

MASS and ADORATION

Parents and children are encouraged to attend Saint Louis' 8:45am Holy Mass before morning atria as well as adore Our Lord Jesus in the Adoration Chapel between 6am Monday and 4pm Saturday.

PLANTS and FLOWERS

Children enjoy caring for God's creation. Please provide a plant with a saucer for your child to care for in the Atrium. Please sign up to bring fresh flowers for one or two weeks during the semester.

CANDLES

Candles are lit in the Atrium when Scripture is read and during sacred moments. An adult always supervises the children when they are near candles. Only the adult handles matches.

CHILD'S PAPERWORK

One of the key Montessori principles regarding children between the ages of 3 and 6 years old is that children work for the process and not the end product. Therefore, each child will have a folder in which to keep their papers (coloring, gluing, etc...) if they desire. At the end of the semester, we will send the work home. We ask parents not to expect the paperwork at the end of each Atrium session, since paperwork is not the focus of their experience in the Atrium.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We are grateful for parental help in the Atrium. It is a wonderful way to be involved in your child's Atrium experience while offering help to our program. We need volunteers to artistically paint figures, sew, wood-work and to assist children during Jesus Visits. Please contact Maria Blazevich (703) 765-4421 x29 if you are interested in volunteering.

WAIT LIST

A waitlist is established after the maximum number of children is reached. Please fill out a registration form to register for the waitlist. If space becomes available, we will contact those on the waitlist. In fairness to other waitlisted children, we will attempt to contact the first family on the waitlist for 24 hours, after that time the next family on the waitlist will be offered the open space.

LOCATION

The Atrium is the white building located between Msgr. Walsh Hall and the adoration chapel. It is across the parking lot from the School and the Church, near the corner of Hwy 1 and Popkins Lane.

Saint Louis *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS)* *Catholic Montessori Atrium Handbook*



Fall 2011 – Spring 2012

Level I (ages 3-6 years old)

Level II (ages 6-9 years old)

*Saint Louis Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Montessori Atrium
2907 Popkins Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306
Rectory Phone: (703) 765-4421 x29; Atrium Phone: (703) 660-9270
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CALENDAR

The Atrium follows the liturgical seasons of the Catholic Church. Please see the Atrium calendar for the annual schedule.

DRESS CODE

Please have your children wear clothing that allows ease of movement, while keeping in mind the respectful attitude due to this special place. No blinking shoes please.

ENVIRONMENT

The Atrium is a special place of prayer and enjoyment of God, where children hear the Word of God during presentations and can meditate on God's Word while working with materials. We try to cultivate a peaceful, prayerful environment where they can listen to the Good Shepherd's voice. We teach the children to use the slow Atrium walk and quiet Atrium voice (as soft as a whisper). When necessary, we review the Atrium walk and Atrium voice. This provides the children an opportunity to gain greater control of their bodies and voices. Please model a quiet manner of speaking and walking in the Atrium to help your children become accustomed to using their Atrium voice and Atrium walk.

ARRIVAL

Before arriving at the Atrium, please be sure children have eaten a well balanced meal and have gone to the bathroom. Please sign in for your children when you arrive. Since the Atrium is a reverent environment, like a church, please encourage your children to use their Atrium voice and Atrium walk when entering. On-time arrivals are essential so that you do not disrupt group presentations given at the beginning of Atrium. If late arrivals become habitual (more than 3 times), the catechist will discuss an alternative plan for your child(ren). Toys from home are not permitted in the Atrium.

DISMISSAL

At the end of Atrium, the children gather around the prayer table to listen to the Word of God, pray and sing. When Atrium is over, children are called by name to line up for the dismissal recession. Please sign out for your children when you pick them up. Children will only be released to designated persons authorized by parents or legal guardians. If you arrive late, your child will wait for you in the Atrium. In the best interest of your children and the catechists, please be prompt in collecting your children.

ILLNESS

Please keep children who are sick at home until they recover. We are unable to let children make up atrium sessions on other days in order to keep consistency with each session.

INCLEMENT WEATHER / EMERGENCY CLOSURES

We follow Fairfax County's School Closing Policy for Inclement Weather or emergency closures. If Fairfax County Schools close, the Atrium is closed. If Fairfax County Schools are delayed 1 or 2 hours, the morning Atrium session is closed. If Fairfax Afterschool programs are closed, the afternoon Atrium session is closed. If Fairfax Saturday programs are closed or delayed, the Saturday Atrium session is closed. Due to Religious Education schedule constraints, we are unable to make up any missed days caused by inclement weather.

To check the status of Fairfax County Public Schools, visit www.fcps.edu, listen to WTOP 103.5 FM radio station, or call the recorded FCPS hot line: 800-839-FCPS (3277).

The atrium schedule already factors in snow days. In addition to the 30 catechetical hours required annually by the Diocese of Arlington, religious education programs should add at least six extra hours to their calendar each year to accommodate days off due to inclement weather or other non-weather related emergencies. In the event these inclement weather/emergency days are not used, the atrium program may dismiss for summer after completing the required 30 catechetical hours. If, however, during the course of the year, the atrium uses more than three inclement weather/emergency days, it is not necessary to extend the atrium year beyond the 36 budgeted hours, provided the atrium has surpassed 30 hours of instructional time. The Saint Louis Atrium schedules 52 hours annually for catechesis.

ATRIUM BEHAVIOR

Following the discretion of the catechist or assistant, if a child is unable to exercise self-control and hurts another person in the Atrium (by hitting, kicking, biting, pinching, scratching, etc...) then we will ask them to skip the next week of Atrium to reflect on proper Atrium behavior. This is to emphasize the dignity of the person and to cultivate an atmosphere of respect in the Atrium. If it happens a second time, the child will be asked to wait until the next semester before returning.

REFUNDS

In the first 3 sessions, we assess if the child is ready for the Atrium. If the child is not ready (i.e. not potty-trained, not able to follow instructions and work independently), we will ask them to wait 6 months. Please contact us within 3 sessions to receive a 75% refund of the annual tuition costs. After the first 3 sessions, tuition is non-refundable. Registration fees are non-refundable.