

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Starting Wednesday, September 25th in the Atrium room of the

Faith Formation Building

Level One: Preschool on Wednesday's from 3:30-5 p.m.

Level Two: Kindergarten and 1st Grade on Wednesdays from 5:30-7 p.m.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a Montessori-based approach to Christian formation for children. It is rooted in the Bible, the liturgy of the church, and the belief that God and the child have a unique relationship.

Everything in this room, known as the "Atrium", is appropriate to the ages and sizes of the children who gather there. A day in the atrium will usually include a presentation of a part of the Bible or Liturgy given to the children by the Catechist. A significant period of time for the children to work on their own with materials of their own choosing, and a gathering time of worship at the prayer table.

The materials in the atrium are attractively displayed inviting children to explore the faith at their own pace. The shelves include maps of Israel and miniature figures representing the elements of the parables and historical events from Scripture that have been shown to satisfy the spiritual needs of the child. Children in the Level 1 program spend time enjoying and nurturing a relationship with the Good Shepherd. • 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 Baptism, and gestures and articles of Eucharist. • A prayer corner located in the atrium reflects the liturgical time of year with appropriate colors, prayer, songs, artwork, and readings.

The level II Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program (kindergarten-1st grade) explores more deeply the themes of level I, adding in works to contemplate the gifts of the Kingdom of God and where we fit in His kingdom. Through the true vine, and other moral life parables and maxims we look at how we, as the branches, can live in order to remain on the True Vine.

The trained adults in the atrium or "catechists" present passages of Scripture to the children, and together they ask questions and wonder: "God who are you? How do you love us? What is the kingdom of God like? What is our place in it?"

For more information contact Leanna Olsem – 507 828-0585 or leannaolsem@gmail.com and check out the National Association of the Catechesis of the Good shepherd at www.cgsusa.org