

A CLOSER LOOK AT

The Level II Atrium

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

The 6-9 year old: Who is this child?

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is based on the work of Dr. Maria Montessori, who spoke of the “planes of development” of the child. The first plane of development is from 0-6 years, with specific developmental tasks that the child strives to master (language, movement, sensorial tasks.) At age 6 the child moves into a new plane of development. The works of the Level II atrium are designed to match the tasks of this new plane of development.

Physical Development

This is a time of great growth for the child (body lengthening, new teeth, increase in physical stamina, etc.) With these new physical developments, the child is ready to think beyond home and school and reach out into the world. In the atrium we see this new phase in many ways; the child chooses intentionally where and how he will work in the setting. The child may choose to do a work that enables her to work in the hallway, (with supervision) near others, or in a group setting.

Intellectual Development

The Reasoning Mind is developing. The child wants to know why things are, what they are and where they come from. Imagination plays a large role in the child’s life. The child has a broad interest in the total universe. Our study in the atrium broadens as well, to include history, space and the universe. The child is capable of great work using this developing powerful and creative mind.

Moral Formation

The child begins to develop a moral code. He has a strong sense of justice, and is learning the tension of “fair not equal.” The children have a strong capacity to be compassionate, generous and loyal. They are moving from an egocentric view of the world, now showing genuine interest in others and a desire to work in groups and explore social relationships.

As we move through the year, we will look more closely at the specific works and materials that address this new plane of development and the 6-9 year old child.