

**Holy Spirit Catholic Church
Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
Parent Information
2019-2020**



If anyone wishes to rank first, they must be servant to all. Then He took a little child and putting His arm around him said, "Whoever welcomes a child such as this for My sake welcomes me."

Mark 9:35-37

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The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

"Help me come closer to God all by myself!"

Frequently Asked Questions:

Who gave us Catechesis of the Good Shepherd?

What are its roots?

In 1954, in Rome, Italy, renowned Hebrew Scripture scholar Sofia Cavalletti observed that the child received the Word of God and essential truths with great joy. Gianna Gobbi collaborated in the discovery of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS). Together, Sofia and Gianna, developed the Catechesis, integrating the methods and insights of Maria Montessori using hands-on, developmentally appropriate materials that put the Scriptures and lessons into the hand of the child with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is now practiced in 20 nations throughout the world and has been in the United States for more than 30 years.

What is unique about this method?

CGS content helps the child "come closer to God, all by myself." As a team, the child and catechist explore the proclamation of the Scriptures, discuss and personally work with the materials, and encounter mysteries that reveal the Holy Spirit, the interior teacher. The catechist prepares the materials, studies the Scriptures, prays and presents them to the children. The work is then placed in the hands of the child, who works with the materials, draws or writes about the presentation, or sits in silent contemplation. The Holy Spirit, True Teacher, works within the child, nurturing the child's relationship with God.

Why is the prepared environment, which we call the "Atrium" necessary?

Children learn indirectly from the environment. Each atrium is pre-pared according to the age, development and religious needs of the child. Through the prepared environment, respect for the relation-ship which already exists between God and the child is developed.

What are Practical Life Exercises? Why are they used?

Practical Life Exercises foster independence, help the child in his/her development, concentration and contemplation, and teach care for the self, others and the environment. These exercises also serve as a foundation for other works found within the atrium.

What place does the Bible and Liturgy have in CGS?

CGS is built on the foundation of the Bible and Liturgy. All presentations are based on the Scriptures. Nothing is added; nothing is removed. The mysteries of God found within Sacred Scripture are proclaimed and embraced by the catechist and child. CGS connects the richness of the Bible with the work of the Liturgy. Moments, gestures and prayers from the Liturgy are isolated and explored. Many presentations bridge the moments, gestures, prayers and holy feasts/seasons of the Liturgical year with the Scriptures that in-spired them, with a specific focus on Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.

What are the characteristics of giving presentations to the child?

Presentations can be made either to small groups or to the entire group in the session. The catechist sits with the children

and proclaims the Biblical text (we use the New American Bible because it is the translation the children will hear in the readings at Mass). Essential background points may be given. The catechist brings out manipulatives (dioramas or materials), identifies them for the children and moves them appropriately during the solemn reading of the Scripture. The child is invited to do personal work following a presentation.

Child's Paperwork

Each child will have a folder in which to keep their papers (coloring, gluing, etc.). At the end of the year, we will send the work home. We ask parents not to expect paperwork after each session, since one of the key Montessori principles is that young children work for the process and not the end product.

Atrium Behavior

Children are expected to follow instructions and be respectful of the catechists and aides. Please refer to the PREP Family Handbook for our general disciplinary guidelines and procedures.

Mass

Parents and children are encouraged to attend regular Sunday Mass, as the children need to experience the Liturgy in order to make the connection between what they hear in the Atrium and Mass.

Calendar

The Atrium follows the liturgical seasons of the Catholic Church from mid-September to May. Please refer to the CGS Schedule for specific dates. In the rare event the schedule would change you will be informed via email, church bulletin, and website.

Dress code

Dress children in comfortable clothing that allows ease of movement, as they will be working on mats on the ground, while keeping in mind the respectful attitude due to this special place.

Arrival

Before arriving at the Atrium, please be sure children have had a snack and have gone to the bathroom. Arrive 5-10 minutes before session begins. Please bring your children to the social hall where the CGS catechist and/or aide will be waiting for them to bring them into the Atrium. Since the Atrium is a reverent environment, like a church, the class will process to the Atrium and enter using their Atrium voice and Atrium walk. On-time arrivals are essential so that you do not disrupt group presentations given at the beginning of Atrium.

Attendance

Regular session attendance will provide the best possibility for the religious potential and religious development of your child. Each week builds upon the last, so please be consistent with your child's attendance. Of course, children should stay home if they are ill. If your child will be absent, please notify the CRE at prep@holyspiritpalmyra.com or call the PREP office at 717-838-3369 ext-5.

Session parent follow-up

As parents, we all want to know what our children learn. It is very difficult for adults to explain their relationship with God; this is true for the children as well. Here are a few suggestions for you to ask your child about the time spent in the Atrium.

- What did you hear in the Atrium today?
- What material did you work with today?
- Did you enjoy your time with God today?

Readiness for the Atrium

To determine if your child is ready to join the other children in the Atrium (room) the following questions will assist you.

- Can/Does your child follow simple directions?
- Can/Does your child communicate in simple sentences?
- Can/Does your child transition from one activity to another with ease?
- Can/Does your child interact with other children?
- Does your child separate from you easily?
- Is your child completely potty trained?
- Is your child able to care for their bathroom needs without assistance?

2019-20 Schedule CGS -Level One Atrium

| Date | Class # | Atrium Work/Presentation |
|-------|---------|---|
| 9/8 | 1 | Reorient to Atrium – Behaviors, Movement, Courtesy |
| 9/15 | 2 | Reintroduce the Bible in the Prayer Corner |
| 9/22 | 3 | Practical Life – Teach Escape Route in case of Fire |
| 9/29 | 4 | Practical Life |
| 10/6 | 5 | Regions of Israel Puzzle Map |
| 10/13 | X | No Class – Columbus Day |
| 10/20 | 6 | Model Altar II – Jesus present in the Word |
| 10/27 | 7 | Model Altar II – Jesus present in the Tabernacle |
| 11/3 | 8 | Sign of the Cross (revisited), Genuflection (revisited), Visit the Church |
| 11/10 | 9 | Liturgical Calendar (revisited) |
| 11/17 | 10 | Prophecy of the Mother |
| 11/24 | 11 | The Visitation |
| 12/1 | X | No Class – Thanksgiving Break |
| 12/8 | 12 | Prophecy of the Birthplace of the Messiah |
| 12/15 | 13 | Christmas Celebration/Nativity & Adoration of Shepherds |
| 12/22 | X | No Class – Christmas Break |
| 12/29 | X | No Class – Christmas Break |
| 1/5 | 14 | Epiphany Celebration/Adoration of the Magi |
| 1/12 | 15 | The Mustard Seed (revisited) |
| 1/19 | 16 | The Hidden Treasure |
| 1/26 | 17 | The Leaven |
| 2/2 | 18 | Preparation of the Chalice (revisited with prayer) |
| 2/9 | 19 | Epiclesis (revisited with prayer) |
| 2/16 | X | No Class – Presidents Day weekend |
| 2/23 | 20 | Offering (gesture only) |
| 3/1 | 21 | The Good Shepherd |
| 3/8 | 22 | The Found Sheep |
| 3/15 | 23 | Psalm 23:1-2 |
| 3/22 | 24 | City of Jerusalem |
| 3/29 | 25 | The Mystery of Life & Death |
| 4/5 | X | No Class - Palm Sunday |
| 4/12 | X | No Class – Easter |
| 4/19 | 26 | Liturgy of the Light Celebration |
| 4/26 | 27 | Baptism II – Water and the Word |
| 5/3 | 28 | Baptism II – Holy Oils |
| 5/10 | 29 | Eucharistic Presence (with Sheep) |
| 5/17 | 30 | Pentecost Celebration |

**Atrium Work/Presentation is subject to change*