

The Cobbler

Ephesians 6:15

The newsletter of the Christian Montessori Fellowship
May – June 2002

Christian Montessori Conference
July 11th –13th
San Antonio, Texas

The ministry has moved!

After ministering in Dallas for almost 35 years and running a Christian Montessori school for almost 30 years we have moved, (been moved, followed the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night) to San Antonio where we will continue to minister to the Christian Montessori and Christian education communities.

We will continue to encourage the Christian Montessori community. We will offer seminars regionally and nationally. We will encourage the Montessori community to become Christian and the Christian community to become Montessori. And we will host school heads and spouses for three day seminars focusing on the “7 P’s of ministry”. (What are the 7 p’s? – We’ll save that until next month.)

Meanwhile we continue to settle in, unpack and continue to minister. We can certainly use your prayers during these very interesting days. Remember God doesn’t always make our way easy just because we follow him. He reminds us – as your days so shall be your strength. Whatever circumstances you may be facing He is already there with you.

Remember the conference in your prayers. And we encourage you to make every effort to attend. Not only will you

be blessed but the children you minister to will also receive a great blessing.

Our new address is 22630 East Range, San Antonio, TX 78255. Telephone 210-698-1922.

How Jesus comes to your classroom. Part 5

Jesus comes to our classroom through the very classroom – the environment. The prepared environment, a unique emphasis in Montessori, by its very nature speaks of Christ. Consider the scripture from Colossians (1:16) “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.”

If things are created by him and for him what do you think they look like? They are a reflection of him. He brings (and is) beauty and order. Sin is discord. Therefore our environments, which are purposely full of coherence, order and beauty are a reflection of the eternal God.

The aesthetics and order of the environment are not an afterthought but an integral part of the Montessori experience. And that experience should be one that is able to take in all the good that God has prepared for us.

I can hear you say – “If only I had the money...”. But this kind of experience is not dependent solely on money. It is built on cleanliness. It is built on having

a green pitcher with a green basin (they go together). It is having both china and crystal in the environment (it doesn't need to cost \$50 a plate) rather than plastic. Plastic has its appropriate uses but usually not for aesthetics.

So how does Jesus come forth in this? He comes forth by the beauty the children see and feel. He comes forth as you share why we, (you and the children), are good stewards of the environment because it belongs to Jesus. But then doesn't everything? And if it all belongs to Jesus and it is a reflection of him shouldn't it be as beautiful as possible?

People will try to convince you that little children take no notice of such things or it isn't important. We train the children in beauty by surrounding them with beauty. There is enough ugliness in the world for them to see the contrast. Beauty is a result of someone who cares – how about sunsets and apple trees and fluffy puppies?

Jesus comes to the classroom in beauty. And they see it because we point it out. It is the intricacies of life that are hidden and need to be taught. Beauty is more than skin deep or just a surface. There is beauty everywhere and by training our children in the aesthetic they begin to see the creator behind the patterns, the clouds and the sunsets. We teach Jesus' presence by creating an environment that reflects him (there is a beauty of holiness that the scripture speaks of). And there is a holiness to the beauty that God has provided. So we teach our children to worship the creator and not his reflection in the creation.

One further thought on the environment from Colossians. Jesus also created that which is invisible. And in each environment there is not only the

visible beauty but there is also present the invisible beautiful presence of Jesus himself. Remember the invisible beauty that Christ's spirit infuses into the environment because you have chosen to honor him and his creation (the children) in a manner that gives him great pleasure.

A Baker's Dozen of Montessori benefits for the children Number four

What is one of the first phrases you would use when someone asks you to briefly describe Montessori? Hands on. And it is this "hands on" that is so distinctive and essential. I believe it was Aristotle that first observed that there is nothing in the mind that is not first in the hands. It is our multi-sensory approach in Montessori that gives, not only greater learning but deeper learning.

"Hands on" is the active employment of all senses focused on a goal. Why is it as adults that we doodle, drum our fingers, play with paper clips etc.? Because the "hands on" is a need. Children doing "hands on" work are less distracted and more focused. That is also why the playing of classical music in the classroom seems to help concentration because it helps remove the audio distraction of extraneous noise and replaces it with a soothing audio sensation.

Don't ever lose the love of the hands on because it meets so many needs. Consider that as adults we will often take a break from vigorous mental activity and do something physical - mow the lawn, do dishes, work out - and while in that process the mental activity becomes focused and answers that stubbornly refused to come, now come clearly.

Most of what was said last month about the benefits of practical life certainly apply to the hands on – muscular development, hand/eye coordination, organization, processing, following multi-step directions etc.

Holiday Ideas

Fourth of July

For those of you that operate during the summer the fourth of July offers wonderful opportunities to share about our wonderful country and our heritage and how God has blessed and continues to bless America.

Have a parade. Let the children, with their parents help, decorate their bikes, wagons, scooters, etc. and bring them to school.

Play patriotic music and have students carry the Christian flag and the American flag. Include the Parents. Share the history of why America is such a great nation. Salute the flags.

Then celebrate with an old fashioned picnic. Make homemade ice cream (use the old hand crank kind so every child can help). Serve the all American meal of hot dogs, potato salad, and baked beans. Use blueberries and strawberries to garnish the ice cream – red, white and blue.

For art projects use white stars and red, white, and blue stripes for making banners, hats etc.

Hats are wonderful for the parade.

In all things celebrate that in our country, we can still worship the true and living God. We are truly blessed.

E-mail addresses

If you have an e-mail address please send it to us at Fidellow@swbell.net

National Conference

San Antonio, Texas

July 11th-13th, 2002

Proposed Topics

1. Physical transformation
2. Emotional transformation
3. Intellectual transformation
4. Spiritual transformation
5. Music: Praise and worship
6. Spiritual life in the classroom
7. The prepared environment
8. The Good Shepherd
9. Diversity
10. Science
11. Hands on Bible
12. The teacher
13. Parent Education
14. Practical life

10 reasons to come to

San Antonio

For your family

For you

Sea World

Fellowship

The Alamo

Encouragement

Fiesta Texas

New Ideas

The River walk

Knowledge

Fun

Fun

Conference details

It is always helpful if you stay at the conference hotel because the hotel bases its charge for the meeting rooms on the number of hotel rooms rented.

It will also be more convenient for you as the hotel is located in the center of town and everything is within walking distance.

It is also helpful for planning purposes for meals etc if you are able to register early. However you are more than welcome even at the last minute.

Christian Montessori Fellowship Conference 2002
July 11th –13th, 2002
San Antonio, Texas

“Christian Montessori and the transformation of the whole child.”

The conference will be held at the historic Crockett Hotel across from the Alamo. Lodging costs are \$92.23 (tax included) for either single or double occupancy. Please call the hotel (800-292-1050) to make your reservations. Conference registration will include 2 continental breakfasts, 2 lunches, morning and afternoon breaks and Saturday evening banquet. Cost of the conference will be \$300.

Christian Montessori Fellowship
22630 East Range
San Antonio, Texas 78255

2002 Christian Montessori Fellowship Conference Registration

Please register me for the conference

Name _____
Address _____
City, St. Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____