



Welcome to St. Mary's Kindergarten Program!

We're so glad you're here! Following is a quick overview of our Kindergarten program's daily routine, key events, resources, and dates to remember. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at jfrankheinze@smsmn.org or 320-256-4257.

OUR DAILY ROUTINE: morning message, religion, Benchmark Workshop reading program, Math block, working in a group or individually at centers, lunch, recess, rest time or read aloud, social studies or science, recess, snack, prayer, and dismissal. Every day ends with each child getting a high 5, handshake, or hug from me.

WHAT	HOW	WHEN
"All About Me" Board	Every student will receive a poster to complete about themselves. I will send a letter with more information and a poster home with your child when it is their turn.	Annually
AR (Accelerated Reader) Program	AR is a computer program that helps teachers manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. Students pick a book at his or her own level and read it at his or her own pace. When finished, the student takes a short quiz on the computer. Passing the quiz is an indication that your child understood what was read. AR gives both students and teachers feedback based on the quiz results, which the teacher then uses to help your child set goals and direct ongoing reading practice. We will be starting this program in January. If I feel your child is an independent reader, I may start him/her earlier in the year.	Starts in January
Birthdays & Half-Birthdays	We celebrate birthdays on the day or the week of the birthday if it falls on a weekend; for summer birthdays we celebrate your child's half-birthday. Your child may bring a treat to share with the class if they wish.	Annually
BLUE Wednesday Folders	Watch for the BLUE folders that come home on Wednesdays. This is where you can expect to find some important school communications and information about school. Return the folder on Thursday each week.	Weekly on Wednesdays
Book Orders	Book orders are sent home once a month in the BLUE Wednesday folders OR on Fridays.	Monthly
Class Mass/Liturgy	Children attend Mass each week on Fridays. Each week a different class is assigned to the Mass. The kids from the assigned class do/act out readings, serve as greeters, bring up gifts, etc. The Kindergarten class is assigned to one Mass in May. See the calendar on SchoolSpeak for class assignments.	Fridays, 8:30 AM
Curriculum	Here's a quick review of Kindergarten curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Benchmark Workshop • Math: Standard-Based Math • Religion: Promise • Science: Scott Foresman Series • Social Studies: Macmillan/McGraw-Hill • Handwriting and Brain Gym • Report cards, rubrics for assessment, tests, and portfolio • Title I services for reading only 	Ongoing
Daily Take-Home Binders	Daily take-home binders are sent home with daily work. Benchmark Workbooks are sent home with your child every three weeks when we complete the unit.	Daily
Field Trips	We will try to take a variety of community field trips this school year. Parent volunteers may be needed to attend these events. There will always be permission slips sent home before each trip. Trips may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-town: fire station, bank or credit union, grocery store, vet clinic, Pine Villa, public library, dentist, and bowling. • Out-of-town: a play, a farm, or a zoo 	Ongoing, Throughout the School Year
FUN-Raising	To keep tuition expenses manageable, SMS hosts a few fundraisers throughout the school year; our major fundraisers include the Marathon/Prayer-a-thon, Catholic United Financial Raffle, Auction4Education, and School Breakfasts. Please watch for details on these important events throughout the school year.	Ongoing MORE ⇒

WHAT	HOW	WHEN
Holidays	Each holiday is scheduled and assigned to a group of Kindergarten parents. Celebrated holidays include: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter.	As scheduled
Homework	I will indicate on the work or in the weekly newsletter if there is homework. Examples of homework are reading little books, sight words, and math sheets. Sight words will be weekly homework; AR reading that starts in January is also homework.	Ongoing
Kindergarten Happenings	Each Friday, I'll post a classroom update on SchoolSpeak; this will include happenings from the past week as well as information for upcoming events.	Weekly on Fridays
Kindergarten 6th Grade Buddies	Every kindergarten student is assigned a 6 th grade buddy. This buddy sits with them at Mass and participates with them at other special events.	Ongoing
Lunch with Kids	You are welcome to come any day to eat lunch with your child. Please call Ms. Jenn in the office by 10 AM with your lunch choice so that there is enough food for all.	Anytime
Monthly Calendars	Our class calendar is on SchoolSpeak; I will post each month to keep you informed about field trip dates, birthday celebrations, and other important happenings.	Monthly
New Parent Pal	New Parent Pals help a new parent learn the ropes, and feel welcome and part of the SMS family. Please feel free to reach out to me with questions or if you're interested in getting a New Parent Pal. New parents will be assigned to new families in Kindergarten UPON REQUEST.	Ongoing
Reading Log	At the beginning of each month I will send home a reading log. On the log you may record books that you read at home with your child. Send the filled in log back at the end of the month and students will receive an item from the prize box.	Monthly
Sight Word Journal	This is a weekly project. Each student needs to complete the Word-of-the-Week sheet. This will come home with the student each week.	Weekly
SMS\$4Kids	SMS\$4Kids is a gift card program that allows schools to buy gift cards from businesses at a reduced rate, which is how the program makes money. Card purchasers buy the cards at face value. SMS parents can use profits from the cards to help reduce tuition commitments too. You'll receive info about this program in the fall.	Ongoing
SMS SPIRIT-PBIS School-Wide Behavior Plan	At St. Mary's, we focus on teaching our students what behaviors are acceptable, praising and rewarding them when they "get it," and helping them learn from their mistakes when they don't. This system is called Positive Behavioral Intention & Supports, or PBIS for short. At St. Mary's, we call it SMS Spirit—a school-wide, positive behavior intervention system that teaches and re-teaches students how to demonstrate SMS Spirit in all school settings. The end goal: a nurturing, and respectful learning community where academic achievement is the focal point and all students feel connected and valued. Talk to your children about SMS Spirit; you can find more info about SMS Spirit on our website and SchoolSpeak.	Ongoing



The school parent portal, **SchoolSpeak**, is your one stop for everything at St. Mary's. There, you'll find the latest happenings/school events, updates on curriculum, weekly and monthly newsletters, and critical information, including the following:

- Class Field Trip List
- Parent-Student Handbook
- SMS SPIRIT-PBIS School-Wide Behavior Plan & Matrix
- Liturgy/Mass Schedule
- School Calendar
- Lunch Menu
- SMS\$4Kids Info
- SMS Strategic Plan

I'm so very, very happy you've joined the St. Mary's Catholic School family!!!