



## Level II Atrium

6-9 years old ( Grades 1-3 )

The level II atrium introduces the image of Jesus as the True Vine, focusing on both relationship and responsibility. The child's need to deepen his or her relationships with God, family, friends, and the larger community are nurtured in this level. As the children discover the vast cosmic history of God's plan of salvation, they begin to realize that they have something to contribute to it. Moral sensitivity and awareness begins in Level II and grows as the work is presented.

The Level II child is introduced to God's reign, as it has unfolded in time, focusing on three key moments of salvation history from Creation through Redemption to Parousia.

Level II presentations will help the child examine the general structure of the Eucharist and other sacramental rites. Moral parables will offer guidelines for the children who will receive two sacraments: First Reconciliation and First Communion.

## Level III Atrium

9-12 years old ( Grades 4-6 )

Formation for the 9-12+ year old builds on the foundation of the previous atrium levels. Level III invites the child to explore salvation history in greater detail, while reflecting more substantially on his or her role in the "Plan of God." The child discerns his or her gifts and puts them at the service of God's Reign in anticipation of the Parousia. The prophets are studied as models of listening and discerning God's call.

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# CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

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## What is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd?

CGS was developed over sixty years ago by Sofia Cavalletti, a Hebrew and biblical scholar from Rome. The philosophy of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is that young children - even the very young - have a religious life. God is present to them in their deepest being and they are capable of developing a conscious and intimate relationship with Him. Each session offers a weekly “presentation” using specific materials designed to draw the child into the Biblical and Liturgical themes. A time for individual work allows the child to absorb and ponder past and current presentations as well as respond to God’s constant invitation to grow deeper in knowledge and understanding of His infinite love.

Children are grouped by age:

Level I: 3-6 year olds (PreK & K)

Level II: 6 -9 year olds (Grades 1-3)

Level III: 9-12 year olds (Grades 4-6)

Each of these levels corresponds to the Montessori planes of development. As the child grows in maturity, the essentials of our religious faith are presented in increasing detail and sophistication. Children, in each level, gather in an “atrium,” a room prepared especially for them, where they can fall in love with Jesus, the Good Shepherd. In the atrium, children live the central mysteries of our faith by working with and reflecting upon simple, yet beautiful, hand-made materials that help them absorb the most essential proclamations of our Christian faith.

## Who Teaches the Children?

Saint Paul said, “It is Christ who teaches, not I.” The catechist, one who echoes the Word of God, has a secondary role in the life of the atrium. It is the child’s own inner guide and teacher, the Holy Spirit, who directs the mind and heart. The importance of the catechist is to place materials within reach and share scripture that fills a particular longing at each stage in a child’s spiritual life.



## Level I Atrium

3-6 years old (Pre-K and Kindergarten)

The theme for this level is the Good Shepherd who loves his sheep and gives everything for them. The child is introduced to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and discovers who the sheep are. This level is a “time of awe and wonder” as the gift of God’s own self to the child becomes the foundation of further religious insight and moral development. The child hears that the Good Shepherd knows his sheep, calls them by name, searches for the lost and celebrates the found.

This image of Jesus meets a deep need in the child for relationship and it is through the presentations about the life of Jesus and his teachings that the mystery of God becomes more concrete for the child.

Level I children must be potty trained and able to follow simple instructions.