



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) Newsletter – January 2019

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Communications/Reminders

- **Prayer Table Kits:** Christmas prayer card and white cloths and were provided in December. Look for a green cloth before returning to Ordinary time.

Christmas and January in our Atria

When we return on January 8th, we will still be in the Liturgical Season of Christmas –so much joy at the birth of our Savior we continue to celebrate until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (January 13th). We will continue to think about the events surrounding birth of the King of Kings and Prince of Peace for the first half of January, then move back into Ordinary Time and reflect on the Kingdom of God.

Level I Atrium (pre-K/K):

Infancy Narratives

We visit two more events that occurred following Jesus’ birth that help us further ponder the Mystery of the Incarnation.

The Adoration of the Magi (*Matthew 2:1-12*) recounts the Magi’s (Three Kings’) travels, following the star to Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, where they honor him with gifts. We can wonder together:

How did they feel when they saw the star? How did they know to follow it?
What was their joy like when they found Jesus?
Why would they prostrate themselves and give such important gifts to the baby Jesus (gold - given to kings; frankincense - used in prayer to God; and myrrh - used in burials of humans)?
Who is this child?

For the older children, we also ponder *The Presentation in the Temple* (Luke 2:22-34, 36-40), when the Holy Family is met in the temple by Simeon and Anna, who, filled with joy and the Holy Spirit, recognize the infant Jesus as “salvation”, “Light”, and “glory” – good news to be shared with others. We can wonder:

How Simeon and Anna felt when they saw the baby Jesus?
What joy!
How did they know that Jesus was the Messiah?
How would Jesus be the “light of the world”? “God’s salvation”? “Glory”?
And again – who is this child?



Parables of the Kingdom of God

Our King of Kings and Prince of Peace told a number of parables to help us understand what His kingdom is like. When we return to Ordinary Time, we will explore some of these parables which help us to see that:

- Like the Precious Pearl (*Matthew 13:45-46*) and Hidden Treasure (*Matthew 13:44*), it is of great value and most desirable!
- Like the Mustard Seed (*Matthew 13:31-32*) and Leaven (*Matthew 13:33*), the Kingdom of God has a transformative power; from something small, great and surprising things come!



Level II Atrium (1st/2nd Grade):

Our Level II children revisit many of the same events and parables as the Level I children above, but with a new light and understanding: Jesus did not just come on the first Christmas, but He comes into our lives continually and will come again at Parousia, when His Kingdom will be complete. We, too, have a role to play in building the Kingdom.

Infancy Narratives

After revisiting some of the familiar Infancy Narratives as in Level I, we introduce a new event that models for us the importance of listening to and following God’s will with faith and trust.

***The Flight into Egypt* (Matthew 2:13-15)** recounts how Joseph, obedient to the messages God sends to him through an angel and dreams, protects the Holy Family by escaping from Herod into Egypt, then later returning safely to Nazareth. We can wonder together:

How Joseph felt to receive such troubling news in this manner?

What does this tell us about Joseph, that he so quickly obeyed? (Such faith/trust in God!)

How does God take care of us?

How does God talk to us/we talk to God today? What do you think God is trying to tell us today?

Parables of the Kingdom of God

When we return to Ordinary Time, we will revisit some of the Level I Kingdom parables to learn more about God's Kingdom as well as our role in the Kingdom. We recall that the Kingdom of God is like the:

- **Precious Pearl** (*Matthew 13:45-46*): it is of great value and brings much joy. Like the merchant, it requires searching and sacrifice. Yet how does it feel to have obtained it?
- **Mustard Seed** (*Matthew 13:31-32*): it has a transformative power to grow and change.

We, too, have the strength of God within us. How does this strength transform God's Kingdom?

For the Home

Family Worship

After all the holiday stress has passed, allow time to continue to linger in and celebrate the Christmas Season. Especially during this dark and cold time of the year, wonder with your child what it means for Jesus to be the Light of the World. Look for signs of His Light – and Hope – around you. Take an evening car ride admiring the beauty of the Christmas lights before they are taken down. Look for gradual signs of the days getting longer. Give thanks together for all the gifts of the season – not just the ones under the tree! Wait until January 13th to take your Christmas decorations down and change the colors in your family prayer corner back to green.

May the joy of Christmas continue to bless and brighten your days!

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