



# Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS)

Newsletter – February 2019

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## Communications/Reminders

- **Mark your Calendars for these Sundays!**
  - March 10: CGS children are invited to participate at the 11:00am Mass
  - May 5: 11:00am Closing Mass and Luncheon.

Details to follow.
- **Prayer Table Kits:** Green prayer table cloths were provided in January for you to update your home prayer table for Ordinary Time.
- **Did you know:** these CGS Newsletters are posted on the [St. Joseph website](#) for your easy reference.

## February in our Atria

During February, our children continue working with materials related to the Mystery of the Kingdom of God (see the [January Newsletter](#)). Our Level II children have added materials on moral parables and maxims to ponder ways in which we can further the Kingdom of God. We also begin to explore materials to help us understand the gestures of the Mass.

### **Level I Atrium (pre-K/K):**

#### **Eucharistic Gestures**

Our Catholic tradition is rich with symbols and signs. Being able to “read” these symbols/signs helps to unlock the mysteries of our faith and tradition, making our spiritual and liturgical lives more meaningful. We introduce some of the signs (or gestures) of the Mass to understand the meaning behind them.

**Preparation of the Chalice** – The children are shown how to prepare a glass chalice by filling it with wine and adding just a few drops of water. At Mass, the wine represents Jesus and the water represents us. As we watch the water disappear into the wine, we wonder:

- Why so much wine (and so little water)? (We are small compared to God who is so great!)
- What happened to the water? Can we separate it back out from the wine?
- What could this water and wine mixed together tell us? The priest's (silent) prayer as he prepares the chalice gives us a clue.



Priest pouring the water into the chalice. As he does this he says quietly: **By the mingling of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.**

We also look at two other gestures which complement each other:

**Epiclesis** –The children are invited to slowly lower their hands down onto a metal cup and plate with a paper “host”, repeating the gesture done by the priest over the chalice and paten. Performing this gesture allows them to “feel” how it is asking for a gift (the Holy Spirit) to come down (from heaven/God) onto the bread and wine. This gift of the Holy Spirit has the power to change the bread and wine into the presence of Jesus, Himself!



**Doxology (or Offering)** – This gesture completes the gesture of Epiclesis. As the children lift the metal cup and plate up high, they again “feel” this gesture of *thanksgiving*, like at Mass when the gifts of consecrated Bread and Wine are *offered* back up to God. The older children revisit this gesture and reflect on the accompanying prayer words. They may recall that the chalice was prepared with both wine and water (representing US). So, who is being offered to the Father?



## Parables of the Kingdom of God

We continue to explore the parables Jesus shared about the Kingdom of God. One of the children's favorite materials helps us ponder the parable of the Yeast, or Leaven:

*“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened.” (Mat 13:33)*

To help understand this parable, the children prepare their own bowl of dough, adding yeast to flour and water. After resting in the warmth of the radiator throughout our session, we return to see how much the dough has changed! We wonder about the power of God within the yeast that causes it to change the dough, and how this might be like the Kingdom of God!



## Level II Atrium (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Grade):

### The Maxims and Moral Parables

Our Level II children have a new understanding of the Kingdom of God: it has a History that is still unfolding towards the time of Parousia (see the [October Newsletter](#)). We continue to ponder what His Kingdom is/will be like, and our role in building the Kingdom of God.

Moral Maxims - One way that Jesus, our Good Shepherd and our Light, guides us is through his Word. His Words provide us with Maxims (laws/commandments) to follow that help us and others to experience His Kingdom. Some of these Maxims that we have written on wooden plaques include:

- *Love your enemies (Mat. 5:44)*
- *Do good to those who hate you (Luke 6:27)*

These might seem hard, but Jesus also offered these Maxims which offer solutions:

- *Pray for those who persecute you (Mat 5:44)*
- *Always treat others the way you would have them treat you (Mat 7:12)*

These Maxims help us to “follow the Light” that guide us in our role of furthering His Kingdom. We might wonder – what would it be like if everyone were to receive His Light and follow these Maxims? Does this give us a clue what the Parousia that we await may be like?

Jesus tells us the Greatest Commandment is:

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” (Luke 10:27)*

All the other Maxims/laws can be summarized by this Commandment. What might be different if we were to follow these words?

The Good Samaritan – To further our understanding of the Great Commandment, we read about when Jesus was asked “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied with the



parable of The Good Samaritan. The Jewish people respected the Levites and Priests, but disliked Samaritans. Yet in this parable, when a man is robbed and left to die, of those three who pass by it is the Samaritan who shows him compassion. Jesus concludes this parable by saying “go and do likewise”.

We remember that we are following the voice of Jesus, our Good Shepherd when we follow His Words from the Bible. In doing so, we are led closer to Him.



# For the Home

## Family Worship

It has been said that when we sing, we pray twice! Children love to sing, so as you gather around your family prayer table, you might read one of the parables mentioned above or in the [January Newsletter](#). You might ask them which is their favorite Kingdom parable. After reading, allow for silence and song. Here's a song you might enjoy together about the [Kingdom of God \(and the Mustard Seed\)](#). The images you see in this video are from an atrium just like ours!

There are several gestures the children should recognize during Mass. Look for these moments during Mass and ask your child:

- *Preparation of the Chalice and Epiclesis*: What goes into the chalice? How much wine? How much water? What might this mean?  
(note: Fr. O'Hara typically prepares a glass carafe with the wine and water, which he then pours into the chalice.)
- *Epiclesis*: Can you notice when this gesture occurs? (Priests often simply place their hands above the chalice and paten.) What might the gift be that is sent onto the bread and wine? What might this gift do to the bread and wine?
- *Offering (or Doxology)*: What (or who) is being offered up? (Bread and Wine/Jesus and US); Who else? (the Holy Spirit); To whom? How do we show we are part of this Offering? (by responding AMEN together)

The National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd provides some wonderful resources for parents. Here are some further resources for you:

- [CGSUSA Newsletter on the Eucharist](#)
- [CGSUSA Newsletter on Parables](#)

Asking God for His peace and blessing in this chilly month!

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