

**CAN LITTLE KIDS UNDERSTAND RELIGION?**

Maria Montessori, the great early childhood educator, demonstrated that small children can often grasp the concept of God better than most sophisticated adults.

The more worldly wise we moderns become, the harder it becomes to find room for godly wisdom. TV and modern things fill the minds of today's children so soon. Such diversions can clog the mind-space that our Creator made especially to hold knowledge of God. We need to plant the seeds of God's revelation early enough to reserve these spaces.

Little children need to be prayed for, prayed over and prayed with. They need to learn their prayers and also learn to talk to Jesus freely with confidence. They need to learn, not only that God loves them but also to experience Jesus alive in His Church. They need to learn all the basic teachings of God's Church from small on along with the way of life for God's people. We should not say this is too complicated for little ones.

We must believe Jesus knew what He was saying by, "Let the little children come to me. Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." He did not say, "Wait until they are old enough to understand this." The Holy Spirit can and does work with little children too.

The term, "Age appropriate education," improperly understood, can be an excuse to teach nothing of importance. In Religion this can be a mistrust of the Holy Spirit and a denial of the humanity of children. Little children, in their own way, can accept the mysteries of faith more easily than our worldly wise teens can.

Every age is the age to hear of the fullness of God's gifts and mysteries so we can process it in the Holy Spirit at our own level. After all, at what age can we really understand the Trinity; but we can all accept and experience this reality in our own deep way at any age.

It may well be that we have lukewarm adults, not so much because of their failure to mature from their childhood faith, as that they had very little chance to receive the seeds of faith in their childhood.