

## The Prayer Area

Prayer is the aim of the atrium. Everything that we do in this space is aimed toward helping the child enter into more conscious relationship with God. In the atrium, we aid the child's prayer through:

- creation of a space and a time set aside for listening for God's voice
- guiding exercises like "the silence game" that still the child's body and enhances their capacity for listening
- proclamation of the Good News in such a way that the child falls in love with God's gift
- allowing time for spontaneous prayer following each presentation that we offer and time at the prayer table
- linking the child's prayer to the prayer of the Church which unites them with the larger community and helps give expression to those thoughts/feelings that they haven't always found words for yet. (For the young child this would include prayer words like "alleluia" or "amen" as well as select psalm phrases and prayer phrases from the Gospels.)

We recognize that the child's natural form of prayer might look quite different than our own. For the young child, prayer is more naturally praise and thanksgiving than petition. Our understanding of prayer is based on a theology of "gift and response": God is always giving ever greater gifts. We are called to first open and enjoy, and to respond to God's gifts.

Establishment of a Prayer Corner:

- low bench or table to serve as prayer table
- a low shelving unit to hold prayer table articles
- book stand or cushion to hold Bible
- medium-sized Bible (able to be held and managed by child)
- a selection of Bibles in foreign languages
- perhaps a set of identical Bibles for all the children in the atrium to read together
- four prayer table cloths (one white, one purple, one green, one red)
- a small statue of the Good Shepherd and perhaps also a small Madonna & child
- one or two small easels to hold pictures or prayer cards
- a lovely box or basket to hold a small array of well-chosen religious pictures
- a lovely box or basket to hold one-word small prayer cards (approx. 5x7 in.) such as:

## Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

- Amen
  - Hosanna
  - Alleluia
  - Psalm 23:1-6
  - The Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)
  - Simeon's Prayer (Luke 1:29-32)
  - Zechariah's Canticle (Luke 1:68-79)
  - Psalm verses of praise for God's Word & all creation (eg. Ps. 16:11; Ps. 19:1; Ps. 89:11; Ps. 33:6; Ps. 113:1-4; Ps. 119:105)
  - Psalm verses asking for God's protection & help as well as forgiveness & reconciliation (e.g. Ps. 43:1; Ps. 51:15; Ps. 18:3; Ps. 124:8; Ps. 51:10; Ps. 27:1)
  - Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you."
  - "Blessed are you among women; blessed is the fruit of your womb."
  - larger Our Father prayer card
- a small kneeler or lovely cushion for a child to rest on in private prayer
  - a candle tray including small tray, votive candle in holder, lovely matchbox, spent match receptacle, small candle snuffer, tiny bell (to call children at end of work time), small prayer object (like cross or tiny icon)