



*The Roman Catholic*  
**Diocese of Phoenix**

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

April 7, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to endorse the work of **Ms. Mary Mirrione** of the Diocese of Phoenix in her role as National Director for The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

For those who may not be familiar with The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, it is an approach to the religious formation of children that is rooted in the bible, the liturgy of the church, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori. Children gather in an "atrium," a room prepared for them, which contains simple yet beautiful materials they use to help them absorb the most essential proclamations of the Christian faith. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a sensorially rich experience for children from the ages of 3 to 12 years that gives them the opportunity to grow in their love and knowledge of God.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd came about through the work of two Roman Catholic laywomen in Rome: Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi. They were inspired by the educational principles of Maria Montessori, also a Catholic. The materials they prepared for children, since 1954, were based on the bible, the Roman Catholic liturgy and sacraments, Tradition, and Church teachings. In 1985, a Level I course welcomed participants from both Catholic and several other Christian traditions. Since that time, the ecumenical character of the roster for each course has continued. All presentations are offered as given to us by Sofia and Gianna (Catholic) and participants are welcome to adapt them to their own traditions with the encouragement of the national association and help from CGS formation leaders who share their traditions.

A number of parishes in the Diocese of Phoenix are using this method of catechetical formation in very positive ways that are a blessing to our children and their families. I would encourage both Catholic and non-Catholic Christian parishes to evaluate the suitability of incorporating the method that is presented through The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for use in their catechetical program.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Thomas J. Olmsted*  
+ Thomas J. Olmsted  
Bishop of Phoenix