



Teacher Bios & Class Descriptions

2026 Fall Semester

Please note: All age cutoffs are teacher recommendations for these classes. Use your best judgment based on your child's level of maturity for the subject matter and your child's ability to interact appropriately with students of the specified age. Thank you, and feel free to reach out if you have any questions to sparrowshomeed@gmail.com.

Nicole Lalond

PreK-Kindergarten | Ages 4-5

Contact: nicoleappleberry@yahoo.com

About Nicole:

I moved to Tiny Timbers Agrihood in St Croix Falls in 2023, and am excited to start teaching at Sparrows this fall! Before moving here, I lived in Hammond, where I operated a certified family childcare program in my home for six years. I currently homeschool my two children, Evelyn (12), and Jacob (8), and volunteer with a group working to start a forest preschool near Luck, called West Denmark Woodland School.

I discovered Charlotte Mason when I was researching how to homeschool my children. It was so much fun to implement her ideas about how children learn in my home and childcare program. I am eager to share this delightful way of learning with the Sparrows PreK-Kindergarten students!

Class Description:

This class will provide a variety of opportunities for your child to learn naturally through play. We will build relationships with one another and the world around us by exploring nature, reading books, listening to and making music, dancing, playing number and letter games, and creating art. Your child will also benefit from the "hidden curriculum" of following directions, solving problems, interacting with adults and peers, and practicing self-help skills. Please bring a snack and seasonally appropriate outdoor clothing to each class.

Allison Williams

DIY Household Products | Ages: 10+

Cost: \$35

Contact: allison.williams720@gmail.com

About Allison:

Allison lives with her husband (Josiah) and two kiddos (Carson and Annaliese) in Osceola. Prior to moving to the area, Allison was a secondary Language Arts teacher in Minneapolis. Now her days are filled with teaching a typical homeschool assortment of subjects and operating their family's short and long-term rental business. Allison's lifelong pastimes include climbing trees, downing queso, and rooting on the Packers.

Class Description:

Become more resourceful by learning how to make a variety of household products with common ingredients.

Alicia Nelson

Oil Pastels | Ages: 10+

Cost: \$30

Contact: aliciamnelson15@gmail.com

About Alicia:

My name is Alicia and I am a mother of 5. I have been a lover of art since a very young age and I'm excited to teach another year of art class at Sparrows.

Class Description:

In this class we will explore oil pastels as we replicate style and learn about masters of old such as Vincent Van Gogh and Claude Monet.

All supplies are included in class fee.

Brittany Stewart

Embroidery | Ages: All Ages

Cost: \$15

Contact: bj.anderson3@gmail.com

About Brittany:

Hi, my name is Brittany. I have three kids, and we have attended Sparrows for a couple of years now. I am excited to teach your students some basic embroidery and help them be creative with a skill that is both practical and enjoyable. My grandma taught me to sew when I was young, and it has been a fun hobby for me ever since.

Class Description:

We will learn several basic embroidery stitches by completing several projects over the semester. Some projects include decorating dish towels, making ornaments, small wall hangings, etc., as time and pacing allow.

Caitlin Schwanke

Nature Study | Ages 6-9

Cost: \$20

Contact: caitlinjschwanke@gmail.com

About Caitlin:

I live in rural Wisconsin with the rest of you, but primarily with my husband, Ethan, and our six children. I love to be outside on the lake or by a fire or playing in the snow, but also love to read good books and eat good food and sleep with the windows open. I am passionate about home

education and particularly love nature study and how it teaches us to see and how in that seeing we learn to care. I believe that is where deep and true learning happens.

Class Description:

Nature study is foundational to science and art and math and conservation and I could go on and bore you but: this is where we build lifelong learners. When children learn to love the lovely and really see it for the glory it holds, we invite them into a grand adventure. In this class, we'll attempt to do just that through observation, nature journaling, poetry, copywork, living books, art study, and diving as deeply as we can into the natural world. We will focus this semester on autumnal subjects like changing leaves and trees, fungi, apples, birds of prey, the moon, arachnids, tracks and scat, woodland creatures, rocks and minerals, and whatever else we can get our hands on.

All class materials (nature journal, watercolors, pencils, colored pencils, study materials, etc.) will be provided and managed by me, hence the class fee. No need to send anything with your child or keep track of it week by week. Hooray!

Caitlin Schwanke

Shakespeare | Ages 10+

Cost: \$10

Contact: caitlinjschwanke@gmail.com

About Caitlin:

I live in rural Wisconsin with the rest of you, but primarily with my husband, Ethan, and our six children. I love to be outside on the lake or by a fire or playing in the snow, but also love to read good books and eat good food and sleep with the windows open. I am passionate about home education and have come to particularly love Shakespeare. Theatre has always been a delight to me, and once you begin to experience the Bard, you begin to see why his plays are celebrated and imitated the world over.

Class Description:

We will be reading and engaging thoroughly with the Shakespearean tragedy, Macbeth. If your child hasn't encountered Shakespeare yet, this is a riveting story of the potential of the human soul that will absolutely get their attention. If you want to familiarize yourself and/or your student with the story prior to class, both Charles and Mary Lamb and Edith Nesbit have excellent adaptations told in story form rather than play (poetic) form. Read it together!

"Macbeth is one of the greatest of the tragedies, swift as night and dark as spilt blood, with death and witchcraft bound together in wonderful poetry to tell the story of a man and woman who destroyed themselves." (*Marchette Chute*)

A story for the ages! This is a fun class that will require reading out loud, acting out parts, and listening and telling back this classic story. No materials are required; I will provide a Folger's Library Edition of the play to each student.

Gabi Marley

Dance | Ages: 6-9

Cost: None

Contact: ggflame29@gmail.com

About Gabi:

I have been dancing for 13 years and have taken many courses in dance education.

Class Description:

General dance basics focused mainly on ballet. They will learn foundational skills and terms. We will also play many fun dance-related games.

**You will need to wear comfortable clothes and wear socks for class.*

Heather Taucher

Improv | Ages: All Ages

Cost: None

Contact: heathertaucher@gmail.com

About Heather:

Heather Taucher has a Bachelor's Degree in paralegal studies. She is married to Kevin, and together they are raising up their two children, Gwenevere and Louis. Her goal is to raise up kids who love God, love people, and are growing in their faith and able to share Jesus with others.

Class Description:

A fun and engaging class with the goal of getting kids more comfortable with speaking in front of a group. We will play lots of improv games.

Jacob Popp

Gym | Ages: 10+

Cost: None

Contact: jcbpopp@gmail.com

About Jacob:

He has an associate's degree in youth ministry through the Ambassador College of Bible and Ministry and 10 years of experience as a local missionary through Teens for Christ. He is passionate about Bible and History and the ways they connect and influence the world at large.

Class Description:

In Gym class, kids will play all kinds of sports! Most will be familiar to kids, but will often have a special twist. About halfway through the class, kids will be asked to invent a new sport. We will then learn a little bit about what goes into designing fun, competitive activities.

Jacob Popp

Games & Chess | Ages: 10+

Cost: None

Contact: jcbpopp@gmail.com

Class Description:

In Games class, kids will be introduced to all kinds of fun, new activities. These will include board games and card games. Kids can bring their own board games or play some from my personal collection. Some days we will have unstructured time when kids can play whatever games they want, while on others we will all play the same game.

Joy Egleston

Gym | Ages: 6-9

Cost: None

Contact: joy@cahillphotostudio.com

About Joy:

Hello! My name is Joy Egleston, and I am excited to be teaching Gym Class for our 6–9-year-old students this year.

I am a wife, mom, business owner, and avid runner who believes kids learn best when they are active, engaged, and having fun. My goal is to create a positive environment where every child can build confidence, develop teamwork skills, and enjoy movement.

Class Description:

Through games, activities, and active play, we'll focus on fitness, sportsmanship, and having fun together. I look forward to helping each student grow and develop a love for being active!

Joy Egleston

Couch to 5K: Train For the Turkey Trot | All Ages

Cost: None

Contact: joy@cahillphotostudio.com

About Joy:

Joy Egleston is an accomplished distance runner with experience ranging from 5Ks to ultramarathons. She has completed multiple 50K trail races, the challenging Moose Mountain

Marathon, and recently finished her first road marathon. She enjoys tackling mountain trails, training for endurance events, and helping others discover the joy of running.

Joy believes anyone can become a runner with the right training plan and consistency. Her Couch to 5K program is designed to help beginners safely build endurance and confidence while preparing to cross the finish line at the Amery Turkey Trot 5K.

Class Description:

Whether you've never run before or you're looking to get back into running, this class is for you! Open to both kids and adults, we'll work together over the course of the session to build the endurance and confidence needed to complete the Amery Turkey Trot 5K on Thanksgiving morning.

Each class will include a guided workout, running tips, and encouragement in a fun, supportive environment. To be successful, participants will also be expected to complete scheduled runs outside of class each week. Those at-home workouts are an important part of the program and will help you safely progress toward running a full 5K.

Come ready to challenge yourself, celebrate progress, and discover that you're capable of more than you think!

Julia Mederich

Me on the Map | Ages: 6-9

Cost: \$20

Contact: julia.mederich@gmail.com

About Julia:

Hello! My name is Julia, wife to Jordan and mother to Jett, Jamey, Jack, and Journey... yes, we did that on purpose. I've been home educating my children since the beginning with a Charlotte Mason approach. As a family, we enjoy spending time outdoors, going to the theater, and reading ALL the books.

Class Description:

In this class we will be introducing geography and social studies to the child. This will give them an overall picture and where they live on the map. We will be learning about their home, street, city, state, country, continent, and planet. We will be using picture books, games, crafts, songs, and maybe some recipes too.

I will be supplying all the resources for this class.

Larry Mederich
Apologetics | 6-9, 10+
Cost: none
Contact: lmederich@gmail.com

About Larry:
Pastor for 40 years.

Class Description:
Teaching the students the essentials of the Christian faith in a way they can share it with others.

Mary Jo Rodriguez
Choir | All Ages
Cost: None
Contact: maryjorm3@gmail.com

About Mary Jo:
I am a retired manufacturing production planner with an Associate degree in Business Management. My husband and I have 3 grown sons and four grandchildren. Music has always been a major part of my life, directing children's choir 1985-1999, and the adult worship choir from 1998-2014, both at New Life Community Church in Milwaukee, WI. Since moving to Amery in 2018, I've participated in the Community Christmas Choir at Camp Wapo and led the choir at Amery Free on special occasions. Other hobbies include reading, scrapbooking, and gardening.

Class Description:
To select and teach age-appropriate music, basic choral skills, and introduce sheet music reading

Melanie Beckstrom
Great Artists | Ages 6-9
Cost: \$15
Contact: frey.mel@gmail.com

About Melanie:
My kids (Jordan and Josie) and I have enjoyed attending Sparrows and the enriching community here. I'm a fan of the arts and am looking forward to exploring that together.

Class Description:
We will be learning about some of the great artists in history, focusing on painters. Kids will hear a brief biography and do an art project in each style.

Megan Sackmann

Arts + Crafts | Ages 6-9

Cost: \$15

Contact: megsomebody@hotmail.com

About Megan:

Hi! I'm a homeschooling mom of 4 kiddos who love to be in community with other families. I love being outside, gardening, with our animals, and creating with my hands.

Class Description:

Let's create together! I love to see each student's creativity as they make arts and crafts their own. We will explore different methods, techniques, and art mediums to make art!

Wendy Dietrich

Using American Sign Language (*listed as "ASL" on class schedule*) | All Ages

Cost: \$5

Contact: wendydietrich43@gmail.com

About Wendy:

I live in Amery with my husband, and we have five children: Micah, Clara, and Ellie have graduated from our homeschool, Lily is a senior, and Esther is a junior. We also have a cat named Tiger and a few living houseplants. I love learning with my kids and get especially excited learning about people and events in history.

Class Description:

Using Dr. Bill Vicars' video course, ASL 1, we'll work through an introduction to American Sign Language (ASL). This includes basic grammar, vocabulary, fingerspelling, numbers, and cultural information related to the Deaf Community.
