

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an approach to the religious formation of children ages 3-12. Based on the educational principles of Dr. Maria Montessori, Sofia Cavalletti, a Hebrew and Scripture scholar and Gianna Gobbi, a Montessori-trained educator, developed this program which links Scripture with Liturgy. They began this work in 1954 and the study continues today throughout the world.

There are three levels of this program:

- ◊ Level I for the 3-6 year old child
- ◊ Level II for the 6 to 9 year old child (Including Sacramental Preparation)
- ◊ Level III for the 9-12 year old child.

Each Level holds sessions in its own specially prepared space called an "atrium". The atrium is not a classroom, but resembles a small retreat center. In the ancient church, the atrium was where people would prepare to enter the church from the outside world. Within the sacred space of the atrium, Good Shepherd catechists prepare the environment and give selected presentations from Scripture and Liturgy that "call forth" the child's response rather than "pour in" information. The child's work in the atrium nurtures the deep bond between God and child and helps respond to the plea of the young child, "Help me to come closer to God by myself."

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an option for children age 3 through 12 who might otherwise attend the traditional religious education program on Sunday mornings. Catechists who serve in the Good Shepherd Program must be certified by the National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

Children enter the Good Shepherd program in Level I (ages 3-6). Registration is currently being accepted for new 3, 4, 5 year old and Kindergarten participants as well as children returning to CGS through sixth grade. Sessions are held on Sunday mornings and evenings, Tuesday afternoons, Thursday afternoons and Friday afternoons. Sessions begin the week of September 18, 2016! To learn more about the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Program, please see the website of The National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd at www.cgsusa.org or contact Tara Speer, Coordinator of CGS, for additional information at Tara.Speer@assumptionparish.org.

