

John XXIII Montessori Children's Center

CGS Atrium Newsletter ~ Lent, March 2006

We have entered into a new liturgical year with the celebration of Advent and then of Christmas and Epiphany with the children. We have seen the changing of the liturgical seasons and have enjoyed the return to Ordinary time, a time to reflect on the gift of the great Feast of Christmas when the Light came to live among us. We ponder the Infancy Narratives together: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Adoration of the Shepherds and the Magi, and for the third year children, the Presentation in the Temple as well.

We are turning now to contemplate the Parables of the Kingdom of God: the parable of the Mustard Seed, the parable of the Merchant and the Pearl, and (for the older children) the parable of the Leaven. We will also be meditating on the parable of the Grain of Wheat as Lent begins and we begin our preparation time for the Feast of Easter.

During this past interval of Ordinary time we have also dwelt more in depth on the Mass: the nomenclature of the altar area, the vestments of the priest, and the gestures which the priest uses during Mass. The children will be learning or revisiting the gestures of Epiclesis, the Preparation of the Chalice, the Offering, the Sign of the Cross, Genuflection, etc. Given the richness of their exposure, this will be a great time to talk with your child about what he or she sees at Mass. Noticing what color the chasuble is and the various items used at Mass such as the chalice, paten, candlesticks, crucifix, altar cloth and so forth will be familiar to

the child even in the first year in the Atrium.

Once a week during the Atrium time is enough to begin to help the child to contemplate these riches but the Spirit at work in them is always active. We sometimes sing a beautiful song with them, "Be Still and Know that I am God," and talk about the value of Silence in order to hear God's voice. The Atrium experience will be greatly enriched for your child if you also find opportunities to share these treasures with them.

~ Mrs. Castellan and Mrs. Primeau

Mark your calendar:

March 22nd – Parent's Gathering: "First Communion Preparation in the Atrium." Held in the 6-12 Atrium for parents of Spring 2006 First Communicants.

March 29th: First Communion Meditation, 7:00 – 7:45 pm.

April 5th: First Communion Meditation, 7:00 – 7:45 pm. in the 6-12 Atrium.

April 12-13th, 19-20th: Easter Break:
NO ATRIUM

April 26-27th: Atrium resumes after Easter break.

April 26th: First Communion Meditation, 7:00 – 7:45 pm.

May 6th: First Communion Retreat with Confession, time TBA

May 10th – Final First Communion Meditation, 7:00 -7:45 p.m.

Notes from the 9-12 Atrium

The children in the 9-12 Atrium have recently completed reports and presentations about early civilizations and how they fit into the Plan of God. We have discussed throughout this past semester how each and every one of us has a part to play in the Plan of God for mankind. The choice God gives to us involves whether we will work to help further the Plan of God, or whether we will hinder it. We observed how each of the great civilizations in early history discovered and developed many things, such as language, architecture, mathematics and music, which they passed on to those who came after them. In so doing, they helped build bridges, one culture with another. The reports and photos of the projects done by the children have been placed in a binder in the 9-12 Atrium. We invite you to stop by at pick-up time to take a look at their creative and thoughtful work.

Joyful News from the 6 - 9 Atrium

We welcome Clara Jane Leutkemeyer, Mrs. Jenny's new baby. She arrived February 8th; all 10 lbs, 10ozs! In Jenny's absence our Atrium immersed ourselves in many of the Kingdom Parables. Contemplating these parables together has been such a wonderful springboard for many thoughtful discussions and prayerful moments. Being ready for that "ah-ha" moment when a child's eyes light up with joy because they see with such clarity that which so often confounds others, has been my greatest moments with the children. And then, oh so quickly, the moment moves on to other tasks and work. As Lent progresses, some of the work we will be exploring will be the Communion Meditations, new Geography work, Stations of the Cross booklets, as well as meditating on the timeline of Our Lord's Passion. We also are looking forward to the birth of our Assistants first children and Jenny's return to the Atrium.

Welcome to our new children and their families. Occasionally we have openings during the year, and this semester we are pleased to welcome Daniel Denehy to the Thursday afternoon Atrium with Mrs. Castellan, and Ian Schwartz and Tobi Schiebmeir to the Wednesday morning Atrium with Mrs. Primeau. Please see the attached addendum to your 2006 Atrium Roster of families.

If your child is sick or will miss Atrium, please be sure to either phone your child's Catechist or send word with another family. In this way no one is left waiting at the HLI entrance for your child.

The Child in the Church by Maria Montessori - we have two copies for sale for those of you new to the Atrium this year. They are in the Atrium and you may pick one up for \$17.00 after your child's Atrium session. They will also be available at the next Parent's Gathering. Please make checks out to John XXIII Montessori Children's Center.

Montessori Beginnings is a once-weekly class offered by Mountain Laurel Montessori School for parents and their children 8 weeks to 3 years. This class is open to anyone in the area, and offers Montessori furnishings, developmental toys and activities and practical life works appropriate for babies to older toddlers. The setting provides a great opportunity for your younger children to gain independence, self-mastery, and to develop concentration. If you would like to eventually enroll your younger children in the Atrium, this is a wonderful way to prepare them to more readily enter into the work and prayer they will experience at the Atrium. Several of our currently enrolled children have benefited from this early introduction to a Montessori environment, and their Moms have enjoyed it, too! Montessori Beginnings is held most Fridays, 9:30-11:30 at MLMS. For more information, please see the attached form.