

Introduction to the Atrium

(Prayer)

This presentation can be given for children as young as 3 in the opening weeks of the year.

You can read more about this in *Religious Potential of the Child*, by Sofia Cavalletti pages 120-127 and *Listening to God with Children*, by Gianna Gobbi pages 45-58; 117-130

With this presentation we wish to introduce the child to the environment in such a way that the child will be comfortable in the space so they can work to know God. Prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond all measure, with His Son, Jesus and with the Holy Spirit. The life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the Trinity and in communion with Him.

We hope that from this presentation the children will development of reverence for God and a respect and enjoyment for the environment. This will help them have more fuller, active, conscience participation in the Liturgy and prepare them for prayer.

MATERIAL DESCRIPTION:

- A space with child size furniture and a gathering space
- table with cloth of seasonal liturgical color
- candle or lamp with holder
- Bible with Holder
- Statue of the Good Shepherd
- Scripture card "Taste and see the Goodness of the Lord"
- rug

PRESENTATION:

Introduction:

Welcome children as they come by name. When all are settled: Perhaps you have wondered why we come here today. This is a very special place. It is a place where we will learn about Jesus and have beautiful work in order to know Him. It is a place of beauty, of peace and of love for all of us. It is a gift to you from the people of this parish. Since it is a special place, we have a special way of talking and walking - we speak softly. *Demonstrate.* We also walk slowly. *Demonstrate slow walking, keeping arms close to the sides, but comfortable.* There is never a need of hurrying here. *Ask the children if they would like to try. Thank each child who tries.*

Invite the children by name to enter the environment. Invite each find a chair to sit at. There will be much work in the Atrium here to help us learn and think about God. So we want to walk and move about in a quiet way so we don't disturb others who are working. *Walk around room, chairs and tables. Give each child a turn. Give them a tour of the room as well as the bathroom and office, come back to seats.* We will need to move chairs around. *Demonstrate how to lift, carry and set down quietly one leg at a time. Then let them carry their chairs to the prayer table.*

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Here we are at our prayer table. This is the place you can come to for the deepest silence. It is the most special place in this room. Let's look at what we have on it. This candle reminds us that Jesus died and is risen! *Strike Match*. He is the Light of the World.

This is a bible, maybe you have one at home. It can be very large or small like this one. It has God's words to us in it. These words are taken from the bible (*show prayer card*): "It says "Taste and see the Goodness of the Lord!" Taste have you ever tasted something you weren't sure of? Did you take a little or a great big bite? We usually take just a little bit of something we are tasting don't we. What do you think we will taste when we are here? What does our scripture card say? Taste and see the goodness of the Lord! Mmmmm...."

Here is an image of the Good Shepherd. Jesus said "I am the Good Shepherd." We will think much more about these words. And flowers... maybe you already know that flowers are a way of showing someone you love them.

Invitation to work: When you are here, you may want to come and spend some time at the prayer table. We have a pillow for you to sit on. *Pull out pillow from under the table*. You may ask me or the aide's name to light the lamp for you. You may want to think more about something you have heard or seen here. Maybe you want to speak or to listen to God. Maybe you want to sing. I know a song we could sing now. *Sing "Jesus Loves me this I know"* Sometimes you may want to draw what you have seen or heard. I would like to show you where we keep those materials. Let's quietly as we can, walk over to the art materials.