



All About the Atrium

CGSUSA Parent Newsletter

Purple is for Preparation

Early in our marriage, when it came time to paint our living room, I gathered the necessary supplies needed for the task: the paint, a roller, brushes and a drop cloth. Eager to see my perfectly chosen paint color cover the plain white walls, my enthusiasm was interrupted by my husband and a roll of blue painter's tape, as he meticulously and painstakingly taped off the woodwork, ceiling and window trim. While he worked so carefully and slowly to prepare the space, I became more impatient to see paint on the wall. My husband understood that there was work that needed to be done prior to my brush applying paint to the wall. Related to the season of Lent, the effort we put into these 40 days will make the celebration of Easter a richer and fuller encounter with the Lord. What does this season of preparation mean for our children and families?

Why purple?

In both the Old and New Testament, purple is found to be a rare and valuable color symbolizing royalty, wealth and status. In ancient times, the dye used to create purple was not only very expensive to produce, but it was also labor intensive. It was considered a great luxury. In the Hebrew Scriptures, it was worn by kings, used in curtains and carpets in the tabernacle, adorned the altar in the temple and was repeatedly shown to be a costly linen. In the gospels, the Roman soldiers dress Jesus in a purple robe before he begins his walk to Calvary. Each Lent, we are called as his disciples, to walk with him on this journey. How do we speak of this to the children?

We know that young children are very sensitive to and have a great interest in colors. When they are small, children enjoy identifying their favorite color. They take great delight in finding their favorite color in the clothes they wear, the food they eat and items discovered in their environment. For the very young child, colors help offer shape and identity.

In the Atrium, we speak about purple as the color for waiting and preparing. Through the presentations of the *Liturgical Colors*, and later *The Liturgical Calendar*, the child discovers that the season of Lent is a time of preparation for the great feast of Easter. Through these presentations, along with the solemn changing of the color of the cloth on the prayer table, the children come to participate in the liturgical life of the Church.

How do we prepare as a family?

What work of preparation can we do as a family?
How do we help our children enter this sacred time?

Purple on your table

