

The Good Shepherd and You

There are many benefits to participating in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

- An opportunity to share in a journey that leads children to fall in love with a compassionately engaged Jesus—a journey that lays the foundation for a deep relationship with God and neighbor...an opportunity that guides children into a lifetime of meaningful service and Christian community.
- 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.
- A time 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.



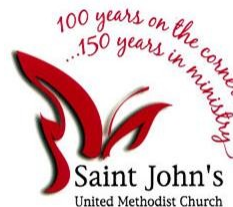
"I am the good shepherd;
I know my sheep and my sheep know me
— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father
— and I lay down my life for the sheep."

John 10: 14-15

St. John's United Methodist Church



Catechesis of the
Good Shepherd



Saint John's
United Methodist Church

To learn more about
Catechesis of the Good Shepherd,
go to www.stjohnsmidtown.org





What is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd?

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an approach to the religious formation of children that is rooted in the Bible, the liturgy of the church, and the educational principals of Maria Montessori.

This approach is based on the belief that God and the child are already in relationship. Our work as adults is to provide a place for the child and God to come together and grow.

All Children are Welcome

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is offered to all children. The gathering space for the children is divided into two rooms based on age and spiritual development:

- Level I: 3-6 years old
- Level II: 6-12 years old

Children gather together for 1½ hours on Sunday mornings, 9:00am to 10:30am.

The Atrium and Materials

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

Examples of materials found in the Atrium include small hand-made figures of Jesus and the disciples 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 a small Baptismal font and Paschal candle used to explore the significance of Holy Baptism.



A day in the Atrium includes:

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

More about the approach:

The Atrium has a certain solemnity. The child is shown how to walk slowly and speak softly so that, even though everyone in the atrium is busy and active, an atmosphere of silence permeates the atrium. The weekly sessions offer children time to listen, work, pray, sing, wonder, rest and discuss important things. In the silence of the atrium, children often make discoveries that positively change their relationship with the Lord.



Trained adult leaders, referred to as catechists, oversee the atrium. The catechist's role is that of a facilitator – preparing materials, maintaining the environment, sharing in listening to God in song and prayer, reflecting with children on Scripture, and giving presentations on the liturgy and life of the church. Catechists asks "wondering questions" to help meditate on the proclamation, thereby leading the children to their own discovery of the meaning.

