



# Parent Page Newsletter

*For the parents of children in the CGS Atrium*

February 2026

## Moral Formation and the Young Child

For those parents who have observed in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Atrium, the approach to communication can seem a bit different than that of a traditional classroom environment. A key practice in the atrium is to be mindful of our use of language, especially avoiding conventional words of praise. This is a purposeful choice that is rooted in a deep understanding of the child.

The atrium is prepared as a place for prayer and deep listening, fostering a love relationship between the child and God. We spend time just being with him and falling ever more deeply in love with our beloved Good Shepherd. This reciprocal relationship of love between a child and the Good Shepherd is the true foundation for moral development. It has been said that the measure of true character is what an individual chooses to do when no one is looking. We recognize that the best choices come from within a child's heart, shaped by love for others, not from pressure, reward, or fear of disapproval. In the atrium, we foster the loving relationship with the Lord. This is the true foundation for moral development. We are so loved by him, and we want to do right by our beloved.

As an observer in an atrium for the three- to five-year-old children, you will notice many factors that are supporting this deeper orientation to moral formation. As an observer in an atrium for three- to five-year-old children, you will notice many quiet, intentional practices that support a child's inner life and moral formation. When a child asks, "Do you love my picture?" the adult responds with warmth and interest rather than evaluation, offering an open invitation such as, "Tell me about it."

This gentle response allows the child to remain connected to their own experience and sense of joy in the work, rather than shifting their attention to seeking approval. Over time, these small moments help the child learn that their value and choices come from within, grounded in relationship and love.

When a child is engaged in working with materials, adults refrain from interrupting their thoughts and activity. We avoid intruding with comments, or lingering, or inserting ourselves between the child and God. Instead, our work is to observe carefully and to give the child something to respond to. We proclaim words from scripture. We model a gesture from the Mass or Liturgy. We put work in their hands that which helps them to become focused and calm...and then we give them space and time to respond from their own wonder and awe. We serve these small ones by helping them to listen within, to trust their own sense of what is good and loving and to respond with the love they are so very capable of giving.