

# *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS)*

## *Newsletter - December 2018*

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### Communications/Reminders

- **Schedule Notes:**
  - December 4: *no afternoon Level I (AM Level I and PM Level II still meeting)*
  - December 25 and January 1: *Christmas break*
- **Prayer Table Kits**

Kits with Advent prayer cloths were handed out this past Tuesday. If your child did not receive one, be sure to pick one up and spend time in prayer together during Advent!

### Advent in our Atria

Following the Liturgical calendar, we have turned our focus to preparing for the feast of Christmas. The church prepares during Advent by changing the vestments of the priest to purple, lighting the candles on the Advent wreath each Sunday, listening to the words of the prophets who foretold of the coming of the savior, and anticipating and contemplating the mystery of the savior's birth. We enter into the season of Advent similarly in the atrium.

#### **Levels I and II:**

#### **Advent Celebration**

Our first day of Advent together begins with singing in procession to our prayer table, preparing it for the new liturgical season. We place a purple cloth on our table, along with an Advent wreath and other reminders of our time of waiting – including an empty manger. We recall that the great gift that we are all waiting for is the gift of Jesus himself.



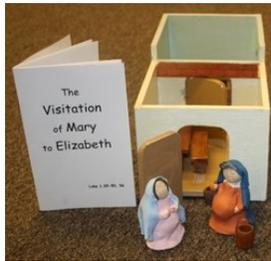
## Messianic Prophecies

We wait four weeks of Advent for Christmas to come. Long before Jesus' birth, the people waited for hundreds of years for the coming of the Messiah. To prepare the people for this great gift, God revealed clues to the prophets who listened to God with their whole hearts. From the prophets, we learn that the gift will be "a Great Light" (*Isaiah 9:1*), be born to a virgin/young maid (*Isaiah 7:14*) in the town of Bethlehem (*Micah 5:2*), have many names, including "Prince of Peace" (*Isaiah 9:5*), and he will be a star and king for all (*Numbers 24:17b*).

Our Level I children delight in knowing that Jesus is this great gift! Our Level II children ponder these same prophecies further, reflecting on ways in which He is still coming as we await His second coming and the fullness of His presence at the time of Parousia.

## Infancy Narratives

Perhaps the most captivating for the children are the stories leading up to and surrounding Jesus' birth. With the youngest children, we begin with the Annunciation to Mary that she would be the mother of God (*Luke 1:26-38*). For the older children, we add Mary's Visitation to Elizabeth, who, filled with the Holy Spirit, joyfully recognized Mary as the Mother of the Lord (*Luke 1:39-56*). All ponder Jesus' Birth and Adoration of the Shepherds (*Luke 2:1-20*).



The materials for these scripture readings help the children to enter into the Mystery of the Incarnation and wonder:

- Who is this young woman chosen to be the mother of the Lord? Why her?
- Who is this child to be born in a manger and visited by shepherds?
- What was it like (for Mary/the shepherds) to be visited by angels? To be told this news?

Our Level II children further ponder these events and the responses and actions of those present who model for us how to say "Yes" to God, and spread the "Good News" of our Savior.

## For the Home

### Family Worship

Periodically gather around your prayer table, Advent Wreath, or Christmas tree and choose one of the scripture passages above. Light a candle and read the Prophecy or Infancy Narrative together from the family Bible and invite your

child to tell about what they just heard. Who is it about? What might it have been like? Encourage your child to put their ideas on paper – either in words or drawing – and place on the prayer table as a form of prayer offering to God. Invite them to make their own prayer cards with the words of the Prophecy, or a specific response from the Infancy Narrative, such as *Glory to God!* as proclaimed by the angels (and us during the liturgy). Imagine what it would be like for there to be *Peace on Earth*, and for the *Prince of Peace* to reign over the entire world!

May you be blessed with joyful anticipation and Christ's Peace this Advent season,

*St. Joseph's CGS Team*

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