



The United States Association of

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Catechist Notes: September 2020

Beginning the Atrium Year and The Enthronement of the Bible

Preparing the Environment

Whether you are going to serve children online or in the atrium, it is still important to consider how to prepare a prayerful environment a place of listening to and responding to God, for us to draw nearer to God. Do you have a small prayer place set up that the children can see if you are in an online meeting with them? Can you encourage them to prepare their own place of prayer?

A word about offering Atrium Presentations electronically:

If we were to give children presentations online, it is not the same as when the presentations are offered to children in person. These are moments that we cannot in any way “realize” electronically. In the atrium, the presentation the catechist offers children is an announcement, a proclamation of the Christian message. While it is a brief moment, the rest of the atrium time allows children to absorb the message internally through the work of their hands. This is especially true with materials presented in the Level I atrium. The material we use in a presentation is not a “didactic material” and therefore, it isn’t designed for the adult as a teacher’s aid. The material is designed for the children’s use and in seeing a material presented online the child would see the material associated with the message but could not immediately use it which is key to allowing the child to absorb the message it conveys. We can discuss scripture with children without materials especially the Level II and III children. We can remember with them (not remind them) that we are united in the love of the Good Shepherd and recall what they have seen in the atrium as part of our reflection on the scripture. What we can do is support the Domestic Church in their shared prayer life at home which is at the heart of our mission and purpose.

Our Attitude

Gianna reminds us that “Catechesis should be a religious experience which is shared by adults and children.” We are listening to the Word of God together with the adult serving as a “sort of mediator.”

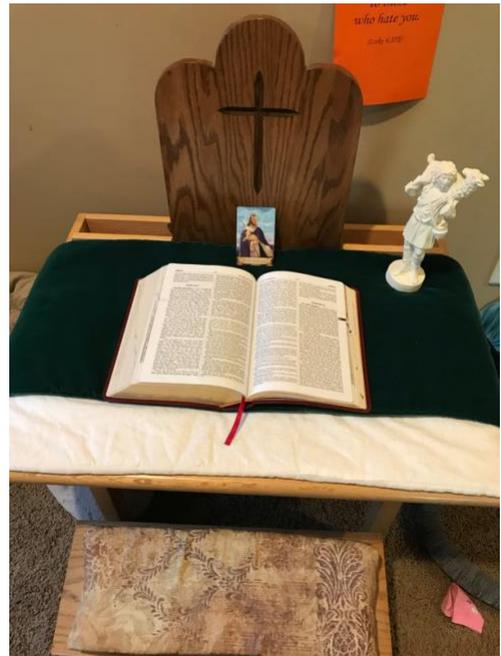
Our attitude is one of faith and profound humility and respect. Adults need to have a clear awareness of their boundaries regarding the relationship between the child and God.



Overview for welcoming and offering Enthronement of Bible

Welcoming the children in an online meeting can include greeting the children and engaging them in a conversation that invites the children to get to know one another sharing about their school, their family, interests (playing a sport, an instrument). We can then name with the children the gathering as our “atrium” even if we are not in the atrium environment. We can identify this as a place prepared for us to get to know God and better understand our relationship with God. We can either sing or call each child by name. You may want to take a few moments for some grace and courtesy helping the children understand how we will act and speak during this time together.

Sitting near a prayer table that is not prepared but has the items placed nearby on a mat. Invite the children to help you prepare the prayer table first with the prayer cloth, then the candle(s), the Good Shepherd statue and then with the Bible stand.



For children who are 3-6 years old, you may want to then take the Bible and hold it up for all to see reverently.

Announce, “This is the Holy Bible. It is God’s Word and is most precious.” Then place the Bible on the stand.

At this point you could end with a song for the 3-6 years old children.

For children who are six to nine years and for those who are nine to twelve years, more could be shared about the Bible based upon notes from What Is the Bible? Keep points shared to only 2-3.

Children could then be invited to look up a gospel or psalm verse in their Bible and copy it for their prayer card.

Options might be John 8:12, Psalm 119:105, Psalm 100 (any verse).

Keep these options for the children’s work very simple and brief.

A note about practical life. As you know practical life activities are important to the beginning of the atrium year for the three to six year old children, especially, but also could be helpful for the six to nine year old children and nine to twelve year old. The Parent Pages offered for this month will give some guidelines to offer families. Consider suggesting 1 or 2 practical life activities that connect the children to preparing a prayerful environment.

A little note about singing with children on Zoom. Since our voices don’t all synchronize on Zoom (unless you have an audio engineer available), it is best to mute everyone so that the children and families can sing and have one person sing for all.