

Catechesis of The Good Shepherd

Level I (ages 3-6)
Adult Formation Course

Ascension Catholic Church

2950 N. Harbor City Blvd.
Melbourne, FL 32935

Part 1: July 20-25, 2026

Part 2: Summer 2027 (dates TBD)

Monday-Saturday 9:00-5:00

(Lunch 12:00-1:00 daily)



"I am the Good Shepherd, and I know mine and mine 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

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a method of religious formation for children ages 3-12 years old and follows Dr. Maria Montessori's philosophy of the planes of development in childhood. It acknowledges that children have their own unique relationship with God. The catechist's role is to help foster and develop that relationship in a specially prepared environment called an atrium. In the atrium, children use hands-on materials to explore and meditate on the greatest mysteries of the Christian faith. Presentations will include the Bible, prayer, parables, the life of Christ, Eucharist, Baptism, the geography of Israel, and the exercises of practical life. Adult reflections will introduce Montessori philosophy, child pedagogy, and theology and methodology related to the presentations.

Today the method of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has spread to all parts of the world. Children and adults of all cultures, a great variety of circumstances, and an ever-widening ecumenical community come together to experience and celebrate God's call to a covenant relationship, grounded in love and shared through Christ, the One who is also known as "Good Shepherd" and "True Vine."

The Level I course is foundational for all further work in advanced levels. It is also beneficial for those wishing to introduce the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to a new locale and parish or school, such as pastors and/or DRE's. Upon completion of the 90-hour, 2-part, Level I course, participants will have received the entire catechetical work for 3-6 year old children and will receive certification from the National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

Course Objectives

- To explore with participants the general developmental characteristics, religious characteristics, and needs of the 3-6 child.
- To facilitate meditations on the Biblical and Liturgical themes of the Catechesis.
- To offer guidance and assistance in preparing an atrium for 3-6 year olds, preparing an album, and materials making.
- 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.

Formation Leader

Stephanie Diethelm has been a catechist since 1998. She completed her Level 1 training with Tina Lillig, Barbara Searle and Carol Nyberg in Chicago in 1999 and says that it changed her life. She has been a formation leader for the National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd since 2005. She has worked extensively with children and adults in a variety of settings and now works with children in an atrium both at Red Mountain Community School and All Saints Episcopal Church in Birmingham, AL. She also completed the Education for Ministry (EfM) Seminar course through Sewanee: University of the South School of Theology in 2019 and has been a trained mentor for EfM Groups since 2020. She resides in Birmingham, AL and has two children, Catherine (33) and Christopher (30).

Registration and Tuition

Full tuition for the course is \$550 paid in two yearly increments of \$275. The first half of the tuition or the certificate fee is due with the registration. The second half will be due June 2027. Tuition includes 90 hours of class work, select materials making, album review, consultation, and certificate fee. There is an auditing fee is \$50 if space permits. Upon course completion, a certificate will be awarded from the National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Scholarship information is available upon request. **Cost should not prohibit anyone from attending.**

*There are three required books for the course that cost approximately \$80 and can be ordered at cgsusa.org.

You may register for the course by contacting Betsy Glasenapp at 321-254-1595 x 3080 or emailing her at dre@ascensioncatholic.net. Registration is also available online at www.ascensioncatholic.net > Faith Formation > CGS Level 1 Course.

Additional information about Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is available at www.cgsusa.org.