

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS)

Newsletter - November 2018

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Communications/Reminders

- **Schedule Notes:**
 - November 6th: ***NO SESSION*** (Election Day).
 - November 20: ***YES, we meet*** (Thanksgiving week). Please let us know if your child will not be attending.
 - November 27: ***“Field Trip” to Church***. Please dress appropriately.
- **Reminder for children in Kindergarten and up:**

Keeping God’s Children Safe sessions are at 9:30 am on either November 4 or 11 in the Level 4 classroom (first trailer). Please return the signed form if your child will not be attending.
- **Christmas Pageant:**

Children in Kindergarten and up are invited to participate in the Parish Children’s Christmas Pageant. Though required for Sunday PREP children, CGS family participation is voluntary.

 - Practices are 2:00pm on Nov. 25, Dec 2, and Dec 9.
 - Dress Rehearsal is 6:00pm on Dec 12.
 - Pageant is 7:00pm on Dec 14.

Please direct any questions to stjosephprep@comcast.net.
- **Thanksgiving Food Drive:** Thank you for all that contributed!

What’s Happening in our Atria

Our focus on the Life of the Church moves from the articles of the Mass to gestures of the Mass. Now that the children are familiar with the atrium materials on the Mass, we plan to visit the church to see how even more wonderfully it is prepared for the special meal we call Eucharist! As we prepare for a new Liturgical Season (Advent), we (re)turn to lessons on geography of the Land of Israel where Jesus became Incarnate. Our Level II children also continue to explore the History of the Kingdom of God, as well as the Books of the Bible.

Level I Atrium (pre-k/K):

Gestures of the Mass

Gestures are a form of prayer with silent meaning. The first gesture shown to the children is the Sign of the Cross. When we silently “draw” this sign of Jesus’s love for us on our bodies, we can feel His closeness to ourselves. This silent movement is enough for our youngest ones. With the older children, we add the words honoring the names of God’s family, the Holy Trinity. We also learn to genuflect as a way of showing respect to God for his greatness and we thank him for his love.

Biblical Geography

Jesus was a real person who was born, lived, died and rose in the Land of Israel that we call the Holy Land. Our geography materials help ground the children to the *historical* nature of the Bible stories we explore.



Our simple land and sea globe marked with a red dot near the Dead Sea (for the Holy Land) first gives us a reference point. Our larger 3-dimensional raised surface map of the Holy Land allows the children to get a sense of the mountainous terrain Jesus traveled. Map pins are placed in the map on important places in Jesus’ life:

- a dove marks Nazareth, where Mary was told that she was to be the mother of Jesus;
- a star marks Bethlehem, where Jesus was born;
- and a cross marks Jerusalem, where Jesus died and then rose again.

The older children further explore the Land of Israel using a puzzle map of the various regions and water bodies:

- the Sea of Galilee where Jesus preached and fished with His disciples
- the Jordan River where Jesus was Baptized
- the Dead Sea that the Jordan River empties into
- the large land region known as Judea where Jerusalem is located
- the region of Samaria where Jesus traveled and told stories of its people
- the regions of Galilee and Perea where Jesus, lived, traveled and preached

By placing their finger on the red dot on the globe, tracing their hands over the mountains, lakes and river on the raised surface map of the Holy Land, and identifying the towns where Jesus spent his life, the children are more able to relate to Jesus as a real person.

AT HOME - Find a globe or map of the world and gather in your prayer corner. Locate where you *learned* of your child's conception? Your child's birthplace? Where are these places in relationship to Nazareth and Bethlehem in the Land of Israel? Make Jesus both "real" and "familiar" by comparing his "home(land)" to yours. Allow time for prayer – listening and talking to God. Ask your child what they would like to say to Jesus, and then wait silently for a response. Young children are naturally thankful – a great way to ready ourselves for prayers to offer on Thanksgiving.

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

The Books of the Bible



While we continue to explore different material to help us think about the History of the Kingdom of God we are also exploring the Bible. Our Bible corner contains many Bibles and materials (a cabinet full of wooden "books" of various sizes representing each of the books of the Bible) to help us appreciate the Bible as a collection of books. The Bible tells the long history of God's people, starting with Creation, to the time of Redemption, as well as God's Plan for the future time of Parousia when "God will be all in all" and we will

live in eternity with God.

- ✦ The first 5 books of the Bible (the Pentateuch or Torah) tell of Creation and the early history of the Jewish patriarchs
- ✦ Other parts of the Old Testament (or "Hebrew Scripture") includes: historical accounts of Jewish kings; wisdom from the sages on how to live; and guidance and prophecies from the prophets – including the telling of the coming of a Savior, the Messiah.
- ✦ The New Testament of the Bible picks up where Hebrew Scriptures leave off, beginning with the birth of Jesus as told in the Gospels written by Jesus' disciples.
- ✦ Other parts of the New Testament include: the history of the early church (Acts); letters of wisdom written to the early church by its leaders; and Revelations, which prophecies of the Parousia.

Biblical Geography

We first (re)turn to the Level I globe and raised surface map of the 3 important cities in Jesus' life - Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem. More elaborate maps are introduced to the Level II children which detail the many cities, regions, mountains, deserts and waterways that Jesus traveled when he was here on earth. The children's work is to look up the events and miracles that took place in these places.

AT HOME - We know that the words of the Bible are the Word of God. Listening to the Word brings us closer to God. Get out your family Bible and find a place for it on your family prayer table. Place a candle or "eternal lamp" by it. Help your child make a beautiful cover for the Bible. Find other ways to reverence God's Word.

Get out a globe or map of the world. Locate the Holy Land where the Word (Jesus) became Incarnate. How far has his Light spread? Are there still places/people on the earth that have not yet experienced His Light? How might the world be different at the time of Parousia, when "God will be all in all"? Do we have a role to play in bringing about the Parousia?

For the Home

Family Worship

Prepare for Advent by locating a purple cloth (the liturgical color for preparation/Advent) that you can use in your prayer corner. Begin and end your prayer time with the Sign of the Cross. Try "drawing" it on your body rather than "tapping" it out. This not only makes it easier for the children to learn, but also to "feel" God's presence on their body. Only add the words of the prayer after mastering the gesture.

In grateful thanks for all God's blessings this Thanksgiving,
St. Joseph's CGS Team

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