



# Parent Pages

## Preparing the environment of the Domestic Church\*

\* The term "Domestic Church" refers to the family, the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. Though recovered only recently, the term dates back to the first century AD. The Greek word *ecclesiola* referred to "little church." The early Church understood that the home was fertile ground for discipleship, sanctification, and holiness.

## The Risen Life of Jesus

### DEATH AND RESURRECTION

"Why did Jesus have to die?" This question is one which is often voiced by young children and, also, by the not-so-young. Perhaps you have the following answer in your mind: "He died so He could save us from our sins." We find this truth proclaimed by St. Paul in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:3 and what a great gift that is! But have you taken the time to ask the further question of "Why?" Why would He do such a thing? This is the question of the elementary aged child, and it is a question worth reflecting on. Perhaps these responses of the children will help you in your pondering!

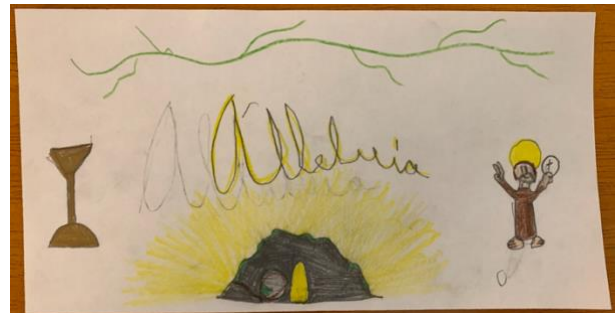
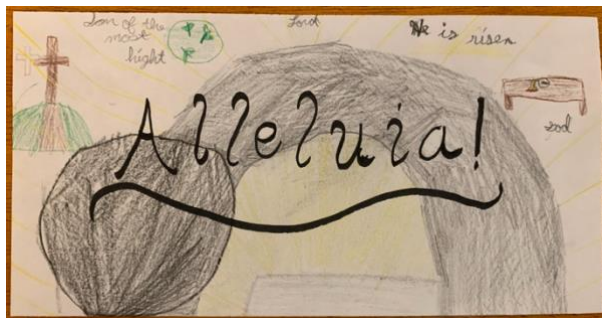
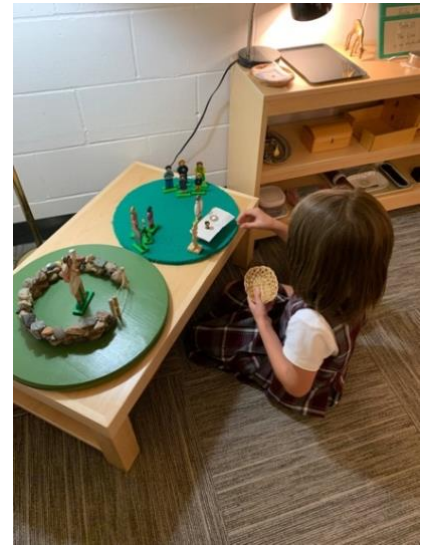
- 4-year-old at the City of Jerusalem material: "Why would the people say Jesus should die?" After a brief pause, she continued: "Oh, I know! So he could be risen. Jesus died and then he had a lot of risen light!"
- 5-year-old, having just heard the account of the Resurrection from the Gospel of Matthew: "He's not here! That's because he is the Good Shepherd and he wants to be with us, his sheep, always!"
- 11-year-old at the Prayer Table: "Jesus died and brought life for all of us."



As the children of the Atrium, from the very youngest age to the older elementary age, have shared, Jesus died so that he might rise and share his risen life with us. What great, great love he must have for each of us and for all of us. How blessed we are to have been invited to share in his risen life, a life stronger than death, a light stronger than darkness. Alleluia, Praise the Lord!

## JESUS' RISEN LIFE AND LIGHT, SHARED WITH US IN THE EUCHARIST

In the Church we continue to be nourished by the best food and best drink, the Body and Blood of the Good Shepherd who is truly present with us in the Eucharist. One of the Atrium materials particularly enjoyed by the 3-6 and 6-9 children is called the Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd. In this material we ponder the connection between the Scriptural parable of the Good Shepherd who gives all of himself to his sheep and the liturgical celebration of this reality in which we, his sheep, are fed by the very best food and drink when we are fed by the Eucharist and, thus, receive and grow in the Risen Life of Jesus, our Good Shepherd. Often, adults are surprised to hear that it is the Risen Life of Christ that we receive and enjoy in the Eucharist. And yet for the children, this is a truth that has resonated from the earliest days of their time in the Atrium. This intrinsic connection between Scripture and Liturgy, Resurrection and Eucharist, can be seen in a very particular way through their artwork. Here are a few examples of "Alleluias" decorated just before the beginning of the Lenten season. It is beautiful to see the synthesis in these illustrations (just two of many similar pieces of art) which reveals the deep truth of the Eucharist recognized by children and, we hope, by adults as well!



### CELEBRATING THE RESURRECTION THROUGH THE EUCHARIST

Each Sunday we are invited to gather and be fed by the Risen Life of Jesus. How can we keep this truth in the forefront of our minds and hearts? In what way can each Sunday be a celebration of His Resurrection, particularly during the fifty days of the Easter season?

- Look for signs of new life during this season of spring. In what way could these creation signs remind you, throughout your day, of the eternal Risen Life shared with us by Jesus?
- Sing an Alleluia song each day of Easter to praise God for his goodness! Collect Alleluia songs, building your family's musical treasury!
- Take time each Sunday to ponder together what eternal life will be like, developing a joy in and longing for that day that is yet to come.
- When you receive the Eucharist, recall that Jesus is sharing with you his Risen Life and Light, a Life stronger than death and a Light stronger than any darkness. Truly, he is so good to us!

