

Christian Montessori and The Kingdom of God

Dr. Maria Montessori, Italy's first female physician, applied the scientific method to the education of children. As a true scientist, Dr. Montessori observed the child, including his or her interests and inclinations, and then, accordingly, provided a learning plan for the student. In other words, Dr. Montessori honored the Principle of Individuality.

Accordingly, Dr. Montessori's method provides materials and activities (curriculum on the shelves) for the child to grow in knowledge and understanding. The curriculum of the classroom rotates in and out as the development of the child progresses. Flexibility in scope and sequence is afforded to the children, permitting them to accelerate in growth in areas where they are more capable, and perhaps gifted, and to work at a slower pace on content as needed.

Furthermore, the Montessori method recognizes the need to develop the whole child in body, mind, and spirit and to foster emotional growth simultaneously. Emphasis is also placed on care for the environment and appreciation for the world around us. Performing actions courteously, with grace, is developed within the child as well.

Dr. Montessori realized that the importance of learning with concrete objects (the ribbon story), especially at the younger ages, is best. For example, feeling or tracing a letter, along with hearing and seeing it, facilitates better letter recognition. Moving manipulatives, while learning the associated concepts, such as the object representing a noun when learning sentence structure, is likewise profitable.

Lastly, although standard basics within each academic content area are covered in specified developmental levels, free choice is also encouraged, permitting students to gravitate to their God given interests and inclinations. These interests and inclinations can change over the years in what are referred to as sensitive periods. One of the responsibilities of the teacher is to be aware, through observation, of the change in the sensitive periods of a student and to provide the resources for his or her "new season" in life.