



St. Gabriel Natural Playpark FACT SHEET

Name: St. Gabriel Natural Playpark

Location:

St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, School & Preschool
5503 Bardstown Road
Louisville, KY 40291

Brief Project Description: Design, execute and reveal a playground construction project for St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, Preschool and School that satisfies the needs determined in the parish's five-year parish strategic plan and that supports the parish's mission to grow a vibrant parish and school community.

The Need: St. Gabriel Natural Playpark

As one of the largest parishes, schools and preschools in the Archdiocese, St. Gabriel identified a need to create a natural, green learning and growth area. The parish *facilities needs assessment survey*, conducted in 2015, identified a playground as the second most important need for our parish to grow. The parish has not had a playground.

St. Gabriel also wanted a means of inviting our community in to the parish – the purest form of welcome and evangelization. The Natural Playpark provides an area for early childhood development, school extracurricular activity, along with elements of environmentalism and sustainable living. It's also a place for spiritual healing and reflection. And, it aligns with the parish's spiritual goal, encompassed in Pope Francis' encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'*, and St. Gabriel School's goal to become a *Green Ribbon School*. The playpark provides safer surfaces to play on, while inspiring innovation and creativity.

Design & Construction Partners:

Booker Design Collaborative
E-Z Construction
Miller Mowing & Landscaping

Timeline: August 2015 – April 2018

Construction Cost: \$399,961

Playpark Interactive Play Area Descriptions:

Zone: Amphitheater (All Ages)

See creativity come forth in the theater. This space is perfect for an outdoor classroom, choir performance, sing-a-longs and small plays.

Zone: Adventure Sand Play Area & Sensory Path (Recommended for Preschool-2nd Grade)

Let creativity flow with the construction of sand objects. Bring buckets and tools to dig in the sand. Children will be able to work on their fine and gross motor skills while exploring nature. Children also will work on balance and spatial awareness.

The funds for the creation of this play area were donated in memory of Jeannie Cockerel, the former Preschool Director, who passed away. Her dream was for a playground for our St. Gabriel youth. A fundraiser was held posthumously in her honor, and the proceeds were used as seed money for the playpark. The area has been dedicated to her memory.

Zone: Flagstone Forest Grove (All Ages)

Provides great space for a small quiet reading group, class discussions or experiments or an individual area for sketching, writing or studying. The possibilities are endless.

Zone: Play Lawn (All Ages)

Bring a blanket and a book and lie amid the lawn and take in the scenery. Great place to have an outdoor class. Run through the grass or just sit under a tree and listen to nature and the kids playing in the park.

Zone: Climbing Hills & Tunnel (All Ages)

Climb to the top of the hill and then take the easy way down and slide to the bottom. Use those gross motor skills to roll down the small hills, crawl through the tunnel and climb up the mountaineering ropes.

Zone: Parkour Play Area (Recommended for Kindergarten and older)

Test gross motor skills as students/children figure out how to cross suspended stumps, cora cord webbing, hanging bars and other obstacles. The swinging bridge will help to sharpen equilibrium as well.

Zone: Gaga Ball Pit (Recommended for Kindergarten and older)

Play in this area, which was donated by the St. Gabriel Men's Club with proceeds from their Annual Codfather Cafe Lenten Fish Fry. They have already played in it! Gaga is a fast-paced, high energy sport played in an octagonal pit. The more players the better! Dubbed a kinder, gentler version of dodgeball, the game is played with a soft foam ball, and combines the skills of dodging, striking, running and jumping, while trying to hit opponents with a ball below the knees. It is a fun way to work on teamwork and friendly competition.

Zone: Stream/Water Play Area (All Ages)

Get hands wet and learn the properties of water. See how the water flows over the objects in the stream. Create dams with sticks, rocks, leaves and other materials provided by Mother Nature. This area is wonderful for work on both gross and fine motor skills.

Zone: Music & Tinkering Area (All Ages)

Highlight musical skills with musical instruments. Become a three-piece band with our large chimes, a drum set and lily pad cymbals. This area can also be used for tinkering in our playhouse by playing house or letting creativity soar.

Zone: Community Picnic Area (All ages)

Provides a great example of reusing and recycling to leave a smaller carbon footprint. Outdoor picnic tables and trash receptacles are made from bottle caps that the parish has collected the last two years. Each table weighs 450 pounds, so they aren't going anywhere. St. Gabriel thanks the community for collecting the caps and the Knights of Columbus for driving to Evansville to deliver caps and pick up all the picnic tables and benches in our playpark. The Family of parishioners Dave and Inez White donated funds to cover the cost of the production of the benches. A generous donation in Memory of Linda Fox Nevin allowed for production of the picnic tables. As a community, St. Gabriel made 11 benches, three Ozark Picnic tables, and three trashcans for the playpark. That was over 7000 pounds of bottle caps. The parish also donated approximately 2000 pounds of caps to St. Albert the Great.

Zone: Greenhouse & Raised Garden Bed (All Ages)

Visit the future Home of the Greenhouse; donated by the Peet, Spurlock and Fox families. The goal is to pilot a farm-to-fork curriculum this summer with expansion in to a robust school curriculum over the next year. This area will host a fully operational greenhouse, and raised beds, which will be used by the preschool through 8th grade. Visitors can experience science and plant life from seeds to maturity. The area is great for science projects and learning botany.

Zone: Prayer Garden (All Ages)

Pray in this small Prayer Garden, designed and constructed by a St. Gabriel alumnus, Spencer Brown, for his Eagle Scout project. This a perfect spot to pray the rosary, read or meditate.

Time-lapse Construction Video Available: <https://www.stgabriel.net/parish/natural-playpark/>

For More Information, Or To Learn About Ways to Support Our Playpark Contact:

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