

The Atrium and Materials

The atrium is a specially prepared room where children can come to know Jesus, the Good Shepherd. The atrium is prepared with materials that children work with as a way of meditating upon the historical events of our faith and reflecting upon significant aspects of our worship.

Examples of materials found in the atrium include figures of Jesus and the apostles used to meditate on the Last Supper, detailed interactive maps of the Land of Israel to help situate Jesus as a real person in time, and the Mustard Seed and the Pearl of Great Value to ponder the mystery and beauty of God's Kingdom. The child enters into the mystery of the Holy Eucharist through the learning of the most important gestures of the Mass such as the preparation of the chalice and the invocation of the Holy Spirit.

There are many more materials. Please come and see!



Land of Israel, with the three most essential cities in the Life of Jesus:

- *Nazareth, where Mary became the Mother of Jesus by the Holy Spirit*
- *Jerusalem, where Jesus rose from the dead*
- *Bethlehem, where Jesus was born*

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and You

There are many benefits to participation in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program.

- An opportunity to fall in love with Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and lay a foundation for a deep and meaningful relationship with God that will last a lifetime.
- A solid grounding in the theology and liturgy of the church, not “watered down” for children, but distilled to its essential elements, so that it meets the spiritual and developmental needs of the child.
- An opportunity to foster the child’s natural spirit of wonder and thankfulness toward God.
- An approach to moral formation, growing out of the child’s relationship with God.
- Two hours each week for quiet and spiritual reflection, and a respite from the business of daily life.
- Membership in a community of children and adults seeking to know God together through reflection, prayer and worship.

Usually a day in the atrium includes:

- A presentation of a part of the Bible or Liturgy given to the children by the Catechist.
- A significant period of time for children to work with materials of their choice on their own, as an aid to meditation and prayer.
- A gathering time of worship at the prayer table.

SAINT LOUIS

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

MONTESSORI ATRIUM PROGRAM



LEVEL 1: 3 TO 6 YEAR OLDS

LEVEL 2: 6 TO 9+ YEAR OLDS

What is the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd?

The Catechesis is a Montessori based Catholic religious education program where children can grow in their relationship with God through a deep engagement in Scripture and liturgy.

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Saint Louis Atrium Sessions

Saint Louis Catholic Church offers the Catechesis to two age groups:

- Level 1 is for 3 to 6 year olds
 - Mondays 10am-12noon
 - Wednesdays 10am-12noon
 - Thursdays 10am-12noon
 - Fridays 10am-12noon
 - Saturdays 10am-12noon
- Level 2 is for 6 to 9+ year olds.
 - Mondays 2:30-4:30pm
 - Tuesdays 1:30-3:30pm

Children usually attend one atrium session per week. Each session is two hours.



Model altar with the model tabernacle and model sacristy cabinet.

Level 1 Atrium:



The Level 1 Atrium nurtures the 3-6 year old child in his or her relationship with Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

The child hears that the Good Shepherd knows his sheep, calls them by name, searches for the lost and celebrates the found. The reality of Jesus in this image meets a deep need in the child for relationship. Presentations about the life of Jesus and his teachings help make the mystery of God concrete for the child.

Level 2 Atrium:



The Level 2 Atrium introduces the image of Jesus as the True Vine to children from first through fourth grades.

*"I am the vine, you are the branches.
Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit."
~ John 15:5*

This proclamation responds to the need of the older child to deepen his or her relationships with God, family, friends, and the larger community. To respond to the child's need for guidelines, moral parables and parables of mercy offer models for comparing their own behavior with Jesus' examples. In this level, the children plan and lead their own prayer services.



"I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

John 10:11

GOD AND THE CHILD

The Catechesis is based on the belief that God and the child are already in relationship. Our work as adults is to provide an environment which nurtures this relationship and prepares the child for fuller participation in the liturgy, specially the Holy Mass.

*Saint Louis
Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
Montessori Atrium
Fall 2011 ~ Spring 2012*

In nurturing the child's religious life, far from imposing something that is foreign to him, we are responding to the child's silent request: 'Help me to come closer to God by myself.'

~ Sophia Cavalletti, *The Religious Potential of the Child*

"Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Matthew 19:14