

## Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

The young children of Emmanuel continue to flock to their respective atria each week to learn what mysteries from God will be revealed to them next. We serve up to 140 children from ages 3 years - 5th grade. We are asked often about the Catechesis program by fellow parishioners.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd website explains it this way: "The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an approach to the religious formation of children. It is rooted in the Bible, the liturgy of the church, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori. Children gather in an "atrium," a room prepared for them, which contains simple yet beautiful materials that they use."

"You may be wondering how these materials help the religious life of children. If an adult hears a beautiful passage from the Bible, the adult might take a Bible, find the passage, and read it slowly again and again. He or she may think deeply about the words and perhaps speak to God in a thankful or hopeful prayer. But a little child, too young to read, needs another way. In an atrium the child can ponder a biblical passage or a prayer from the liturgy by taking the material for that text and working with it - placing wood figures of sheep in a sheepfold of the Good Shepherd, setting sculpted apostles around a Last Supper table, or preparing a small altar with the furnishings used for the Eucharist. Older children who do read often copy parables from the Bible, lay in order written prayers from the rite of baptism, or label a long time line showing the history of the kingdom of God."

Our Church invests heavily in the training of the program leaders and the furnishings and supplies needed for this quality program. The program holds so many blessings for the children, their parents, and the program leaders. We invite every Emmanuelite to become more familiar and involved "the Catechesis;" after all, it takes a village to raise a child.

We thank the faithful servants who continue to share the Word with our young children every week. More volunteers would be most welcome! Even if you only want to know a bit more about Catechesis, please get in touch with the Rector or the Catechesis leader listed on the contacts page.