

# Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Faith Formation Option for Children

Age 3 thru First Eucharist

St. Joseph Church—2020-2021



*I am the  
Good  
Shepherd.  
I know My  
sheep  
And they  
know Me.*

*The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) methodology is a hands-on Montessori approach to religious formation that is rich in prayer, liturgical and spiritual content and is specifically designed to meet the age appropriate developmental stages of the child.*

*The goal of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is to nurture the child's relationship with God and prepare them for full participation in liturgy through:*

- ✦ *the use of manipulative materials*
- ✦ *prayer and songs*
- ✦ *listening to the Bible with the children*
- ✦ *giving them time to work and thus meditate with materials*

*The Atria where the children meet are unique environments filled with materials specifically designed for the child's use. The Atrium provides a special space to nurture their spiritual growth and relationship with God. In addition to the physical environment, the atmosphere or "Way of the Atrium" is prayerful and retreat-like. We walk slowly and quietly, with controlled movements and hushed voices.*

*The Home is also an Atrium - a place where the child first learns who God is and how to live the gift of life that God has given him or her. Recommended practices for the family and home which will enhance the children's formation experience in the atrium include:*

- Preparing a Home Prayer Table/Corner*
- ◆ *Creating space for Quiet Time and Wonder*
- ◆ *Regularly participating in Mass*

*Parents and catechists will partner together on this year's journey!*

For more information on the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd at St. Joseph Church, please contact Anne Pulsifer at [cgsstjoseph@comcast.net](mailto:cgsstjoseph@comcast.net)/484-431-5156.

# Communication



**Important information will be** communicated via email. Parent Letters will be sent home periodically providing information on what's happening in the Atrium. Please read these letters to help understand what your child is doing and what you can do to enhance your child's experience!

# Protecting God's Children



**Keeping God's Children Safe Lessons** are required by the Archdiocese to be provided to children at each grade level (K thru 7). These lessons will be taught during Sunday sessions only. Parents will be notified of the scheduled dates. Parents who choose not to have their child participate are to inform the PREP Coordinator in writing.

# First Eucharist Preparation



**First Eucharist preparation** is offered to CGS children in their second year of CGS Level II, which includes additional sessions for both parents and children. Be sure to register separately for this preparation.

# The Typical CGS Atrium Session

Each week in the Atrium, time is dedicated to:

✦ Catechist guided individual or small group presentations/ meditations



✦ Personal "work time", when the children work independently or in a group for personal reflection, exploration and wonder – a time to develop a personal relationship with our loving Father.

✦ Communal Prayer time that includes song, formal prayers, silent prayer, personal intentions, praise and thanksgiving.

# The Way of the Atrium



**To maintain a sense of wonder, awe and respect,** the "Way of the Atrium" should be practiced whenever in the Atrium, including during and before/after each session. Visitors are asked to respect these principles, *and parents are encouraged to adopt this manner of spiritual growth at home.*

# Parent Responsibilities

# Schedule of CGS Offerings

## Monitor email:



Important information, reminders and cancelation notices will be sent home

via email.



## Pray with your children:

When encouraged, freeform prayers

of praise and thanksgiving come naturally for the children. The following traditional prayers are also important for the children to know:

- ✠ *Sign of the Cross*
- ✠ *Hail Mary*
- ✠ *Our Father*
- ✠ *Glory Be*

## Attend Mass with your children:



This will make real what is being presented in the atrium, make them comfortable

and familiar with the liturgy, and strengthen both their and your relationship with our Lord!

The goal of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is to provide both a special environment and the time for the children and the adults with them to experience a deeply personal, prayerful and spiritual encounter with the Lord. As such, children enrolled in CGS meet for two hour sessions on a weekly basis.

**CGS Level I** is for children who are ages 3-5 in the fall (i.e. pre-K through K). Three sessions are offered:

9:00am-11:00am Tuesdays  
8:45am-10:35am Sundays

**CGS Level II** is for children who are age 6-8 in the fall (i.e. grades 1 thru 3). One session is offered:

4:30pm-6:20pm Tuesdays

## 2020-2021 Calendar

Parent Orientation/Information meetings along with orientation sessions for the children will begin the week of Sept 6. Regular weekly sessions begin Sept 22nd thru early May with days off for the following:

Thanksgiving  
Christmas/New Year's Day  
Holy Week/Easter

A full calendar will be available in August.

# CGS Content Overview

Throughout the year, presentations are given to the children to help them grow in understanding of their Loving God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Scripture; and Liturgy.

➤ **Parables:** The parables of the Good Shepherd (and later the True Vine) nurture the child to grow in an appreciation for the unconditional love and protection of the Good Shepherd and the deeply rooted relationship Jesus has with us. The parables of the Kingdom further the children's understanding of the beauty, value, and strength of God's Kingdom, deepening their desire to become participating members of the Kingdom of God.



➤ **Moral Formation:** The Good Shepherd and Kingdom parables provide the foundation for moral formation that comes as a natural response to God's love. Communion invites us to be united to the love of the Good Shepherd and the care of all those around us. ***In Level II:*** the Moral Parables such as the Good Samaritan, and the Publican and the Pharisee, as well as the Moral Maxims (the Commandments given to us by Jesus) help us to nurture and deepen our moral life in Christ. Further study of the History of Salvation from Creation, to Redemption and Parousia allows for reflection on our personal role in fulfilling God's plan.



➤ **Gestures, Prayers and Articles of the Mass:** Our materials on the Mass help the children to learn and understand not only the names and preparation of the vessels and articles used during the Mass, but also the meaning behind the symbolism and the prayers and gestures of the priest and people.



➤ **Liturgical Seasons:** We explore the Liturgical Seasons of the Church and the colors used to represent the seasons and feast days. During Advent and Christmas, we will reflect on the words of the prophets who foresaw the coming of the Messiah and read from scripture the Infancy Narrative(s). During Lent we focus on the events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection, with particular focus on the Last Supper and institution of the Mass. Easter is the season to reflect on the Light of the Risen Christ we each receive through the gifts of Baptism. We end our year with a special Pentecost Celebration to celebrate the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

