



Maria Montessori

"An education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking; it involves the spiritual development of man, the enhancement of his value as an individual, and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live."

Maria Montessori (1870-1951) is esteemed as one of the most influential educators of the last century. Despite the limits placed on women in her time, she advanced successfully through school and became one of the first women in Italy to graduate from medical school. After becoming a doctor, she became very interested in the development and education of children. She eventually opened a school called Casa dei Bambini in one of the worst neighborhoods of Rome. It was here that she developed the pioneering Montessori Method that would transform early childhood education around the world. She showed that young people learned better through active experiences rather than passive lessons. Dr. Montessori's concern for children, especially disadvantaged ones, was influenced by her Roman Catholic faith. She believed that nurturing a child's spiritual life was just as important as developing his or her intellectual gifts. With the rise of Fascism in Italy before World War II, Montessori was forced to flee her native country, eventually ending up under house arrest in British India. Nevertheless, her influence continued to grow, and she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in three consecutive years, 1949-1951, before passing away.

Dr. Montessori was a passionate advocate for transforming the education of young people to make the world a better place. Her ideas have influenced the founding of Dietrich Bonhoeffer Academy, and we honor her life and work.