

# Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

## Epiphany Catholic School

### Level 2 May 2019

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. Last school year we opened our Level II atria for our 1<sup>st</sup>

and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grades. This year we added 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade to complete Level II. 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 Level II, there is more group work. In the atrium, work and study spontaneously become contemplation and prayer. This will help our children 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     |



### Pentecost

We had an early Pentecost celebration on our last day of atrium. Pentecost is 50 days after Easter and will be on June 9<sup>th</sup> this year. We lit seven candles labeled with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

### The Parables

We have spent time with some of the parables and had a synthesis of Level I parables. We read the parable of The Leaven (or The Yeast). The children were able to make their own dough with yeast during work time.



### The Maxims and Summary of the Law

Jesus' moral teaching shows us how to live a life of true joy.



### Books of the Bible

One of the big works of Level II is the Books of the Bible. The large Bible cabinet contains all of the books of the Bible for sorting (by color and size). This work has certainly helped us when we are reading the real Bible!



### The Good Shepherd

Our Good Shepherd work continued on from Level I with The Good Shepherd with the Wolf and Hireling. We also read Psalm 23:1-6.



### Infancy Narratives

We had the Flight into Egypt presentation after Christmas break.



### Easter

It's been joyous celebrating Easter in the atrium! We saw the City of Jerusalem, Empty Tomb and Mystery of Life and Death presentations. Then we had the Liturgy of Light, a celebration of the Resurrection. We each lit our own candle from the Paschal candle and sang "Alleluia".

### Sacramental Preparation

The second graders were able to have some of their preparation for First Communion in the atrium this year! We read The True Vine and The Healing of the Centurion's Servant. We had a retreat where we had stations for the Cenacle and Reconciliation presentations and made banners. We ended with a re-enactment of the Last Supper and sang songs of praise.



### 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. Gruenwald, Mrs. Overby or Mrs. Havens and assisted by Mrs. Craig. Also, for our First Communion Retreat your children were with Mrs. Lohr, Mrs. Overby, Mrs. Blankenship, Mrs. Herr and Mrs. Havens.

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Please contact me if you have any questions:

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