



# Parent Pages

CGSUSA Parent Newsletter

## The Liturgical Calendar

While the “big picture” of Salvation History provides a beautiful framework into which we can place specific events in history, we also need an orientation to the way we live each year, particularly as we live it through the Church. Dr. Maria Montessori developed such a material, the Liturgical Calendar, which serves to orient us to the Liturgical Year. This material, utilized in the 3-6, 6-9, and 9-12 Atrium, is a perfect example of Montessori’s brilliance, serving the child from the age of four until twelve.

### The Liturgical Calendar vs. A Civil Calendar

The Church has its own calendar, which we call the “liturgical calendar.” The Liturgical Calendar is different from the civil or secular calendar, which is divided into 12 months over four seasons. While the civil calendar orients us to secular life, the liturgical calendar orients us to religious life and, more importantly, helps us to re-live various aspects of the life of Jesus. When we refer to the seasons and feasts on the liturgical calendar, we are not only remembering the historical events that happened in the past, but we are celebrating what continues to happen today. We can do so because the person who is the center of our seasons and feasts is the person of the Risen Christ, who is alive and continues to be revealed to us.

### Level I

The Liturgical Calendar is composed of 52 prisms, inner arcs and arrows, and two outer arcs. Each prism indicates one Sunday or week of the year, a year which is guided by three principal feasts (Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost) as well as corresponding seasons of preparation, celebration, and ordinary/growing time. The two cycles which make up the year (The Cycle of Christmas and The Cycle of Easter) have at their center the life of Jesus, the Son. As the earth travels once around the sun each year, so we “travel” around Jesus, preparing for, celebrating, and growing after the most significant events of His life. Level I children return repeatedly to this material which concretizes time and allows them to see visually and sensorially where they are in the year, a year centered around our greatest gift, the Eucharist, which is often drawn on the centerpiece of



the calendar. In the words of a five-year-old who returned to building the Liturgical Calendar several weeks in a row, "Do you know why I like this work? It's so peaceful!"



## Level II

Having spent several years building and even copying colors, symbols, and labels for the seasons and cycles of the Liturgical Calendar, the child of 6-9 is ready for another layer. The Level II child learns that each Sunday has a name, and he has the opportunity to label each Sunday and then create his own calendar with those labeled Sundays, illustrating and embellishing the great

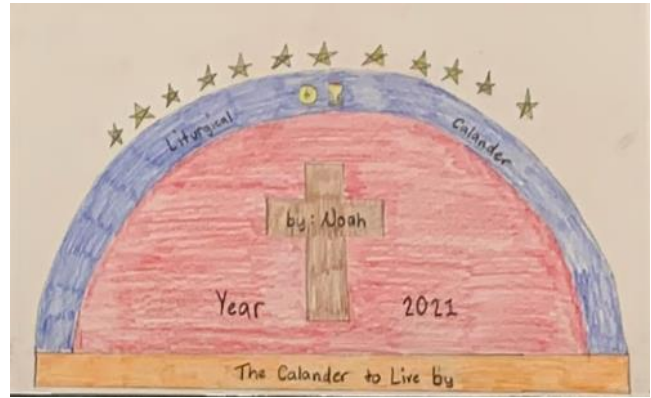
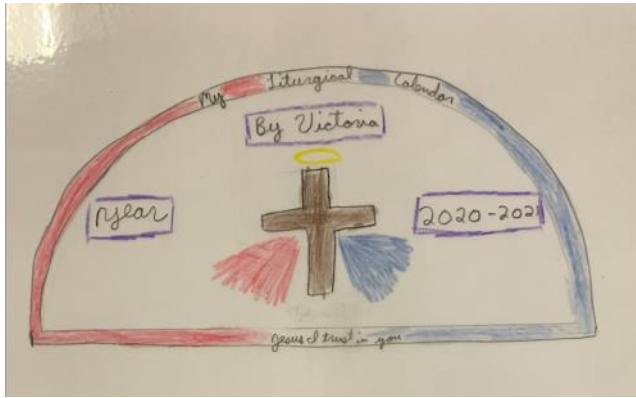
feasts and celebrations of the year. The engagement of the reasoning mind through the use of reading and writing gives time and space to ponder the liturgical year in a new way. The children begin to attune their attention to where we are currently on the Liturgical Calendar. They also begin to synthesize their understanding of the year through the image they choose to draw at the center of their calendar.

## Level III

In Level III, the work with the Liturgical Calendar continues. The typology study on Exodus provides an opportunity to discuss how the date of Passover is calculated and, alongside it, how the date of Easter is determined each year. The children are then able to discover when Easter will fall for the upcoming year, the year of their birth, or any other year in which they have an interest. In addition to all of the extended work with the Liturgical Calendar, there is a final expansion to this material which they were first introduced to so many years ago. The vertical Liturgical Calendar provides each child with an opportunity to create a personal calendar for the upcoming year with the weeks and seasons labeled, solemnities and days of obligation recorded, as well as one's favorite saints' days and feasts added in. The process of making a vertical Liturgical Calendar requires the use of a calendar for the current year and includes labeling the months and seasons of the calendar year and then filling in the yellow Sundays (note how the light permeates the calendar because of the five-day format) and additional







solemnities, labeling them and then adding feasts and celebrations as desired before the seasons of the liturgical year are shaded in purple, yellow, and green. Finally, the child creates the title for their vertical calendar, revealing a bit of their pondering of the liturgical year.

### Living the Liturgical Year

The Liturgical Calendar helps orient our family to the life of the Church.

- How does your family's liturgical year center on Jesus, the Son?
- In what ways do your Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost celebrations point to and flow from Jesus? How do you prepare for these celebrations and grow after them?
- How does your family's décor reflect the liturgical season of the Church? How does your family prayer table reflect the liturgical season or feast of the year?
- Do you know the name of the current Sunday/week of the liturgical year?
- Could you and your family make a Liturgical Calendar for your home that marks the most important solemnities and feasts that you celebrate together? Did you include Feasts of Patron Saints or Name Saints? How would you illustrate your calendar?
- If your family would like to purchase a liturgical calendar (similar to the one in the photo above), CGSUSA [sells a poster size here](#) that could be hung near the family prayer table, and a ["notebook" 11 x 17 size here](#) that would fit on your refrigerator.

