

Suggestions and Information for Parents

As a parent, you can support this important work by bringing your child to the Atrium regularly and arriving on time as much as possible. New presentations are made to the children almost every week, and we delve further and deeper into the faith as we go along. Your child's participation in the Catechesis will contribute to the spiritual growth of your entire family.

Please know that children may not wish to talk about what they have been doing in the Atrium or may not have the words to be able to.

Going to the Atrium is more like going to Church than going to school. Just as it might feel strange to have someone question you about what you did or felt in worship, children may not wish to answer questions about their time in the Atrium, or may not be able to put into words what has happened there.

You can support your child's work in the Atrium by offering affirming comments about your child's time spent growing with God. Also pointing out elements of the liturgy that correspond with things we are learning in Atrium can be helpful. When you have questions about what your child is doing in the Atrium, talk to a Catechist to learn more.

Very few papers and crafts are sent home from the Atrium. Children take something home on the inside from their time in the Atrium, just as we do from Church. Art work and collages that children create in the Atrium are collected in a folder. A few times during the year, your child will review his or her folder with the Catechist and then bring home a collection of work.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd



Religious Formation for Young Children

Our Lady of the Presentation Parish
130 NW Murray Road
Lee's Summit, Missouri 64081

*For more information contact
Jo Engert at (816) 251-1135 or
Diana Hennessey at (816) 251-1146*

Welcome

Welcome to the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. The Catechesis is a Montessori-based religious formation program where children can grow in their relationship with God through a deep engagement in scripture and liturgy. This program will lay the foundation for a life grounded in an awareness of God's love.

Our primary beliefs are that God and the child have a unique relationship with one another and that the growth of this relationship should be assisted by the adult but is directed by the Spirit of God within the child.

At Our Lady of the Presentation, we currently offer the Catechesis to children from age three through third grade. Children meet one hour a week October through the first week of May.

Generally a day in the Atrium will include:

- A presentation of a part of the Bible or Liturgy given to the children, by the Catechist
- Time for children to work with materials of their own choice on their own
- A gathering time of worship at the prayer table

Glossary of Terms

There are some terms used regularly in the Catechesis that may be new to you. Becoming familiar with these words will make it easier to understand the work being done in the Atrium.

Catechesis—This word was first used in the early Church to describe the instruction people received in preparation for Baptism. In our context, the Catechesis is the way that children become prepared to participate fully in our faith community.

Catechist—The Catechist is an adult who guides the children. This person is not the teacher in the traditional sense. Instead she prepares the space where God and the child can come together. She creates materials, presents them to the child, and then wonders with the child about God.

Atrium—Atrium is another word from the early Church. It was the name of the room-sized porch or entryway into the Church where people new to the faith were instructed for Baptism. In the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, the Atrium is the room that is prepared for the children. It is not a classroom. Instead it is a place of religious experience, community, and worship.

Materials—Many kinds of materials are found in the Atrium. They are often handmade, and are usually beautiful. The most important thing about the materials is that they are closely linked to the Bible and liturgy. Children work with the materials to meditate on the stories of our faith and to reflect on the traditions of our worship. Examples of materials found in the Atrium include small figures of Mary and the angel for the Annunciation, water, yeast and flour for the Parable of the Leaven, and a small Baptismal font and Paschal candle to explore Holy Baptism.

Presentation—A presentation is made by the Catechist for the children. The Word of God is proclaimed through a scripture reading or a description of an aspect of the liturgy and a demonstration of how to use the associated materials.

Work—This is the Montessori term for the child's use of the materials. Different than play, working with the materials is the job of the child, the way that he or she delves deeply into biblical story and liturgy.