

The Cobbler

Ephesians 6:15

The Newsletter of the Christian Montessori Fellowship
May 2003

National Conference

June 26 – 28th
San Antonio, Texas

A Baker's Dozen **Of Montessori benefits for the child**

Time

You don't have to be a Montessori school to give this benefit to children but sadly it seems impossible to do unless you are a Montessori school. Children have a different timetable than the rest of the world. From the moment the doctor tells you the baby will arrive May 21st to when the baby arrives – April, May or June - there is nothing about children that declares "time" as important.

Babies don't know day from night, they don't know (or even care) what is important to your schedule – they live in the moment. (And long after we leave childhood there is something about living in the moment that we should remember.) And at this point in their life it is the absolutely correct approach because they are tasked with learning to take dominion over themselves and their environment. There will be plenty of time later to learn about annuities and retirement. Now they are needing to master the present.

This mastery is a basic building block of who they become in the future that

they are not yet concerned about. It takes time to master the present. It takes time to establish "their" place in the whole cosmos that God created. I am making this sound like it is a monumental task of monumental importance. It is. Who they are today, who they are allowed to be today does determine their future. And it does determine the grasp that they will have on their own power and lives. Feelings of security and feelings of confidence are very much tied up with their "future" success. What they need now is the time for their powers to mature.

We all know the feeling of being rushed of not being able to do the very best we could do because we have run out of time. I am not talking about perfectionist tendencies of wanting to re-do and re-do but the desire to present a "finished" masterpiece. I am talking about the feeling that comes when we have marshaled all of our abilities, gifts and talents and have accomplished something that is important to us.

The distinct philosophical difference in Montessori is that we give great respect to the child. Normally, we expect children to adapt to the adult world. We have our schedules to maintain, our itineraries to complete and the child's needs are often relegated to the way back burner because they are not on the same level of importance as ours. And ten, fifteen, twenty years from now when the child – no longer a child – functions dysfunctionally we wonder how that came about.

The development of self-esteem has become such a convoluted undertaking in our society. Educated people come up with all kinds of scenarios (some more outlandish and less intelligent than others) to develop, to explain, or to enhance self-esteem in our children but often miss the core attributes that will allow the child to develop their own real sense of self-esteem and self-confidence.

A primary ingredient, most often overlooked, is **time**. Not time by itself but in combination with all the other factors that will lead the child to real maturity. If time alone were sufficient, then maturity and the acceptance of responsibility would be a given at any designated point in “time”. So it takes more than time. Now you are asking is it time or not that the child needs? Yes. That’s clear isn’t it? Hardly. Yes it takes time but it has to be the right kind of time.

In Montessori we talk about “sensitive periods” when life and learning are freely (and easily) mastered. They come at a distinct “time” for each child. And if we recognize them we can use them for the child’s benefit.

The building of self-esteem and confidence also follows in these tracks. When we master something we have confidence. Mastery takes time. Interestingly, one of the reasons that children do so well with computers is that they take (and have) the time to master them. As adults it is just one more tool that we add to our tool kit and unless forced to, master only what we need at the moment.

Mastery takes time. Maturity takes time. Experience takes time to accumulate. All of these contribute to those essential feelings of self-confidence and esteem.

Now consider your own feelings when somebody of importance (make your own choice – president, movie star, business exec, author etc.) clears their schedule and gives you their undivided attention. What is the emotional result for you of such an action - an overwhelming feeling of significance.

Therefore when we give our children time, which here signifies undivided attention we create within them this very real feeling of value. When we give them time to accomplish the tasks of their own nurturing we are in essence telling them that we love them not because they perform to our expectations but because they are loved for who they are.

Anybody can give money (and it is nice to receive) but whoever gives you time gives you a precious gift. Ben Franklin said, “Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time: for that’s the stuff life is made of.” When someone gives you time – they give you life.

The 10 P’s of Ministry

9. Prayer

The purpose of prayer is to get us into dialogue with God. Prayer does change things but not always the things that we think will change. God uses prayer in our lives to sensitize us to His spirit.

There is nothing wrong in our setting out a vision, establishing goals and working a plan. That is the way that

God has created us to effectively and efficiently work. (Efficient means doing things right, effective means doing the right things.) What happens in ministry is that when we become focused on the goal it is important to take note that God often has many “layers” of goals wrapped up in one. We have no idea of the consequences that God puts into play as we obey Him and walk toward our goals. It is this prayer, this constant state of prayer – of just plain talking to Him - that allows Him to talk back to us and open our understanding of all of the threads that are being played through our obedience.

Our problem as humans is we often think it is all about us. Sometimes God uses us, directs us, and guides us, not for our own benefit but for the blessings of others. A major character trait of leadership in ministry is to be focused on a goal – that’s what motivates us and gets our juices flowing. Sometimes it is not “our” goal that is important to the Father but the help we give another on their journey. It takes a very special kind of ministry leadership to play “crack the whip” where our efforts are used to propel someone else outward and onward. Here is where prayer – “Not my will but thine” really comes into focus. Few of us would handle this assignment (of propelling others) with the same intensity and devotion that we invest when we feel we have a “call” from God to meet a specific goal.

There is a major prayer lesson in the story of the centurion who said to Jesus “But say the word and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,” and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it. When

Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, ‘I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.’” Luke 7:7-9.

Prayer prepares us to be under authority. Prayer doesn’t make God do our bidding but gets us ready “to go or come or do” according to the Father’s plan. Often in prayer we gain real clarity of the situation and just as often prayer creates in us a “real clarity” that we are under authority and that whatever happens God is using for the furtherance of His plans (and not always of ours).

Prayer is a mighty tool for reaching the heart of God – not for getting what we want but being in tune with what He wants.

Holidays Memorial Day

Memorial Day is the quiet 4th of July. Without the sacrifices that we commemorate on this holiday there would no longer be the “celebration” of our independence. It is a good time to teach our children that every right has a responsibility and every privilege has a cost. Pray for those that defend our ability to celebrate our liberty.

That’s A Good Question

We would like to do a series on the questions asked about Montessori. Everything from what is Montessori to There’s no discipline in Montessori is there? Please send us the questions that you are frequently asked for which you would like a great answer.

National Conference Proposed topics

1. Celebrating the holidays
2. The Special Needs Child

3. Real PE
4. Nutrition
5. Discipline of the Environment
6. Grace and Courage
7. The prepared environment
8. How Jesus comes to your classroom
9. Respect for the child
10. God's children Sing
11. Music, How it affects the learning potential of the child
12. The importance of Toddler training
13. Hands on Bible

The conference begins at 10:00 A.M. Thursday June 26th and runs through Saturday evening.

Christian Montessori Fellowship
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San Antonio, TX 78255

Or call 210-698-1911

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