

Saint Joseph Parish

and Mission Church of St. Vincent de Paul

9961 Elk Grove Florin Road, Elk Grove, CA 95624 • (916) 685-3681 • FAX (916) 685-7254

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) Guidelines

2025/2026

The following guidelines were developed in order to meet our ministry's goal of a well-supervised, high quality religious formation program for our youngest children. Your understanding and cooperation are appreciated. Please initial each block to indicate you have read and understand these guidelines.

This is a PARENT-PARTICIPATION MINISTRY. For those families, not able to serve as Coordinators, Catechists, Assistants or Helpers, your participation will consist of a minimum of 32 sessions for each child enrolled in CGS during the course of the year.

We have established small Catechists to child ratios and maximum allowable numbers of children in each session is (10). Space for your child is on a first-come, first-served basis and is contingent upon having enough Catechists for the session that day. If the ratio has not been met for the day, you may be asked to stay if you wish your child to participate.

CGS is a program where children from three years old (potty trained) through kindergarten age learn and experience our Catholic faith. Each session spends approximately two hours each week working in the *Atrium*, the space set aside for this catechesis. Many of the presentations *build* on each other, so that the child learns to synthesize various mysteries of the Faith into a single whole experience. Weekly attendance is required. If your child will not be attending due to illness, you must contact the Catechist via phone, or text. Contact information will be provided,

For the first two months, Year 1 children's parents must not leave the church property while their children are at CGS without the permission from the Lead Catechist. Children must be signed into their morning sessions before 9:30 AM but no earlier than 9:20 AM; and afternoon session before 3:15 PM but no earlier than 3:05 PM. An adult (not an older sibling) must sign children in and out of their sessions. Should parents bring other children (siblings), parents are responsible for watching and overseeing their care. No child care will be available. It is very important to respect and care for ALL parish property and to adhere to all rules and guidelines while on parish grounds. There will be opportunities for parent volunteer hours and making materials for the CGS Program.

The CGS program uses a phone calling system to call parents if they are needed to attend to their child, if the child needs clothes changed, is inconsolably unhappy, or becomes sick or unruly. It is important to leave a phone number when signing in your child for each session.

Please do not bring your children if they are ill (fever, persistent cough, runny nose, etc.). Also, do not let them bring snacks (even if to share) unless prior arrangements are made with CGS Lead Catechist. Sippy cups or water bottles containing water only are okay but must be labeled with the child's name.

Pre-enrollment, registration, and a parental liability release is required before a child may attend CGS. The fees are as follows: One child = \$110; Two Children = \$200; Three or more = \$260. **FEES ARE NOT REFUNDABLE AND ARE FOR THE CGS PROGRAM ONLY.** Make checks payable to St. Joseph Parish, on memo write: CGS Program. **(Over)**

Mission Church: 14637 Cantova Way, Rancho Murieta, CA 95683 • (916) 354-2403 • FAX (916) 354-2404

www.stjoseph-elkgrove.net (Form Updated 7/17/25)

- Neither younger nor older siblings of enrolled children may stay and participate in the CGS program. Exceptions may be made for Catechists, or Assistants on the day they volunteer. The Lead Catechist may grant exceptions if reasonable.
- In the spirit of giving, we will have an offering basket/box at times at the sign in table prior to each session. Donations are gladly accepted for materials building in the Atrium. Gift cards from Staples, Hobby Lobby, Dollar Tree, Target, and Walmart are welcomed.
- Parents/Guardians are to attend four separate Children/Family Masses and/or Adoration time and participate in a Pot Luck after the Mass to build community, (dates to be determined). Masses are typically scheduled on a Saturday morning. A family Pot Luck luncheon immediately follows the Mass. You will be given at least a two weeks' notice prior to the scheduled date. Attendance will be taken at the Mass.
- Cash donations for the Priest celebrating the Children's/Family Mass will be asked for on four separate occasions, typically prior to or on the Mass date, (dates to be determined). The week a Children/Family Mass is scheduled, there will be no Atrium sessions held. Attendance will be taken at the Mass.
- At times Parents/Guardians will be asked to assist with materials building, and or supplies, or to help set up, restore materials, and break down the Atrium room, help with Mass/Adoration celebration, or with Pot Lucks.
- Shoes may not be worn during Atrium sessions. Socks will be available. Girls are to wear short leggings or leggings under dresses skirts or shorts.
- Should your child have behavioral issues that disrupts the other children or may damage Atrium materials, your child may be asked to leave the Atrium session and sit in a supervised 'time out area' or "do nothing chair" until the issue is resolved. You will be notified at the time you pick up your child from the Atrium session. Depending on the seriousness of the issue, you may be notified or called immediately.
- Parents/guardians are allowed to attend two Atrium sessions should you or your child have separation anxiety. If more than two sessions are needed, for the other children's safety, you will be required to be fingerprinted and take an online child safety course as required by the Dioceses of Sacramento. You may also consider inquiring about becoming a Parent Assistant or Helper.
- Family Catechesis: Once a month, sessions for parents/guardians will be held that will review all presentations that children will be presented that month. At least one Parent/guardian will be expected to attend. These sessions will assist the parents/guardians in understanding the presentations the child(ren) will receive that month. Sessions will last about 2 hours and will be held on the 1st Saturday of each month beginning in November. Date and times to be determined later.
- Parents/guardians will be asked to purchase the following book to aid them in the Catechesis and understanding of the CGS Atrium Presentations. THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND THE CHILD: A JOYFUL JOURNEY, Revised and Updated. The book is available at: https://www.cgsusa.org/product/joyful_journey/ for \$19.95, Limited copies may also be available on Amazon. A joint order may be placed to save on shipping costs. If joint order is placed, cost will be \$22.00 (includes shipping).

Other guidelines may be added as needed. You will be notified when they occur.

I have read and agree to these guidelines

Signature: _____

Name (Print): _____ Date: _____