



ST. MARY'S
An IB World School

**PRESCHOOL
CURRICULUM
GUIDE
2010-2011**

St. Mary's is an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School dedicated to inquiry-based academic excellence, developing well-rounded, confident children who flourish in a creative environment founded on Christian values.

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INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

Forty years ago, a group of talented teachers from international schools around the world created the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme. What started as a single programme for internationally minded students has today grown to be three programmes for students aged 3 to 19, experienced by half a million students from state and private schools in over 139 countries.

As the only private school in Orange County to offer the IB Programme from Preschool through Eighth Grade, St. Mary's mission embodies the importance of developing strong and capable leaders through programs that prepare students for positive interaction in a global setting. Through experiences in the classroom, field studies, participation in arts, music and athletic programs, and engagement in community service activities, students experience the fundamentals of leadership.

St. Mary's is authorized as An IB World School and offers the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP). The PYP and MYP both emphasize the dynamic combination of knowledge, skills, independent critical thinking, and the appreciation for the richness of life through international awareness.

Primary Years Programme

→ **For students aged 3-12**, focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside.

Middle Years Programme

→ **For students aged 11-16**, provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, becoming critical reflective thinker.

Both programmes:

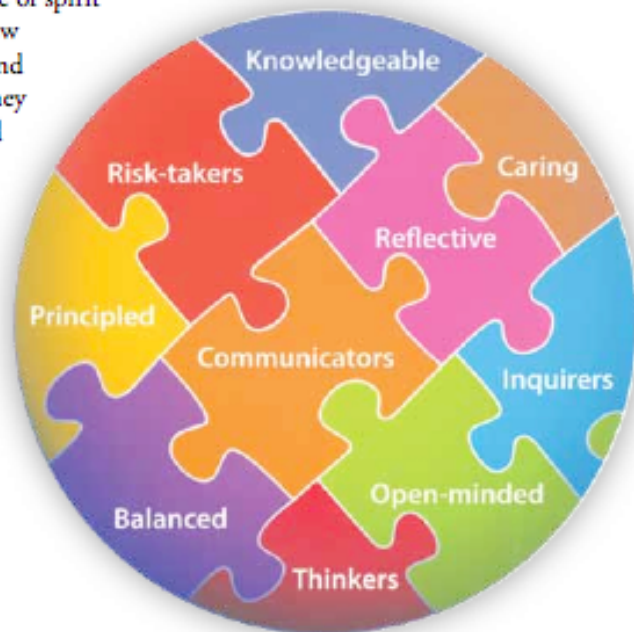
- have a strong international dimensional.
- draw on content from educational cultures around the world.
- require study across a broad range of subjects.
- include both individual subjects and and transdisciplinary areas.
- give special emphasis to learning languages.
- focus on developing the skills of learning.
- provide opportunities for individual and collaborative planning and research.
- encourage students to become responsible members of their community.

IB LEARNER PROFILE

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

IB Learners Strive to be:

- **Inquirers:** They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
- **Knowledgeable:** They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
- **Thinkers:** They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
- **Communicators:** They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
- **Principled:** They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
- **Open-minded:** They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
- **Caring:** They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
- **Risk-takers:** They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
- **Balanced:** They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
- **Reflective:** They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.



PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME

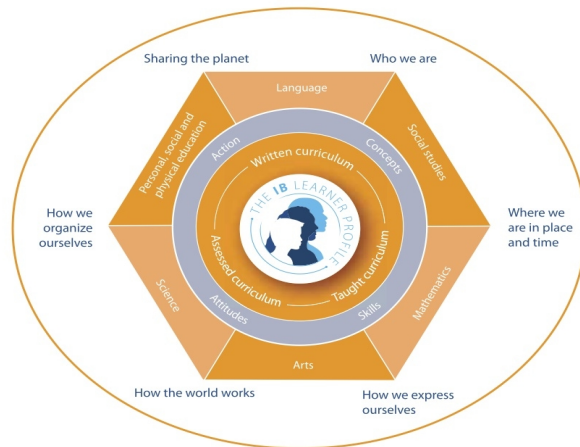
The IB Primary Years Programme, for students aged 3 to 12, focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside.

The programme:

- encourages international-mindedness in IB students.
- encourages a positive attitude to learning by engaging students in inquiries and developing their awareness of the process of learning so that they become lifelong learners.
- reflects real life by encouraging learning beyond traditional subjects with meaningful, in-depth inquiries into real issues

In Preschool through Grade Five, students explore six units of inquiry each year. These six to eight-week transdisciplinary units are investigations into important ideas and require a high level of involvement on the part of the students. In each Grade level, the themes revolve around the following topics:

- ***Who we are***
- ***Where we are in place and time***
- ***How we express ourselves***
- ***How the world works***
- ***How we organize ourselves***
- ***Sharing the planet***



Since these ideas are related to the world and beyond school, our students see the relevance of the content and connect with it in ways that are engaging and challenging. This helps them to reflect on their responsibility as learners and become actively involved with their learning.

In addition to the critical thinking skills developed through these transdisciplinary units, students also learn all the skills necessary to effectively communicate their understandings. Reading, writing, mathematics and information skills are embedded into the entire program. The school also offers exploratory classes in music, Spanish, physical education, art and computer. By blending IB learning and traditional skills learning in the classroom, our Preschool and Lower School students are well prepared to transition into the Middle School at St. Mary's.



ST. MARY'S

An IB World School

PRESCHOOL

Jean Piaget, leading cognitive theorist, theorized that a child's mental models, or cognitive structures, are based on the child's activities; engagement makes meaning. Free, unstructured play is healthy and, in fact, essential for helping children reach important social, emotional and cognitive developmental milestones. Piaget's theory is based on the idea that the developing child builds cognitive structures known as mental maps, or schemas, for understanding and responding to physical experiences.

St. Mary's offers an inquiry based program allowing the students to reflect on their learning in order to develop their own understanding of the world. Through teacher directed activities and child initiated play experiences, the student adjusts their mental model to accommodate their new knowledge. Our focus is on creating inquiry based, engaging activities taught in a transdisciplinary curriculum which also involves an important element: play. "Play is the work of the child." – Jean Piaget

Through play, the child learns to negotiate the world around them. Their imagination and creativity flourishes as they role play and invent games and the rules that govern. Through a fine tuned balance of academics and play, St. Mary's students become life-long learners prepared to conquer the challenges that lie ahead of them.

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

Two-Year-Old Classroom

St. Mary's offers a dynamic two year old program that focuses on the development of the child in relation to perception, motor skills, cognition, language, emotions, and social skills. Through a warm and loving environment, St. Mary's youngest students are able to learn about themselves developing autonomy while learning about the world around them and where they fit into that world.

Attachment is a complex, ongoing process that lasts a lifetime. Learning how to create attachment to others such as friends and family is an essential part to developing a sense of self and social skills in order to be successful in learning. Assisting the young children in creating bonds between the teachers and peers assists in the development of attachment which affects mental, social, and emotional development. By providing an environment where the children can trust that their basic needs will be met and they will be loved promotes strong attachment development in the children.

Perception is the ability to take in and organize sensory experiences and sensory information provides an important link to the other areas of development. Children learn to use their sensory experiences to learn about their world. St. Mary's provides a very sensory rich environment using music, stories, cooking projects, art, and visual object to stimulate the different senses.

Motor skills are divided in to fine motor skills, small movements of the body, like picking up a cotton ball, and gross motor skills, large movements of the body like running. Both fine and gross motor skills are important to the daily functioning of people. Fine motor skills and muscles are developed and strengthened through activities such as cutting a variety of mediums (such as green beans, spaghetti, yarn, paper), lacing, the use of nesting blocks, painting using different modalities (Q-tips, cotton balls, small paint brushes), using clay and clay tools, using small objects like tweezers to pick up and move other small objects like beads. Gross motor skills and muscles are developed when the student is engaged in our outside curriculum. The students are provided tricycles, balance boards, a climbing structure and room to run and jump while outside. When inside the classroom, the students are engrossed in activities such as dancing with scarves, banging large drums, and hammering to aide in large motor developing and motor planning.

The process of gathering information, organizing it, and using it is the essence of cognition. Knowing and understanding comes from active involvement with people and materials. Young children are naturally active, interactive, and learning through their environment. They seek experiences that are interesting to them and that eventually lead to problems solving. St. Mary's promotes cognitive development by inviting and encouraging exploration in an environment rich in sensory experiences. When given the opportunity to play with a variety of materials as they wish, children will encounter problems such as how to make a large object fit in a small space. Allowing the students to explore the materials and manipulate them to solve these cognitive problems promotes cognitive development. Young children learn through constructing knowledge, meaning, by taking what they already know about an object and applying it to a problem, they can construct new knowledge about the new object and problem being presented to them. It is through this construction of knowledge that cognition is enhanced. By providing our students with a variety of materials and allowing them a degree of freedom to explore the objects and materials, they are developing a new knowledge daily. Our students are provided with materials in science, math, language, dramatic play, art, and music to allow for their cognitive development.

Math

Color mixing, cooking, planting and gardening, observing light and shadows, learning about plants and animals through observation and literature, and beginning to use scientific vocabulary are all ways in which our young students are learning about their environment and scientific principles.

Science

Counting songs and games, classifying objects by attribute, exploring shapes and colors, and using math vocabulary to describe their immediate environment (such as inside, outside, above, below, next to, behind, in front, up, down) are ways we introduce our students to math concepts. Providing a variety of blocks and materials allows for the development of spatial awareness and architectural concepts.

The Arts

Dramatic arts allow students to express themselves through creativity and imagination. They will use varying styles of drama to explore concepts within the units of inquiry as they are introduced by the teacher. Students will act, sing, dance and role play as an individual and in groups.

Art is incorporated daily through many different modalities such as using scissors, glue, crayons, markers, paint, chalk, oil pastels, or charcoal and all on different mediums such as cloth material, newsprint, foil, wax paper, or butcher paper.

Music

Music includes the exploration of sound and the expressive use of musical elements. Students will join together in musical activities using their voices, bodies and simple instruments to develop concepts about sound and musical awareness. They will participate both individually and in groups. Students will have opportunities for practice, and consistent exposure to music. They will begin to develop an awareness and appreciation of music from different cultures.

Language

Language includes both expressive and receptive language. Expressive language is the ability to communicate your needs and feelings to others. Receptive language is hearing and understanding what others are saying. Both receptive and expressive language is important in a child's development and is fostered daily in our 2 year old preschool. Engaging in dialogue daily, creating monologues, discussing events both past and future, telling stories, singing songs, creating rhymes and poems, reading books both individually and in groups, asking questions and encouraging our students to ask questions, listening to the students and summarizing for understanding, and helping our students listen to their peers are all ways in which we foster language development in our program.

Helping young children recognize their own feelings and cope with them contribute to the child's inner sense of self-direction and competence. Sometimes people want to label feelings as "good" or "bad". However, all feelings are good; they carry energy, have purpose, and can provide us with messages that are important to our sense of self. Through guidance, our programs assist children in identifying their emotions and feelings and validating how they feel. Children feel all the same emotions that adults feel at this young age; however, they don't always understand what they are feeling (such as frustration, embarrassment, elation, excitement, separation anxiety). By empowering our young students to understand their feelings, we are empowering them to be confident and communicate how they are feeling which leads to problem solving and peer relationship development.

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

Three & Four-Year-Old Classrooms

Language

In preschool, students are introduced to letters and phonemes. Through stories, games, and direct instruction, preschool students will gain letter recognition and phonemic awareness. Reading to young children is an essential tool for early literacy. In both large and small group, Preschool children are read to throughout the day from a variety of genre. Through stories, students strengthen their ability to rhyme, sequence, and demonstrate reading comprehension.

Through the above instruction strategies, Preschool students will begin to experiment with print materials, recognize and create rhymes, recognize and begin to spell their first name, begin to recall and re-tell stories, dictate sentences about life events and stories, and begin to show an interest in writing.

Math

Numeracy is an important skill for young children. Rote counting, number recognition, patterning and measuring through standard and non-standard units of measurement is the core of our math curriculum. Students are introduced to math through hands on activities with the use of manipulatives for counting, sequencing and patterning, as well as activities such as cooking and measuring for an interdisciplinary approach to teach math concepts.

Through hands on activities, students will learn to compare two sets of objects and identify which set is equal to, more than, or less than the other. They will begin to count numbers to 20, begin to identify, sort and classify objects by attribute and identify objects that do not belong. Students will begin to use math vocabulary such as longer, shorter, heavier, empty, full, next to, above, below, behind, up and down when describing their environmental boundaries and position of objects.

Science

Science is an abstract concept for young children; however, through the use of our garden, along with art and sensory activities, science comes to life. Interacting in the garden is a hands on way to learn about plants and what they need to grow, and why we need plants. Through cooking, art, and sensory activities, the students are introduced to the concepts of how materials change such as through color mixing and cooking. Through the use of ramps, the children learn how to negotiate through the world of physics and gravity.

Throughout the year, students will be provided the opportunity to observe environmental changes due to seasonal changes, care for the environment, begin to understand the life cycle of plants and observe how they change over time, identify the different parts of plants the purpose plants serve in the environment, classify materials by similarities and differences, explore how things move and begin to ask scientific questions in order to formulate predictions and record observations while communicating what happened.

Social Studies

Preschool students will gain an understanding of people and their lives, focusing on themselves, their friends and families and their community. They will gain an increasing awareness of themselves in relation to the various groups to which they belong. They will gain a sense of place, and the reasons why particular places are important to people.

Through our IB units of “Who Am I? Who Are You?” and “Tell Me a Story”, students will begin to understand that events occur in order, identify what places in their community are like, understand how to plan for a trip, recognize similarities and differences between people, understand that family and friends should care for one another, and begin to share their opinions respectfully.

The Arts

Art is an important component to our daily curriculum as it allows each child to develop in their imagination and creativity as well as provide an additional means to express their emotions. Each day, unstructured art is available to the students through the art/writing center in addition to a planned art activity. We focus on process driven art rather than product driven to allow all our students the ability to plan and create a piece of art they are engaged in and are proud of at the completion of their work.

Dramatic play is another essential art form in the preschool classroom. Through dramatic play, children are provided the opportunity to role play. Through role play, children take on roles of family members, peers, teachers, and learn to make sense of the world through their experience. Language confidence and acquisition is an important component to dramatic play as they interact with their peers in a variety of roles and settings. In order to continue in dramatic play development, the theme of our dramatic play changes throughout the year, often supporting our current unit of inquiry.

Music

Music allows the child to learn concepts such as rhythm, melody, and pace in a fun and interactive way. Music is incorporated throughout the day with the availability of musical instruments, such as rhythm sticks, drums, and shakers, in the classroom as well as singing together as a group in circle time. Music is also a means to teach concepts such as numeracy and literacy and is integrated into our core curriculum.

Gross Motor Skills and the Outside Curriculum

Through an abundance of materials provided for outside play such as bikes, climbing structure, balls, and organized games, our students are strengthening their large muscles, core strength, and balance. In addition to the daily materials provided, St. Mary’s provides additional outside activities to ensure each child is engaged during recess. These activities might include easel painting, gardening, or dramatic play.

Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills are the small muscles needed to learn how to write. Through the use of clay, cutting practice on a variety of materials, using tweezers, art, and lacing activities, our students are strengthening those necessary muscles daily. Once a student has demonstrated strong fine motor skills, we will begin to teach proper pencil grip leading to writing success.

IB Units of Inquiry

Preschool students are engaged in four units of inquiry within the school year. The four units are transdisciplinary in nature in that the units encompass all academic and social disciplines essential for the child to be prepared for Junior Kindergarten and life. The units of inquiry for Preschool are: “Who Am I? Who Are You?” With a central idea of “similarities and differences make us special” engages the students in inquiry of who they are, how they are similar and different from their peers, why each child is special.

- **From Here to There:** The central idea for this unit is “taking a trip requires planning and preparation”. Students inquire into the concept of taking trips, why people take trips, what people need to take on a trip, and how they might travel.
- **Tell Me a Story:** This unit of inquiry is so literature rich. The central idea is “people express themselves through creativity and imagination”. Through the use of old favorites and new stories, students are introduced to the literary arts of folklore, poetry, storytelling as an art, and engaging in creating their own stories.
- **How Does Your Garden Grow?:** The central idea for this unit is “plants change over time”. We teach this unit in the spring when we can spend a lot of time in our Preschool garden planting and harvesting vegetables and learning how plants grow and change over time through a hands on unit. The students will inquire into the life cycle of plants, what people and animals get from plants, and how we help plants grow.

JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

Four & Five-Year-Old Classrooms

Language

In Jr. Kindergarten (JK), the St. Mary's program builds upon what was taught in Preschool. St. Mary's utilizes the Orton-Gillingham method to teach students the building blocks of reading. This model allows the teachers to teach not only the letters, the sounds, and how to write them, but also how to blend consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words. Learning how to blend three letter words is the beginning of reading instruction. In addition to Orton-Gillingham, St. Mary's utilizes Handwriting Without Tears as the method of instruction for proper letter formation and proper grip of the pencil. This program provides the students with a multitude of materials to begin the proper writing of the letters. On a daily basis, students are engaged in language activities that include teacher read stories from a variety of genre, rhyming, reading comprehension, dictation journals, and language manipulation. Through games, manipulatives, collaborative projects, and direct instruction, the students gain concrete knowledge of upper and lower case letter recognition.

Throughout the year and using a multitude of instructional practices, JK students will understand that listening is important in small and large groups, listen with increasing concentration, listen to a variety of genre, identify main events and relevant points in a story, follow multi-step directions and work collaboratively in a group. Students will learn to spell simple words, rhyme, blend sounds into words, make predictions about a story and understand the different elements within a story such as the characters, the conflict, and the resolution, identify the purpose of the author and the illustrator, and begin to tell their own stories both with and without picture cards.

Math

In JK, math is taught through a hands-on approach in which students are constructing meaning and concept, through increasing levels of abstraction. The teaching of math is taught in relevant and realistic contexts within the math areas of numeracy, algebra, data, measurement, geometry, and mathematical reasoning.

Students in JK will learn to compare and contrast sets of objects, begin to rote count and read whole numbers to 100, begin to write whole numbers to at least 20, begin to understand the concept of estimation, create describe and extend patterns, begin to understand the purpose of graphing data, begin to understand the concept of time through the use of the calendar and understand the sequence of the week and months in the year. Students will also begin to measure through standard and non-standard units of measurement and learn to identify and classify objects according attributes and explain why certain objects do not belong. Block play is essential in order to strengthen student's spatial awareness and achievement on spatial skills tests. Allowing students to build with blocks of different materials, sizes, and non-standard means reinforces their physical and spatial awareness skills.

Science

JK students are introduced to the concept of science through the study of the four strands of study provided by IB, the four strands are: living things, earth and space, materials and matter and forces and energy. JK students will develop their observational skills by using their senses to gather and record information, and they will use their observations to identify simple patterns, make prediction and discuss their ideas. They will begin to explore the way objects function and the basic cause and effect

relationship. Students will examine change over varying time periods and know that different variables and condition may affect change. Students will communicate their ideas using scientific vocabulary modeled throughout the year.

JK students will learn to identify the similarities and differences between themselves and other living things, begin to understand the life cycle of plants and animals, explore animal habitats and how plants and animals affect the environment around us and our responsibility towards maintaining their natural environment. Students will begin to observe how materials change over time and how some materials will cause that change. Building with ramps allows the children learn how to negotiate through the world of physics and gravity and begin to understand what makes things move. Science experiments exploring buoyancy, gravity, change, forces of nature, and living things are integrated into our curriculum throughout the year. The students learn to ask scientific questions, make a hypothesis, record their observations and discuss what happened. The culminating Science Faire in the Spring allows our students to showcase their scientific skills of how to form a hypothesis, conduct an experiment while observing what happens, and finally drawing and recording conclusions.

Social Studies

Students will gain an understanding of people and their lives focusing on themselves, their friends and families, and their immediate environment. They will gain an increasing awareness of themselves in relation to the various groups to which they belong. They will gain a sense of place and the reasons why particular places are important. They will also gain a sense of time, and recognize important events in their own life and how time and change affect people. There are three strands of social studies JK students will inquire into: history, geography and society. Within the three strands, JK students will begin to understand that events occur in an order, use and understand common words for the passing of time, know the days of the week and month, and discuss events in the past. Students will understand and identify what places are like and where they are in relation to where the student is and begin to understand that different places have different features. The students will begin to recognize what is fair, unfair, right, and wrong and begin to make diplomatic decisions. They will begin to recognize how their behavior affects others and the community around them.

The Arts

Art is an important component to our daily curriculum as it allows each child to develop in their imagination and creativity as well as provide an additional means to express their emotions. Each day, unstructured art is available to the students through the art/writing center in addition to a planned art activity. We focus on process driven art rather than product driven to allow all our students the ability to plan and create a piece of art they are engaged in and are proud of at the completion of their work. In JK, we begin to introduce the students to classic artists in history such as Van Gough, Kandinsky, and Cassatt. By learning about the artists, their medium of choice and common themes they produced, the students begin to recreate famous works while still adding their personal touch to their art.

Dramatic play is another essential art form in the preschool classroom. Through dramatic play, children are provided the opportunity to role play. Through role play, children take on roles of family members, peers, teachers, and learn to make sense of the world through their experience. Language confidence and acquisition is an important component to dramatic play as they interact with their peers in a variety of roles and settings. In order to continue in dramatic play development, the theme of our dramatic play changes throughout the year, often supporting our current unit of inquiry.

Music

Music allows the child to learn concepts such as rhythm, melody, and pace in a fun and interactive way. Music is incorporated throughout the day with the availability of musical instruments, such as rhythm sticks, drums, and shakers, in the classroom as well as singing together as a group in circle time. Music is also a means to teach concepts such as numeracy and literacy and is integrated into our core curriculum.

Gross Motor Skills and the Outside Curriculum

Through an abundance of materials provided for outside play such as bikes, climbing structure, balls, and organized games, our students are strengthening their large muscles, core strength, and balance. In addition to the daily materials provided, St. Mary's provides additional outside activities to ensure each child is engaged during recess. These activities might include easel painting, gardening, or dramatic play.

Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills are the small muscles needed to learn how to write. Through the use of clay, cutting practice on a variety of materials, using tweezers, art, and lacing activities, our students are strengthening those necessary muscles daily. Once a student has demonstrated strong fine motor skills, we will begin to teach proper pencil grip leading to writing success.

IB Units of Inquiry

Through the use of a transdisciplinary IB programme, Jr. Kindergarten students are learning about the world around them and where they fit within that world. There are four units of inquiry taught in the year and are transdisciplinary in nature in that they encompass all areas of learning and developmental growth. The units of inquiry for Jr. Kindergarten are:

- **Peace Be With You:** The central idea is “when we express ourselves in a positive way and conflict is managed, peace is created. This unit is the first unit taught in the year and sets the tone from the first day of school. The students inquire into conflict resolution, what peace means, and how our choices contribute to a peaceful environment. Throughout this unit, the students become very good communicators and conflict is minimal as they begin to collaborate and work together to solve problems.
- **Energize Me:** this unit of inquiry is all about healthy choices and being a healthy person. The central idea of “healthy choices energize me” leads the students to inquire into nutrition, the importance of exercise, and how healthy choices affect how they feel. There is a lot of gross motor development within this unit as the students learn to build their own obstacle courses and teach others how to navigate them, begin to climb the rock wall and do yoga.
- **I'm A Scientist:** The central idea is “through observation and investigation, we learn about how our world works.” The students are deeply engaged in a rich science and math curriculum throughout this unit as they inquire into the world around us through investigation of forces and energy, materials and matter, and living things. Students learn to formulate a hypothesis, record their observations, and verbalize a conclusion with all their science experiments. The students

also engage in a Science Faire as the culminating summative assessment for this unit of inquiry. The Science Faire allows the students to showcase their “scientist” skills and abilities by teaching others about their science experiments.

- **Buzz on Bugs:** This is a student favorite as it’s all about insects. The central idea is “we need to understand and respect insects and how they help our environment”. The students inquire into the life cycles of insects, insects in their natural habitat, how insects affect us, and how we can respect insects.

PRESCHOOL TECHNOLOGY

All Preschool classrooms are equipped with video cameras, picture cameras, and light tables. Light tables provide the opportunity to explore science and light through engaging hands on activities. A variety of materials are placed on the light table such as x-rays and glass encased insects and small animals. Students are introduced to technology and curriculum content through interactive media to aide in learning and retention. Video and picture cameras allow teachers to capture students engaging in activities throughout the day. This equipment provides the means to create digital and video reflections for both students and parents. Videos capture the true essence of student learning at this young age, including dramatic play, social interaction with peers, creative interpretation, and making cognitive connections using ramps.

The Jr. Kindergarten program features three computers in each classroom and a Smart Table, used as an interactive computer for students in small groups. Learning games are designed and developed based on the current IB Unit of Inquiry. The Smart Table offers another method of visual and hands on instruction, encouraging students to actively participate in their own learning. The Smart Table and learning games reinforce concepts that are being taught in the curriculum and create a fun, social and interactive learning center in the classroom.

WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

St. Mary's is proud to be both an IB World School with a Preschool that is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is both an accrediting agency and advocate for young children. Part of being an NAEYC accredited school is being able to participate in Week of the Young Child (WOYC). NAEYC describes WOYC as:

“The Week of the Young Child is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the world's largest early childhood education association, with nearly 90,000 members and a network of over 300 local, state, and regional Affiliates.

The purpose of the Week of the Young Child is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

NAEYC first established the Week of the Young Child in 1971, recognizing that the early childhood years (birth through age 8) lay the foundation for children's success in school and later life. The Week of the Young Child is a time to plan how we--as citizens of a community, of a state, and of a nation--will better meet the needs of all young children and their families.”

During WOYC, St. Mary's Preschool designates each day within the week-long celebration with a specific learning theme. Our goal is to showcase how much young children learn through play. Past themes have been: buildings and architecture, language and literacy, the arts, and through the senses. Within these themes the students are “playing” yet learning so much. Through buildings and architecture, the students are learning math concepts, spatial awareness, and how to building with materials other than blocks. This week long celebration takes place every April and is a favorite of our teaching faculty.