

A CLOSER LOOK AT

The Level II Atrium

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

The History of the Kingdom of God

The Level II child has a new sense of wonder and fascination with his or her role in the great expanse of history. Large timeline works help the child grapple with questions such as, “Who made all of this? How do the events of history fit together? Where is this history headed? How do I participate in the history of God’s people?”

1st Year Works. Early in the year, the catechist gathers the Level II children and narrates the great story of Salvation History. The following week, the catechist works with the children to retell this story using a material called the “Fettucia” (fettucia means “ribbon” in Italian). The material consists of over 50 meters of ribbon wrapped around a spool. As the catechist (and later the child) unwinds the spool, the catechist tells of God’s great work in creation: creating chaos out of order, separating light from dark, and separating land from water. It tells of how God lovingly creating the mineral world with useful and beautiful minerals; the plant world with plants for eating, sheltering, and beautifying; and the amazingly diverse animal world. When God created humans, they found a banquet already prepared for them to meet their needs. The narration describes prophets who prepared humanity for the ultimate gift: God’s own light and life in Jesus Christ. This moment is called “redemption.” History continues forward to the future in which the children, and all humanity, do the work of salvation by “writing on the blank page” of salvation history. At some point in the future, God will be “all in all” at the end of time, known as “parousia.” Children contemplate where various scripture passages fit on this timeline and marvel over the many gifts it represents.

2nd Year Works. The Blue Unity Strip is a smaller paper timeline that reflects the same themes of creation, redemption, and parousia introduced in the Fettucia. As the catechist narrates the story, children decide where to place markers that depict various events in salvation history. This work may also be introduced sometime after the Fettucia during the first year.

2/3rd Year Works. The Gift Strip is a third timeline that depicts the story of Salvation History, with an emphasis on the many gifts God has bestowed on us. The child places small containers with examples of God’s gifts such as sand, rocks, plants, and sea shells on the timeline and also places models of the chalice and paten representing God’s gift of Jesus. Like all Atrium timelines, this work allows the child to ponder his or her role in writing on the blank page of history and the ultimate union with Christ at the parousia.

Further work of the child. All of these works invite the child to draw, research, and write about the themes they reflect. Sometimes children enjoy making their own versions of timelines.