



Parent Pages

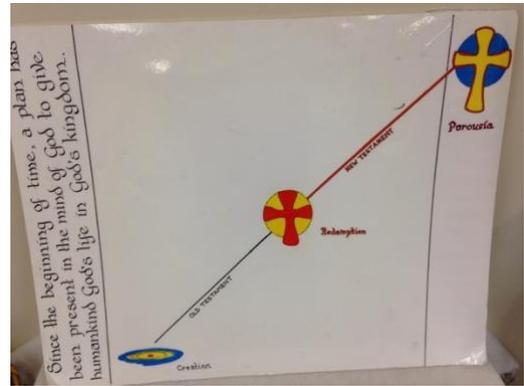
Preparing the environment of the Domestic Church* * The term "Domestic Church" refers to the family, the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. Though recovered only recently, the term dates back to the first century AD. The Greek word ecclesiola referred to "little church." The early Church understood that the home was fertile ground for discipleship, sanctification, and holiness.

The History of the Kingdom of God

The Three Moments

Each year the Level II and III atrium begins with an overview of Salvation History. This story is offered through a variety of materials, but in each repetition the children hear of this great truth through the lens of the three moments of Creation, Redemption, and Parousia.

Creation comprises that period in which time begins and God, who has always existed, begins to prepare a place into which he can welcome the greatest of his creation, humanity. The universe, the earth, the land and water, the minerals within the earth, the plants upon the earth, the animals which move in the sea, sky, and land are all created by God in preparation for mankind who will need all of these gifts for life. As time passes, Creation continues, as does the work of God who offers a new gift to humanity, the gift of the Covenant. This gift of relationship with God is offered through the great figures of the Old Testament: Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the Prophets call the people back to the Covenant. All of this leads to the second moment, **Redemption**, in which God reveals himself most fully through the gift of the Son of God who becomes man. In this moment the greatest gift is given, Jesus, who is born, lives, dies, and rises in order to share his risen life with his people. We live today in this moment, this time in which his risen life continues to spread throughout the earth through the work of those who act in accord with him. We await today, as have all people of all times, the third moment, called **Parousia**. This is a Greek word which literally means "physical presence" and marks the time in which Christ will return and be "all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28).



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The Blank Page

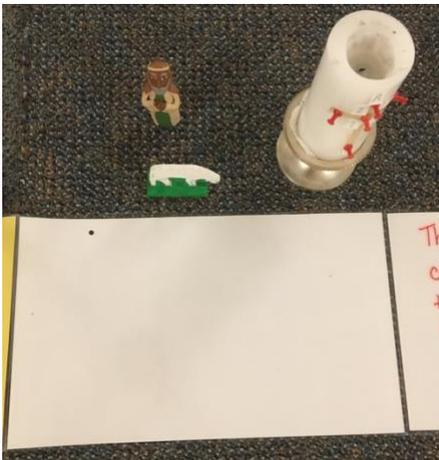
While God is clearly the author of this plan for creation, we see that throughout history he has invited humans to collaborate with him from the beginning of their existence. Adam was given the task of naming the animals (Genesis 2:19), Noah built an ark for himself and all living creatures (Genesis 6:18-19), Abraham followed God's call (Genesis 12), and Moses spoke for God to the Egyptians as he advocated for their freedom (Exodus 5-12). Mary's "yes" to all God was asking brought forth the gift of Jesus, whose "yes" opened a new way of living, filled with risen life, to all. So what about us? Have we also been invited to collaborate with God? Yes, in each and every moment of our own lives. In the Atrium we call every next second, every hour and day between now

and Parousia, the blank page. Why is it blank? We can look back and read history. We can hear about the way our ancestors have lived their lives. But tomorrow has not yet been written. God has a plan for tomorrow and part of his plan is to write through us, through our words and actions. What “yes” is he inviting of us? Who is in need of a kind word or gesture? In what way can we help to share his goodness with that person? How does he desire his light to be spread each moment of every day through our choices and actions? How can we collaborate with God in his great plan to bring all of creation to fullness of life?

The response of the children

After hearing the Scripture of the Parable of the True Vine (John 15:1-11), several children were discussing their thoughts in a way that showed their understanding of the blank page.

- “The fruit of the vine is the Light because Jesus is the Light” (1st grade girl).
- “We have to remain because if we don’t God can’t prune us and then we can’t bear beautiful fruit” (3rd grade boy).
- “It takes a plant a long time to bear fruit so maybe our fruit is our holiness that you see when you get to heaven” (2nd grade boy).



Invited to bring items from the Atrium to place on the blank page, a group of 2nd graders brought an apostle, a sheep, and the Easter Candle. They explained that we are the sheep, filled with the Light of the Risen Christ given to us at our Baptism and we write on the blank page just like the apostles did.

A 2nd grader, pondering the blank page, wrote:

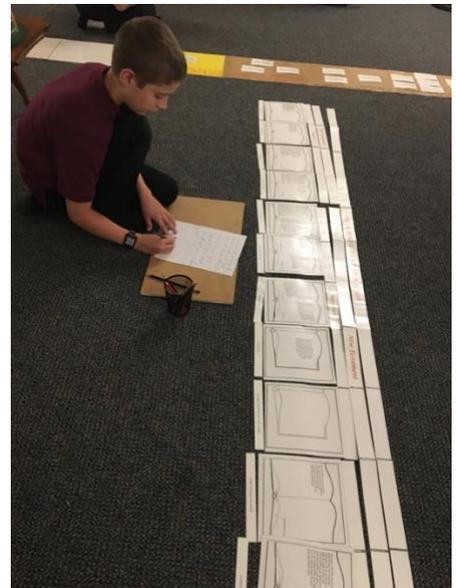
We love you God!

God help us to be more like you. Help us to pray you guide us to go to heaven. Lead us to be close to your heart. Be with us all. Be in our hearts.

Be in our words. Be in our actions. Let you guide the way to your heart. We love you, O

God Almighty Father. Almighty Spirit, we love you. Lord God and Holy Spirit we know you are the God, the only God, and you are the only God but three people, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit and one true God forever and ever.

Amen.



Having worked with a Level III material about the History of the Kingdom of God, a 6th grader chose to compose a prayer asking for God’s help in writing well on the blank page.