

It's a CGS Summer

The month of August is often the hottest month in the northern hemisphere. It's no wonder this is the month for water play: dashing through sprinklers, splashing in the city pools, spraying each other with garden hoses. Water is the basis of life and joy!

Pouring Works

Even the youngest child loves to play in water. Help your two year old become independent by learning to pour her own milk, juice, lemonade. Start by setting up a shelf at her height which includes a small 4"x6" tray upon which are small handle-less carafes (one empty, one filled with popcorn). Show her how to pour from one carafe to the other. Watch and when this becomes too simple, switch out one carafe for a tiny cream pitcher with a handle to develop her pincer grip.



As she learns to pour without spilling a kernel, switch out the corn for rice which pours much more like water. As her thumb and finger grip develops, switch out the last carafe for another pitcher. Over the summer, keep making the material a little more

challenging, but move at her pace and don't rush the changes.

Perhaps the rice now becomes water, and you add a sponge and show her how to clean up her own spills. Add a stool near the sink so that she can get her own water as she needs. By the end of the summer she may be pouring from a pitcher into child's glasses of equal size or learning to pour into a cruet with a funnel.

Now she can pour her own lemonade! I wonder how else she may be called to use her new skill in caring for the living creatures of God's kingdom or participating in worship?

Plant Care

God placed humankind in the Garden and gave us responsibility for the tending of the earth. The love of growing things and the desire to care for them is part of every child's created being. Help your child develop his desire for stewardship by giving him a meaningful purpose for his water pouring: caring for plants in your home or garden. Place on a small tray a pitcher, a small dish, a tiny bowl containing a few cotton balls, and a flag made of a bamboo skewer with a bit of paper taped to the end and upon which is drawn a heart. Show him how to touch the soil of a potted plant and determine if it is damp or dry. If dry, let him fill his pitcher with water and give the plant a drink. He can wash its leaves by pouring a tiny amount of water in the dish, wetting a



cotton ball, and stroking the leaves. He can place his flag in the soil to show this plant has been loved.

Flower Arranging

One of the first acts of prayer is simply to notice and enjoy the beauty of the world around us. Often we transform the beauty of the world into an offering back to God: think of the flowers on our altars or prayer tables! Perhaps your child too can prepare flowers to offer on your family prayer table (insert link on how to prepare a prayer table). Provide a small 4”x6” tray upon which is a small pitcher, a small bowl, two tiny vases or pinch pots, and a pair of child’s scissors. Show your child how to fill her pitcher with water, to pour a small amount of water in the bowl and in the vase she is preparing, to place a flower stem under the water in the bowl and to snip it at the height appropriate to the vase, and to place the trimmed flower in the vase. When she has finished trimming all the flowers she desires, and her vase is ready, guide her to place it on your family prayer table as a way of thanking God for the beauty of the flowers. Does she see in your church a place where flowers have been watered and given to God, too?

Water in the Liturgy

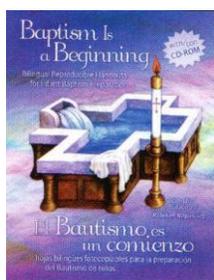
Water is one of the signs of our liturgy. In our sacraments, we use elements of everyday life, because we know that God is working through the elements of matter to assure our salvation. Watch with your child for the uses of water in our church and wonder with him about the meaning of the water in our liturgy.

Why does the priest wash his hands before the Eucharist? Watch closely for the drop of water placed in the wine as the chalice is prepared. Stop by the

baptismal font and ponder why water is poured over the baptized. Can life be sustained without water? What kind of life does this baptismal water give to us? How is water a meeting place in which we encounter God in our everyday world?



Baptism Is a Beginning



CGSUSA has a wonderful resource for parents and grandparents that offers essays on the elements of baptism, religious capacities of the young child, praying with young children, moral formation in young children and much more.

By making water work available to our children and exploring water’s use in our church, we are initiating them into our Christian life by introducing them to one of the most potent signs in our liturgy.

“The book of the universe can remain silent to the person who has not been initiated into its language, to the one who has not been trained to know its signs, that is, to read beyond appearances.” The Religious Potential of the Child p. 163