

**The History and Future of the Good Shepherd Program:
The Parishioners of Assumption and The Marks/Graziano Good Shepherd Certification
Scholarship Fund**



The Marks/Graziano Good Shepherd Certification Scholarship Fund will promote and strengthen the faith formation of the youngest children at Assumption Parish by helping its recipients attend certification programs recognized by the National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

The Good Shepherd Program offers a unique approach to the faith formation of the young child. It is offered as part of Assumption Faith Formation and is an option available to all young children of registered parishioners at Assumption Church. It offers the young child a joyful religious experience within a multi-age setting replete with engaging, developmentally appropriate activities and lessons which nurture the child's relationship with Christ, encourage the child's understanding and participation in the Mass, and convey confidence in the child's ability to contribute to the many expressions of faith and service in the community at Assumption.

The creation of the Marks/Graziano Good Shepherd Certification Scholarship Fund honors the love and faithful service of Sr. Patricia Marks and Sr. Marie Graziano to the young children of Assumption. Their desire to help the young child come closer to God through the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd led them to recruit the assistance of other loving members of the Assumption family- Father Martin, JuliAnn Ferdenzi, Marianna Quagliano and Mary Romance.

In 1997, the first atrium was opened at Assumption to serve the 3-6 year old children of the parish. Through the love, service, and guidance of Sr. Pat and Sr. Marie, a second level atrium was added to the program to serve the 6-9 year old children who had completed Level I of the Good Shepherd program. The Level III program was requested by the Level II children who had completed 6 years of CGS Formation. The Good Shepherd Level III program for children 9-12 was added in 2003.

In 2013, the first Good Shepherd graduate enrolled in a Level I Formation Course and returned with catechist certification to serve 3-6 year old children in the Level I atrium.

In August 2014, the first children with special needs in our Level II special Friday atrium celebrated the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

In 2020-2021, we were blessed to be able to offer in-person Good Shepherd atrium sessions to all the children during the Pandemic. Many of the children's artwork, prayers and photographs were published in the special online CGS April 2011 journal: "CGS in Quarantine" excerpts from the online journal have been posted on the Good Shepherd section of the parish website at www.assumptionparish.org.

In October 2021, two of our Good Shepherd Students with special needs celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation. Those two students have become official Good Shepherd Level II Volunteer Assistants in our Level II Special Friday session.

In 2021-2022, Good Shepherd graduates returned to serve as Level I, II and III assistants or catechists to the Good Shepherd children and were active in the altar server, lector, social justice, Music, Youth and Eucharistic Ministries.

In 2022, four graduates of the Good Shepherd Program: Karis Marum, Ana Gomez, Courtney McAllister and Sara Gomez were awarded MGF Scholarships to attend an Orientation to Atrium Assistants course offered by the Center for Children and Theology. Good Shepherd parent, Ana Danielpour was also awarded a MGF Scholarship to attend the Orientation to Atrium Assistant Training.

In 2023, one graduate of the Good Shepherd Program, Chloé Hedary, was awarded a MGF Scholarship to attend the Atrium Assistants Orientation.

In 2024, two more graduates, Jilliane DePeralta and Samantha Morgan, returned to serve the children in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Program. Jilliane DePeralta received a MGF Scholarship to attend the Atrium Assistant Orientation.

The Good Shepherd program presently serves children enrolled in 3 different levels of formation who meet in 7 separate sessions. With your prayers and support, we hope to be able to continue the legacy of Sr. Pat and Sr. Marie by continuing to offer Levels I, II, and III of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to 3-12 year old children at Assumption.

Registered parishioners who have demonstrated a desire to serve the children of Assumption by becoming catechists in the Good Shepherd program and who embrace the Spirit of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd as elaborated in the 32 points of reflection detailed in The Religious Potential of the Child 6 to 12 Years Old by Sofia Cavalletti, may apply to the Marks/Graziano Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund for full or partial tuition assistance to attend a formation course and earn a certificate from the National Association for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in the United States (www.cgsusa.org).



Please visit our Good Shepherd Page of our Assumption Parish at www.assumptionparish.org/good-shepherd or see our Instagram page for more information at [#cgsprogramassumptionchurch](https://www.instagram.com/cgsprogramassumptionchurch).

We look forward to welcoming the children back to the 2026-2027 Good Shepherd Program!