

# City Tree Christian School Celebrates 50th Anniversary of Serving San Diego Families

*Downtown San Diego preschool, founded in 1976, to hold anniversary celebration on Thursday, Sept. 3, at 5:30 p.m. on campus*

SAN DIEGO, CA, UNITED STATES, August 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [City Tree Christian School](#) is marking the 50th anniversary of its founding as a preschool in downtown San Diego. The school will celebrate the milestone on Thursday, Sept. 3, at 5:30 p.m. on campus during Back to School Night. What began in 1976 as a preschool program at [First Presbyterian Church of San Diego](#) has grown into a full

Infant through 8th-grade school while remaining deeply rooted in its early childhood mission. Today the school continues to provide full- and part-time preschool options for children ages 2-5 in the heart of the city.



City Tree Christian School at First Presbyterian Church, 320 Date St., downtown San Diego.

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We partner with parents from many backgrounds who want their children to grow in knowledge, character, compassion, and a sense of purpose.”

*Sara Delgado, Head of School*

Located at 320 Date St., City Tree offers San Diego families a preschool experience that combines play-based learning, kindergarten readiness, STEM experiments, music, Spanish exposure, art, and a warm, family-like community. Parents searching for preschool San Diego options will find a program that emphasizes academic preparation alongside character development in a safe, nurturing environment. The preschool operates year-round with flexible full- and part-time schedules and enrichment activities such as

Playball and dance during aftercare.

“City Tree is a missional school,” said Sara Delgado, head of school. “That means we intentionally extend a wide invitation to all families—not only those who attend church. We partner with parents from many backgrounds who want their children to grow in knowledge, character,

compassion, and a sense of purpose. Our doors are open to every family seeking an excellent preschool education grounded in care and values.”

Lisa Phipps, preschool director, added: “For fifty years we have watched young children discover the joy of learning through hands-on exploration, music, stories, and relationships. Our preschool teachers create a loving classroom where every child is known, encouraged, and prepared for kindergarten. Whether families are looking for a Christian preschool in San Diego or simply a high-quality early childhood program, they find a place where children thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.”

City Tree Christian School began in 1976 when members of First

Presbyterian Church of San Diego felt called to use their Christian Education building for weekday education. Co-directors Ruth Ely and Marion Persons launched the preschool; elementary grades were added soon after. The school expanded to include middle school, with the first 8th-grade class graduating in 2008, and now serves infants through 8th grade. It remains an outreach ministry of the church while welcoming families regardless of religious affiliation. Parents and students are not required to profess Christianity or attend church.

Research from the United States supports why many families—including those who are not regular churchgoers—choose faith-based early childhood and K-8 programs. Studies of private school choice consistently show parents prioritize a strong moral foundation, character development (such as kindness, respect, honesty, and responsibility), a caring and supportive community, smaller class sizes, individual attention, and a safe, loving environment. A 2024 experimental study published in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* found that parents selecting among private Christian schools place high value on both academic quality and spiritual formation.

Research by the Barna Group, a leading research organization that studies the intersection of faith, culture, and American life (often in partnership with groups such as the Association of Christian Schools International), shows that parents frequently rank “instilling strong principles and values” and intentional character development among their top goals for education. Barna’s



City Tree Christian School will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its preschool at Back to School Night on Sept. 3.

broader research on worldview formation also indicates that a child's moral and worldview foundations begin taking shape in the earliest years of life, underscoring the lasting impact of a values-rich preschool experience.

City Tree's preschool program reflects these priorities through its focus on kindergarten readiness, STEM and creative arts, social-emotional growth, and a diverse, family-like community in downtown San Diego. The school maintains accreditation through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and membership in the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). Average teacher tenure is long, and the student-teacher ratio supports individualized attention.

As City Tree celebrates five decades of early childhood education, the school invites San Diego parents exploring preschool options to join the anniversary celebration on Sept. 3 and to schedule a tour. Applications for the upcoming school year are open, with rolling admissions based on available space.

### About City Tree Christian School

City Tree Christian School is a diverse, family-like community that grows fully engaged citizens, partners with parents, nurtures Christ-centered learning, and champions academic excellence. An outreach ministry of First Presbyterian Church San Diego, the school serves infants through 8th grade at 320 Date St., San Diego, CA 92101. License numbers: Preschool 370800967; Infants 376701237. For more information, visit [citytree.org](http://citytree.org). This announcement was prepared and distributed on behalf of City Tree Christian School by Breton Buckley Marketing LLC, a full-service marketing and PR agency.

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