

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Epiphany Catholic Church

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 Grade classes.

This was our second year of the Parish Preschool class! It was wonderful adding the 3's to the class this year, for a mixed age 3's and 4's group. Next school year we will add 3rd Grade to the Level II atria. 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 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 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!



Church Visit

During Easter we took a field trip to the church. We wanted to see the Baptismal font and the Paschal candle. We also saw the stand where the Paschal candle is when it's not Easter, near the Baptismal font. That is why the Paschal candle is in our Baptism area in the atrium.

Pentecost

We celebrated Pentecost early on our last day of atrium. Pentecost is 50 days after Easter and will be on May 20th this year.



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 the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. We then saw the Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd



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 heard the Precious Pearl, the Mustard Seed and the Hidden Treasure.



Preparation of the Cruets/Chalice & Gestures

We learned how to prepare the cruets and the chalice, using wine and water. We then learned two of the gestures that the priest does at mass: The Epiclesis and the Offering. We had time to practice all of these.



Easter

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



Thank you!

Thank you for enrolling your child in our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Parish Preschool Program! I have enjoyed working with your child this year. It was such a joy spending my Friday mornings with him/her in the atrium! It is my hope that this experience helped your child fall more in love with Jesus. I have included all of the atrium work from the semester in this packet. I wish you all a wonderful summer! God bless!

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, Lead Catechist
Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
Epiphany Catholic School
jennifer.havens@epiphanyschools.org
(309) 452-3268 x306