



## Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

### **What is this About?**

Last week the Sunday homily was dedicated completely to the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a new initiative to be introduced here at Saint Francis in September 2018. To communicate all the information concerning the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in a homily is not practical, thus this insert offering you yet more information, as was promised in last week's homily. You are being asked to read this over and to visit the two web sites listed at the end of this insert so as to gain greater knowledge and understanding as to what exactly the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is all about. Between now and September you will continue to receive information concerning this initiative, as well, people to help bring this to reality will be invited to participate. We will begin slowly by introducing the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd **Level One** (for ages 3 – 6), then if all goes well introduce **Levels Two and Three**.

### **Purpose**

“To assist the involvement of children and adults in a common religious experience in which the religious values of childhood, primarily those values of contemplation and enjoyment of God, are predominant.” ([www.cgsusa.org](http://www.cgsusa.org))

### **Mission Statement**

“Our mission is to support catechists, parents and others in the Church and beyond, as they grow in their understanding of the religious potential of children.” ([www.cgsusa.org](http://www.cgsusa.org))

### **What is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd?**

- ⤴ It is distinct from other religious education and catechetical programs.
- ⤴ It is faith formation rooted in the Word of God.
- ⤴ It begins with the understanding that God already has a relationship with each of God's beloved.
- ⤴ It does not pour information into the child. Instead, the adult presents an aspect of faith to the child, and then steps back, blending into the environment. The child is free to contemplate in peace.
- ⤴ It recognizes the Holy Spirit as the true Teacher. In a room with 10 children and 2 adults, there are 12 believers who listen to the Word of God together.
- ⤴ It presents the child with the richest and best food – the greatest mysteries of our faith (the Resurrection, the Incarnation, the Kingdom of God, the Eucharist).
- ⤴ It seeks to answer the child's unspoken request to “come to know God by myself”.
- ⤴ It has a counter-cultural pace – quiet, slow.
- ⤴ It teaches children how to be with each other and with God.

## What is the Atrium?

- ⤴ It is a prepared environment where the child can have an authentic encounter with Christ – a room in the Church set up for this purpose.
- ⤴ It is a place that provides time for the child to fall in love with the One who calls each of us by name.
- ⤴ It contains simple yet beautiful materials designed to draw the child into prayer while contemplating a passage from the Bible or an aspect of the Liturgy.

## What the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is Not

- ⤴ It does not replace any existing Sunday school program.
- ⤴ It is not a replacement of our current 9:00 am Sunday morning Children's Liturgy of the Word.
- ⤴ It is not busywork.
- ⤴ It is not babysitting.
- ⤴ It is not noisy.
- ⤴ It is not programmed.

## Some General Information

- ⤴ Once a week sessions generally run from 1.5 to a maximum 2 hours.
- ⤴ Catechesis of the Good Shepherd generally takes place from September to Pentecost.
- ⤴ There is no cost, the parish absorbs any cost, if any, for this.
- ⤴ There are three levels: **Level One:** ages 3 – 6; **Level Two:** ages 6 – 9; **Level Three:** ages 9 – 12.
- ⤴ The above levels meet at different times.

For more information: visit [www.cgsusa.org](http://www.cgsusa.org) or [www.cgsac.ca](http://www.cgsac.ca)

