



Early Learning Center

UNITED DISCIPLES  CHRISTIAN CHURCH

December 2016

From the Director

Christmas is here! Christmas is here! What a wonderful time of year to celebrate. I love the decorations. I love the time with family. Most of all I love that the whole season is centered around Jesus Christ. It is a privilege, this time of year, to get to teach the children about the birth of our Lord and Savior. He is the most important person in my life, and I pray that each of the children will choose to follow Him.

Jesus left His Heavenly home and humbled Himself as a small, helpless baby, so that we can be made right in our sins and able to approach to Him. I think it is appropriate after Thanksgiving, to emphasize that we can be thankful most of all for our Lord & Savior Jesus.

Over the next few weeks, we will be focused on the true meaning of Christmas—the birth of Jesus Christ. This message gets lost in the secular realm of Santa and trees. At the ELC, the children will learn about the Christmas story through songs, stories, pretending in their classroom “manger,” learning projects, and even through their art experiences. I hope you will take time at home to reinforce this important message.

Most of all, I thank you for sharing your children with us and for entrusting them to our care. Each one is a precious gift and brings us so much joy. May your family be blessed throughout this Christmas season with love and hope in the eternal love of Christ.

“⁴ But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. “
Titus 3:4-7

Annabelle Miles

Calendar Notes

Wed. & Thurs., Dec 7 & 8	ELC Shirt Days
Wednesday, Dec. 7	Vision and Hearing Screening
Thurs & Fri., December 15 & 16	Birthday Parties for Jesus
Monday, Dec. 19—Monday, Jan. 2	No School—Christmas Holiday
Tuesday, January 3	Classes Resume

Daily classroom lesson plans are posted in each classroom

Upcoming Events

Birthday Parties for Jesus

As we talk this month about God's gift to us through the birth of Jesus Christ, we will celebrate with "birthday parties" for Jesus. The parties will be held Thursday, December 15, and Friday, December 16 (Miss Laura's class will have their party on Friday). If you would like to help with the party for your child's class, please check with the classroom teacher, or the sign-up list outside of the classroom.



Literacy Lunch Drop-In for Holiday Shopping!!!



The ELC is giving you an early Christmas Gift—time!!!

We have drop-in for our Literacy Lunches for \$10. Think of everything you could get done—extra shopping, lunch with a friend or family member, house cleaning for the Christmas guests!

**Requires at least 24 hours notice

**Payment must be made prior to or the day of the drop-in

**Subject to class availability

3 Ways to Give this season — Feed the hungry continues!

Thank you to everyone who gave to The Network in Richardson through our Red Wagon mission project and to Heifer International through our quarters tube project. Look for final donation numbers in the ELC Weekly Email Update! These community mission projects will continue throughout the year. Please take this opportunity to teach your child about sharing with others less fortunate.

Illness Policy

Inclement Weather Closings

Now that colder weather is here, please be aware that we follow the Richardson Independent School District closings. If RISD *cancels school due to ice or snow, then the ELC will be closed.* If the RISD *delays opening, the ELC will be closed.* There may be occasions when the RISD chooses to remain open and the ELC makes a decision to close school due to hazardous road conditions. If this happens, you will receive a phone call from an ELC staff member. You may also sign up for twitter text alerts through the handle [@MY_ELC](#) or check the [front page of the website](#) if you are unsure. Snow days are not made up.

Keeping children home when they are not quite well really makes a difference in halting the spread of germs through our school.

The following are state licensing and ELC regulations regarding ill children. Children must NOT be admitted to school if one or more of the following exists:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (including outdoor activity).
2. The child has any of the following: Oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater, rectal temp. of 101.4 or greater, or armpit temp. of 99.4 or greater. Symptoms and signs of possible illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, 2 or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.

For a child who has been ill, they should be free of the above symptoms for 24 hours or longer before they return to school. If a child arrives at school ill, the child will be moved to the office and a parent will be called to pick up the child.

Specials

Music News

Thank You to all the parents who joined us for the annual Thanksgiving Feast! The classes did a wonderful job singing and performing their Thanksgiving songs. The classes were rewarded with a "Dance Party" in Music for their hard work and practice! "Dance Party" is always a highlight in music class. The boys and girls love to free dance and show off their moves to the fun upbeat music. As we move into the Christmas season, we will begin singing about the true meaning of the season and playing instruments to the songs that warm our hearts with joy and peace. The holiday season is a perfect time to give thanks for all the children that attend the ELC. They brighten our days and are such a blessing to teach.



Why Teach Music?

Music is Language.

Most of the terms are in Italian, German, or French, and the notation is certainly not English – but a highly developed kind of shorthand that uses symbols to represent ideas. The semantics of music are the most complete and universal language. Also, some songs we study are from other cultures.

Sand and Water News

Mother Nature has continued to provide us with warm weather which allows us to continue holding our sand and water times outdoors. We had a great time washing pumpkins, gourds and other fruits and vegetables to celebrate fall and hunting acorns among a pumpkin patch. Some additional highlights from November included using scales to weight objects, playing with flubber, tending our farm animals, creating turkeys with pine cones and feathers and sorting fall colored pom poms using tongs. Children desperately need to have a multitude of whole-body sensory experiences on a daily basis in order to develop strong bodies and minds. This can best be done outside where the senses are fully ignited and young bodies are challenged by the uneven and unpredictable, ever-changing terrain. At the ELC, we work very hard to provide a wide variety of sensory activities for our students in order to stimulate creativity and a higher-level of thinking. We will continue to include activities that will help develop large and small motor development, scientific and mathematical discoveries, and so much more fun!

A word cloud of various languages, including Arabic, French, Polish, Turkish, Mandarin, Spanish, Croatian, Swedish, Indonesian, Italian, German, Japanese, Norwegian, Serbian, English, Portuguese, Danish, Greek, Russian, and Dutch. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with some words being larger than others, and they are rendered in various colors like purple, green, blue, and red.

Specials



Bible News

Godly Play, our chapel time in the sanctuary each week, has been such a wonderful time of exploring the sacred stories of the Hebrew Bible. We've been following along the lives of the "The Great Family," the people of God, as they have made their way through the desert, discovered ways to worship God and learned that God is everywhere. As the children participate in the story each week, they spend time thinking and wondering about the experiences of The Great Family. They integrate the stories into their play outside of chapel as well!

This year, when Pastor Joe pulled out the furniture of the temple, the children could recall from last year the ark of the covenant, the sacrificial alter, and the menorah.

In December, we will learn about the prophets who point to the birth of the Messiah. We'll hear about Mary and Joseph, the Shepherds, the Wise Men and, of course, Jesus! We may even act out the story of Jesus' birth. We are thankful for your children and the joy they share as they learn about God. We pray that this season is truly holy for you and your family.

Blessings, Rev. Joseph Harker



WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR “EMPTY” BOXES?

A cardboard box may appear empty to an adult but, for a kid, it is actually filled with possibilities! Simply getting inside an empty box can transport children to new spheres of creative play. Armed with only their imagination, a child can transform a box into a spaceship, house, cave, train, or ship. In fact, the cardboard box is such a popular and versatile plaything that, in 2005, it was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame.

Because boxes foster so much learning, creativity, and discovery through play we include at least one with every shipment! And because our furniture comes fully assembled, many of the boxes are BIG!

<https://www.facebook.com/CommunityPlay->

TEACHING SOCIAL SKILLS TO LITTLE ONES

Are there any adults in your life who probably didn't get enough instruction on basic social skills when they were preschoolers? While these folks can be a bit annoying at times, it's probably wise to remember that their lack of relational finesse has probably made their own lives less than peachy. When I remember this, it's easier for me to remain empathetic with them. It also reminds me why it's so important to help our young children learn the basic social graces.

Most of this teaching should take place in the classroom of real world experience. That is, at the very moment our children are interacting with others. Listed below are just a few of the things we ought to expect our children to do:

- Shake people's hands and look into their eyes.
- Smile.
- Say "hello."
- Say "thank you" when complimented.
- Say "please."
- Say "goodbye" and wish people well.

I'm constantly amazed at how many parents fail to expect these things out of their preschoolers. Instead, their children are allowed to snub others or to hide behind their parents' backs.

Now, I understand that some children are extremely shy. I also understand that this takes work and can feel a bit awkward from time to time. In our book, *Love and Logic Magic for Early Childhood*, we teach the importance of having high expectations for our children. Parents who maintain high expectations raise far happier and more socially skilled kids.

Thanks for reading! Our goal is to help as many families as possible. If this is a benefit, **forward it to a friend**.

Dr. Charles Fay, Love & Logic

<https://www.loveandlogic.com/download/weekly-tips/CF-Teaching-social-skills-to-little-ones.mp3?>