



# All About the Atrium

CGSUSA Parent Newsletter

## Ordinary Time

The liturgical year begins with the Season of Advent, a time for the faithful to prepare for the feast of Christmas. We are now moving from celebrating the birth of Jesus at Christmas to Ordinary Time. The Church's calendar, the liturgical calendar, lifts up for us the life of the Church, as it commemorates the life of Jesus Christ. This month we focus on Ordinary Time which lasts about half of the liturgical year. We find this time on the liturgical calendar just after the new civil year begins in January. Ordinary Time follows the Christmas season through Ash Wednesday and begins again after the feast of Pentecost. This longer observance of Ordinary Time continues until the start of Advent, which marks the time we begin a new liturgical year at the end of November and the beginning of December. The color for Ordinary Time is green. We see green in the vestments worn by the priest and deacon at liturgy, we find it used in the liturgical environment that decorates our Church, and the child discovers the green cloth as it adorns the prayer table in the Atrium.



Photo courtesy of Carolyn Kohlhaas

Sofia Cavalletti writes on page 71 of *The Religious Potential of the Child: Six to Twelve Years Old*:

"In modern life, the way we live time has been referred to as "mercantile time" — a way that is out of sync with nature's rhythm. In the structuring of "mercantile time," the occupations of homer faber prevail; humans organize their jobs and lives according to precise schedules. "Mercantile time" calls for strict adherence to the clock, not to natural cycles. It is short and discontinuous in comparison to the regular rhythm of nature and also to the irregular but slow rhythm of the movement of history. Liturgical time is whole; it envelops the past, the present and the future. It offers us, who live mercantile time in our daily lives, a pause — a pause that is charged with possibilities for newness of life. It isn't that one way of living time — mercantile or liturgical — can be substituted for the other. Rather, each must be known for what it is, and the two must be integrated in the harmony of life."

### Why is it called Ordinary Time?

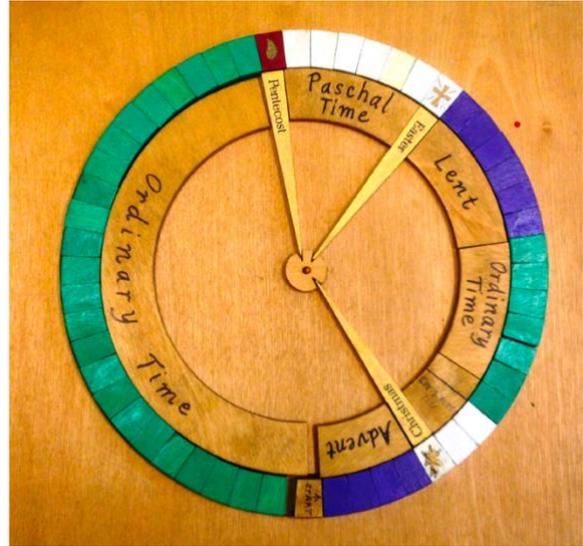
In our culture, the term "ordinary" suggests a commonality, a familiar routine that connotes a drab, dull and monotonous state. It seems to be reinforced by the fact that Ordinary Time falls outside of a major liturgical season (such as Advent and Lent) or the time when we are celebrating a feast (Christmas, Easter, or Pentecost). In the culture of the Church, Ordinary Time is called "ordinary" not because it is mundane, but because the weeks of Ordinary Time are numbered. The Latin word

*ordinalis*, which means numbers in a series, comes from the Latin word *ordo*, where we get the word *order*. The weeks of Ordinary Time represent the ordered life of the Church. It is a time when we are walking with the Shepherd. This is the time when we are living the life of Christ.

## The Child and Ordinary Time in the Atrium

In the Atrium, the child is introduced to Ordinary Time in the material of the Liturgical Colors and the Liturgical Calendar, the latter is presented in the form of a circular wooden puzzle. How does the child's work with this puzzle assist their religious life?

- The liturgical calendar assists in connecting the child to Liturgy. The child discerns that the life of the Church revolves around the life of Christ. The liturgical calendar helps to introduce the child to the concept that the Liturgy is structured or *ordered* and, like nature, follows a predictable path containing seasons and events.
- The older child will look to the History of the Kingdom of God timeline and find where in that history the feasts first occurred, as well as contemplate where this current time would be on our History of the Kingdom of God timeline.
- The oldest child will come to determine the date of Easter using the lunar and liturgical calendars. That work expands the child's understanding of and interest in the liturgical cycle celebrating the life of Christ.



The calendar moves counter-clockwise. This is in keeping with Maria Montessori's version of the Liturgical Calendar as a reminder that "God's time is not our time."



### New Podcast Launches January 8th Introductory episode available now on iTunes, Spotify, and Podbean!

How can a young child deeply encounter the love of God and respond to it? What does this look like? How can we as adults foster and facilitate children's authentic and loving awareness of God? What are the needs and capacities for a healthy religious life that children show us for such relationship?

The method of Christian Faith Formation called The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has been exploring these questions for over 65 years guided by the Bible, Liturgy, Montessori principles, and the careful observation of what resonates most deeply with children.

Journey with us, every other Wednesday as we explore the spirituality of the child through The Good Shepherd & the Child Podcast. <https://www.cgsusa.org/learn/resources/podcast/>