

The Cobbler

Ephesians 6:15

The newsletter of the Christian Montessori Fellowship
October 2002

Regional Conferences

Washington DC	October 12 th
Metuchen, NJ	October 19 th
Atlanta, GA	November 2 nd
St. Paul, MN	November 23 rd

National Conference

San Antonio, Texas
June 26 – 28, 2003

How Jesus comes to your classroom. Part 9

Snack time

Snack time is another good time to remind our children that Jesus is present in our classroom. We set up snack time as an individual activity. We would provide a bowl of cut up fruit – apples, oranges, bananas etc for the children to serve themselves. Once again we are looking for ways for our children to become self-sufficient. Individual snack time, instead of a group snack time, provides for more working classroom time as well as another opportunity for the children to operate independently.

Like every other activity in the classroom this needs to have a presentation. Our children were shown how to invite a friend to have snacks with them, how to get a plate and napkin and how (and how much) to serve themselves from the bowl of fruit. The bowl of fruit would have a set of tongs, which they would use to select their

fruit. The use of tongs is again a re-enforcement of hand eye coordination, as well as hygienic. They were also taught to choose with their eyes. This helps them, in situations where there are no tongs etc, not to handle all the food but only the one they have chosen with their eyes.

When they and their friend are seated at the snack table they bow their heads and fold their hands and give thanks to Jesus for their snack.

We used a variety of blessings, spoken or sung. They often freelanced their own blessings but one of their favorites was (sung to the tune of Frere Jacques): God our Father, God our Father. We thank You, We thank You. For our many blessings, for our many blessings. Amen, Amen.

An additional note. Meeting the needs of the child is a definition of Montessori. The physical well being of the child has also to be concerned with their nutrition. That is why the replacement of cookies and juice with fruits and vegetables should be a consideration. “But they don’t like that, they won’t eat it.” I’m sure you’ve heard parents say this - teachers would **never** say such a thing, would they? If we are talking about educating children we also need to understand that we need to educate their palates as well. Education means to be able to have knowledge to choose wisely - that includes learning to eat what is good for you not just what you like. And that also has to be trained.

A Bakers Dozen
Of Montessori benefits for the child
Part Seven
Spontaneity

The joy of discovery is enhanced by the ability to be spontaneous. Traditional education is locked into being on page 10 by Tuesday. There is no trust that the child can achieve both the serendipitous path that discovery has led to and the requirements of mastery embodied in the “curriculum”.

Contrast that to the joy that fills the child when she comes to an “aha!” moment. Now instead of reading just 10 pages of “prescribed” science the student with great avidity reads a 100 pages about tigers or lilies, or rocks. Then filled with great satisfaction willingly tackles the 10 pages of prescription but this time filled with a new sense of adventure looking for what may be locked into those 10 pages.

So what really happens during this spontaneous adventure? There is reading, accumulation of facts, classification, writing, reporting - in short, learning. And the learning is rigorous and joyful.

Holiday
Thanksgiving

What a wonderful opportunity to share the blessings of being thankful, to develop a thankful heart not only for Thanksgiving Day but all year long.

Thanksgiving projects
Turkey centerpiece

Start with a large pinecone.
Fold a red pipe cleaner in half.

Twist it at the middle to make a loop to form the turkey’s head and bring the ends out to form the feet.

Twist it on to the small end of the pinecone.

Make feathers from a variety of colors of construction paper.

Write scriptures pertaining to being thankful on each of the feathers.

Glue the feathers to the tips of the pinecone at the large end.

You may use these to decorate the environment and the table for the Thanksgiving (feast) lunch at school. Each child can take his home for the family celebration.

Thanksgiving Activities

Read the story of the first Thanksgiving.

Make headgear – pilgrim hats and brown headbands with feathers. A Pilgrim hat can be fashioned from a black headband and a square piece of black construction paper glued to the headband.

Make Thanksgiving foods for a Thanksgiving feast

Make popcorn.

Make tiny corn tortillas and homemade butter.

Homemade butter recipe: Pour a ½ pint whipping cream into a pint jar with a tightly sealed lid. Pass the jar from child to child at circle time allowing each to shake the jar vigorously until the butter forms. Serve the butter on the tortillas with honey.

The Ten P's of ministry

2. Passion

Last month we talked about the place of purpose in our lives and ministry. This month we look at passion. Passion is a two-edged sword. It gives zest to life and, like fire, it consumes. But without passion, teaching or anything else becomes just a job. Passion does not keep us from problems, annoyance, frustration etc. In fact because we are passionate the negatives sometimes seem to multiply as we passionately try to get closer and closer to perfection (which is one of the problems of passion itself).

We have all kinds of passions in life – everything from the kind of foods we really like, the music we enjoy, the hobbies we follow and if we've truly found our calling the work that we do. Passion truly is a wind beneath our wings, lifting us higher, helping us soar. Passion gives us focus and drive – drive to become the best that we can be.

Passion also has two parts: red hot and white hot. Red-hot passion is the emotional part. It is what we feel as we engage in our calling or activity. It is the excitement. Whether it is the making of materials, the arranging of the environment or the observation of a child in discovery. These are all part of that emotional passion.

White-hot passion ironically is cold. This part of passion requires the deliberate focus and application of our will and talents. It is the part of passion that compels us, impels us, and drives us to perfection. It is the cold and calculating part of passion. It is very much like what practice is to a game. It is the investment of life into small parts, into incremental steps towards

perfection. It is deliberate use of will without the attendant rush that comes from emotional passion.

Most of the outstanding people I have met in my lifetime have been Montessorians - people full of life and passion, drive and focus. These are people who are consumed by the joy they find in Montessori; where they apply their talents and life.

There are many people who take Montessori training who never find this consuming passion, who never become transformed. Montessori might have, ironically, called that passion – normalization for the adult. That transformation is very much like falling in love – everything changes.

And here again we have two extremes – people who care too much and people who do not care enough. For those who care too much Montessori becomes a religion. (Can you identify the denominations in Montessori?) As for the others once we have finished our studies we seem not to study again. Which means we do not re-read the books (did we read them the first time or did we get our understanding from someone's interpretation?).

As we gain experience we may look for better techniques and approaches but it is essential that we go back to fundamental principles and re-apply them to our ever-changing environments. The case for re-reading the books is that after 2 or 3 years or 5 or 10 years we no longer are the same. Our understanding of life has changed and so a revisiting of the philosophy is crucial for renewed and more matured understanding.

This is part of that cold passion – the quest for excellence, if not for perfection.

Conference information

Seminar costs are \$150 per person. Early registration (two weeks before the seminar) is \$125. Multiple registrations received at one time qualify for an additional \$10 discount two weeks before the seminar.

Conference locations

Washington DC
Washington Business Journal
1555 Wilson Blvd. Suite 400
Arlington, VA 22209
214-621-6413 (cell)
214-564-9170 (cell)
Call to confirm attendance

Metuchen, NJ
Children First Christian Montessori
School
10 Jersey Ave.
Metuchen, NJ
732-635-1300

Christian Montessori Fellowship
22630 East Range
San Antonio, TX 78255

Atlanta, GA
Alpharetta International Academy
4772 Webb Bridge Road
Alpharetta, GA 30005
770-475-0558

Saturday 9:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Conference Topics

1. What is Christian Montessori
2. Grace and Courtesy
3. The 10 most important Montessori lessons
4. Hands on Bible
5. Practical Life
6. Spiritual life in the classroom
7. Parenting

Old Business

We would like your e-mail address and your surveys. Please e-mail to Fidellow@swbell.net