

**Dear CMS Parents,**

Last month, we explored one of the core elements of Christian Montessori Education: Grace, Courtesy, and Good Manners (GCGM). This essential etiquette education is seamlessly integrated into the Christian Montessori curriculum, teaching children to interact harmoniously, live with good manners, and treat one another with respect. This month, we are excited to dive into two virtues that naturally flourish in the Montessori environment: patience and respect.

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## **Helping Children Develop the Virtue of Patience Through the Montessori Way**

Have you ever wondered, “Can patience really be taught to young children?” Many of us know that patience isn’t something you can instill by simply saying, “Be patient” or “You need to wait.” Then, how can we help children develop this virtue? In Montessori education, the answer lies in a hands-on approach: children learn patience by experiencing and observing it repeatedly in their daily lives.

One of the things that surprise parents when touring a Montessori classroom is the wide variety of Montessori Didactic Materials across all areas, including Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Math, and Culture in a spacious Prepared Environment. However, what surprises them even more is the fact that despite having so many materials, there is only one set of each material available. That’s right—no duplicates!

This often leads parents to ask, “Doesn’t this cause children to fight over materials?” This is a valid question, especially for parents familiar with sibling dynamics at home. However, Montessori classrooms rarely experience such disputes. Why? Children are introduced to the ground rule that if a material is in use, they must wait patiently for their turn.

This practice teaches patience in a very tangible way. Children quickly learn they cannot demand, complain, or interrupt another child’s work. Meanwhile, the child using the material is granted the freedom to finish their work without interference. This reciprocal respect fosters a natural cycle of patience: children wait their turn not because they are

told to do so, but because the environment consistently models and reinforces this behavior.

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## **Helping Children Develop the Virtue of Respect Through the Montessori Way**

What does respect look like in a Montessori classroom? In this environment, respect is more than a set of rules—it's a way of life that extends to people, materials, and personal workspaces.

For example, Montessori Materials are used either on a mat or at a table, and this workspace is treated as private property. Children learn not to encroach on someone's workspace without permission, just as we wouldn't step into another person's yard without permission.

Teachers model respect by giving children autonomy. Unlike traditional classrooms, where teachers might adjust or touch a child's work during activities, Montessori teachers step back after presenting a lesson, allowing the child to work independently. If assistance is needed, the teacher asks first, using phrases like, "May I help you?" or "Would you like some assistance?" This subtle but profound practice instills respect for the child's independence.

Similarly, children practice respect with their peers. For example, if a child wants to observe another child's work, they must first ask permission: "May I watch your work?" If granted, the observing child must remain quiet, without distracting or touching the working child's materials. These interactions teach the importance of consent and mutual respect in a practical way.

Through these experiences, children internalize respect. They don't learn it because they're told to "be respectful"; they learn it through mutual respect from their teachers and peers. The Montessori classroom becomes a small community where respect is consistently modeled, practiced, and deeply ingrained.

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## Bringing Patience and Respect Into the Home

You might be wondering, “How can I support these virtues at home?” Here are some simple yet effective ideas:

**Model patience in daily life:** When waiting in line or stuck in traffic, verbalize your thought process: “I feel impatient, but I’ll take a deep breath and wait.”

**Respect their efforts:** When your child is focused on a task—building blocks or coloring—ask before intervening. Use Montessori-style questions like, “Would you like my help?” to show you value their independence.

**Encourage turn-taking:** Whether through board games, sharing toys, or even waiting for their favorite show, give children opportunities to practice taking turns. Unlike forced sharing, turn-taking fosters patience and fairness.

Research shows that taking turns, rather than sharing, helps children develop cooperation and generosity. When children know they’ll have a turn, they feel secure and more willing to let go when it’s someone else’s turn. For example, if one child has a favorite toy, establish a rule: “*You can play with it for five minutes, then it’s your sibling’s turn.*”

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## A Virtue Rooted in Experience, Not Instruction

Patience and respect are not abstract ideas in a Montessori classroom. They are woven into daily routines and interactions, shaping a child’s character over time. As Dr. Maria Montessori wrote: “These experiences happen every hour of the day for years. This practice of respecting and patience enters into the life of each individual as an experience that matures with the passing of time.” (*The Absorbent Mind*, pp. 163–164)

By cultivating an environment where these virtues are lived and practiced daily, the Montessori Method ensures that patience and respect become intrinsic parts of a child’s character. These aren’t just children who know patience and respect—they are children who embody them.

We hope this deeper look into how Montessori fosters patience and respect enhances your appreciation for the intentional education your child receives at Central Montessori School. Together, we're nurturing not only their minds but also their hearts—helping them grow into individuals who embody Christ's love through their interactions with the world.

Serving with Joy in Christ,

**Lois Kim**

Director, Central Montessori School

*(This newsletter is part of a series on Montessori education at Central Montessori School.)*