

## Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

### What Do They Learn?

Children in the Level I (ages 3-6) program spend time enjoying and nurturing a relationship with the Good Shepherd. The children are deeply affected by the boundless love of the shepherd for His sheep as described in the Scriptures. They learn that He knows His sheep, calls them by name, searches for a lost sheep, and celebrates the found sheep.

- Materials and presentations on the life of Christ and His teachings help to make the great mystery of who God is more understandable for the child.
- Through geography, the words of the prophets, and infancy narratives, Jesus is established as a real person.
- The Paschal narratives are treated similarly, using model cities of Jerusalem, empty tombs, and cenacles for the Last Supper.
- Selected parables further the child's wonder and curiosity about the great mystery of the Kingdom of God.
- Children become familiar with the articles of the Eucharist and Baptism by arranging them in their own atrium on miniature altars and fonts.
- The children also become acquainted with the gestures of our liturgy and their meaning of the Paschal Mystery: Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again.
- A prayer corner reflects the liturgical time of year by means of appropriate colors, prayer, songs, artwork, and readings.

## What Happens in the Atrium?

A session in the Atrium is 1 1/2 hours long. Because the Atrium is a sacred space, it is quiet and soft tones are used and 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.

- Throughout the program year, 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 is allowed for children to work with materials of their choice on their own, as an aid to meditation and prayer.

At the end of atrium time, the children gather around the prayer table for a closing prayer, then they are called by name to line up for dismissal. Caregivers sign out their children when they pick them up.

## Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

### Nativity of Mary



"Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." - Matthew 10:14

2017 - 2018 Program Information

## What is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Program?

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."

*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*

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 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.

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.

### 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.

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

JOHN 10:10

## 2017-2018 Atrium Sessions

Session 1	Sunday	9:00 – 10:30
Session 2	Wednesday	4:30 – 6:00
Session 3	Wednesday	6:30 – 8:00

Sessions are also available to Nativity of Mary Preschool children on Tuesdays from 1:00 – 2:30. Please contact the school office to register for that session. Tuition will be slightly different due to different meeting times.

### Fees

Space is limited to 10 children per session. Sessions begin in early September.

**\$100 tuition/child (\$300 family cap) for Sessions 1-3.**

Online Registration is available at:

<https://nativityffregistration.wufoo.com/forms/catechesis-of-the-good-shepherd-registration/>

Each family must volunteer to help for 2 sessions. Orientation will take place in August.

### Our Catechist

The atrium is managed by the Director of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program at Nativity of Mary, Cathie Baier: [cbaier@nativitybloomington.org](mailto:cbaier@nativitybloomington.org)