

# The Cobbler

Ephesians 6:15

The Newsletter of the Christian Montessori Fellowship  
November 2002

## **National Conference**

June 26-28 2003  
San Antonio, Texas

## **Regional Conferences**

St. Paul, MN  
Nov. 23, 2002

North Heights Lutheran Church  
1700 West Highway 96  
Arden Hills, MN 55112

Atlanta, GA  
Feb. 1, 2003

Alpharetta International Academy  
4772 Webb Bridge Road  
Alpharetta, GA 30005

## **How Jesus comes to your classroom Part 10**

### **Circle time**

Circle time offers multiple opportunities to acknowledge Jesus in our environment. If you have a discussion of the weather, certainly Jesus can be thanked for the beautiful sunshine, or the rain that makes the flowers grow or the dazzling snowflakes that fall.

If circle time mentions the holidays the Christian influence of each can be noted. Certainly Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving offer themselves as prime opportunities. Also consider the other holidays: Martin Luther King encouraged us to love our neighbor as our selves; St. Valentine was a Christian bishop who encouraged us to love each other and God; St. Patrick took the

Gospel to Ireland; Memorial day we honor those who gave their lives for our country – Jesus gave his life for us; Fourth of July celebrates the Godly men who helped found our nation and the sacrifices of Liberty; Labor day celebrates how God honors labor and how He wants us to do the very best work we can; Columbus day honors Columbus and his devotion to God and his wanting to spread the gospel; Veterans day is a time to honor those who have defended our country.

Show and tell offers another opportunity to celebrate God's creativity. Whether they bring a shell or a rock or even a toy we can extol the Lord for the creativity that we find not only in nature but also in our human capacity to be like God as creators.

I remember as an elementary student putting a pair of classroom scissors on the invention table after it dawned on me what a marvelous invention it was of two knives hooked together to cut.

Jesus was God's instrument of creation – "Without Him nothing was made that was made." Show and tell is that perfect time to let Jesus shine.

Everything is new to a preschooler. Some have never seen snow or fog. The blooming of a plant from seeds to flower would be magic if it weren't already one of God's miracles.

Circle time doesn't have to be deep theology but a natural time of sharing the wonderfulness of God as revealed all around us every day.

## **A Baker's Dozen**

Of Montessori benefits for the children  
Number 8  
Freedom

Of all the concepts found in Montessori freedom is one of the greatest. And it is the most misunderstood concept both in and out of Montessori.

I'm sure you've heard it said time and again "Montessori, isn't that where kids can do anything they want?" And that becomes the definition of freedom.

Unfortunately that is the definition of license and not freedom.

Many beginning Montessori teachers have a difficulty in distinguishing between freedom and license. They err on the side of license. (License is freedom used with irresponsibility.) When they find that approach leading to chaos they swing back to what is familiar – control. Freedom does not lie in either extreme. Montessori states "Children have unlimited freedom to do what is right." To have the choice to do what is right is freedom. To have the ability to choose to do what is right is character (which is a discussion for a future time).

The skill of the proper use of freedom needs to be developed – exercised. And it is this exercise of freedom that needs to be carefully observed. Montessori states that we should be careful not to destroy that which is good. And it is precisely because the exercising of freedom often looks "bad" that we intervene prematurely. Is it easy to tell what is embryonically good from what appears to be bad? No. And that is the challenge for the guide to observe where the "exercise" of freedom is taking the child. The ability to keep hands off in a hands on world takes experience and

wisdom, which takes time to develop. At least being aware of what the potential for good might be will place the child's actions in a new light.

Your children are blessed to be in an environment where they may exercise freedom while at the same time they learn to understand the consequences and benefits of their choices.

## **Holidays** **Christmas**

Of all the holidays Christmas has got to be the grandest and yet the most secularized. The challenge is to help our children transfer the excitement and anticipation that they feel to the very real meaning of God's gift to us.

We always chose to downplay Santa Claus to concentrate on the Christ child. They will get plenty of Santa outside of school. However when children asked about Santa we would share the heritage of the Christian St. Nicholas who out of a heart filled with love for God was known as a giver of gifts.

One delightful Christmas tradition we enjoyed with our staff was "Christmas Angels". Staff members would draw a name and for the time between Thanksgiving and our staff Christmas party they would secretly do kind acts, write words of encouragement or provide small gifts. We would make up a form for each staff member to fill out listing their favorite candy, color, hot drink, cold drink, collectible etc. And their Christmas angel could be guided accordingly. It was not meant to be an expensive proposition but one of encouragement and fun.

At our Christmas party we would ask each staff member to guess who their angel was which lead to a lot of

wonderful laughter and glee. It was always delightful when two staff members actually got each other's name or when a staff member guessed who their angel was by interesting deductions.

One Christmas I was sent on a scavenger hunt following one note to the next note going from office to classroom, to kitchen to store room. The creativity was delightful. One year my wife received several very nice notes of encouragement (along with a two inch Santa Claus candle ). One note said that she was a wonderful boss to work for (which she is). When it came time to guess she never imagined that her angel was her husband (I could have told her that!) That revelation led to great laughter.

## **The 10 P's of Ministry**

### **3. People**

All ministry involves people – either giving or receiving. It is wonderful when both givers and receivers are blessed by the interchange. When I first started looking at the P's of ministry I came up with three – people, problems and possibilities. My oldest daughter asked if people and problems weren't the same thing. Sometimes they seem to be but if you look beyond that you find that both are possibilities for growth and blessings.

Schools offer a complex of relationships. In other businesses (schools are a business even though they are a ministry) you have one client. A woman goes to a shoe store to buy a pair of shoes. The sales person only has to help satisfy the customer. And when the customer is satisfied and buys the sales person and the manager are happy.

Consider the web of relationships that play themselves out within a school. Many of these will apply to a teacher but look at it from an administrator's viewpoint. A school board gives direction to a program. The administrator needs to follow the outlines given. A teacher has needs that must be met within the classroom for them to function effectively. You bring a child into the classroom who also has needs that must be met for them to flourish. At the same time the child's mother has expectations of what the school should provide. Mother's expectations and Father's expectations do not always coincide. If there were only one child and one teacher in the school you could reduce some of the complexities. But you have multiple students, multiple parents, and multiple teachers, let alone support staff. You may also have a church sponsoring the school. This brings in another web of relationships with pastors, deacons, and parishioners.

While people may bring great joy to the ministry they also bring great complexity. So consider that even a "simple" request from a student, a parent, a teacher or co-worker may wind up requiring multiple decisions that affect a myriad of people because of the nature of the close relationships found in a school setting.

It all seems simple – and it would be if a school were an army where everybody did what the general said. But this is a voluntary association where people can come and go as they please. There is a great difference between quitting or being fired and shot.

People always need to be handled prayerfully. You never know the secret sorrows that people carry with them –

the things that have made them bitter or wary. None of us like to be on the receiving end of grief. And it takes discernment and a God-given love to be gentle in difficult circumstances. Remember! A gentle answer turns away wrath – especially when you'd rather kick them in the shins.

### **Support for CMF**

We would like to keep membership in the Christian Montessori Fellowship open to all who are interested without charging a membership fee but in order to do this we do need to raise support.

Therefore we would like to ask you to make a tax-deductible contribution to CMF so we might continue to encourage each other, lift each other up and continue to become the very best Christian Montessori teachers that we can be.

Christian Montessori Fellowship  
22630 East Range  
San Antonio, TX 78255

The future plans of the fellowship are to develop a website with resources and a tape ministry, enhance our national conference, do more regional conferences, encourage Montessori schools to become Christian, Christian schools to become Montessori and to bless children all around the world with this fantastic way of living.

For this we need your help. Please send your generous contributions to:  
Christian Montessori Fellowship  
22630 East Range  
San Antonio, TX 78255

### **E-Mail Addresses Needed**

[Fidellow@swbell.net](mailto:Fidellow@swbell.net)

210-698-1911

Register now for regional conferences  
\$150, (\$125 early registration 3 weeks in advance)