



# 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.

## The Sign of the Cross

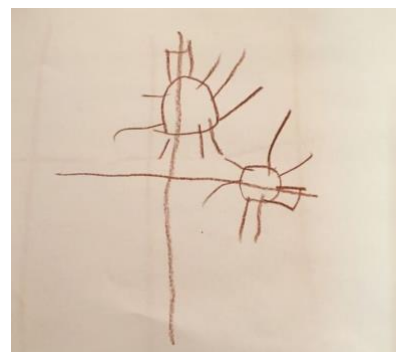
One of the most common gestures we use in prayer is the Sign of the Cross. It is a movement we see at Church and at home, in our family and personal prayer. With the youngest children in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Atrium, we begin by looking at the crucifix in the atrium, recognizing this as a sign of Jesus' death and resurrection. We focus first on the gesture itself, the movement of the hand by tracing the cross on our body. Then after inviting the children to pray this gesture we might think more about what we are praying, we invite them to continue enjoying this gesture and to look for His sign in the Atrium, at home, and at Church.

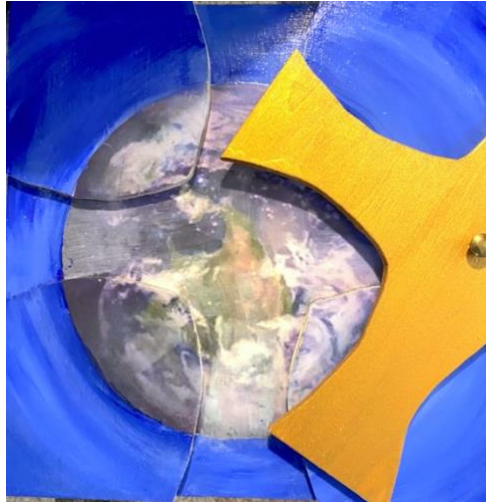
### The Sign of the Cross at Home:

- For the youngest child, parents may simply model the Sign of the Cross. If the children see you do it, they will want to do it, too.
- Pray the Sign of the Cross at the beginning and end of your prayers: meal prayers, bedtime prayers, etc.
- Make the Sign of the Cross in times of need or fear (during a thunderstorm, an illness, or travel.)
- Making the Sign of the Cross by tracing the cross on the forehead of an infant who readies for bed or an older child who goes off on a journey.
- Make a Sign of the Cross prayer card that can be displayed on your family prayer table or dining room table.



The cross makes its way into many of the children's drawings, showing their attunement to the deep connection of Jesus' sign with our faith.





The Cosmic Cross Puzzle is an extension of the Sign of the Cross work for the child.

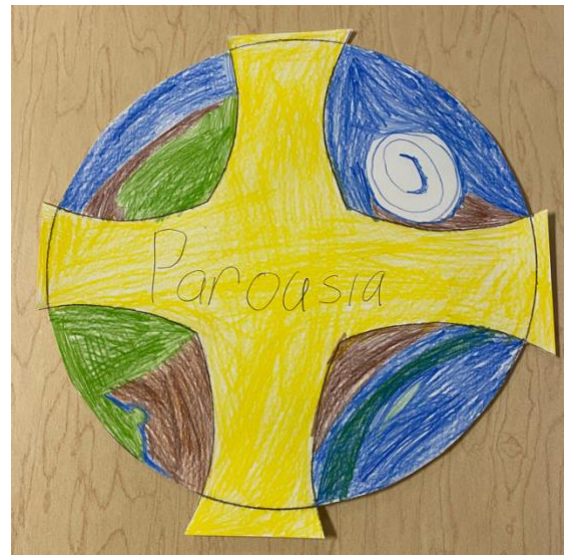
The child sees that the cross is larger than or extends beyond the earth.

There is only one moveable piece of the puzzle, which allows the child to create their own Cosmic Cross image. (See below)



The children use the Cosmic Cross puzzle to create their own Cosmic Cross image

The older children love this image as well.



Many children will choose this image to create a First Holy Communion banner (below), or draw the Cosmic Cross during their First Communion Retreat (middle and far right images, below).

