



In the Meadow

Where the sheep gather

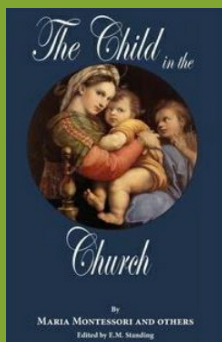
A newsletter for the Organization Members of CGSUSA



Greetings!

This month, the children in our Level Two atrium have continued to choose one prayer card to place on the prayer table each week. The words from Psalm 46 - *Be still, and know that I am God* - resonates deeply with them. They delight in the moments of silence during the atrium session and sitting in silence with the Shepherd at the prayer table.

In silence, the child is able to listen to the Inner Teacher and to hear the voice of God. In the book *The Child in the Church* by Maria Montessori and others, we read on page 47, where Maria Montessori speaks about everything the children do in their environment would be repeated on a higher plane:



"In a similar way the Silence Game - in itself so full of mystery and awe - would now become the prelude to the still more wonderful silence of prayer and meditation."

We know that silence must become a habit for our prayer. May the children continue to lead us as we enter into these moments of stillness before our God.

For the Parish Bulletin or Parent Newsletter or Catechist Note

The Characteristics of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd *The 32 Points of Reflection*

What are the principal points which distinguish this catechesis and because of which it is called the "Catechesis of the Good Shepherd?" The following characteristics are intended to represent the principal aspects of the catechesis as they have emerged after more than fifty years of work with children of different countries, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. These characteristics are reflective of the constants which have presented themselves in this work and are presented here with the invitation to go deeper into them for further reflection.

4. The transmission of the Christian message in the atrium has a celebrative character.

The catechist is not a teacher, remembering that the only Teacher is Christ himself.

The catechist renounces every form of control (such as quizzes, texts, exams, etc.) in the spirit of poverty before an experience whose fruits are not her/his own.

For the Parishioner: The atrium allows the child and God to encounter one another. How have you encountered God this week in his Word? in Liturgy? in Another Individual? in Silence?

For the Parent: We are reminded that the only Teacher is Christ himself. He teaches both the adult and the children. The Christian message is received by the adult and child listening together. Set aside time this week to listen to the Word together, after an appropriate moment of silence, invite your children to tell you what they heard. _

For the Catechist: To 'renounce every form of control' while in the atrium, may have been a shift for you when you began your role as a catechist, how has that impacted your ministry and your relationship with the child?

For Parents

This information may be included in your communication with parents.

This month our focus is [Art and the Child](#).



All About the Atrium

CGSUSA Parent Newsletter

Art and the Child

The art shelf is a much-loved space in our Level Two atrium. In fact, this year, after a tour of the

was the co-founder with Sofia Cavalletti of the Center of Catechesis in Rome, writes in *Listening*

For the Catechist

Spend some time with the 32 Points of Reflection. Consider the following questions, pick one or two from the list below and journal your response or share with a fellow catechist:

- *Which characteristic is easiest for you to live? easiest for your community to live?*
- *Which characteristic is most challenging for you to live? most challenging for your community to live?*
- *What is one concrete step you could take in moving closer to living that characteristic?*
- *How would living this characteristic make a difference in your life? The life of the child? the life (or culture) of your parish / school community?*
- *If you could make one characteristic into a prayer card for your table at home, so it would be in front of you each day, which would you chose? Can you find a lovely piece of paper and your favorite pen to make that card?*

- After reading the characteristics, do you have a new understanding based on your lived experience with the child in the atrium? Do any of the characteristics remind you of an incident with a child in the atrium?
- What struck you when you read the characteristics today? Was there anything that seemed "new" for you today?

The 32 Points of Reflection can be found on page 133 of RPOC II and on our [website](#).

For the Catechist and the Children

*This month CGSUSA member Paula Rush shares the song, "Be Still and Know."
Our children love to sing this at the prayer table.*



Be Still

For Reflection...for the Catechist in the Atrium

The Sources: *from Sofia and Gianna*

"Silence is an essential element of prayer. Silence is not simply the absence of noise; it is a deeper stilling of the body, heart, and mind so as to listen and to open oneself more fully to God. We are invited to: *Be Still, and know that I am God* (Psalm 46:10). The cultivation of silence is a very important dynamic in the religious formation of children.

Many adults are surprised to discover how much children enjoy silence. During the retreat leading up to her first Communion, a child once wrote: "I like everything here, but



silence is the thing I like best." In fact, silence is something the child searches for and loves. There is a quality of silence in which the child feels completely at home. The day to day world of the child does not tend to offer the opportunity to be "at home" with silence. This is a special offering of the atrium."

- Sofia Cavalletti, [The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey](#), p 90.

Do you have questions about the Silence Game or how to begin making silence with the children in your Atrium? Please re-visit the last chapter of [Listening to God with Children](#) by Gianna Gobbi, who writes about the nature of prayer. You may also want to read Maria Montessori's [Discovery of the Child](#). For more information, contact [Membership Office](#).

The black and white version of some of the elements that you would like to copy and paste to your parish bulletin or catechist communication can be found [here](#). We look forward to [hearing from you](#). Please let us know what resources may be helpful to you as an Organization Member.

In the Shepherd's Care,

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