

## **The Album Page**

In order to dispel the mystery of what an album page is you might say that an album page is a de-schooled sort of lesson plan. However the term lesson plan would inadequately address the purpose of an album page, since lesson plans are structured only to teach facts and help develop concepts within a school setting. An album page with academic Montessori is the first spark in a child's journey to self-discovery. With the album page a presentation is introduced that will help the child to discover for himself the inherent concepts of the materials leading the child from concrete to abstract intellectual thought. With the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd the Album Page serves as a guide for announcing God's love (kerygma) to the children.

This may seem like an extra chore to some but it must be remembered that a teacher/directress is *\*formed\** with each step of the process in preparing the presentations, whether it be making the materials or preparing the album page. For the purposes of those using these methods to homeschool, what I am going to do here is to provide a suggested format using a combined approach to the academic and CGS album pages:

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**Title of Presentation** (Name of Exercise)

**Category:**

This will help you to organize your albums. The category refers to the area of study the presentation may be listed with.

e.g. With academic Montessori the categories would be Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Math or Culture (which includes Science, History, Geography, Art and Music)

e.g. With CGS the 3-6 year old categories may be Prayer, Liturgy, Geography, Narratives, Prophecy, Good Shepherd, Parables, Gestures, Baptism, Celebrations.

**Age:**

General age appropriate for this presentation. Keep in mind while “following the child” this is a general age, some children may be ready sooner or later.

**Sources:**

List here what sources you referenced in preparing this page, including other personally prepared album pages and background reading.

**Preparation/Prerequisite**

Indicate here if needed, which presentation or presentations should precede this one.

There are many exercises which may be given in parallel with another however you need to be aware of which ones must have foundation in a previous exercise. e.g. with academic Montessori one should master counting to 100 with the Hundred Board and the Tens Boards before going on to the Thousand Chain.

**Liturgical Time:**

If applicable, with CGS this would indicate what time of the liturgical year is most appropriate to introduce this presentation. Liturgical seasons include Ordinary time, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc.

**Fundamental Concepts/Doctrinal Points:**

Here you indicate the \*meat\* of what you are teaching, the underlying reasoning or meaning. This is not necessarily what you will directly communicate to the children but will help you in your preparation and delivery of the content or message.

**Direct Aim:**

This is the primary point or specific goal of the presentation, which we hope the child will discover. This aim should flow from the doctrinal point or fundamental concept above. With CGS there are many layers of truth to be uncovered, while with academic Montessori there are many foundational concepts to be built upon. For some presentations the direct aim may be as simple as nomenclature (learning the names of things).

**Indirect Aim:**

Beyond the direct aims, here we project what this presentation may lead to with future presentations or understanding.

**Material:**

Brief description of materials needed for the presentation. At this point you may also consider adding to your album page: photos, illustrations, hand drawings of materials.

**Presentation:**

This may be a detailed step-by-step description of what is to be presented to the child. Or it may be an outlined summary, depending on your preference.

CGS for example uses the following presentation format: Introduction (link to what children have already experienced), Oral Presentation (telling/summarizing the story/major points in your own words), Reading of Scripture, Presentation with Materials, Wondering Questions, Closing (with prayer, song, silence)

With academic and CGS Montessori is always important to “Let thy words be counted” in the presentation of the materials, using words only when necessary. Also remember to analyze your movements making each move of your hand slow, precise and deliberate. And always using a gentle voice while presenting the material.

**Vocabulary:**

You might note here new terms that are introduced with this activity. This may be nomenclature introduced with a three period lesson or it may be terms defined in the presentation as with CGS e.g. “When we don’t know every detail of how something happens we may call that a “mystery.”

**Points of Interest:**

What is there in the materials or the presentation that will interest or attract the child?

**Control of Error:**

(mostly for academic Montessori) What will lead the child to self-correction of errors while using this material?

**Child’s Work/Variations/Extensions:**

The child works first with the materials presented, but here you can record alternative ways to present the materials, and follow-up extensions, which will further develop the presentation. You may want to consider starting a scrapbook of the child’s work and a photo journal of the child working with various materials. (Just don’t overdo it with the photos – you don’t want to interrupt the child’s concentration.)

**Child’s Response/Observations/Reflections:**

Here you can leave space to record you observations of how the child works with the materials, or what you might do to improve the presentation or materials.

**Category:**  
Kingdom Parables

### **The Mustard Seed**

**Ages:** 3+

**Sources:** Matthew 13:31-32  
Religious Potential of the Child p. 140-145  
The Good Shepherd and the Child p. 56-58  
Catechism of the Catholic Church (#546 and p.885)  
Altoona, WI (this meaning I had seen the presentation at training in Altoona)

**Prerequisites:** none

**Liturgical Time:** Ordinary Time – after Christmas

**Doctrinal Content:**

- Jesus' invitation to enter His Kingdom comes in the form of parables, a characteristic feature of His teaching (CCC546)
- There is great power in the tiny seed, which contains within itself the potential to become something great through transformation.
- The Kingdom of God is mysteriously present and is secretly at the heart of the parables.

**Direct Aim:**

- To announce that Jesus' Kingdom is different from earthly kingdoms.
- To announce that God's power helps all things grow and change.
- To contrast the small and the great, and to recognize that the great comes from the small.

**Indirect Aim:**

- To invite a sense of wonder, awe and joy through the Kingdom parables.
- To recognize that we are a part of the mystery of life.
- To foster contemplation through God's creation.
- To prepare for future Kingdom parables.

**Material:**

- Mustard seed in an attractive container with a cover.
- Photo of mustard tree and child in Israel
- Candle and holder, snuffer, matches
- Booklet with scripture text – Matthew 13: 31-32

**Presentation:**

Introduction – Jesus was born as a tiny baby in a stable – yet He was called a king.

Jesus' Kingdom is different from earthly kingdoms.

What do we know about earthly kingdoms?

When Jesus began to teach, he wanted the people to know about the Kingdom so he told them many stories, to help them understand. The stories Jesus told are called parables.

Can you say parables.?

Presentation – I'm going to read you a parable told by Jesus. These are the words of Jesus:

(Read scripture text Matthew 13:31-32)

The mustard seed is the tiniest of all seeds. It is the smaller than the head of a pin.

Yet it becomes a large tree that welcomes the birds of the air and provides a place for their nests.

Wondering Questions –

Do you know anything about seeds?

What seeds do you know? Can you think of a small seed? Can you think of a large seed?

(Pass around the container of mustard seeds)

Is this the smallest seed you've seen?

Jesus spoke about the mustard seed because it was a plant that grew in Israel (Show photo)

Let's read the scripture \*again\* and listen to Jesus' words (Read text)

(Put a single seed in the palm of your hand or on your finger tip and show to the children)

This seed is very, very small. Can you see it? This seed grows and becomes bigger and bigger.

How does that happen? What is inside the seed that makes it grow?

Sometimes we don't know how things happen. Sometimes we don't have all the answers. We know that this tiny seed has a secret inside that helps it to grow into something very big. When we don't know the detail of how something happens we may call this a mystery. Can you say "mystery." The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed.

Why would God compare his Kingdom to a mustard seed?

**Child's Work:**

Mustard seed with photo (work with presentation materials)

Magnifier box with mustard seed

Free drawing

Make a card with a mustard seed and quote:

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed.”

Tracing cards

**Child's Response:**

(Record observations here)