

Course Description

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a Montessori based religious formation program 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 catechist 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 Cavaletti and Gianna Gobbi over 60 years ago, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd continues to spread world wide and is used with adaption in various Christian traditions. The Level I 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 3-6 years olds. The Level I cycle is designed to meet the needs of the 3-6 year old child.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd requires formation for adults at each level or age group. The course includes giving all the biblical and liturgical presentations as given to the Level I child, discussion and adult reflection on the key theological themes pertinent to this aged child, and assistance in the beginning to prepare one's Level I album and atrium materials.

Course Objectives

- To explore with participants the general developmental and religious characteristics of the 3-6 year old child.
- To explore the religious capacity of the 3-6 year old child through observation and discussion.
- To meditate deeply on Biblical and Liturgical themes of Sacred History, Sacraments and Moral Formation.
- To offer guidance and assistance in preparing an atrium, the catechist album, and catechetical material.

FORMATION LEADERS

RHIANNON JENSEN has been a catechist for several years, working in the atrium at all three levels. She has a passion for making materials and building beautiful atrium environments for children to encounter Christ. Rhiannon has led Level I formation courses for adults in California and Alaska. She currently lives in California with her husband and son where she continues to serve in the atrium in levels 1-3, as well as leading adult courses.

DEBBIE STENOVEC has been a catechist for many years, starting her formation with Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in 2011 as K-5 Faith Formation Coordinator. She began welcoming children to the Level One atrium in 2013, followed by Levels Two and Three. She has completed formation in all four GCS levels, including Toddler Formation. After retiring from her coordinator role, she was recognized as a Level 1 Formation Leader. Debbie now serves in the Atria for Levels 1-3 at her Parish. She is married to Deacon Jerry, and they have two sons and four grandchildren.