

A three-year old is setting a model altar with an altar cloth, paten, chalice, candles, and crucifix. Later she carefully arranges a small bouquet of flowers. A four-year old sits in front of a model of a sheepfold, moving model sheep and shepherd while listening intently to an adult read the scripture account of the Good Shepherd. Two five-year olds sit across from each other; one sewing while the other traces images from a scripture account and makes a book.

Welcome to the Atrium, a prayer space designed to meet the spiritual and developmental needs of children using the Montessori method. By means of the beauty, silence, self-direction and prayer fostered here, the mystery of the child encounters the mystery of God. Lovely hand-made materials to work and pray with, proclamations of God's Word, meditation and song, all appropriate to the child's way of approaching God, invite him or her into a lifelong relationship with the Good Shepherd who gives "life to the full."

In the Atrium the child explores prayer, scripture, liturgy, Holy Land geography, practical life, and art expression during a weekly 2-hour session. The atrium is not a classroom, the atrium is a place where we live our relationship with God.

Could the Good Shepherd be calling your child to the Atrium?

