



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

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Communications/Reminders

- **CGS Children’s Participation in Masses**
 - March 10: CGS children are invited to participate at the 11:00am Mass
 - May 5: 11:00am Closing Mass and Luncheon.
- **Prayer Table Kits:** Remember to change your family prayer table cloth back to purple (the color for preparation) as we prepare during Lent for the Feast of Easter.
- **Did you know:** these CGS Newsletters are posted on the [St. Joseph website](#) for your easy reference.

March in our Atria

Early March marks the beginning of Lent. As with the beginning of all liturgical seasons, we celebrate in the atrium with a procession and changing of the colors on our prayer table – back to “purple for preparation”. During Lent, we focus on the Paschal Mystery and Christ as our Good Shepherd. Working with our sheepfold, figures of sheep and shepherd, the children feel the love and security of being part of the Good Shepherd’s flock. Over time they discover we are the sheep He so loves! Our 3-D map of the City of Jerusalem and Upper Room of the Last Supper help us understand how the Good Shepherd laid down his life, and continues to offer Himself to us in the Eucharist of the Mass.

Level I Atrium (pre-K/K):

The Good Shepherd

When Jesus grew up, he did so many wonderful things, people wondered who He was. We look to the Bible for Jesus’ own words to understand who he is. The children already know he tells us “I am the Light of the world.” (John 8:12) He also tells us “I am the Good Shepherd.”

The Parable of the Good Shepherd - Knowing that shepherds take care of sheep, we wonder what makes Jesus a Good Shepherd as we read his words together:

The sheep hear [the Good Shepherd's] voice, as he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers. I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd.

John 10: 3b-5, 11, 14-16

Using our materials (a sheepfold, shepherd and sheep), the children are usually struck with the understanding that He:

- knows each sheep by name;
- leads them to provide for all that they need
- protects them (with his life)



We wonder together how the sheep must feel when close to the Good Shepherd? Likewise, how the Good Shepherd must feel when with his sheep? Who might these sheep really be who are so loved by the Good Shepherd? (This takes time for the children to discover!)

The Parable of the Found Sheep - For the older children, we return to our Good Shepherd materials, and wonder what would happen if one of the sheep were to wander off and get lost. We read Jesus' words from the Bible:

What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.'

Luke 15:4-6

The children find security in knowing that the Good Shepherd knows and loves each sheep individually, never resting until all His sheep are safely home and he can rejoice with his loved ones. We can wonder how both the sheep and shepherd felt when the sheep was lost, then found? And again – who might these sheep really be who are so loved by the Good Shepherd?

The Paschal Mystery

We know that Jesus, our Good Shepherd, lays down his life for his sheep. When presenting the Paschal Mystery to the children, we never end there, for the greatest part of this mystery is that He rose! He came that we might have life, and have it abundantly! We have two wonderful sets of materials to help the children enter into this mystery:

The City of Jerusalem – our 3-D model of the City of Jerusalem illustrates where the events of the Triduum (Christ's Last Supper, death, and resurrection) took place. As we retell the events of the last days of Jesus, we place materials representing first the walls around the city, the water pools, the Temple in the upper part of the city, the Cenacle where the Last Supper was celebrated in the Upper Room, the Garden of Olives, the residences of the High Priest and Herod, the Palace of Pontius Pilate, and then the Place of the Crucifixion. Here we placed the cross, and then a depiction of the tomb that is closed with a stone. Recalling Jesus' resurrection, we open the tomb and light a candle representing the Light of Christ that now fills those who follow Him.

The Last Supper – our model of the Upper Room of the Cenacle with figures of Jesus and the Apostles is used to reenact the events of the Last Supper when Jesus spoke words that had never been heard before: "This is my Body", "This is my Blood". After *singing hymns*, Jesus and the Apostles leave for the Mount of Olives. A crucifix is placed on the table symbolizing Jesus' death. But we celebrate that he rose on the 3rd day by lighting the candles on the table (which has been transformed to look surprisingly like an altar!)



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

The Good Shepherd

After (re)visiting the Parables of the Good Shepherd and Found Sheep (see Level I above) and the loving relationship between the Good Shepherd and sheep, we further our understanding of the Good Shepherd's love for us through related parable(s).

The Good Shepherd, Hireling and Wolf - To help understand Jesus' loving sacrifice (of the Eucharist) for us, we read more of Jesus' parable:

"A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them... I am the good shepherd, ... and I will lay down my life for the sheep." John 10:12-15

We reflect on this using our Good Shepherd materials, replacing the Good Shepherd figure with a hired hand. The figure of a wolf is introduced, chasing away the hired hand and scattering the sheep. But the Good Shepherd returns to gather his sheep together, and is protectively laid down between the wolf and the sheep. Jesus went on to explain:

"This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ...I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again." John 10:17-18

The shepherd is then stood back up. There is much to meditate on:

How does this help explain Jesus' death and resurrection? Who/what might the wolf be?

Who is more powerful, the shepherd or the wolf? Isn't it a good feeling to know that the Good Shepherd remains with us always?

We are so loved by our Good Shepherd who gathers us to Him and gives all of Himself for us!

The Paschal Mystery

As with the Level I children, we explore the Paschal Mystery by looking at the events that occurred during Holy Week. We revisit the map of the *City of Jerusalem* as above, but explore in more detail the events that occurred in and around the city leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection. We add events that occurred following Jesus' resurrection:

- At the Mount of Olives, Jesus ascended to Heaven 40 days after Easter. He promises to send the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Back in the Upper Room, the Holy Spirit comes as tongues of fire on the 50th day, empowering the apostles to go out and spread the Good News.

We wonder about this gift of the Holy Spirit. Do we have the strength of the Holy Spirit, too? Is it our work, too, to spread the Good News?

We similarly revisit the events of *The Last Supper*, using our model of the Upper Room and figures of Jesus and the 12 apostles. We realize that through the words spoken at this event – “*this is my body*” and “*this is my blood*” - Jesus fulfilled His greatest desire to give the gift of himself. We wonder who he wanted to give himself to in the gift of Bread and Wine: just his disciples? Or who?

For the Home

Family Worship

Here are some suggestions that might enrich your family time around your prayer table:

Hosanna - The word ‘Hosanna’ can be found in both the Old Testament (Psalm 118) and in the New Testament (Mark 11:9, and Matthew 21:9). It is a shout of praise or adoration. Make a Hosanna prayer card for your prayer table.

*A**elua* - We do not say or sing this word in the Atrium or at liturgy during Lent and Holy Week. You might make this prayer card for your prayer table collection but place it in a box or drawer until Easter Sunday. Some families ritually “bury” the prayer card for the season of Lent.

Bible Atlas - The older children are interested in making discoveries about geography and even seeing photos of those places today. A Children’s Bible Atlas would make a nice addition to an Easter Basket. Or check out a Child’s Bible Atlas at your local library.

The National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd provides some wonderful resources for parents. Here is another resource for you:

- [CGSUSA Newsletter on the Last Supper](#)

Asking God for His peace and blessings this Lenten season!

St. Joseph’s CGS Team