

What is the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd?

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a religious formation approach based on scripture and liturgy that uses the educational and pedagogical (classroom model) principles of Dr. Maria Montessori. The CGS roots are in the Roman Catholic tradition, however CGS is an ecumenical approach that invites all to develop their relationship with our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is framed such that children are encouraged to ask questions and to discover answers through work with specially crafted presentations and materials. The content corresponds to the liturgical seasons and the life of the church.

What is an Atrium?

The atrium is an environment prepared to nurture the already present spirituality of children. Dr. Montessori borrowed the term “atrium” from the early church, as it was the space where the catechumens were prepared for Baptism. The atrium contains a variety of hands-on materials that are developmentally appropriate for the age range of children that they serve. The catechists and other parishioners make many of the materials as part of their own personal formation experience.

Who is a Catechist?

The catechist is the adult who has undergone a personal formational experience with preparation in the Biblical and liturgical themes that correspond with the developmental stages of the children. The adults who work with children are called, not recruited. They take on a servant leadership role, using facilitation instead of direct instruction techniques.

What are the ages of the children served by the CGS?

Traditionally, children begin the CGS at or around age three (3). As with the Montessori model, each atrium serves approximately a three-year age span of children through the 6th Grade. Holy Family Parish is currently preparing a Level I atrium space for children age three (3) through Kindergarten to use as their primary space for Faith Formation as they journey in their relationship with our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

When will Catechesis of the Good Shepherd offered?

Once pandemic gathering restrictions have been eased, CGS will meet each Sunday for two hours immediately following 9:30 AM Mass. This time includes, song, prayer, presentation and work. Moreover, the atrium is a place of prayer, simply put; the children’s work is their prayer.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Formation for Adults?

Parents, clergy, and other interested adults are drawn to the very rich, retreat-like courses in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Through formation courses in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, adults have the opportunity to see all age appropriate presentations and materials given to children from the Bible and liturgy. Each formation course focuses on a specific developmental age group of the child.

Please contact Father Willie Lechnar

(wlechnar@dioceseofgreensburg.org) or Danielle Cribbs

(dcribbs@dioceseofgreensburg.org), Director of Parish Life &

Ministry, with any questions regarding our new Level I Atrium space.





In the coming weeks, our bulletin will contain more detailed information regarding our newly created Level I Catechesis of the Good Shepherd atrium. As we continue to prepare this and additional prayer spaces for our children, we are in need of your support and assistance. If you are willing to share your talents with the children of our parish and/or the preparation of the space they use, please indicate so using this form. Forms may be returned to our Parish Office or dropped into the Offertory Basket the next time you attend Mass.

Name: _____

Best way to reach you:

Phone: _____

e-mail: _____

- I am interested in being a catechist.
- I am interested in being an aid to the catechist.
- I would like to volunteer my talents in: (Please check all that apply.)

- _____ wood-working
- _____ painting
- _____ sewing
- _____ embroidery
- _____ calligraphy
- _____ other: _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Donation of any of the following items would be much appreciated and will be well used and loved by our children.

Bookshelves - tall or short

Small tables/chairs

New or gently used solid color bedsheets - in particular: purple, red, green, and white

Small vases / dishes

Hand towels

Table lamps

Small area rugs

Donated items may be delivered to the Nazareth Room or, for larger items, please contact our Parish Office at 814.446.5759 to discuss delivery or pick-up. Much thanks in advance for all of your time and commitment to the children of our Parish Community!