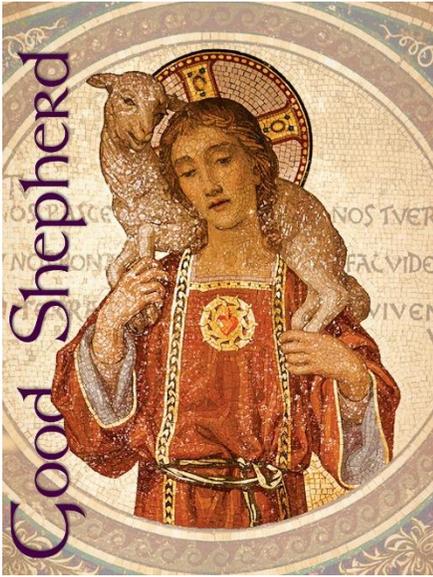


## Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Program at Nativity of Mary



The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) Program is a Montessori based Catholic religious education program which nurtures the child's relationship with God, and educates the child in the faith. Dr. Maria Montessori's approach follows St. Thomas Aquinas' understanding that "all our knowledge has its origin in the senses." The "Atrium" is a place of prayer, prepared especially for children to contemplate the life of Jesus and the liturgy of the Church with the use of many sensorial materials, including infancy narrative figures, a raised surface map of the Land of Israel, a model altar and a model baptismal font. This concrete method of presenting the faith is similar to the way the Church teaches us through the sacraments, holy water, incense, and statues.

"I CAME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL." JOHN 10:10

### What Happens in the Atrium?

A session in the Atrium is about 1 1/2 hours long.

Because the Atrium is a sacred space, it is quiet and soft tones are used when speaking in the Atrium. Children are discouraged for yelling and running. We behave in the Atrium as if we were in the church.

We begin our time together with gathering time of worship at the prayer table. Then the children work on activities as needed to help them develop their relationship with God.

- Typically, children receive a one-on-one presentation of a part of the Bible or Liturgy given to them by the Catechist. There are 52 presentations in Level I that can be given over the course of three years. All presentations are developmentally appropriate for the level in which they are presented.
- A significant period of time for children to work with materials of their choice on their own, as an aid to meditation and prayer.

At the end of Atrium, the children gather around the prayer table for a closing prayer, then they are called by name to line up for dismissal.

*In nurturing the child's religious life, far from imposing something that is foreign to him, we are responding to the child's silent request:*

*'Help me to come closer to God by myself.'*

~ Sophia Cavalletti, *The Religious Potential of the Child*

### Atrium Location

The atrium location is located in Room 204 on the North side of Nativity of Mary near the parish offices. Please use door 1 to access the Atrium.

**Level I (for 3-6 year olds)**

For 2017-2018, we will only offer Level I Atrium sessions for children between the ages of 3 and 6 years old. Children must be potty trained and able to follow simple instructions.

The Level I Atrium nurtures the 3-6 year old child in his or her relationship with Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

*“I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”  
 John 10:11*

The child hears that the Good Shepherd knows his sheep, calls them by name, searches for the lost and celebrates the found. The reality of Jesus in this image meets a deep need in the child for relationship. Presentations about the life of Jesus and his teachings help make the mystery of God concrete for the child.

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**Level II (for 6-9 year olds)**

Our goal is to start a Level II Atrium sessions for children who are between the ages of 6 to 9 years old for the 2019-2020 school year. Level II children must be at least 6 years old and in first grade.

The Level II Atrium introduces the image of Jesus as the True Vine to children from first through third grades.

*“I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit.”  
 ~ John 15:5*

This proclamation responds to the need of the older child to deepen his or her relationships with God, family, friends, and the larger community. The child examines the structure of the Eucharist and other sacramental rites. Moral parables offer guidelines for the children who will receive the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

This age group is introduced to God’s reign as it has unfolded over time, focusing on three key moments of salvation history from Creation through Redemption to Parousia. In Level II, the children plan and lead their own prayer services.

**Scope and Sequence for Atria Levels I - II**

	<b>Level One (3 to 6 years old)</b>	<b>Level Two (6 to 9 years old)</b>
Prayer: gives the child opportunity and language to	Prayer table, praise language	The Lord’s Prayer, develop prayer services, personal prayer

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Information Sheet

Prepared by Cathie Baier

	<b>Level One (3 to 6 years old)</b>	<b>Level Two (6 to 9 years old)</b>
enter into prayer alone and with others		journals, examine scriptural prayers
Narratives: young children in particular are drawn to these narratives—indeed, they have rich theological content	The Annunciation to Mary, The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, The Adoration of the Shepherds, The Adoration of the Magi, The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple	Flight to Egypt, same narratives as Level One expanded to include scriptural prayers, moral content, and common themes across all narratives,
Geography: helps the child to understand that the Biblical stories did indeed occur, as well as provide a context for what they hear.)	Three major cities & associated events, Regions & waterways of Israel, City of Jerusalem and key locations	Extensive work with the cities of Israel, locating and connecting scriptural events to them, further work with the paschal events in Jerusalem
Eucharist and sacraments: helps the child to enter into our liturgy as a sign of the covenant relationship, explores the underlying significance	Nomenclature of articles used during Eucharist, Liturgical colors, Gestures of Epiclesis, Offering, Peace, and Lavabo; Genuflection, Sign of the Cross, Preparation of the Chalice & Cruets, Celebration of Liturgy of the Light & Pentecost, Eucharistic presence of the Good Shepherd	Synthesis of the articles & gestures of the Eucharist, further work with the articles of the Eucharist, Continuing celebrations, continuing work with the Eucharistic presence of the Good Shepherd expanding the meaning to the world-wide community, The Mystery of Faith
Paschal narratives: the child studies the key events of our Christian story and the meaning of Christ's death and risen life	The Last Supper, The Women at the Tomb	Bible studies of these narratives, Study of the apostles, further work with the Last Supper, Origin of the Eucharist
Bible: the children learn to honor the Bible as God's written word, where it came from, it's structure, and how to study it	The Bible and the Prayer Table	Books of the Bible, How to Use the Bible, various Bible studies, Maxims—key teachings of Jesus
Sacred History: the child looks at the history of man as God's history and studies its greatest moments		The History of the Kingdom of God & its 3 great moments: creation, redemption, & parousia, including associated scriptural texts
Prophecy: reveal Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, examine moral teaching.	Messianic prophecies of the Light, the Mother, the City, and Names, Star & Scepter	Same prophecies as Level One expanded to include a synthesis of common themes, moral prophecies from Isaiah 11:6-9 and 40:3-5
Parables: the younger child focuses on parables concerning the Kingdom of God. Older children focus on moral parables	The Pearl of Great Price, The Mustard Seed, The Leaven, The Hidden Treasure, The Mystery of Life and Death, The Good Shepherd, The Found Sheep, Psalm 23	Further work with Level One parables including common themes, The True Vine, The Forgiving Father, The Centurion's Servant, The Wolf & the Hireling, The Good Samaritan, The Insistent

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	<b>Level One (3 to 6 years old)</b>	<b>Level Two (6 to 9 years old)</b>
		Friend, The Pharisee & the Tax Collector, The Sower, The Ten Bridesmaids, The Wedding Feast
Baptism: examine the signs and liturgy associated with this induction into the Christian faith	The gifts of the water, oil, word, light at Baptism	Further exploration of the liturgy and prayers associated with Baptism