

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Epiphany Catholic School

May 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 opened our Level II atria for our 1st

and 2nd Grades. We have also added a Parish Preschool class. Next year 3rd Grade will begin visiting the Level II atria, too. 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 an 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 John 8:12 in which Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." 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 school 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



The Bible

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. Reading the Bible has become a favorite choice in the atrium!



The Parables

We have spent time with some of the parables this year. We learned that Jesus used parables to teach about the Kingdom of God. We read the Precious Pearl, the Mustard Seed, the Hidden Treasure, the Growing Seed and the Leaven.



Preparation of the Cruets/Chalice & Gestures

We learned how to prepare the cruets and the chalice, using wine and water. We then learned some of the gestures that the priest does at mass: The Epiclesis, Offering and Lavabo (hand washing).



Pentecost

We had a Pentecost celebration on our last day of atrium. We celebrated early! Pentecost is 50 days after Easter and will be on May 20th this year. We already learned earlier this year that red is the color of Pentecost and that the flame is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. We lit seven candles labeled with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.



The Good Shepherd

The Good Shepherd materials are some of the favorite in the atrium! We continued our parable work with the Good Shepherd and the Found Sheep. The children know that the sheep follow the Good Shepherd because they know his voice and that the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The older children continued with the Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd presentation.



Easter

It's been joyous celebrating Easter in the atrium! The week before Holy Week, we had the Cenacle presentation about the Last Supper. The week after Easter we saw the Empty Tomb. Then we had the Liturgy of Light, a celebration of the Resurrection. We had already learned that the color white is for celebration! We each lit our own candle from the Paschal candle and sang "Alleluia". Later we had a Baptism presentation, where we worked more with the Paschal candle and the other items in the atrium.



Our Catechists and Assistants

We have three Level I 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. Gruenwald, Ms. Lanham, Mrs. Dillion, Mrs. Francois, Mrs. Becker, Mrs. Overby, Mrs. Dicken, Mrs. Lohr or Mrs. Havens. The catechists were assisted in the atria by the following assistants: Mrs. Newmister, Mrs. Larson, Ms. Baum, Mrs. Sanders or Mrs. Craig.

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:

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