



Parent Pages

Preparing the environment of the Domestic Church*

*The term "Domestic Church" refers to the family, the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. Though recovered only recently, the term dates back to the first century AD. The Greek word *ecclesiola* referred to "little church." The early Church understood that the home was fertile ground for discipleship, sanctification, and holiness.

The City of Jerusalem

Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi understood the importance of knowing about the Holy Land in order to grasp the message of the Bible. There is no history without its geography. She wrote, "In our view it is important that the historical events also have materials relative to their geographical reconstruction in order to let the children know how to situate them in a point in space. The material helps to concretize the events." (*Religious Potential of the Child*, p 113)



WHY DO WE FOCUS ON THE CITY OF JERUSALEM?

Every year during the Lenten and Easter Seasons, we find ourselves returning to the city of Jerusalem and visiting the places and events that lift up the Paschal Mystery in the Sacred Scriptures. Sofia Cavalletti, founder of this work, along with Gianna Gobbi, wrote in *The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey*:

The City of Jerusalem in which we offer a raised-surface map of Jerusalem with moveable pieces of the sites of the paschal events. The very brief narrative that accompanies the naming of the sites underscores the realness (or historical reality) of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection and the unity of the events. In a sense, all of these

episodes are really one event: the greatest mystery of love! (p 80)

Biblical Geography allows the child to participate more deeply in the liturgy, and will draw their attention to listen more closely in the coming weeks to the names of the towns and the locations they hear proclaimed in the Scriptures. Especially during Holy Week on Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil or Easter morning, we will be journeying to these sacred spots that our children will discover with the City of Jerusalem presentation.

It is important to note: When we speak to the children, we are careful to hold the death and resurrection of Jesus together. We never speak about one without the other. They are one mystery.

After the children are oriented to the city, the catechist shows more details, depending upon the children's attention span. For the youngest children, our meditation includes:

The Pools: There are two pools in the city of Jerusalem, that were places where Jesus performed healings, the Pool of Siloam and the Sheep's Pool.

The Temple: The Temple, located on the Temple Mount, is the highest point of the city. The temple comprises a large portion of the upper city. The temple is the site of many of Jesus' preaching and teaching.

The Cenacle, or Upper Room: Jesus came to

Jerusalem to share a special meal, the Passover Feast, with his disciples. This was a special meal with special words of love were spoken for the first time. Jesus took bread, blessed it, and broke it. Giving it to his disciples, he said, "Take it; this is my body." Then, he gave them the cup of wine and said, "This is my blood."

The Garden: After the special meal with special words, Jesus and his friends went out to the Mount of Olives. It's also called the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus prayed there. That night, people came and arrested Jesus and took him away from the garden. Jesus was sentenced to death.

The Cross: Jesus was crucified on a cross in Golgotha. It is also called Calvary. After he died, his friends placed his body in a tomb in a cave. They rolled a big rock in front of the tomb.

The Empty Tomb: On the third day, women came to care for Jesus' body according to their customs. They brought oils and spices. But the rock had been rolled away from the tomb, and Jesus' body was not in the tomb. Jesus was Risen. We light a candle next to the tomb. This light reminds us of Jesus' light which is stronger than death.

Cavalleti writes, "With regard to the events of the passion, we restrict ourselves to indicating the location of the Cenacle, the house of Caiaphas, The Tower of Antonia, the Temple, the Garden of Olives, Calvary and the tomb of the resurrection. The texts offer a detailed account of the passion; but we believe these texts go into detail that arouse horror, such as we could not bear in relation to anyone dear to us; why would we dwell on them with respect to Jesus? We risk inciting sentiments that should not be aroused. We concentrate on the Last Supper, the death and resurrection, and the gift of the Holy Spirit." (*Religious Potential of the Child*, p 114)

AT HOME

Hosanna

The word 'Hosanna' can be found in both the Old Testament (Psalm 118) and in the New Testament (Mark 11:9, and Matthew 21:9) It is a shout of praise or adoration. Make a Hosanna prayer card for your prayer table.

A**elua

We do not say or sing this word in the Atrium or at liturgy during Lent and Holy Week. You may want to remove this prayer card from our collection and place it in a box or drawer until Easter Sunday. Some families ritually "bury" the prayer card for the season of Lent.

Bible Atlas

The older children are interested in making discoveries about geography and even seeing photos of those places today. A Children's Bible Atlas would make a nice addition to an Easter Basket. Or check out a Child's Bible Atlas at your local library.

Reading Scripture

Invite your children to listen for the names of cities, towns and other places mentioned in the scripture readings during Lent:

- Jesus being tempted by Satan, taken to the parapet of the **temple**. (First Sunday of Lent, Year A, B, and C)
- Jesus drives the money-changers from the **temple** (Third Sunday of Lent, Year B)
- Jesus heals the man born blind, sending him to wash at the **Pool of Siloam** (Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year A)
- The Pharisees confront Jesus at the **temple** (Fifth Sunday of Lent, Year C)
- **Passion** of Jesus (Palm Sunday and Good Friday, Year A, B and C)
- Jesus washes the disciple's feet at the **Cenacle** (Holy Thursday, Year A, B and C)
- Jesus' Resurrection or discovery of the **Empty Tomb** (Easter Sunday, Year A, B and C)