



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.

Parables

Among the biblical signs, a particular place belongs to the parable, the teaching method of Jesus (Mark 4:34). The parable, like every sign, relates to a reality that is different from the episode or event it contains. For instance, the parable may speak of a woman making bread, but its aim is to introduce us to the Kingdom of God.

Parables usually have two components: one is taken from everyday life, and the other from the transcendent level of reality. These two levels are like the two rails in a track that guide our meditation, helping us to go farther and deeper. The episode or event of the parable is like the façade of the house, behind which are several rooms filled with many treasures; to enter we need to go slowly, almost if on tip-toe, and with a spirit of reverence.

This is the kind of spirit we mean: to offer children the parables as we would offer them a treasure, so that it implants itself deep within them and they can draw on it, how and when we do not know (Mark 4:27).

In the Level One Atrium (for children ages 3-6) we offer the following parables:

- The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)
- The Parable of the Yeast (Matthew 13:33)
- The Parable of the Growing Seed (Mark 4:26-29)
- The Parable of the Precious Pearl (Matthew 13:45-46)
- The Parable of the Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44)

These five parables focus on two particular aspects of the mystery of the kingdom of God. (1) The first three parables lift up the mystery of the Kingdom as the mystery of life itself, a mystery of growth and transformation, with a continuous movement from less to more life. (2) The last two parables invite us to contemplate the Kingdom of God as the most beautiful and valuable thing there is, a gift from God that it is intended for our greatest joy.

- Cavalletti, Sofia, Coulter, Patricia, Gobbi, Gianna, Montanaro, Silvana Quattrocchi, Rojcewicz, Rebekah. *The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey*, revised and updated, 2014, chapter four. Liturgy Training Publications.