

It is true for every person, at every age and stage of life, that we have a need to know and connect to God. Our Catholic Church brings us all together in common worship; the Word and Eucharistic presence are brought forth in a tradition of sign and symbol that can be very powerful if we know what we are being drawn into. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd helps children, from a very young age, to understand the “language” of the Church. It removes barriers and helps children encounter Christ.

Sometimes it is difficult for us to see things through the eyes of a child. When my oldest child was just learning to talk, we taught him the word for “ball.” I remember being at a carnival, holding him in my arms. He pointed at something and said, “Ball.” There was so much stuff and confusion everywhere, and I couldn’t see it, but, I paused and took a careful look...There, on a poster, some feet away, was a picture of a basketball. “Yes,” I said, excited to be able to see it too, “Ball!”

Children are in their own world, working, and learning. If we tap into that and meet them where they are at, they can learn the “language” of the Church and participate with us in the Holy Mass and in our prayer life at home. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd makes this possible for children. They learn to name things, and they learn to recognize signs and symbols. They learn to wonder with the Church about the great gifts that God has bestowed on us. They begin to walk in confidence with the Good Shepherd who loves them.

At St. Therese, we have a Level I “atrium” for ages 3 to 6, set up with a complete work environment which allows children to explore Prayer, The Mass, The Life of Christ, and the Parables of Christ. Over this coming year, this will be expanded to a Level II “atrium” and will include materials for children ages 6 to 9.

Registration for the program is available through the parish website’s Religious Education Registration Page or through the Early Education Center’s full time preschool program. Opportunities for older children will come through “enrichment” activities for public school children and for students at St. Therese. More details about Catechesis of the Good

Shepherd can be found at <https://www.cgsusa.org/discover/cgs-approach/>