

# Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

## Epiphany Catholic School

### December 2018

Welcome to Catechesis of the Good Shepherd! It's a religious program for children based on the educational philosophies of Maria Montessori.

What an exciting experience to begin Catechesis of the Good Shepherd at Epiphany Catholic School in Spring 2016! We are so blessed to have this program at our school in a newly remodeled space. We have implemented Level I for 3-6 year olds which includes the Pre3, Pre4, PreK and Kindergarten classes. This school year we added 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade to our our Level II atria with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grades. This completes our Level II atria. We also have a Parish Preschool class. Each class visits the atria once a week for 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours.

Our first week together in the atria we had a re-introduction to the atrium to learn about our environment. The next week we had a special procession and

Enthronement of the Bible. We lifted up the scripture verse Psalm 119: 105 "Your word is a lamp for my feet, and a light for my path." Each week we gather at the prayer table to pray, read from the Bible and sing songs. We then have a religious presentation. After our presentation, the children



may work with the materials in the atrium that have already been presented to them. It may be the materials for the presentation they've just received or materials from previous presentations.

Children are exposed to hands-on catechetical learning materials. Some choices in the atria are Montessori materials, too. In the atrium, work and study spontaneously become contemplation and prayer. This will help our children at Epiphany to fall in love with Jesus and foster their relationships with God. What a gift, a joy and a blessing!

### Why is it called an "atrium"?

The atrium was the space in the ancient basilica which lay between the street and the inner sanctum of the church. It was the place in the early church where the catechumens were prepared. For the child, too, the atrium is a place of preparation for involvement in the larger worshipping community.

### Atrium Vocabulary

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd uses different vocabulary that you may have heard your child use.

Instead of:	We use:
Class	Atrium Session
Student	Child
Lesson	Presentation
Play	Work
Toys	Materials
Teacher	Catechist
Religious Ed	Catechesis



### The Prayer Table

The children may choose to spend time at the prayer table to read the Bible or pray. They may ask an adult to light the candle for them.



### The Liturgical Calendar

We had a presentation for the Level II Liturgical Calendar. It has added outer rings for the Cycle of Easter and the Cycle of Christmas.



### Sacristy Visits

All Level II children went to visit the Sacristy for a tour. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders were given the tour by their catechists and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders were given the tour by Father Joe. They were able to see the vestments of the priest and the many sacred items used for Mass.



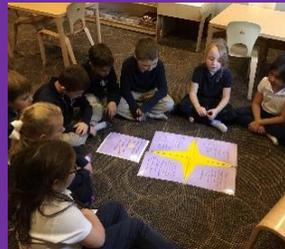
### La Fettuccia & Blue Unity Strip

We had presentations for La Fettuccia (the ribbon) and the Blue Unity Strip. They show the vastness and unity of the Kingdom of God. They both also lift up the importance of the three moments: Creation, Redemption and Parousia.



### Bibles in Other Languages

The children were introduced to Bibles in other languages. These Bibles are always available for the children to spend time with when they are in the atria. Thank you to the parents, grandparents and Epiphany parishioners who have donated Bibles to our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd atria.



### Advent

It's been a joy celebrating Advent in the atrium! Our prayer table cloth is purple, the color of preparation. There is a statue of Mary with an empty manger, as she waits (as we do) for Jesus' birth. Each week we light the candles on our Advent wreath. We have learned about prophets. We had a synthesis of our Level I prophecies. We also read the Prophecy of the Star & Scepter, the Prophecy of the Valleys & Mountains and the Prophecy of the Shoot of Jesse. We have been revisiting the Infancy Narratives from Level I. We will add the Flight into Egypt, after Christmas.



### Our Catechists

We have three Level II atria so that each class can be split into groups of ten with one catechist. Each week the children went to the same atrium with the same catechist. Your child was with one of the following trained catechists for each session: Mrs. Dicken, Mrs. Lohr, Mrs. Wey, Mrs. Overby, Mrs. Gruenwald or Mrs. Havens.

If you like the photos you've seen here, please like us on Facebook at Epiphany Catholic School.



Please contact me if you have any questions:

Jennifer Havens, Director  
 Catechesis of the Good Shepherd  
 Epiphany Catholic School  
 jennifer.havens@epiphanyschools.org  
 (309) 452-3268 ext. 306