

Dear Parents,

Welcome to faith formation with the Good Shepherd! God is so gracious to bring this approach to faith formation to the children of Church of St. Therese the Little Flower.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd classroom is called an atrium. The environment, which we call "atrium", is to serve as an intermediary between the classroom and the church, corresponding to the name of the space in the ancient basilica which lay between the street and the inner sanctum of the church.

The atrium is a place where the child can listen to the proclamation of the Good News, meditate on it, and begin to live it according to the child's own rhythm. The interior design of the atrium corresponds to the child's developmental needs and allows for freedom of movement. The environment helps even the youngest children give expression to an intimate, loving relationship with God.

With Scripture and Liturgy as the primary sources, the children will be soundly supported in learning about the Kingdom of God, the Life of Jesus, the Mass, the Sacraments, and prayer. They will also develop practical life skills like pouring, sweeping, polishing, and folding; all which are skills necessary to keep the church (and your home, the domestic church) clean and neat.

Our work in the atrium very closely follows the Liturgical rhythm of the church. With this in mind, I will be sending home summaries of the works and presentations your child will be given during the Liturgical season we are approaching. Currently, we are in the Liturgical season of Ordinary Time.

Opening weeks in the Atrium:

Level I (Preschool and Kindergarten)

-Orientation to the Atrium... We go over behaviors in the atrium as well as how to care for materials that we see in the atrium.

-Prayer Table/Bible at prayer table... We end our time in the atrium gathering at the prayer table. This is a time for us to ponder scripture and prayer cards together as well as personal prayer they wish to share.

-Art in the Atrium... Children may choose to use the art supplies at any time in the atrium. Art supplies may only be used to express things that we have talked about in the atrium. (no batman, superman or Cinderella)

-Practical Life Skills... these skills include pouring, sweeping, polishing, folding, sewing, plant care etc.

Level II (Grades One through Three)

-Orientation to the Atrium... The children decide what behaviors will allow all children to have a beautiful experience in the atrium. We discuss duties that need to be taken care of before we leave the atrium.

-Prayer Table/Bible at prayer table... The children plan our prayer table experience. They have a format they follow choosing the Introit, Psalms, Gospel, Petitions, Prophecy, Prayer, and closing song.

-Art in the Atrium... Children may choose to do art at any time in the atrium. We spend more time creating prayer booklets, and prayer cards.

-Practical Life Skills... Only as needed to keep our Atrium running smoothly.

-Vestments of the priests... Children work with material that shows how the priests vests for mass and penance services. The vestments we have in the atrium are the amice, alb, cincture, stole, chasuble, cassock, and the surplus.

Level III (Grades Four through Six)

-Orientation to the Atrium... The children decide what behaviors will be needed to help our atrium run as smoothly as possible. We talk about any duties that need to be done before we leave the atrium.

-Prayer Table and the Bible at Prayer Table... The children organize and plan the Prayer Table experience. Their format includes the Blessing, Song, Call to Prayer, Gospel, Psalm, Petitions, and the Dismissal.

-Practical Life Skills... Only as needed to keep the Atrium running smoothly.

I invite all parents to observe in the Atrium if you wish. If possible, I ask that you set up a time with me, this will give me time to prepare the children for the observation- something that is important to their sense of order and the order of the atrium. If you have any questions at any time, please stop by and visit or call me at **701-822-3237** Dione Bohl – CGS Coordinator

Church of St. Therese the Little Flower
Level I, II, III Catechists



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