be bought! MCPS's Department of Adult Education provides these hints for happy holidays:

- 1. Give your child the pleasure of giving.** Chat about those you love and care about and plan together how you might remember them at holiday time. Ask, "What does Suzie like to do?" or "What do you think would make Grandpa happy?"
- 2. Give your child a chance to create.** Help your child make simple gifts, such as a picture for Daddy or some play dough for a favorite friend. Bake cookies and deliver them to special people together.
- 3. Give your child a family tradition.** Plan a holiday activity that might become a treasured memory in later years. For example, one family designs and makes their own holiday greeting cards each year; another hosts a neighborhood International Dinner.



- 4. Give your child the joy of celebration.** Include your child in the holiday preparations, including baking, wrapping, decorating the house. Chat about what you are doing and why. Share the values symbolized by the season in simple, concrete ways.
- 5. Give your child an example of caring.** Share your holiday time, traditions, or favorite foods with someone who needs a friend.
- 6. Give your child some extra patience.** When adults are super-busy, children — feeling left out — may become super-demanding. Avoid placing unreasonable expectations on children, such as asking them to remain angelic while out shopping for hours. Resist the urge to threaten that "Santa won't come if..."
- 7. Give your child some time together.** Pause together to admire a sunset, snuggle up with a picture book, or take a walk around the block. Continue these special "time-offs" throughout the year. Your own time is the best gift of all — and it's free.



December Songs and Fingerplays for Parents

There Was a Little Baby

There was a little baby,
 Oh, my Lord, (*repeat 2 times*)
 Way down in Bethlehem (*repeat*)
vs. 2: They laid Him in a manger
vs. 3: Some shepherds came to see Him
vs. 4: Three wise men brought Him presents
vs. 5: Bright angels watchin' over
vs. 6: There was a little baby

Twinkle, Twinkle Special Star

Twinkle, twinkle special star
 Wise men saw you from afar,
 Riding camels night and day
 To the manger where He lay
 Bringing gifts they came to see
 Jesus born for you and me.

Angel Band

There was one, there were two,
 There were three little angels,
 There were four, there were five
 There were six little angels,
 There were seven, there were eight,
 There were nine little angels,
 Then little angels in that band.
Chorus: Oh, wasn't that a band,
 Christmas morning, Christmas morning,
 Christmas morning
 Oh, wasn't that a band, Christmas morning,
 Christmas morning soon.
vs. 2: There was one, there were two,
 There were three little shepherds, etc.
vs. 3: Jesus comes bringing love,
 Love and peace to all people,
 Peace to all people in all lands.

Here is Baby Jesus

Here is Baby Jesus lying in the hay
 Wrap Him up in swaddling clothes,
 He's warm and safe that way.
 Here is Mother Mary,
 Here is Joseph, too,
 They're watching while He's sleeping
 They're glad He came.
 Aren't you? YES!

Are You Sleeping, Brother John

Are you sleeping, are you sleeping,
 Brother John, Brother John,
 Christmas bells are ringing, Christmas bells are ringing
 Ding, ding, dong, ding, ding, dong.

Ring Those Bells

(*Tune: Jimmy Crack Corn*)
 Ring those bells and turn around,
 Ring those bells and turn around,
 Ring those bells and turn, around,
 For Christmas time is here.
vs. 2: Ring those bells and jump up high
vs. 3: Ring those bells and stomp your feet

The Little Bells of Christmas

The little bells of Christmas say,
 "Ding, dong, ding dong dong,"
 The little bells of Christmas say,
 "Ding, ding, dong."

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed
 The little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head,
 The stars in the sky looked down where he lay
 The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

Can You Ring Your Bells

Can you ring your bells high,
 Can you ring your bells high,
 Can you ring your bells high,
 Jingle, jingle, oh, my!
vs. 2: Can you ring your bells low,
 Can you ring your bells low,
 Can you ring your bells low,
 Jingle, jingle, ho ho!

Santa Claus is Sleeping

(*rhythm chant*)
 Santa Claus is sleeping, Sh....Sh....
 Santa Claus is snoring. Snore.....Snore.....
 Wake him up, wake him up,
 Shake him, shake him,
 Grab his boots, grab his bag, gently, gently,
 Time to hitch the reindeer up,
 Hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry,
 Santa Claus has work to do. Shoo....Shoo...
 Merry Christmas, Santa Claus, Me, too, me too.

