



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS)

Newsletter – April 2019

Registration for fall begins April 7

Contents

Communications/Reminders	1
April in our Atria.....	2
The Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd:	2
Celebrating the Easter Season:	3
<i>The Liturgy of Light:</i>	3
<i>The Empty Tomb:</i>	3
<i>Baptism:.....</i>	4
For the Home	4

Communications/Reminders

- ***Time to Register for Next Fall!***
 - Pre-printed family registration forms will be available starting April 7. Simply review and make your schedule selections for next year when you come with your child. On-site credit card payments may be made on April 9th.
 - There will be an Open House of the entire Faith Formation Center on April 7 and 28th, 10:00am-11:00amm.
 - If you wish to view the Level II Atrium located in the middle trailer after your Tuesday session, just let us know!
- ***CGS Children’s Mass Participation – May 5***
 - CGS children are invited to participate at the 11:00am Mass as a closing celebration, followed by a family luncheon.
- ***Prayer Table Kits:*** Remember to change your family prayer table cloth back to white on Easter – when we celebrate the Light of the Risen Lord!

April in our Atria

As we wrap up our Lenten focus on the Paschal Mystery and Christ as our Good Shepherd (see the [March Newsletter](#)), we give thanks that our Good Shepherd is ever present with us at the Eucharist of the Mass. When we return in Easter, we celebrate that our Good Shepherd who laid down his life for us is stronger than death! Through our baptism we share in His promise of new life. Both our Level I and II children explore similar themes with an ever-deeper level of understanding.

The Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd:

The joy of being in a loving relationship is to be celebrated! The liturgy of the Mass is how we celebrate being in relationship with our loving Father. Connecting this joy of relationship to the celebration of the Mass unfolds slowly with the child. The foundation begins as the children fall in love with the Good Shepherd materials (re)introduced at the beginning of Lent. As the children begin to become aware that we are the sheep (which often takes a few years) – and after knowing that Jesus, our Good Shepherd tells us of the bread and wine that “This is my Body” and “This is my Blood” – we introduce a new place that the Good Shepherd calls His sheep to be with him in a most particular way – to the sheepfold of the church; present in the Holy Eucharist.



Already grounded in the understanding that the Good Shepherd knows each sheep *by name*; *leads* them to provide for *all that they need*; and *protects* them (with his life), we wonder together how the sheep must feel to be with the Good Shepherd in this way? Likewise, how the Good Shepherd must feel to be surrounded here by his sheep?

Once the child fully understands that we are the sheep, and that Jesus, our Good Shepherd, is truly present in the Eucharist (often not until Level II), we can remove the Good Shepherd figure from the miniature altar and replace the sheep with people. One of the sheep/people has a special role: the priest repeats the words of our Good Shepherd: “This is my Body” and “This is my Blood”.



Later – perhaps as the child is preparing for First Eucharist – we might wonder together who all Jesus calls in this way? Who all does he offer himself to at the

Eucharist? We realize that this gift of His whole self is offered to all people of all times! And so we bring into the sheepfold international figures of people from around the world. Surely this gift of relationship is to be celebrated!



Celebrating the Easter Season:

The children will recall that at the beginning of Lent we “buried” the Alleluia by wrapping our prayer card with this word in cloth and hiding it under our prayer table. Like “The people who walked in darkness”, we anxiously waited to “see the Great Light” (Isaiah) and joyously sing Alleluia to our Risen Lord!

The Easter season in the atrium is filled with much light as we share together:

The Liturgy of Light:

We begin Easter with a celebration similar to the Easter Vigil’s Liturgy of Light. Lighting the atrium’s Paschal Candle, we rejoice in the light of the Risen Christ that it symbolizes, sing songs of praise in procession and lift up Alleluias! As a candle for each child is lit from our Paschal Candle, we watch how the light spreads and delight in its beauty.

The Empty Tomb:

We wonder about Jesus’ resurrection as seen through the eyes of the women who, upon reaching the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body, discovered that the stone had been rolled back. A replica of Jesus’ tomb helps to visualize these events:

On entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, “Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him. But go and tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.’” Then they went out from the tomb, seized with trembling and bewilderment.



Mark 16:6-8

In the season of Easter, we celebrate that through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we have the promise of eternal life. Surely this is a gift to be celebrated!

The Level II children who have been reflecting on the History of the Kingdom of God and ways of furthering His Kingdom spend some time wondering about the response of the women at Jesus’ tomb who were directed to tell the disciples of this *Good News*. Can we share this good news of Jesus’ being risen with others?

Baptism:

On Easter Sunday, we renew our Baptismal vows. The rest of the Easter season in the atrium has a primary focus on Baptism. Using a miniature model of a baptismal font and other items, we explore the meaning of these signs and symbols:

- **The Paschal Candle:** representing the Light of the Risen Christ which overcame the darkness of death and brings us New Life.
- **Our Baptismal Candle:** shows that we have received this Light and Life.
- **A white garment:** shows we are completely covered in Christ's light – the light we receive in our hearts shows even on the outside.
- **Water:** both cleanses and strengthens us – it provides us with new life.
- **The Word:** scripture is a guide on how to live our lives with Jesus.
- **Holy Oils:** anoint us as a sign of our new life with Christ.

We explore these symbols slowly each year in the atrium – the youngest perhaps simply enjoying the light of the candles and experiencing the water poured over their hands. The older children continue to go deeper, and may ponder the meaning behind the gestures of Baptism:

- **Epiclesis or Imposition of the Hands over the water:** blessing of the waters of Baptism – to make them (and us) holy.
- **The Sign of the Cross:** using his thumb, the priest makes the Sign of the Cross on our forehead and “marks us as Christ's forever.” Later, he makes a large Sign of the Cross before all who are present - like a shield before us.

The gestures of Baptism reinforce that we are each a child of God, a part of the sheepfold, and protected by his presence in our lives.

The Level II child revisits these symbols and gestures, along with the accompanying prayers, placing them in the order of the Rite, which we see is one beautiful prayer celebration!

For the Home

Family Worship

There are many forms of prayer. Formal prayers such as the Hail Mary or Our Father are wonderful traditions, but for the young child, the most natural form of prayer is praise! Asked what they would like to say (or pray) to God, it most often will begin with “Thank you”. Some things are too profound for the child to express in words, but art can be a form of prayer, too! Some tips on “prayer art”:

- Ask your child if they would like to “draw a prayer”, then provide them with the materials, time and personal space to work on their prayer.

- Yellow is often the color instinctively chosen by children to represent God (who is our Light!). Be sure to have yellow available for use.
 - Likewise, red is typically used to represent Love – such as the love between the Good Shepherd and His sheep.
 - Respect their “prayer” as personal between them and God.
 - Refrain from saying “good job”; rather describe what you see (such as the colors used, objects drawn).
 - Wonder and reflect with them:
 - “I wonder what you were praying to God when you drew this?”
 - “Can you tell me about what you drew?”
- You might be surprised by what they have to say!
- You might place their prayer art on or near your family prayer table.



To see some examples of CGS children’s artwork from around the world, take a look at “The HeART of a Child” book on our cart in the foyer of the house. The traveling CGS USA art show even includes the work of one of our own St. Joseph children!

Here is another resource for you on Art from the National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

- [*CGSUSA Newsletter on the Art of the Child*](#)

Asking God for His peace and blessings this Lent and Easter seasons!
St. Joseph’s CGS Team

CGS Catechist and Formation Leader:
Anne Pulsifer
cgsstjoseph@comcast.net
484-431-5156