



*National Association of the
Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGSUSA)*

CGSUSA SUMMER BOOK CLUB 2013
Guidelines & Suggested Questions



The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

An Association of Children and Adults

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to our maiden voyage in reading together online and outside of a course! It is wonderful to begin this new adventure with you. Sofia once said: "When something takes you where you do not know and yet, all along the way, God continues to provide, it is an adventure. And there is nothing more beautiful." May we all experience this beauty with each other in the conversations we share.

We will be holding our conversation on LinkedIn. I know that this new for many of us, it is certainly new for me. Let us be patient with each other as we learn how to hold this conversation in such an environment. You will find more information about how we can be together in the following pages.

As we begin, let us prayer with each other:

Beloved Good Shepherd, send your Holy Spirit, Giver of all good gifts, to us and fill our minds and hearts. Give us the gifts of knowledge and understanding and the grace to use them wisely. Help us to more deeply recognize the religious potential of children and in doing so may we "assist the involvement of children and adults in a common religious experience in which the religious values of childhood, primarily those values of contemplation of and enjoyment of God, are predominant." We ask this in Your most Holy Name. Amen

And if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to email me at marymirrione@cgsusa.org. Thank you for your interest!

In the Peace and Love of our Good Shepherd,

National Director

Basic Ground Rules for CGSUSA Summer Book Club

How does the process begin?

Each Sunday morning, Mary Mirrione, our National Director, will post several discussion questions for each week's reading. Catechists are invited to respond (500 words or less) to any question.

Face to face book clubs usually have anywhere from 10 - 15 people. When it gets bigger than that, it is hard to allow everyone a chance to speak. Due to the abundant response to the CGSUSA Summer Book Club, we have offered 2 groups connected to our LinkedIn Company page:

http://www.linkedin.com/company/3218950?trk=NUS_CMPY_FOL-pdctd. For simplicity, if your last name begins with a letter from A to L please join group A and if your last name begins with a letter from M to Z please join group B.

You are, of course, welcome to read all the posts, but we did not want someone to join in and feel like that have to wade through 30+ posts (it can take a while to read) before posting themselves.

If we find that the conversation is too cumbersome with only two groups we can easily add another.

You are encouraged to respond to other's posts. Response posts in CGSUSA Summer Book Club should follow any of the strategies listed below rather than a simple, "I agree!" post. Response posts extend the conversation. Make sure your response posts do this in an essential manner. Response posts should address a specific part of another member's post, offer new ideas and/or integrate our work with the children. Response posts might also extend the conversation with a new question.

Strategy	Working Definition
Elaborating	Extending a previous comment or question by adding further detail.
Clarifying	Increasing clarity by making distinctions
Reinforcing/Supporting	Making visible a convergence in thinking or agreement with another's thoughts

Strategy	Working Definition
Challenging	Using a question or statement to suggest an alternative view or position
Conjecturing	Suggesting tentative explanations or possible outcomes, most frequently prefaced with "Maybe..." Trying out a line of reasoning.
Requesting Clarification	Seeking clarity about another's statement or question.
Admitting Difficulty	Acknowledging one's own lack of understanding to the rest of the group.
Initiating	Instituting a new direction in the learning conversation.
Paraphrasing	Expressing another's thought in slightly different language with the intention of clarifying.
Summarizing	Listing main points, general ideas by way of review
Defining	Offering a definition to a word used by another, or supplying a term to fit a definition or description used by another.
Noting Relationship Among Tasks	Making explicit connections between previous conversations, texts and/or learning activities and the ideas of the present conversation.
Activating Background Knowledge	Making explicit connections with prior knowledge and/or experiences outside of the classroom.

Questions will also be available for download on the CGSUSA website. We know that there are several local regional associations that will be reading along with us and gathering in small groups for their own "CGSUSA Book Club." *Please send us photos of your gatherings that we may post online.*

Do we all need to be online on the same day at the same time?

No, we ask that any time during the week, you visit the CGSUSA Summer Book Club to post your primary response to the discussion questions or your response to other's comments.

What if I haven't finished reading the book yet?

Come and join us anyway! Not everyone is able to finish every book by the time the book club begins the discussion. Your insights are valuable to the other book club members' discussion.

What if I disagree with a comment from another member?

As a community we abide by our standards of grace and courtesy. We ask catechists to be gracious with one another and be open to another's view. Different perspectives will make our conversation interesting.

How do I begin?

Some catechists read with a pencil in hand, taking notes or marking passages that strike them. Talk about why you marked the passage that you did.

What should I expect from our time together?

As one of our survey responders reminded us: "That we respond with great joy each time another layer of our love for the child and the Risen Lord is revealed to us through our reading." Let us share the joy that comes from our fellowship in this work.

Basic Questions of the Week for CGSUSA Summer Book Club

The Religious Potential of the Child by Sofia Cavalletti
Copyright 1992

Week 1 July 1st -7th, 2013 (be sure to develop your profile on LinkedIn so that we can all get to know each other)

Preface: The Religious Potential of the Church pages 3 - 12

- What struck you as you read the preface?
- Had you read the preface before? If so, was there anything you read in the preface that was new for you this time?
- Had you thought about the broader pastoral applications of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd? (p 3) How have you seen it lived out in your parish community or school setting?
- Searle describes catechesis and ministry as an "Encounter with the mystery of God"; can you describe your first experience of CGS as an encounter with the mystery of God? (p 4)
- "Liturgy, Cavalletti suggests, is primarily a visual experience. It can only "work" therefore, for those who are trained to allow their inner eye to be guided by the unfolding rite to that which is represented but cannot itself be seen." (p 8) What have you seen in the liturgy that was hidden to you before you CGS Formation?

Week 2 July 8th – 14th, 2013

Foreword: An American Experience of the Catechesis

- What struck you as you read the forward?
- Had you read the forward before? If so, was there anything you read in the forward that was new for you this time?
- Had you thought about the framework you use, or could use, in which you can share your experience of God and the child in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd? (p13)
- Rebekah describes the experience of catechesis in light of the Gospels. Is there a particular scripture that resonates for you what she describes?
- “Perhaps it is difficult for us to sense the fullness of life in the atrium or to recognize the particular quality of the children’s joy if we have not first discovered our own joy in response to God’s presence. But the children help us with this.” (p 19) How have the children help you discover your own joy in response to God’s presences that was concealed to you before you CGS Formation?

Week 3 July 15th – 21st 2013

Introduction page 21-29

- What struck you as you read the introduction?
- Had you read the introduction before? If so, was there anything you read in the introduction that was new for you this time?
- Sofia describes the center of catechesis as a “place in which the community of children and their catechists live their religious experience together...”; can you describe your first experience of this slower pace of the child before God? (p 23)
- The introduction gives an essential overview of the book. Is there a particular chapter you are looking forward to the most?

Week 4 July 22nd – 28th, 2013

Chapter One: God and the Child pages 30 - 46

- What struck you as you read this chapter?
- Was there anything you read in the chapter that was new for you this time?
- What do you think is the most essential point of this chapter?
- Sofia suggests. “Before beginning any discussion about the religious education of children, we should ask ourselves a basic question: Is it justifiable to

give religious education to children?" (p 30) After reading this chapter, how would you respond?

Week 5 July 29th-August 4th, 2013

Chapter Two: The Child and the Adult pages 47-61

- What struck you as you read this chapter?
- Was there anything you read in the chapter that was new for you this time?
- What do you think is the most essential point of this chapter?
- Sofia suggests that "the essentiality of the child is perhaps the element that imposes the severest discipline on the adult. "(p 47) Has this been true for you?
- It is in this chapter that Sofia discusses the Adult as "Unworthy Servant" found in Luke's Gospel. A description we all know well and sometimes have been challenged by. She goes on to say that "The initiation of a child into the Christian Life is not a work that can fulfilled by the catechists alone nor by the parents alone. It is the whole Christian community that proclaims Christ, and the child must enter into contact with the entire Christian Community." (p 60) How do you see this lived out in your community?

Week 6 August 5th – 11th, 2013

Chapter Three: Christ the Good Shepherd pages 62-77

- What struck you as you read this chapter?
- Was there anything you read in the chapter that was new for you this time?
- What do you think is the most essential point of this chapter?
- Has this chapter made it even clearer to you why "the Good Shepherd parable is the cornerstone of all this work" (p 65)?

Week 7 August 12th- 18th, 2013

Chapter Four: Christ the Good Shepherd and the Eucharist pages 79-97

- What struck you as you read this chapter?
- Was there anything you read in the chapter that was new for you this time?
- What do you think is the most essential point of this chapter?
- "There does not exist a Bible that we read and the Liturgy that we live; there is the Bible we live with the whole of our life and especially so I the Liturgy. The former without the latter would be deprived of its most intense moment of life; the latter without the former would be based on a void. The Bible finds its fullness in the listening of the community that lives in justice and builds

itself in the Eucharistic Celebration. Therefore the child who comes to know the Good Shepherd should be initiated into the greatest action in which we meet Him: the Mass” (p 79) Have you experienced this in your community? How has this chapter helped you better understand Sofia’s statement?

Week 8 August 19th- 25th, 2013

Chapter Five: Christ the Light and Baptism pages 98-104

- What struck you as you read this chapter?
- Was there anything you read in the chapter that was new for you this time?
- What do you think is the most essential point of this chapter?
- Have you considered what Sofia calls the “linking point” in what you present to the children? How has this helped?
- This chapter references many of the children’s artwork. Was there something in their work that particularly struck you? Do you have a favorite piece of art from your own Atrium that you would like to share with the CGSUSA Summer Book Club?

Week 9 August 26th- September 1st, 2013

Chapter Six: The Historical Events in the Life of Jesus

- What struck you as you read this chapter?
- Was there anything you read in the chapter that was new for you this time?
- What do you think is the most essential point of this chapter?
- Sofia suggests “...the presentation of sacred scripture, - parables or historical narratives- should never be disunited from prayer, in a structured or structured form. The proclamation is complete when it has been received and in one form or another, when it has been given a response.” (p 118) What responses of the child have you witnessed when pondering the Life of Christ with them?

Week 10 September 2nd – 8th, 2013

Chapter Seven: Prayer pages 120 -137

- What struck you as you read this chapter?
- Was there anything you read in the chapter that was new for you this time?
- What do you think is the most essential point of this chapter?
- Sofia writes of a “real education to silence” in this chapter. “(p 136) What education to silence have you experienced with the children? How important is

silence in your life? How can you better develop silence in your life and the lives of the children you serve?

Week 11 September 9th- 15th, 2013

Chapter Eight: Education to Wonder and the Kingdom of God pages 138-150

- What struck you as you read this chapter?
- Was there anything you read in the chapter that was new for you this time?
- What do you think is the most essential point of this chapter?
- “Education to wonder is correlative with and education that helps us to go always more deeply into reality. If we skim over things we will never be surprised by them. Wonder is not an emotion of superficial people; it strikes root only in the person whose mind is able to settle and rest in things...” (p 139) Have you considered the gift of wonder as a necessary habit of the spirit of a catechist?

Week 12 September 16th- 22nd, 2013

Chapter Nine: Moral Formation pages 151 -157

- • What struck you as you read this chapter?
- Was there anything you read in the chapter that was new for you this time?
- What do you think is the most essential point of this chapter??
- In this chapter Sofia discusses the need for catechesis to begin before the age of six so that the child is free from any preoccupation and open to the encounter with God and to the enjoyment the child derives from this encounter. How can we best articulate this need to the parents and pastors of the children we serve?

Week 13 September 23rd – 29th, 2013

Chapter Ten: The Method of Signs pages 158-167

- What struck you as you read this chapter?
- Was there anything you read in the chapter that was new for you this time?
- What do you think is the most essential point of this chapter?
- “The method of signs educates the child and the catechists in humility (that virtue which has been defined as the ‘cardinal virtue of the Christian’) because this method never gives anyone the sense of knowing everything, of having arrived at the core of things, given their allusive nature, signs will never be exhausted of their meaning.” (p 166) What was the first sign that brought you this humility in your work in CGS?

Week 14 September 30th- October 6th, 2013

Chapter Eleven: Anthropological Catechesis and Conclusion pages 168-178

- What struck you as you read this chapter?
- Was there anything you read in the chapter that was new for you this time?
- What do you think is the most essential point of this chapter?
- In writing of CGS as an anthropological catechesis, Sofia lifts up three constants and four objects. Choose one to share your experiences with the child. (p 170, 171)
- Finally, in her conclusion, Sofia asks the question: "What is the profound relationship that binds together the subjects listed in the previous chapter?" How do we respond to this question?

We thank you all for participating in this book club and hope you have experienced joy and contemplation in the study of this book. We will be sending a brief survey in the week following the close of the conversation. Please respond so that we might better serve you in the future.