

# Assistant's Guide to Helping in the Atrium

## Before the First Group:

- Fill water source, pitchers, wine/water decanters.
- Warm water in thermos for leaven work.
- Folders out for the session.
- Ensure Atrium is tidy – shelves in order.

## During the Session:

- Participate in any full group presentations / prayer times.
- Sit at Assistant chair and observe children. Wait here for child to come with request.
  - Walk to a child to address him or her. When moving, STAY LOW.
  - Make eye contact and be at the child's eye level.
  - "Excuse me. This is John's work right now. You can use it when he puts it away on the shelf."
- Be ready to meet children's needs **when asked** or **if required**. "Every unnecessary help is a hindrance."
  - Light the candles, invite the child to prayer, stay near until candles are extinguished.
  - Read a Scripture.
  - Personal Care: Bathroom visits, cleaning face/hands, wiping a nose, getting a drink.
  - Show pencil sharpener.
  - Fill up water and wine decanters.
  - Take notes, keep records, record responses of children.
  - Protect presentations – pay particular attention to those not in presentations, intercept those waiting for attention of catechist during presentations.
  - Help child choose work. If a child is disruptive or struggling to choose, limit the choice: "Do you want to do this or this?" or "Please choose something from this shelf." If needed, invite child to work at a particular table or stay by your side as long as necessary.
  - In group, sit beside child struggling to settle. Remove and help find individual work if needed.
  - If child is "pretending" with work, ask if they would like you to read the Scripture.
  - Invite child to put work away if not using it appropriately.
  - If child is using a material he has not been shown remind him he can use anything he has been shown and that you can tell the catechist this is a work he would like to be shown.
  - Stop disruptive or harmful behavior verbally. If this does not help, physically remove the child from the situation. Tell the child before you touch him, "I am going to have to move your body because . . .you aren't listening to me . . .you are interrupting \_ (name), etc." Then do what is necessary to gently but firmly remove the child from the situation Avoid power struggles at all costs. Think about what the child needs at this moment, what he is telling you.
  - Resist the urge to compliment and instead affirm that the child seems delighted with he has done. "You seem so happy with your work. Did you enjoy doing it?" "Tell me more about your work." "Thank you for sharing that." "Look at the colors you chose!"
  - Work with materials to raise interest in children.

## End of the Day:

- Empty/clean Baptismal bowl, Holy Water bowl, water pitchers, water buckets, wine/water decanters, (prep of cruets and chalice), leaven bowls, oilcloths.
- Check paperwork shelf to ensure 5 sheets each set, glue sticks usable, collage pieces.
- Replenish Leaven: Flour, yeast, sponge, utensils for mixing and measuring, cups, popsicle sticks.
- Check polish.
- Check laundry: lavabo, Baptism, polishing.
- Sharpen colored pencils if necessary.
- Empty recycling and garbage if necessary.
- Put folders away.
- Water plants if needed.