

January 2018

### Religious instruction in the Christian faith

Dear Parents of St. Martini Kindergarten and Pre-Primary,

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you more about the weekly services that happen, currently on Wednesday mornings. It has been a tradition from the very beginning of the Kindergarten's existence for the children to assemble once a week for a short lesson in Christian teaching, either in the church or in their class rooms. The person leading this lesson has in the past usually either been the pastor or the youth deacon of the St. Martini congregation. (Some of you may remember Johannes Herter, or Claudette Ciborovius, both church deacons who led the weekly devotions.) Currently, the services are led alternately by the principal of the Kindergarten and the pastor, as the position of youth deacon is vacant. In Wynberg, Pastor Michael Denner conducts the church services, usually on Tuesdays.

This is what we do during a church service:

- The bells of the church are rung as the children enter the church in their class-groups, accompanied by their teachers.
- We light candles as a symbol of being in God's presence of kindness and light, remembering where there is light there is no need for fear.
- We sing a song or two, e.g. *Gottes Liebe ist so wunderbar / God's love is so wonderful; Tragt in die Welt nun ein Licht / Carry a light into the world; Gott hat die ganze Welt in seiner Hand / He's got the whole world in his hand; Wo ich gehe bist du da / Wherever I go you are there.*
- The children hear a Bible story, or any other story with a Christian theme or message. Usually picture slides are shown to make the stories more vivid.
- We say a simple prayer. We usually thank God for the good in our life, ask for God's assistance in the difficulties of life. The prayer ends by asking for God's peace and blessing.
- The children whose birthday it has been are then allowed to blow out the candles. This signals the end of the devotion.

The main message that we seek to convey in word and in action is what is central to the Christian faith, i.e. that

- God loves us. God is good, even if life and the world do not always seem to be good.

#### **St. Martini Pre-Primary School (RF) NPC**

Company Reg. No.: 1999/003225/08

Non-Profit Org. No.: 035-328-NPO

Public Benefit Org. No.: 930014551

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- God has made us and all that exists. (This does not repudiate the knowledge we have through science, such as the evolution. We believe there is no contradiction between faith in God as creator and acceptance of the scientific theory of evolution.)
- We are wonderfully made, worthy to be loved.
- God wishes us to be in relationship with Him.
- In order for us to have a relationship with Him, He became human.
- Jesus is God become human.
- Jesus invites us to a life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, compassion, and self-control (these are the “fruits of the Spirit” mentioned in the Bible, in Galatians 5:22).
- How we live our lives (what we say and do) matters. Therefore ethical values such as helpfulness, respect, thoughtfulness and fairness are part of the teaching.
- God is there for us in times of joy and in times of sadness and need.
- God never leaves us, God is faithful.

The message we offer is never one of bigotry and exclusion, nor of fear. Instead, it is based on the intrinsic inclusiveness and welcoming nature of the good news of Christ. In order for you to see what specific topics and Bible stories we teach, a roster will be posted on the notice board each term.

While we cherish our own religious identity, we respect and value other belief systems. We do not expect all parents to subscribe to our Christian belief system and views, and we indeed acknowledge that a number of our parents are atheistic or agnostic, while a handful are adherents of other faiths. Yet we do expect all parents to be open to their children participating in the weekly devotions. The church services are an integral part of our Kindergarten’s identity and religious heritage of which we are proud. In this light, attendance of the devotions is not optional. However, if as a parent you have grave concerns about your child attending the church lessons, please make an appointment to discuss these with our principal Mrs Lengner or Pastor Nolte-Schamm, so that we can try to find an individual solution for you/your child.

Moreover, if you would like to know more about the content of the services, you are welcome to pop in and attend one, or speak to the pastor about the basic theological underpinnings of the Christian faith and world-view. We are not apologetic about being an institution based on Christian values and beliefs. But we are certainly open to dialogue!

We trust that attending St. Martini will be a positive and edifying experience for your children and hope to have your co-operation and support in making it so.

Yours faithfully, on behalf of the St. Martini board of directors,



Rev. Dr. C. Nolte-Schamm