



September 3, 2008

Subj: PEACEABLE SCHOOL

Dear St. Matthew School Parents:

We would like to tell you about a new program we are initiating at St. Matthew School this year. It is called Peaceable School, and we are very excited about it. The aim of Peaceable School is to create a more peaceful and tolerant school environment in which our children are motivated and equipped to resolve conflict peacefully themselves. For us at St. Matthew's, this means creating a more Christlike environment. As Jesus taught at the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." [Matthew 5:9]


Let us be clear about one thing: we all agree that St. Matthew is a *great* school. This initiative is not in response to some crisis in student behavior. It is the result of a group of caring parents and teachers getting together to figure out what we can do to make what we have even better.


One of the key aspects of the Peaceable Schools approach is that it involves all the elements of the school community—parents as well as teachers and students. Our teachers have already received initial training in Peaceable School techniques, and will continue to receive training throughout the year. They will be happy to tell you more about the particular things they are doing to incorporate Peaceable School into their curricula. We would like you, as parents, to be aware of the program and actively support it, so that we are all working together to create the best possible learning environment for our children. We will be holding a three-session training program for parents over the course of the year. **The dates of the parent sessions are: Sept. 25, Nov. 13 and Feb. 19.** All will be held in the MP room from 7:00-8:30pm. The sessions are progressive, not repetitive, so each session will teach a different subject. As parents ourselves, we know how busy you are, but we encourage you to attend as many sessions as you can.

We want to make clear that Peaceable School does not replace the existing discipline code, which spells out acceptable and unacceptable conduct and specifies the measures for dealing with the latter. Rather, our expectation is that, as the result of Peaceable School, we will less often find it necessary to resort to the discipline code to resolve conflicts, which our children will instead learn to resolve peacefully themselves.

This program will be implemented fully over the course of three years. The foundation of the program, and the focus of this year's effort, is the [Statement of Responsibilities and Rights](#), which the teachers and advisory committee have worked very hard on and which your children will spend quite a bit of time discussing in their classrooms. Later efforts will focus on providing teachers, students and parents with mediation and conflict-resolution techniques and other skills that will help us all become the blessed peacemakers that Jesus calls us to be.

We genuinely believe that Peaceable School can make St. Matthew School even better than it is. We hope you will support it enthusiastically, and patiently, so that we can create a school environment that encourages our children to grow, learn, express themselves freely, and become more Christlike. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments. Peace be with you.

  
[Kathleen Scherer](#)  
Principal

  
[Denise Martin](#)  
Committee President

Peaceable School Advisory Committee:

[Cindy Feeney](#) □ [Carol Hatfield](#) □ [Dave Horn](#) □ [Jill Meade](#) □ [John Schmitt](#) □ [Kathy Schuett](#)  
[Topper Steinman](#), Advisor