

# The Cobbler

Ephesians 6:15

The Newsletter of the Christian Montessori Fellowship  
December 2002

## **National Conference**

June 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> 2003

## **Regional Seminar**

Atlanta

Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003

Alpharetta International Academy  
4772 Webb Bridge Road  
Alpharetta, GA 30005

## **How Jesus comes to your classroom Part 11**

### **Playground**

The playground is one of the most overlooked teaching tools available. If we consider it only as playtime and not as important as academic time we miss tremendous opportunities to teach and encourage. Even though we are expected to produce academic results (parents are paying us big dollars for this) it is in the "non-academic" times that we are able to help sharpen the ax of the learning. It is also in these times that we are able to share the glorious, happy, joyful and wonderful presence of Jesus.

Children possess this great joy in all of their undertakings. Traditionally we think that it is play that produces this joy but as we have been taught the child's work is his play. Everything is exciting and joyful. And that is how our relationship to Jesus should be.

The playground offers many opportunities for the child to be kind to each other. It is the less structured setting of the school day wherein the child has great freedom to exercise his

relationship to Jesus. How can you hate your brother who you see each day and love the Lord whom you have not seen" the scripture tells us.

Jesus comes to the playground by the children sharing the love and joy of Jesus with each other. Also in the words of the scriptures "How will they hear without a messenger?"

We have great opportunity in the less structured and less demanding times to quietly and casually share with our children how Jesus might act in regards to the other children. How do we minister (both us and the children) to the shy child, to the less physically developed child, to the child who is friendless or super needy.

"I was a stranger and you took me in." can certainly be applied to the happenings of the playground.

The playground is also an open environment that displays God's handiwork. When we help our children "see" the beauty and the miracles of nature that surround them we call attention to the wonderful provision that God makes for us each day.

We have to be careful that we do not consider only what we test or record as learning for the child. The great lessons of life are often small and considered inconsequential but they are the mortar that holds the bricks of the skyscrapers of their lives together.

And Jesus is always there whether it is in the creation of the world or the creation of the masterpiece that each child's life is in His eyes.

## **A Baker's Dozen**

Of Montessori Benefits for the child  
Number 9

### **Accountability**

“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” is an interesting way to begin a discussion of accountability. Adam's first conversation with God after tasting the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil was to blame “the woman you gave me”. Not much has changed in the millenniums that have passed. We still look to blame others for our faults and “sins”. That is why the old joke says: “Every man should be married because there are just some things you can't blame on the government.” Some things never change.

That is why true accountability must start with the negative - accepting responsibility for the sin nature which we possess before we can move on to the truly positive and joyful acceptance of the responsibilities (and accountability) for the gifts, talents and opportunities that God gives each one of us.

One of the strengths of Montessori instruction is that each child is personally accountable for his own learning. Since we are not learning as a class but as individuals we bear individual responsibility and accountability. This is a major difference in the systems of learning. In traditional learning the class has a lesson, the class takes a test and the class moves on. If a student has not learned the material because of difficulty or complexity or laziness they move on

with the group anyway. The accountability is mixed into an average (this test plus all the others) and the learning is lost.

There is a big difference in accountability when you demand mastery rather than passing or average. Accountability is squarely placed in front of the child. This kind of direct accountability fosters a lifetime of personal responsibility.

## **Holidays**

### **New Year**

New Year's is a wonderful time to teach about God's forgiveness and restoration. As mundane as New Year's resolutions appear to be they do give us a reference point for starting over and beginning again.

Salvation and forgiveness give us the same perspective spiritually. Just as the year starts over and we attempt to make changes, when we receive God's forgiveness we start over again – with a clean slate – and He helps us make those changes in our lives that are pleasing to Him.

Using New Year's as a reference point for personal change is still a valid exercise. For our children to know that every time they ask for forgiveness it is literally a New Year and time to begin again our pursuit of God wholeheartedly.

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

### **4. Problems**

“As sparks fly upward so is man born to trouble” says Proverbs. This is not a negative pronouncement but an affirmation that just because we face problems does not mean we are not still in God's hands and God's favor.

Problems are a natural part of a fallen world. And God has chosen to use problems for our benefit. That is how “all things can work together for good.” Because God will redeem even that which sometimes seems unredeemable.

Having said that we certainly don't have to go looking for problems, there are more than enough that will come our way. Let's divide problems into three categories. First, problems you have no control over. In this category fall such things as 9/11, the economy, floods, etc. Being prepared for all of the unexpected is such a humongous undertaking that we can never be fully prepared for its countless surprises. The best we can do is to keep a reserve of energy, money and time available. Where this becomes impractical is trying to consider all the contingencies that might befall us while at the same time wondering if that mostly mythical reserve would not be better used to deal with some of category 2 – Problems I have some control over.

Note the finally nuanced “some control over.” Our expectation of being able to control all the problems we face is unrealistic. My greatest lesson in problem solving, the one that gave me the most peace, was realizing that I would never be able to solve most problems – all I would be able to do would be to manage them.

There is no “fix” in management. What worked well last year may not work next year. If a manager could fix everything they wouldn't need a manager. You have to realize it as a mixed blessing – they will always need someone to manage the ministry.

Now having said all this you want to learn to manage as far away from the crisis point that you can – “A stitch in time saves nine.” Good management is

hard work. And the harder you work the more boring it should be. Boring in the sense that you are not dealing with crisis. Good management means having a vision for the clouds on the horizon and preparing accordingly.

There is a third category of problems. Those are the problems that we have initiated both positively and negatively. Negative problems come by our negative actions – being unclear, being un-decisive, or being just plain ugly. We have initiated these problems and we need to take responsibility for them.

Then there are the problems we create by being positive, pro-active and decisive. Every new initiative, every new goal, every new program challenges the inertia of what is. When you decide to build for the future, enhance your program or go after excellence you will create problems. Vision always creates problems. And you have to be ready to “manage” the vision. That kind of management is exciting but we have to be careful as we look to the future horizon with anticipation that we don't neglect the past structures that continually need maintenance and management. In the future we will discuss the seven types of problems – communications, disagreements, expectations, finances, performance, personalities and procedures.

## **Visit Our Web Site**

[www.crossmountainforum.com](http://www.crossmountainforum.com)

## **E-mail addresses needed**

**Do we have your e-mail address?**

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

## **National Conference**

San Antonio, TX

June 26-28, 2003

This year's conference will have one day devoted to a pre-school and elementary track covering such topics as classroom management, record keeping and other specific classroom needs.

Other proposed seminar topics include: Celebrating the holidays, Nutrition, Discipline, Respect for the child, Hands on Bible, Music, How Jesus comes to your classroom, Physical education, Practical life cycles and more. We are still looking for topics and presenters.

Conference cost is \$325 (\$300 if paid by May 1<sup>st</sup>, \$275 if paid by March 1<sup>st</sup>) and covers 3 lunches, 2 continental breakfasts, Banquet and morning and afternoon breaks.

Christian Montessori Fellowship  
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## **Support for CMF**

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

## **Regional Seminars**

Seminars are now being planned for February and March for Seattle, Northern and Southern California and Houston. If you are interested in a seminar in your region contact us.

May you have a  
Blessed  
Christmas