

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

What is the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd?

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a hands-on, Montessori-based religious formation approach, rooted in Scripture and liturgy, to help young children fall in love with God. It began in Rome in 1950 under the guidance of noted Hebrew scholar and theologian Sofia Cavaletti, and is inspired by the educational principles of Maria Montessori. The CGS has been in use throughout the United States in Catholic churches since 1985.

Children gather in an “atrium,” a room prepared for them, which contains simple yet beautiful materials that they use to help them reflect on God’s love for them. In an atrium, the child can ponder a biblical passage or a prayer from the liturgy by taking the material for that text and working with it. For example, placing wood figures of sheep in a sheepfold of the Good Shepherd, setting sculpted apostles around the Last Supper table, or preparing a small altar with furnishings used for the Eucharist. Older children who can read often copy parables from the Bible, lay in order written prayers from the rite of Baptism, or label a long timeline showing the history of the Kingdom of God.

Children are grouped according to the Montessori principles of periods of development. Thus, a level 1 atrium is for 3-6 years olds (preschool through Kindergarten), level 2 is for ages 6-9 (grades 1-3), and level 3 is for 9-12 year olds (4th through 6th grade). Grade levels are approximate, and a child will be placed according to their personal needs as observed by the catechist.

We are excited to offer this form of catechesis for your child in our parish and look forward to growing along with them as they encounter our Risen Lord in their time in the atrium!

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Peggy Hanley
CGS Coordinator

CGS Session Dates

September: 17th, 24th

October: 1st, 15th, 22nd, 29th

November: 5th, 19th

December: 3th, 10th, 17th

January: 7th, 21st, 28th

February: 4th, 18th, 25th

March: 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th

April: 14th, 21st, 28th

Community Opportunities

The dates for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program are structured so you can take advantage of the many community events that the parish has to offer. Be sure to check the parish bulletin, website, and social media pages for more information about the Parish Picnic, Knight of Columbus Breakfasts and Fish Frys, Sunday Donuts, and so much more!

Please remember if your student is in a sacramental year (1st, 2nd, 7th, and 8th grades) you will need to read the “Sacramental Preparation” sheet and complete the corresponding Enrollment Form.