



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.

Geography and the Elementary Child

From forever, God has had a plan, a plan which leads to an abundance of life. This plan does not just exist in abstractness but continues to be played out in the world through the messiness of human history, in the concreteness and physicality of matter. One of clearest revelations of this truth occurred when the Second Person of the Trinity united Himself completely to humanity in the Incarnation. Jesus lived in a particular land, the land of Israel, and walked, ran, swam, and fished. He used mud to heal blindness and drew in the dirt with his finger, turned water into wine and made breakfast for his friends. He lived a life filled with struggle and heartache, family and friends, delight and joy, laughter and tears. Just as we often return to the physical places in our own lives to remember significant moments, we can "visit" the land of Israel to enter more fully into particular moments in Jesus' life.

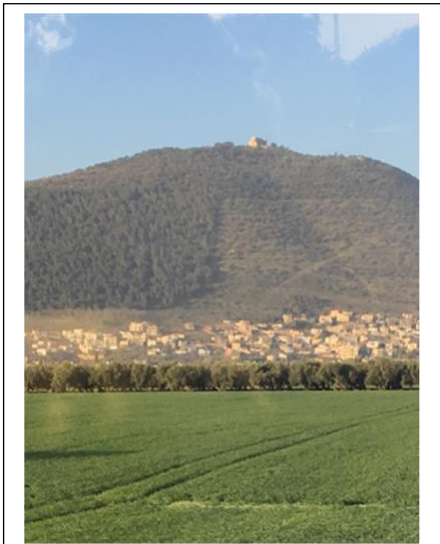
Geography in the Atrium

Having been introduced to the land of Israel and the cities of Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem in the Level I Atrium, the elementary children are invited to expand their study of the geography of Israel through Pin Maps, booklets, and Scripture charts.

- **Pin Maps:** The children use an atlas or a control chart to label significant cities in Israel, often transferring these onto their own personal map as they "collect" their names and locations. This provides a sensorial tool for visualizing the places where Jesus walked, preached, and healed others. Nazareth is quite a distance from Bethlehem, but the journey from Bethlehem to Jerusalem is very short.
- **Booklets:** Picturing where a specific location is in relation to others is helpful but knowing what took place there is also a gift! The booklets provide information about events which occurred in Jesus' life, listed by the place in which they transpired.
- **Scripture chart:** The geography Scripture chart is like a mini concordance or tool for finding where these locations



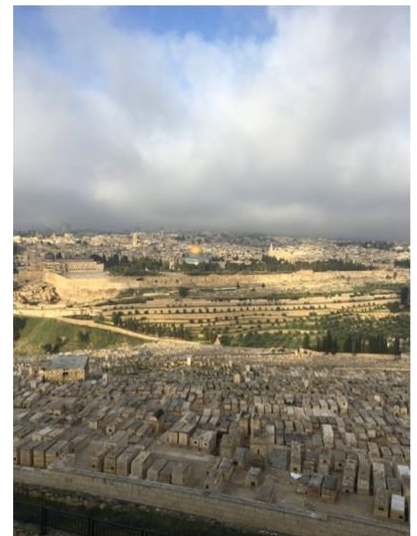
are mentioned in the Bible. The chart shows that Cana is mentioned twice in the Gospel of John, and by looking up these passages the children can read about the events which occurred in Cana and other locations straight from the Word of God.



Mount Tabor
 (Matthew 17:1-9)
 (Mark 9:2-8)
 (Luke 9:28-36)



The Sea of Galilee
 (Matthew 4:12-22)
 (Mark 4:35-41)
 (John 21:1-14)



Temple Mount (Jerusalem)
 (Matthew 21:12-14)
 (Luke 2:46-47)
 (John 5:1-14)

Geography in the Home

The land of Israel today is only about fifty by one hundred fifty miles. This tiny area contains Mt. Hermon where you can find Israel's lone ski resort as well as the Dead Sea which is earth's lowest elevation on land. The "Sea" of Galilee is really a lake which you can see across when standing on one shore, and the Jordan river is often no more than 20-30 feet in width. The green mountain ranges and valleys in the Galilee are often covered with huge boulders while the southern Judean countryside is filled with desert cliffs reminiscent of the Badlands. When reading Scripture as a family or hearing God's Word in the liturgy, tune your ears for the places that are mentioned. You can look these up and find out what else happened in these places. You might also want to find pictures of these sites in order enter more fully into pondering the "realness" of Jesus and his life.

Perhaps there are places where significant moments in your own family's spiritual journey took place. Consider looking at photos of the church where your child was baptized, where you were confirmed, or where your parents were married. These places provide physical, sensorial reminders of some of God's greatest gifts!

