





The Vineyard Preschool Department Manual

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

-John 15:5

Contact Information:

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Program Start Date: August 2023
Days operating: Monday and Wednesday, 9-12pm

Mission Statement:

At The Vineyard Preschool, we aim to provide a loving, enriching environment to produce optimal growth and strength in the children we serve. Our goal is to help children learn what it truly means to “abide in the vine” and bear much fruit.

Our mission is to provide excellent Christ-centered childcare and early education in a welcoming, safe, and encouraging environment to nurture the desire to know God and to be life-long learners through teaching the gospel, providing opportunity for developmentally appropriate play, having structured learning times, reading quality children’s literature, engaging in art study, and working on life-skill development.

Vision:

- To show the love of Christ to the next generation and help meet the need in our community for part time child care and early education by providing a preschool program with a standard for excellence, grace, patience and joy.
- Engaging children with the gospel in a fun and interesting way.
- To model and lead children into the practice of prayer, worship and spending time with God.
- Provide lessons focused on bible learning, social/emotional development, basic life skills, quality literature, the arts, and nature study.
- To facilitate calm and nurturing teacher-child interactions, adequate free play, quality structured learning times and appropriate amounts of time outdoors.
- To foster a thriving community where children are intentionally cultivated and show notable growth in all domains of development (emotional, social, cognitive and physical).
- To be a blessing to parents by providing a secure environment for their child to learn and socialize in a calm and inviting montessori-style classroom set up for child-led-learning and skill mastery.
- **For teachers to model and guide children on what it means to “abide in the vine and bear much fruit”, love God and love others well.**

5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

-John 15:5

30 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31 The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

-Mark 12:30-31

- Love God first.

- We are commanded to love, worship, and submit to God in accordance with His Word (The Bible) in every aspect of our lives. We seek to know and love God first and foremost above all else, and we teach these children to do the same.

- Love and serve others.

- We are committed to creating and cultivating a loving and nurturing environment to help people know God, grow together, discover purpose, and make a difference.

At The Vineyard Preschool we....

Make disciples: We are committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ by sharing the Gospel and teaching children about God and the Bible. We will help them to live fully for God and make disciples by sharing the love of God with others.

Educate: We provide Christ-centered, high-quality, age-appropriate educational opportunities for children to effectively learn and grow spiritually, mentally, socially, emotionally and physically. We teach valuable life skills to help children thrive in life.

Make it fun: We create a fun, engaging and dynamic atmosphere for children to show growth in all aspects of development.

We intentionally love, encourage and connect with the families we are privileged to serve. We believe God will use this to reach people for Christ, transform families, cities and nations. We provide child care that is available to all. By offering quality, safe, affordable child care, we can serve families from all walks of life. We admit students of any race, color, national origin, ethnic origin and religious affiliation to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

The Vineyard Preschool Program Description:

The Vineyard Preschool is in partnership with GCF Church in Greenville, NC. **We are committed to nurturing children in a Christ-centered environment. By providing excellent care and early education we give children opportunities to learn and grow spiritually, mentally, socially, emotionally and physically.** An essential part of our program is creating and cultivating a fun, engaging atmosphere where children can thrive. Our focus is on increasing our knowledge of God, growing together in community and sharing the love of God with others.

The Vineyard Preschool is structured and functions as a half-day, Montessori inspired preschool operating twice a week on *Mondays and Wednesdays from 9AM to 12PM* during the school year. We intentionally incorporate and facilitate an abundance of play, outside time, music, movement and arts & crafts in our daily schedule.

Our class is for children ages 2-4 years old (children can turn 5 in the program). Our calendar is similar to (but not the same as) Pitt County Public Schools calendar. We aim to keep a 1:6 teacher to student ratio, and we always require at least 2 teachers in the classroom. Tuition is \$150 monthly. The Vineyard Preschool is open to our community without regard to or affiliation with GCF Church. Please fill out the registration application to enroll in the program.

Daily Schedule:

9:00 am-9:30 am	Arrival
9:30 am-10:00 am	Play- playground play or inside free play
10:00 am-10:10 am	Break- Diaper change, bathroom, water
10:10 am-10:30 am	Circle time- Prayer, songs, classroom rules, calendar, weather, memory statement board
10:30 am-10:50 am	Snack and Bible lesson- Gospel A-Z Material
10:50 am-11:10am	Music and dance or arts and crafts
11:10 am-11:30 am	Lesson- The Gentle and Classical Preschool academic curriculum lesson & activity. Reading & writing or math & manipulatives
11:30 am-11:55 am	Break- Diaper change and bathroom, Outside playground play or inside play
11:55 am-12:00 pm	Clean up and departure

*Schedule is subject to change to best fit the needs of the children in the class.

Important Dates:

- o **First Day of School-** Monday, August 21, 2023
- o **Labor Day-** No school Monday, September 4, 2023
- o **Thanksgiving Break-** No school Monday, November 20 & November 22 2023
- o **Last Day of Semester-** Friday, December 20, 2022
- o **Christmas Break-** No school Monday, December 25 2023 - January 1 2024
- o **First Day of Semester-** Wednesday, January 3, 2023
- o **Martin Luther King Jr. Day-** No school Monday, January 15, 2024
- o **Spring Break-** No school Monday, March 25 & Wednesday, March 27, 2024
- o **Memorial Day-** No school Monday, May 27, 2024
- o **Last Day of School-** Wednesday, June 5, 2024

Early Childhood Education Philosophy:

The Vineyard Preschool is a Christian early education program. We make every effort towards excellence in providing care, education, and character development for children enrolled in our program. We strive to demonstrate the love and grace of God through patience, respect, and gentleness in our interactions with children. With a balance between free, exploratory play and structured learning times we provide an enriching, intentional time for your child to learn and grow. Our biblical curriculum presents children with high quality content to explore including nature study, poetry, classical art and music. Our foundational bible verse from John 15 inspires us to teach and demonstrate what living a fruitful life abiding in the vine of God looks like.

1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

-John 15:1-5

We believe children benefit from practices that are grounded in biblical principles. Our philosophy is also shaped by child development theorists such as Lev Vygotsky and Erik Erikson. Our methods are inspired by the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori and Charlotte Mason.

At The Vineyard Preschool we:

- Welcome children into a tidy and calm environment conducive to exploration and learning by minimizing things that may over-stimulate and distract.
- Place emphasis on both independent and collaborative play as a modality for learning.
- Alternate between exploratory play times and engaging group learning times throughout the day.
- Teach life skills to empower children with real life materials and activities.
- Foster the curiosity of the child to be a lifelong learner of both theology and academia.

The Montessori Method:

*Montessori is both a philosophy and a method of educating children created by Maria Montessori, the first female physician in Italy. It is based on the belief that children have a natural desire to learn and that when they are placed in an **enriched environment** with specially designed materials and highly trained teachers, they learn quickly and easily through hands-on experience. Maria Montessori began work in the slums of Rome and through careful observation of the children in her care she discovered how to help children learn about self-care, math, language, cultural studies and size, shape, colors, etc. Montessori traveled throughout the world introducing her systems to educators and parents everywhere. She was nominated for the Nobel Prize three times. www.rosehallmontessori.org , www.chiaravalle.org*

The Montessori method is based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning, and life skill development. Children are able to choose during free play times what center and what activity they would like to do. Trained teachers offer age-appropriate activities to guide children and add to the process of learning by helping them to gain competency and confidence to thrive as they grow and develop. The materials in the classroom are developmentally appropriate and intentionally specific to the interests of the child and can be changed accordingly.

The teacher's role in a Montessori-style setting is to guide without interrupting the child's concentration or inserting themselves unnecessarily into the natural learning process. Montessori teachers are aware of children's individual abilities and view children as active participants in their own learning who are capable and curious discoverers with great potential for growth.

Resources to learn more about the Montessori method:

1. <https://amshq.org/About-Montessori/What-Is-Montessori>
2. The Montessori Toddler - A Parent's Guide to Raising a Curious and Responsible Human Being - Simone Davies

Charlotte Mason Method:

Charlotte Mason was a renowned, British educator and reformer in England at the turn of the twentieth century. According to Mason, children have a natural love for learning. She devised strategies to help children thrive through the creation of a positive learning atmosphere, ample time outdoors, and exposure to art, music and literature. She believed that children should be fed the best ideas, which she called 'mind-food' and even that the youngest children should be given 'ideas, clothed upon with facts' inspiring tales, and worthy thoughts.

Charlotte Mason, inspired from her biblical worldview believed children should be led in the training of good habits built one at a time. She placed emphasis on God's creation, the fine arts and quality literature read aloud as tools for teaching young children.

Resources to learn more about Charlotte Mason Method:

1. <https://simplycharlottesmason.com/what-is-the-charlotte-mason-method/>
2. Laying Down the Rails - A Charlotte Mason Habits Handbook - Sonya Shafer

Play Based Philosophy — Playing to Learn/Learning to Play:

High quality early childhood programs teach children to think creatively so they may succeed in a complex and ever-changing world. Purposeful play is developmentally appropriate and a significant element of any early childhood program. The following emphasizes the importance of play in a child's intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.

Play is a way of learning for children. During a typical preschool day there will be structured and unstructured periods, enabling children to learn through at their own rate. Values that support learning through play include:

- *Children are viewed as thinkers, reflecting about their world*
- *Purposeful play is when children learn through the process of their efforts*
- *Children gain knowledge by building on a path of ever increasing knowledge*
- *Children are encouraged to make choices and practice individual decision-making*
- *Learning environments support purposeful play by:*
 - *Blocks of various sizes and materials*
 - *Materials and time for dramatic, imaginative play*
 - *Manipulative and table toys*
 - *Art materials and tools to explore*
 - *Sensory play materials, including sand and water*
 - *A library area*
 - *Music and movement activities*
 - *Cooking experiences*
 - *Computer exploration*
 - *Outdoor and gross motor play*
 - *A quiet area for the child who needs to be alone*
 - *Ample and rich language and print*
 - *Writing tools and materials*

Adapted from the Evanston Early Childhood Directors' Council, POSITION STATEMENT: THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY TO CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS... "Playing to Learn/Learning to Play"

Curriculum:

For our daily lessons we use a preschool curriculum blending Charlotte Mason Methodology with the Classical Homeschooling Method. The Gentle & Classical Preschool was written by Erin Cox ©2021 The Gentle + Classical Press, Inc. <https://gentleclassical.lpages.co/preschool-2nd-edition/>

This curriculum aims *“To educate and disciple our children using gentle, time-proven methods that lead them into a relationship with Christ, a relationship with Creation, and a loving relationship with education”* by using the following:

- “Living” books and stories that develop the moral imagination
- Hands-on engagement with a focus on developing fine and gross motor skills
- Oral and play narration
- Pretend play
- Math (order)
- Music, dancing, and singing
- Poetry, scripture, nursery rhyme, and catechism recitations
- Exposure to good, true, and beautiful words, art, and music

Statement of faith:

1. WE BELIEVE in the Scripture, the infallible Word of God containing sixty-six books, as being fully inspired by God. The Bible is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks. (2 Tim. 3:16)
2. WE BELIEVE in one eternal God who has revealed Himself in three Persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit; distinguishable yet indivisible and of one substance. (Matt. 28:19)
3. WE BELIEVE in the Lord Jesus Christ, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, true God and true man united in one Person. He suffered and died on the cross for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and was buried. He arose bodily from the dead and personally appeared to His disciples. Afterwards, He ascended to heaven, where He is now exalted above all else. (Lk. 1:26-35; Jn. 1:189; Is. 7:124; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Jn. 14:2-30)
4. WE BELIEVE in the Holy Spirit, who has come to glorify Christ, to convict people of sin and to draw us to the Savior, Jesus. We believe the Holy Spirit indwells God's children, gives new life, empowers believers for service, imparts spiritual gifts, enables believers to live a fruitful, holy and spirit-filled life and guides God's children into all truth. (Jn. 14:18, 12, 13; Jn. 3:6; Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:22-24; Eph. 5:18; Jn 14:16, 17, 26; Acts 2:38-39; Acts 8:14-17; Acts 10:44-46)
5. WE BELIEVE in the creation account, as recorded in Genesis, and in the test and fall of man. As a result of the fall, people remain spiritually depraved, separated from God, and unable to attain right-standing with God apart from Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:12, 18)
6. WE BELIEVE that the salvation of sinful people is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. Salvation is manifested through our repentance, plus faith in Christ and His finished work on the cross. Through His work, not our own, we obtain the remission of sins and become God's children: heirs of eternal life. (Eph 2:8, 9; Rom. 5:1, 9, 11)

7. WE BELIEVE in one true universal church consisting of genuine believers and in the visible expression of that church in local congregations. These churches are commissioned by Jesus to propagate the gospel, administer the sacraments (baptism and communion), and administer all it's local works. (Matt. 18:15-20; Acts 15:22)

<https://gcfchurch.org/statement-of-faith/>