



The United States Association of

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd®

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd — Level Two Formation

Pedagogical Foundations for Catechesis w/ Young Children

With emphasis on the Centrality of the Kerygma; and the Role and Formation of the Catechist

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Two

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is grounded in the belief that the child already has a relationship with God before s/he arrives in the atrium, but desires to understand more fully the nature of that relationship and to celebrate it. The Catechesis seeks to help the child's relationship with God flourish by introducing and pondering with the child core mysteries of the faith in a way that is respectful of both the child at this phase of her/his development and the rich scriptural & liturgical heritage of our sacramental tradition. The adult plays a unique role in the Catechesis – as both the preparer & facilitator of the atrium space and a co-listener with the child before the Word of God.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 6-9 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

- +Who is the 6-9 Yr. Old Child?
- +Transition between Level I Atrium to Level II Atrium
- +Two Moments of Catechesis (Falling in Love/Discriminating Thought)
- +Cosmic Education
- +Music & Art in the 6-9 Atrium
- +Three-Year Presentation Cycle for 6-9 Yr. Atrium
- +Reflection on the 32 Characteristics of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

- +Lk 18:15-17
- +Mk 10:13-16

Relevant CGS Literature

- +RPC I (3rd ed.), intro-32, 135-141
- +RPC II (2nd ed.), intro-12, 133-137
- +Lillig, intro-52
- +LV, 4-9, 10-14
- +Gobbi, 1-33, 39-47, 69-96

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +The child's right to catechesis: DCE 2-3
- +Call to holiness in all stages of life: LG 40-41; CCC 2012-2013
- +“Divine Pedagogy” / Finding a method congruent w/ content: GDC 139-149; DC (2020) 194-196
- +Nature & task of catechesis: GDC 78-87; DC (2020) 79-89
- +Catechesis to be adapted to age of the catechized: GDC 163-165; DC (2020) 236-243 (children), 244-256 (adolescents)
- +Special characteristics of catechesis with children / pre-adolescents: GDC 181-185; DC (2020) 244-256
- +Role of catechist: GDC 156; DC (2020) 110-113
- +Formation of the Catechist: DC (2020) 79-89, 90-109, 133-150
- +Theology of work: GS 33-39
- +On fostering a contemplative spirit & space: CCC 2709-2719
- +On becoming a child: CCC 526
- +Who is the human person?: GS 12-16; CCC 33, 1700-1706, 1718-1719

(cont. Relevant Ecclesial Documents)

- +Human freedom: GS 17; CCC 1730-1734
- +Kerygma: DC (2020) 57-60
- +Methodologies in Catechesis (Space): DC (2020) 221-223

The Trinitarian God

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Two

In the atrium, the child comes to know a God who is deeply relational, who reaches out to be in relationship with humanity, who is Life in Abundance and invites us to share in that, abundant relational, i.e. "Trinitarian" life. In the 6-9 atrium, the child is more fully introduced to the traditional Trinitarian prayer language of the Church – especially in the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. The child also enters into fuller meditation on several Johannine parables and narratives in Jesus' life that speak of the relationship of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 6-9 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

{Indirectly addressed in the presentations on the True Vine, the Good Shepherd, Baptism, Eucharist, Infancy narratives, and Pentecost}

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

- +Mt 28: 18-20
- +Jn 10:1-18
- +Jn 15:1-11
- +Jn 16:5-7, 23-24
- {+see infancy narrative references below}
- +OCIA 54-56, 226
- +Order of Baptism for Children 41, 60, 70
- +Order of the Mass

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +Foundational theology of the Trinity / Invitation to participate in Trinitarian life: CCC 232-260, 1997
- +Trinitarian-Christocentricity of catechesis: GDC 99-100; DC (2020) 168-170
- +Trinitarian-Christocentricity of liturgy: CCC 1077-1109
- +Baptized "in the name of...": DC (2020) 78

Relevant CGS Literature

- +RPC II (2nd ed.), 52-56
- +HKG II 15-22, 77-83

The Economy of Salvation (Salvation History)

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Two

Having often meditated on the nature of the Kingdom of God in the 3-6 atrium, the 6-9 year old child begins to ask new questions about this Kingdom: "When did it begin?" "Will it end? If so, when?" In the 6-9 atrium, the child is introduced to God's Reign as it has unfolded in time, focusing on the three key moments of creation, redemption, and the Parousia. The child is invited to ponder how God has become increasingly known to humankind in this history through the giving of gifts: the gifts of creation, the gifts of fellow humans, and eventually the gift of God's very own self in the person of Jesus, still present with us in a most particular way in the sacraments. The words of the prophets are lifted up as clues that help shed light on God's Plan – especially the coming of Christ and the final "coming," the Parousia.

**Specific Presentations & Adult Background
Offered in 6-9 Formation Course in which the
Theme is Addressed**

- +*Sacred History: History of Salvation*
- +*History of the Bible*
- +“The Fettuccia”: The History of the Kingdom of God w/ accompanying works (“Blue Strip”)
- +The History of the Gifts
- +The Synthesis of 3-6 Messianic Prophecies
- +Expanded Meditation on Num. 24:17
- +The Prophecy of the Plain
- +The Prophecy of the Shoot
- +The Prophecy of the Peaceable Kingdom
- +Pentecost & the Gifts of the Spirit

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +Overview of the History of Salvation: DV 2-4, 11-16; CCC 51-67; GDC 107-108; DC (2020) 171-173, 157-163
- +Creation: CCC 279-305
- +The Special Role of the Human in God’s Plan: GS 9-10; CCC 306-308, 355-359
- +Prophets: DV 15; CCC 64, 218, 522
- +Redemption: CCC 512-655- m. esp. 517; GS 22
- +Pentecost & Gifts of Spirit: CCC 731-738, 1831-1832
- +Parousia: CCC 1042-1050, 1720-1722
- +Call to Study the Revelation of God’s Plan in Scripture: DV 21-26

**Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical
Foundations Referred to in the Presentations
& Meditations**

- +Gen 1:1; 1:27
- +Lk 2:11; 24:5
- +1 Cor 15:28
- +Rev 12:10
- +Is 9:1a
- +Is 9:5b
- +Is 7:14
- +Mic 5:2
- +Num 24:17
- +Is 40:3-5
- +Is 11:1-3
- +Is 11:6-9
- +Acts 2:1-11
- +Jn 16:5-7, 23-24
- +Mt 28:18-20

Relevant CGS Literature

- +RPC I (3rd ed.), 74-76
- +RPC II (2nd ed.), 13-40, 123-129
- +HKG I, 1-15, 118-133, 184-186
- +HKG II, 77-80
- +LV, 29-35, 37-38, 46-47

The Life of Jesus Christ (Incarnation and Paschal Mystery)

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Two

Jesus Christ is the greatest gift of God. To humanity, however, he is also the greatest paradox. The greatest of kings born in the smallest and most humble of places. A mighty God who chooses the small and hidden. The Lord of all who embraces human death. In Jesus, we see the clearest revelation of how God works in history. With the 6-9 yr. old child, we continue to ponder the mystery of who Jesus is by studying more intensely the land in which he lived and by further meditation upon core events surrounding his birth, death, and resurrection, and ascension. The 6-9 year old is also invited to look for common themes or threads that permeate these stories (eg. the presence of the Spirit; the juxtaposition of great and small; etc.).

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 6-9 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

- +The Geography of the Land of Israel (Pin Maps)
- +The Annunciation- expanded meditation
- +The Visitation- expanded meditation
- +The Nativity & Adoration of the Shepherds- expanded meditation
- +The Adoration of the Magi- expanded meditation
- +The Presentation in the Temple- expanded meditation
- +The Flight into Egypt
- +Synthesis of the Infancy Narratives
- +The Healing of the Centurion's Servant
- +The Last Supper & Origin of the Eucharist
- +Celebration of the Last Supper
- +The City of Jerusalem- expanded meditation
- +Messianic Entry into Jerusalem
- +The Agony in the Garden & Arrest
- +Trial of Jesus before Caiaphas
- +Trial of Jesus before Pilate and Herod
- +Johannine Trial of Jesus before Pilate
- +The Crucifixion
- +The Empty Tomb
- +Appearitions of the Risen Jesus
- +The Ascension
- +Pentecost
- +various parables and miracles engaged by the children in their work

Relevant CGS Literature

- +RPC I (3rd ed.), 76-88
- +HKG I, 144-156, 177-183
- +LV, 17-25
- +WNRG, 1-31, 32-65, 84-103

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

- +Lk 1:26-38
- +Lk 1:39-49, 56
- +Lk 2:1-20
- +Mt 2:1-12
- +Mt 2:13-23
- +Lk 2:21-38
- +Mt 8:5-10, 13
- +Mk 14:12-17, 22-26, 32-65 / 15:1-47
- +Mt 26:17-68 / 27:11-61
- +Lk 22:7 – 24:53
- +Jn 18:1-14 / 18:28-21:24
- +1 Cor 11:23-25
- +Acts 1:3-11
- +Acts 2:1-11

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +Christ at heart of catechesis: CCC 426-429
- +Who are you, Lord?: CCC 430-451
- +Mystery of the Incarnation: CCC esp. 456-469, 522-534; DC (2020) 159, 165
- +Mary, the Mother of Jesus: CCC 484- 489, 494-495, 2673-2677; LG 52-59; DC (2020) 159
- +Paschal Mystery: CCC 559-560, 571- 573, 595-597, 610-618, 624-628, 638-664
- +Presence of the Spirit in the Gospels: CCC 717-736

The Teaching of Jesus Christ

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Two

The Gospels reveal that the primary, overarching theme in Jesus' preaching and teaching was the Kingdom of God. With the 6-9 yr. old child, we continue to ponder several of Jesus' "Kingdom parables" in an attempt to grasp the true nature of this Kingdom and to begin to wrestle with its social implications. Additional "moral" parables are introduced as the child increases in her/his desire to understand what it means to live in this Kingdom.

Additional images of Christ and his unique role in this Kingdom are also introduced. The parable of the True Vine becomes a key image for the 6-9 year old child, in addition to the Good Shepherd, the Light, and the Grain of Wheat.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 6-9 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

- +Miracles as Signs of the Kingdom
- +The Mustard Seed – expanded meditation
- +The Precious Pearl- expanded meditation
- +The Synthesis of the 3-6 Kingdom Parables
- +The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector
- +The Parable of the Insistent Friend
- +The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids
- +The Parable of the Good Samaritan
- +The Parable of the Sower
- +The Parables of the Found Coin & the Found Sheep
- +The Parable of the Forgiving Father
- +The Maxims (esp. from Sermon on Mt)
- +The True Vine
- +The Good Shepherd w/ the Wolf & Hireling - expanded meditation
- +The Grain of Wheat – expanded meditation

Relevant CGS Literature

- +RPC I (3rd ed.), 33-48, 107-118, 125-134
- +RPC II (2nd ed.), 52-56, 83-95
- +HKG I, 167-176
- +WNRG, 32-65, 84-103

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +The Kingdom of God: CCC 541-546
- +Jesus' Vision of Living in the Kingdom of God on Earth: CCC 1928-1942
- +The Great Commandment: CCC 2083
- +The Good Shepherd: CCC 606-609 (total gift of self), 2158-2159 (on being called by name), 764
- +The True Vine: CCC 946-959 (communion of saints), 1823-1824 (abiding in love), 2074
- +The Grain of Wheat & Mystery of Death: LG 7 (mystical body of Christ); GS 18; CCC 1005-1020

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

- +Mt 13:31-32
- +Mt 13:45-46
- +Mt 13:44
- +Mt 13:33
- +Mk 4:26-29
- +Lk 18:9-13
- +Lk 11:5-8
- +Mt 25:1-12
- +Lk 10:25-37
- +Mt 13:3-8
- +Lk 15:3-6;8-9
- +Lk 15:11-24
- +Lk 10:27
- +Jn 13:34
- +Mt 5:37; 42; 44; 48
- +Mt 6:6
- +Mt 7:7; 12; 22
- +Lk 6:2
- +Jn 10:1-18
- +Jn 15:1-11
- +Jn 12:24

The Church

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Two

As the 6-9 year old child's capacity for relationship expands to include a wider social sphere, s/he begins to ponder more extensively the communal relationship that we have with Christ, in addition to the personal relationship. Through presentations on Baptism and Eucharist and continued meditation on images of Christ from Scripture, the child explores various images of what it means to be Church.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 6-9 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

{Indirectly addressed in several scriptural presentations, particularly: the Good Shepherd, the Grain of Wheat, and Pentecost. Also indirectly addressed in the presentation on Baptism & Eucharist.}

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

N/A

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

+Scriptural images of the Church: LG 6-7;
CCC 753-757

(+See references below on Baptism &
Eucharist, esp. CCC 1267-1273, 1368-1369,
1396; EM 6)

Relevant CGS Literature

+RPC II (2nd ed.), (throughout)

+HKG II, 15-18, 44-50, 84-89

The Liturgical/Sacramental Life of the Church

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Two

Having looked at key parts of the orders of Baptism and Eucharist in the 3-6 atrium, the 6-9 year old child revisits these moments and their accompanying prayers and begins to examine how these pieces fit together as a whole, like pearls forming a necklace. In preparation for first reconciliation, s/he is also introduced to the order of penance.

With new capacities for understanding the breadth of time and diversity of human cultures, the 6-9 year old child is also presented with a history of how the desire of Jesus to be present with his sheep always in the Eucharist has been preserved through the ages and further meditations on how far his call to celebrate this meal reaches throughout the world today.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 6-9 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

+The Cosmic Function of Liturgy
+Eucharist as Sacrament of Unity
+Liturgy & Memorial
+The Bible & Liturgy
+Overview of Preparation for First Communion
+The Celebration of Reconciliation & the Parables of Mercy
+The Liturgical Calendar
+The Epiclesis – expanded meditation
+The Offering– expanded meditation
+The Sign of Peace w/ Breaking of the Bread
+The Washing of Hands

+The Mystery of Faith: the Memorial
Acclamation
+The Synthesis of the Mass & Introduction
to the “First Missal”
+The Eucharistic Presence of the Good
Shepherd (International)
+The Last Supper & the Origin of the
Eucharist; Celebration of the Last Supper
+Synthesis of the Signs & Gestures of
Baptism
+The Order of Baptism
+The Order of Penance

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

- +Order of the Mass
- +OCIA 218-230
- +Order of Baptism for Children 32-71
- + Order of Penance 1-20, 41-47

Relevant CGS Literature

- +RPC I (3rd ed.), 49-72, 125-134
- +RPC II (2nd ed.), 57-82, 96-122
- +HKG II, 1-11, 15-50, 63-110, 117-124
- +WNRG, 66-83

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +Liturgy & Catechesis: CCC 1066-1075
- +On imp. of helping children understand liturgy: DCM 8-15; EM 15
- +Encouraging full participation in liturgy: CSL 47-48
- +Reading Sacramental Signs: CCC 1145-1152
- +On liturgical yr: CSL 102-111; GIRM 308-310; GNLY 1-44; CCC 1163-1171
- +On Eucharist: EM 3, 6-10; GIRM esp. 48-56; CCC 1104-1109, 1322-1405
- +On history of apostolic succession (Origins of Eucharist): CCC 1087; LG 18-28
- +On Baptism: LG 22; CCC 1213-1274; 683, 694-699
- +On Reconciliation: CCC 1422-1470
- +Jewish roots of liturgy: CCC 1096
- +The bridge between Word & Sacrament: LMI 10; CCC 1153-1155

Christian Morality/Catholic Social Justice Teaching

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Two

Based on the firm foundation of love and listening established in the 3-6 atrium experience, the 6-9 child is introduced to key moral parables and maxims in the teaching of Jesus that show us how those who love and listen to God are invited to live. The moral life is presented as a joy-filled path leading to ever more abundant life. It is the natural overflow of a right and loving relationship with God – the fruit of life in the True Vine.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 6-9 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

- +*Moral Formation & the 6+ child*
- (See the Teaching of Jesus – moral parables and maxims & Liturgical Life – the Washing of Hands)

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

(See passages under section on Teaching of Jesus)

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +On conscience / Inner Teacher: GS 16; CCC 1776-1785
- +Moral life grounded in love/ joy: CCC 1770, 1723-1724
- +On the virtuous life: CCC 1803-1829
- +Toward an understanding of sin: CCC 1846-1851

Relevant CGS Literature

- +RPC I (3rd ed.), 119-124
- +RPC II (2nd ed.), 83-122

Prayer

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Two

The spontaneous prayer of the younger child in the 3-6 atrium evolves into a more structured form of communal prayer in the 6-9 atrium where the child is invited to continue linking their prayer ever more tightly to the prayer life of the larger Church – especially through the practice of the Liturgy of the Hours. The children begin to plan prayer rituals for themselves that include readings from scripture, praying the psalms, petition, praise, and song. The Our Father is introduced as a particularly treasured prayer in the Church – the prayer taught to us by Jesus.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 6-9 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

- +Celebrations and Prayer with the 6-9 Yr. Old Child
- +The Bible in the Prayer Corner (Bible in various languages)
- +Communal Prayer in the Atrium
- +The Books of the Bible
- +The Our Father
- +Psalm 23
- +The Magnificat
- +Atrium Celebrations of the Key Feasts of the Liturgical Year (See also +History of the Bible above)

Relevant CGS Literature

- +RPC I (3rd ed.), 89-106
- +Gobbi, 97-106

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

- +Jn 8:12
- +General structure of Liturgy of Hours
- +Ps 23:1-6
- +Ps 51:10
- +Mt 6:9-13
- +Lk 11:2-4

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +On prayer: CCC 2558-2567, 2623-2643, 2659-2660; DC (2020) 86-87
- +Prayer corner: CCC 2691
- +On understanding & praying Scripture: DV 11-26, 21-26; CCC 101-114, 131-133
- +The books of the Bible: CCC 120-127
- +Psalms: CCC 2585-2589
- +Liturgy of the Hours: CCC 1174-1178; CSL 83-101
- +Our Father: CCC 2759-2856

Education for Community Life

With emphasis on Mission and Evangelizing

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Two

Building on the foundation laid in the 3-6 atrium, the 6-9 year old children are expected to continue to care for the atrium environment and to follow atrium guidelines on how to live as a community in the atrium space. These guidelines and practices lay a solid foundation for communal life outside the atrium as well. In presentations on the teaching of Jesus, the guidelines and practices of harmonious communal living continue to be directly addressed and discussed - in context of the atrium community, but also in relation to the larger world we live in.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 6-9 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

- +Practical Life in the 6-9 Atrium
- {+see also presentations under “The Teaching of Jesus”}

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

N/A

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +Human meant to be in community: GS 24-32; CCC 952, 959, 1878-1880
- +On common good: CCC 1905-1917
- +Family life: DC (2020) 124-126, 226-231

Relevant CGS Literature

- +Gobbi, 79-86

Course Description:

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a Montessori-based religious formation method for children, beginning at the age of three. It seeks to create and facilitate a sacred, "hands-on" space for children called an atrium, in which both the children and the catechists can hear, ponder, and celebrate the most essential mysteries of the Christian faith as revealed in the scriptures and the liturgy. Originally developed in Rome by Dr. Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi approximately 70 years ago, the Catechesis continues to spread worldwide and is used with adaptation in various Christian traditions. This Level II course grounds the participant in the theory and praxis of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd while also concretely preparing her/him to develop and facilitate an atrium for 6-9 year olds. (Prerequisite: CGS Level One Formation)

Course Objectives:

- To explore with participants the general developmental and religious characteristics of the 6-9 year old child.
- To facilitate meditation upon the biblical and liturgical themes of the Catechesis.
- To offer guidelines and assistance to catechists in setting up an atrium for 6-9 year olds, preparing an album, and making materials.
- To deepen participants' ability to observe and learn from children, while also exploring avenues for deepening parental and congregational ability to observe and learn from children.

Required Course Texts:

Cavalletti, Sofia. *Religious Potential of the Child: Experiencing Scripture and Liturgy with Young Children*. 3rd ed. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2020. (RPC I, 3rd ed.)

_____. *Religious Potential of the Child: 6 to 12 Years Old*. 2nd ed. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2020. (RPC II, 2nd ed.)

_____. *The History of the Kingdom of God I: From Creation to Parousia*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2012. (HKG I)

_____. *The History of the Kingdom of God II: Liturgy and the Building of the Kingdom*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2013. (HKG II)

Lillig, Tina. *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in a Parish Setting*. Rev. ed. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2018. (Lillig)

Rojcewicz, Rebekah. *Life in the Vine: The Joyful Journey Continues*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2021. (LV)

Recommended Course Texts:

Cavalletti, Sofia, and Coulter, Patricia. *Ways To Nurture the Relationship with God*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2010. (WNRG)

Gobbi, Gianna. *Nurturing the Whole Child: Montessori Principles Applied to the Catechesis of Children*. Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 2024. (Gobbi)

Code of Abbreviations for Ecclesial Documents:

CCC – Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994)

CSL – Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum concilium*) (1963)

DC (2020) – Directory for Catechesis (2020)

DCE – Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum educationis*) (1965)

DCM – Directory on Children's Masses (*Pueros baptizatos*) (1973)

DV – Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei verbum*) (1965)

EM – Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery (*Eucharisticum mysterium*) (1967)

GS – Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) (1965)

GDC – General Directory for Catechesis (1997)

GNLY – General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar (1969)

GIRM – General Instruction on the Roman Missal (1975)

LG – Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*) (1964)

LMI – Lectionary for Mass: Introduction (1981)