Guidelines for Observation in the Atrium

Welcome to the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Atrium.

We are happy to have you observe this place prepared for prayer and your child's work.

In the atrium, we are always mindful that the True Catechist is God, the Good Shepherd. It is He who directs these precious souls. The catechist's job is to provide the atmosphere that makes His work possible.

Note the various aspects of the Montessori environment:

- ❖ Children are directed to keep the materials in order and assume responsibilities for the room.

- ❖ Children are encouraged to work at their own individual pace and are free to choose their work.

- ❖ A variety of activities are offered: prayer and Scripture reading, geographical materials, liturgical elements, work with historical Bible and parable materials, tracing and freehand drawing, practical life exercise, cutting and pasting.

- ❖ All children are gathered together at certain times during the atrium session. Presentations are given sometimes to a large group, and sometimes to a smaller group.

- ❖ Children are directed to move about the atrium in a quiet manner using whisper voices and to be respectful of the others in the space as well as the materials.

- ❖ Catechists may take notes about their observations regarding specific materials the children have been presented and which materials the children have chosen to work with.

To preserve the rhythm of the atrium which you have come to observe, we ask that you follow these guidelines:

- ❖ Quietly remain seated in the chair provided. Moving about the room and talking will distract the children.

- ❖ Avoid speaking with the catechist during the observation period. Someone will be happy to answer your questions after the observation.

- ❖ Avoid speaking with the children. In the atrium, children are encouraged to enter into a quiet, meditative work. Conversing with them distracts them from such work. Also, children may not be conscious of the significance of their work and thus may not provide answers to your questions.