



CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
SONFLOWER REGION

**SERVING THE CHILDREN
OF KANSAS AND
NORTHWEST MISSOURI**

President

Ellen Balke-Jones
Overland Park, KS

Vice President

Janet Lovick
Prairie Village, KS

Treasurer

Laura Haeusser
Overland Park, KS

Recording Secretary

Karen Newkirk
Overland Park, KS

Corresponding Secretary

Lynn Smith
Kansas City, MO

Formation Leader Representative

Cathe Sienkiewicz
Atchison, KS

Kara Litzau

Kansas City, MO

Sandy Reynolds

Olathe, KS

Jane Whalen

Bonner Springs, KS

To reach a board member, please
contact Corresponding Secretary

Lynn Smith at
cgsksmo@gmail.com

The Grapevine

Spring 2018

"Follow The Son"

Vol. 12, Issue 1

Letter from the President, Ellen Balke-Jones



Spring is one of my favorite seasons of the year. New growth, rebirth, Lenten preparation, Easter, baptisms and confirmations, longer days, sun, wind and rain. One of my favorite presentations in the Atrium is the Mystery of Life and Death, Grain of Wheat.

Such a simple presentation, filled with so much meaning and significance, yet so easy for the children to relate to in some way or another.

Some children are simply fascinated by the stalk of wheat as it grows and changes. Some are enlightened by the disappearance of the seed. Some are excited by the fact that one seed produces so many more! Others can translate that to fruitfulness, as a child of God on the Vine.

The older children can relate this parable/scripture to Jesus dying on the Cross so that we may live, and have eternal life.

The Atrium is a place of quiet and contemplation. As some of you may know, I am not a quiet person...and I am a boy mom. So, as you can imagine, the days I present this Mystery of Life and Death are not quiet or clean. It took me several years to accept this about myself and

give myself permission to be loud and get dirty when I present this material.

There are times when it seems that the atrium has erupted into chaos. Usually because the children latch onto my excitement.

Many of them go back to the material during work time, to touch, wonder and contemplate. These are some of the reasons this is one of my favorite presentations.

The other reason I love this material so much is that there is quiet contemplation as I prepare for it.

Even if it's just a few minutes every few days planting the wheat, quietly praying for the children in my atrium who will use the material, or tending and watering the seeds.

Through this Mystery of Life and Death, Jesus tells us that death is not the endgame.

There is rebirth in Christ as we share in His divinity in heaven. There is no time as we know it in heaven, just endless joy and light.

I think THIS will be everyone's favorite "season."

- Ellen Balke-Jones

Winter is STILL hanging around! The fun and excitement of snow, boots, and sweaters has completely worn off as I find myself longing for spring. As I wait for the seasons to change, the grayness and bleakness of the winter sky is a mirror for my soul.

This time of the year is tough. I long for warm weather and being outside. Even my commitment to my Catechesis of the Good Shepherd classes can seem overwhelming. No matter how excited I was for this Atrium year to begin back in September, each session can be heavy by March! I sometimes even find myself wondering about next year and asking, "Is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd REALLY worth my time and energy and sacrifice?"

Each year, I am finding it more and more important that I ask myself that very real question. Each year, my own children get older and become more involved in activities. Each year, preserving family time becomes more and more difficult, yet all the more essential. I deeply ponder the answer to the question, "Is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd REALLY worth my time and energy and sacrifice?"

The answer always points me to the children. As part of answering this question, I look back on all the works, all the quotes, all the sacred moments I have been blessed to be a part of year after year. I reflect on moments with different children throughout the years. Moments that have truly shaped my adult faith.

Perhaps you can relate to how I feel at the end of winter. Perhaps the dreariness of the season has your heart heavy too. Maybe you're even wondering if all your sacrifices are worth the effort. If so, I wanted to share a work of a child that always brings me such great hope. This work was done by a boy who started in CGS as a 4-year-old and ended as a 12-year-old. This work is his final prayer from Atrium.

Every time I look at this work I can easily answer my own question, "Is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd REALLY worth it?" Plain and simple, the answer is "Yes". As Sofia has said, "The children will lead us, IF we know how to observe them."

In the Love of Good Shepherd,
Corey Grace

The Heavenly Mass by Noah Grace

The Alpha and Omega represent the beginning to the end

The blue, sun, and green represent creation

Blue represents the waters of Baptism and Jesus' flowing love for us

The red on the outside of the picture represents Jesus' blood

The fish (in the middle of the picture) represents the beginning of Christianity

Redemption is represented by the cross, Jesus, and the Earth

The earth with the yellow ring represents the host

The large dove represents epiclesis

The smaller dove and the fish together represent prayers and blessings

The dove also represents the Holy Spirit

The vine ties everything together

The grapes and vines represent that we can't be separated from God

The shape of yellow and red represents the tabernacle and altar



Continuing & Upcoming Formation Courses

(Kansas Residents may apply for a CGS Grant through the Archdiocese of Kansas City, KS)

LEVEL I, PART 2

DATES AND SCHEDULE

Sept. 15, Oct. 13, Nov. 10, 2018 Jan. 12, Feb. 9, March 9, April 13, 2019
Sessions are from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION

St. Paul Catholic Church
900 S. Honeysuckle Drive Olathe, KS 66061
Church Basement

TUITION/REGISTRATION

Send completed registration and \$100 deposit to: Ms. Veronica Donegan
SonFlower Region of CGS
1822 W. Fredrickson Dr. Olathe, KS 66061
Formation Leaders, Marilee Quinn and Jeanne Wichman

LEVEL I, PART 2

DATES AND SCHEDULE

June 7-10 and July 5-8, 2018
Sessions are from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION

Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church
401 Pioneer
Seneca, KS 66538

TUITION/REGISTRATION

Send completed registration and \$100 deposit to:
Angie Hammes
SonFlower Region of CGS
1588 L4 Road
Seneca, KS 6653
Formation Leaders, Marilee Quinn and Jeanne Wichman

LEVEL II, PART 2

DATES AND SCHEDULE

Sept. 8, Nov. 17, Dec. 1, 2018
Jan. 5, Feb. 2, March 2, April 6, 2019
Sessions are from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION

Holy Trinity Catholic Church
Father Quigley Formation Center
9201 Summit, Lenexa, KS 66215

TUITION / REGISTRATION

Send completed registration and \$100 deposit to:
Ms. Pat Domann
SonFlower Region of CGS
5121 Congressional Circle, Apt. B202, Lawrence, KS 66049
Formation Leaders, Marilee Quinn and Jeanne Wichman

What can CGS SonFlower Regional Board do for You?

The SonFlower Region Board manages CGS activities across the Kansas and Greater Kansas City area. The nine-member board reviews and awards financial aid to formation participants in need, schedules and reviews formation courses in the area, and shares continuing education opportunities with our members. You can find information through various regional communications, e.g., newsletter, email, and our website. Please let us know if there is a course you are looking for that is not currently being offered!

The SonFlower Board offers resources for you to get help starting an atrium in your area, finding materials, or finding Formation opportunities. We can also help you promote CGS by scheduling an event in your parish or school. We call these events "seed-plantings". Like the mustard seed, the region began small, but the power of the Holy Spirit has strengthened and guided it. Like the leaven, though, it needs the work of human hands to help it grow and change with God's grace. Please let us know if we can help support your program in any way. The CGS website is www.cgsksmo.org,

Applications for financial aid may be requested through the National Association at www.cgsusa.org, the SonFlower Region at cgsksmo@gmail.com, or the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kan., at www.archkck.org.

Help much appreciated, always needed

The SonFlower Region cannot fully bloom unless more catechists are involved. Please prayerfully consider serving the region as a board member. For more information please contact Lynn Smith, Corresponding Secretary at cgsksmo@gmail.com

Lenten Enrichment

Catechists from the Sonflower Region gathered for a morning of fellowship and enrichment on February 17th at Holy Cross Catholic School. Sebastian D'Amico, a theology teacher at St. James Academy and Instructor in the School of Faith was the featured speaker. He inspired the group with a talk and discussion on "The Incarnation and Passion of Jesus: The Receptivity and Vulnerability in the Spiritual Life." The group pondered receptivity to God's will using Mary as our role model and receptivity to God's grace in the sacraments looking at a hands-on example using water poured into cups. After a short break, the group gathered in silence around a replica of The Shroud of Turin, and contemplated our own wounds in union with Christ's wounds and the importance of vulnerability in the spiritual life. A special thanks to Sebastian for this atrium-like enrichment filled with meditation and contemplation and thanks to all who attended.

-Janet Lovick



“In my years 13 years as a High School catechist I’ve always been struck by the disposition of the students who come with a background in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. It’s hard to put into words but it is as if they come with a comfort level with silence, prayer and reflection that other students don’t have. Over the years I’ve had the good fortune of getting to know some of the catechists and my wife has even started her training. Not to mention my own kids who have started their time in the atrium. It is a regular occurrence at my home for my wife to get back from her training and for her to excitedly tell me about what she learned and for me to then think, “I should really do something like that with the high school kids.” Please encourage all the catechists in their work. God is with you! And you are doing good work in the vineyard! Thank you all.” -Sebastian D’Amico

Thank you!

The SonFlower Board would like to express our gratitude to everyone who contributed to our membership database updates and voted on the bylaws changes. What a successful group effort!

The membership list will be an ongoing work, but now provides better representation of our current members. If you or anyone you know is not receiving email communication from the region and would like to, please contact cgsksmo@gmail.com. We are happy to report that the amendments to our bylaws passed by a majority vote, which will allow the region to be better positioned for current and future needs. So again, thank you! -Janet Lovick

Save the Date!

The Child Among Us: Maria Montessori's Catholic Insights on the Human Person

Join Benedictine College in welcoming Montessorian and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Catechist Maggie Radzik for a weekend enrichment May 18-20, 2018. Ms. Radzik will discuss the importance of the interaction between the child and the adult and how “with reciprocal influence, they work together in the harmony of mutual aid” (The Child and the Church, by Dr. Maria Montessori and others). Explore with Ms. Radzik the depths of the Montessori philosophy and its application in the classroom, atrium, and home. Encourage the children in your life to reach their full intellectual, physical and spiritual potential by becoming more aware of the Four Planes of Development and the adult's role in guiding the integration of the child's mind, body and soul through their work and their environment. Ms. Radzik has 25 years' experience in the Montessori method and will aid attendees in appreciating the mystery that is the child among us.

A native of Alabama, Maggie graduated from Christendom College and began teaching high school history and geography. In pursuing her Master's in Education, she discovered the Montessori approach of assisting human development and earned three AMI diplomas: Assistants to Infancy (ages 0-3), Primary (ages 3-6), and Elementary (ages 6-12). She is also trained in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in Levels I-III and is currently taking the 0-3 CGS course. Maggie is a Level I Formation Leader with CGS and is earning her Level II Leader credentials. Maggie has taught at all levels of Montessori-toddler through high school- and is currently working with Montessori Catechetical and Cultural Institute (MCCI) to spread the beauty of Dr. Montessori's discoveries within the Catholic Church.

A flyer will be sent out with more details closer to the date.