



The United States Association of

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd[®]

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd — Level Three Formation

Pedagogical Foundations for Catechesis w/ Young Children

With emphasis on the Centrality of the Kerygma; and the Role and Formation of the Catechist

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Three

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is grounded in the belief that the child already has a relationship with God before s/he arrives in the atrium, but desires to understand more fully the nature of that relationship and to celebrate it. The Catechesis seeks to help the child's relationship with God flourish by introducing and pondering with the child core mysteries of the faith in a way that is respectful of both the child at this phase of her/his development and the rich scriptural & liturgical heritage of our sacramental tradition. The adult plays a unique role in the Catechesis – as both the preparer & facilitator of the atrium space and a co-listener with the child before the Word of God.

The structure of the 9-12 atrium is intended to particularly address the child's growing desire and capacity to wrestle with the mystery of time and their own role in history. It helps the child to grasp the "big picture" of God work in the universe, while at the same time honoring the 9-12 year old's desire and capacity to work with details of the "whole" that grab their attention and study these in depth.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 9-12 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

- +Who is the 9–12-Year-Old Child?
- +Transition from Level II Atrium to Level III Atrium
- +Cosmic Education / Intro to the Plan of God
- +Reflection on the 32 Characteristics of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

- +Lk 18:15-17
- +Mk 10:13-16

Relevant CGS Literature

- +RPC II (2nd ed.), viii-12, 133-137
- +LV, 4-9, 10-14

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +The child's right to catechesis: DCE 2-3
- +Call to holiness in all stages of life: LG 40-41; CCC 2012-2013
- +“Divine Pedagogy” / Finding a method congruent w/ content: GDC 139-149; DC (2020) 194-196
- +Nature & Task of catechesis: GDC 78-87; DC (2020) 79-89
- +Catechesis to be adapted to age of the catechized: GDC 163-165; DC (2020) 236-243 (children), 244-256 (adolescents)
- +Special characteristics of catechesis with pre-adolescents: GDC 181-185; DC (2020) 244-256
- +Role of catechist: GDC 156; DC (2020) 79-89, 110-113
- +Formation of the Catechist: DC (2020) 79-89, 90-109, 133-150
- +Theology of work: GS 33-39
- +On fostering a contemplative spirit & space: CCC 2709-2719

(cont. Relevant Ecclesial Documents)

- +On becoming a child: CCC 526
- +Who is the human person?: GS 12- 16; CCC 33, 1700-1706, 1718-1719
- +Human freedom: GS 17; CCC 1730-1734

- +Centrality of the kerygma: DC (2020) 57-60, 164-165
- +Methodologies in Catechesis (Space): DC (2020) 221-223

The Trinitarian God

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Three

In the atrium, the child comes to know a God who is deeply relational, who reaches out to be in relationship with humanity, who is Life in Abundance and invites us to share in that, abundant relational, i.e. “Trinitarian” life. In the 9-12 atrium, the child is more fully introduced to the traditional Trinitarian prayer language of the Church – especially in the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 9-12 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

{Indirectly addressed in the presentations on the sacramental life of the Church and in the child’s further meditation on key events and parables in the life of Jesus.}

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

- {+see infancy narrative references below}
- +OCIA 54-56, 226
- +Order of Baptism for Children 41, 60, 70
- +Order of the Mass

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +Foundational theology of the Trinity / Invitation to participate in Trinitarian life: CCC 232-260, 1997
- +Trinitarian-Christocentricity of catechesis: GDC 99-100; DC (2020) 168-170
- +Trinitarian-Christocentricity of liturgy: CCC 1077-1109
- +Baptized “in the name of...”: DC (2020) 78

Relevant CGS Literature

- +RPC II (2nd ed.), 52-56
- +HKG II, 15-22, 84-89

The Economy of Salvation

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Three

In the 6-9 atrium, the child was introduced to God’s Reign as it has unfolded in time, focusing on the three key moments of creation, redemption, and the Parousia.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 9-12 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

- +*The Mystery of Time*
- +*Cosmic Education / Introduction to the Plan of God*

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

- +Creation: Gen 1:1-2:25 (+ related NT allusions)

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

+Overview of the History of Salvation: DV 2-4, 11-16; CCC 51-67; GDC 107-108; DC (2020) 171-173, 157-163

Relevant CGS Literature

+RPC II (2nd ed.), 13-51, 123-129
+HKG I, 1-185
+LV, 29-35

Salvation History

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Three

In the 9-12 atrium, the child is invited to enter into this history more deeply, exploring the “Plan of God” in much greater detail through extensive study of the Old Testament but also archeological and historical material concerning the evolution of civilizations in the Middle East and Europe. The child is introduced to key moments and figures in the history of Israel in particular and is aided in identifying common threads that run throughout this history. The child is also invited to reflect more substantially on his/her own role in the Plan of God, discerning which particular gifts they possess and how to put these at the service of God’s Reign in anticipation of the Parousia. The prophets continue to be lifted up as those who have a special call in listening for and discerning God’s Plan and announcing it to the world. As such, they are models for the 9-12 year old child as s/he embraces this state of listening and discerning as well.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 9-12 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

+Introduction to Typology & Myth
+“The Fettuccina”
+The Open Book
+The Plan of God (w/ control, mute, and individual work strips)
+The Peoples & the People of God
+My Century
+2000 Years
+The Kingdom of God & My Place in It
+The History of the Jewish People (control & mute strips)
+Worship in Israel
+The Holy Bible & the Parousia
+Creation – Scripture & Typology Study
+The Fall – Scripture & Typology Study
+The Flood – Scripture & Typology Study
+Abraham – Scripture & Typology Study
+Moses, Exodus, and the Law – Scripture & Typology Study
+Call of the Prophets
+Struggles of the Prophets
+Message of the Prophets (Messianic & Moral)

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

+Fall: Gen 3:1-24 (+related NT allusions)
+Noah: Gen 6:5-9:17 (+related NT allusions)
+Abraham: Gen 11:27- 25:11 (+related NT allusions)
+Moses: Ex 1:8-26:1; Num 2:1-10-36; Deut 34:1-12 (+related NT allusions)
+Call of Prophets: Is 6:1-8; Jer 1:4-10; Amos 7:14-15; Ezek 2:8-3:4
+Struggles of Prophets: 1 Kgs 18:17-19:15; Jer 26, 36-38; Dan 14:22-42
+Message of Prophets: (22 various verses from Isaiah, Micah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Amos)
+Parousia: Mt 25:31-46; Is 35:5-6; Joel 3:1-2; Rev 21:4-5; Is 2:4-5; Jn 11:25-26; Mt 24:30-31; Rev 5:13; 1 Cor 15:20-22; Is 60:19-20; Is 11:6-8; Is 65:17
+Order of the Mass (esp. Easter Vigil Service)
+Order of Baptism
+Order of Confirmation (esp. blessing of Chrism)

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

+Typology / Unity of Old & New Testaments: DV 16; CCC 128-130, 761-762, 1093-1095, 2566-2584
+Creation: CCC 279-305
+The Special Role of the Human in God's Plan: GS 9-10; CCC 306-308, 355-359
+The Fall/Sin: CCC 385-412
+Moses & the Law: CCC 2056-2069
+Prophets: DV 15; CCC 64, 218, 522, 711-712

+Redemption: CCC 512-655- m. esp. 517; GS 22
+Pentecost & Gifts of Spirit: CCC 731-738, 1831-1832
+Parousia: CCC 1042-1050, 1720-1722
+Call to Study the Revelation of God's Plan in Scripture: DV 21-26; CCC 131-133

Relevant CGS Literature

+HKG II, 77-80
+HJP
+LV, 17-25
+WNRG, 1-31, 32-65, 84-103

The Life of Jesus Christ (Incarnation and Paschal Mystery)

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Three

Jesus Christ is the greatest gift of God. To humanity, however, he is also the greatest paradox. The greatest of kings born in the smallest and most humble of places. A mighty God who chooses the small and hidden. The Lord of all who embraces human death. In Jesus, we see the clearest revelation of how God works in history. With the 9-12 yr. old child, we continue to ponder the mystery of who Jesus is by further study – often child-directed – of events surrounding his childhood, ministry, death, and resurrection. We also continue to encourage the child to note common themes or threads that permeate these stories (eg. the presence of the Spirit; the juxtaposition of great and small; etc.).

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 9-12 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

+Further Synthesis Work with the Infancy Narratives (cont. from 6-9)
+Further Work with the Passion Narratives (cont. from 6-9)

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

+Christ at heart of catechesis: CCC 426-429
+Who are you, Lord?: CCC 430-451
+Mystery of the Incarnation: CCC esp. 456-469, 522-534; DC (2020) 159, 165
+Mary, the Mother of Jesus: CCC 484-489, 494-495, 2673-2677; LG 52-59; DC (2020) 159
+Paschal Mystery: CCC 559-560, 571-573, 595-597, 610-618, 624-628, 638-664
+Presence of the Spirit in the Gospels: CCC 717-736

Relevant CGS Literature

+HKG I, 144-166, 177-183

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

+Lk 1:26-38
+Lk 1:39-49, 56
+Lk 2:1-20
+Mt 2:1-12
+Mt 2:13-23
+Lk 2:21-38
+Lk 2:41-52
+Mt 8:5-10, 13
+Mk 14:12-17, 22-26, 32-65 / 15:1-47
+Mt 26:17-68 / 27:11-61
+Lk 22:7 – 24:53
+Jn 18:1-14 / 18:28-21:24
+1 Cor 11:23-25
+Acts 1:3-11
+Acts 2:1-11

The Teaching of Jesus Christ

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Three

The Gospels reveal that the primary, overarching theme in Jesus' preaching and teaching was the Kingdom of God. With the 9-12 yr. old child, we continue to ponder several of Jesus' "Kingdom parables" in an attempt to grasp the true nature of this Kingdom and to wrestle with its social implications. Additional "moral" parables are introduced as the child increases in her/his desire to understand what it means to live in this Kingdom.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 9-12 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

- +Miracles of Jesus
- +The Mustard Seed – expanded meditation
- +The Precious Pearl- expanded meditation
- +The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard
- +The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids
- +The Parable of the Talents
- +The Parable of the Debtors
- +Further Work with Additional Maxims (esp. from Sermon on Mt)
- +The Cosmic Maxims
- +The Virtues

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +The Kingdom of God: CCC 541-546
- +Jesus' Vision of Living in the Kingdom of God on Earth: CCC 1928-1942
- +The Great Commandment: CCC 2083

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

- +Mt 13:31-32
- +Mt 13:45-46
- +Mt 18:23-24
- +Mt 20:1-16
- +Mt 25:1-13
- +Mt 25:14-30
- +Lk 12:16-21
- +Additional Maxims: Mt 7:13; Mt 6:20; Mt 5:40; Lk 9:62; Mt 7:3; Mt 6:2
- +Mk 10:46-52
- +Lk 7:11-17
- +Mt 14:13-21
- +Mk 2:1-12

Relevant CGS Literature

- +RPC II (2nd ed.), 52-56, 83-95
- +HKG I, 167-176
- +LV, 26-29

The Church

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Three

As the 9-12 year old child's capacity for relationship continues to expand to include a wider social sphere, s/he is invited to ponder more extensively the communal relationship that we have with Christ, in addition to the personal relationship. Through further presentations on Baptism and Eucharist explores both the vastness of the Church across nations and cultures, but also across history. The child is also introduced to fractures that have taken place in the Christian Church over the past 2000 years and invited to reflect on what this means in this context of God's larger plan that "all may be one."

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 9-12 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

- +Ecumenism / Interfaith Work
- +Schisms in the Church and Ecumenism (Indirectly addressed in several scriptural presentations, particularly: the Good Shepherd, the Grain of Wheat, and

Pentecost. Also indirectly addressed in the presentation on Baptism & Eucharist.)

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

N/A

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

+Scriptural images of the Church: LG 6-7;
CCC 753-757
(+See references below on Baptism &
Eucharist, esp. CCC 1267-1273, 1368-1369,
1396; EM 6)

Relevant CGS Literature

+HKG II, 15-18, 44-51, 84-94
+HJP
+RPC II (2nd ed.), (throughout)
+LV, 33-35

The Liturgical/Sacramental Life of the Church

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Three

Having examined the general structure of Eucharist and other sacramental rites in the 6-9 atrium, the 9-12 child explores in detail the complete celebrations of Eucharist, Baptism, Reconciliation, Confirmation, and the Anointing of the Sick.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 9-12 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

*The Liturgical Calendar – expanded work
+The Synagogue – Origin of the Liturgy of the Word
+The Structure of the Mass
+The “Color Base Material” – “Second Missal”
+The Preface of the Mass
+The Mystery of Faith
+The Mystery of Faith and the Prayers of Intercession
+The Propers of the Mass
+The Story of Bread
+The Complete Order of Baptism
+The Complete Order of Confirmation w/ articles & gestures, vestments of bishop
+The Sacred Chrism
+Order of Penance / Second Confession (w/ 5 Armor of Light Meditations)
+Order of Anointing of the Sick w/ articles, gestures, and rite

Relevant CGS Literature

+HKG II, 1-125
+RPC II (2nd ed.), 52-82, 96-122
+LV, 62-74
+WNRG, 66-83

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

+Liturgy & Catechesis: CCC 1066-1075
+Trinitarian-Christocentricity of liturgy: CCC 1077-1109
+Sacraments of Christ / Sacraments of the Church: CCC 1113-1118
+On imp. of helping children understand liturgy: DCM 8-15; EM 15
+Encouraging full participation in liturgy: CSL 47-48
+Reading Sacramental Signs: CCC 1145-1152
+On liturgical yr: CSL 102-111; GIRM 308-310; GNLY 1-44; CCC 1163-1171
+On Eucharist: EM 3, 6-10; GIRM esp. 48-56; CCC 1153-1155 (Liturgy of the Word), 1322-1405, 2634-2636 (Intercessions)
+ On history of apostolic succession (Origins of Eucharist): CCC 1087; LG 18-28
+On Baptism: LG 22; CCC 977-978, 1213-1274, 683, 694-699
+On Confirmation: CCC 1285-1314
+On Reconciliation: CCC 979-983, 1422-1470
+On Anointing of the Sick: CCC 1499-1525
+Jewish roots of liturgy: CCC 1096
+The bridge between Word & Sacrament: LMI 10; CCC 1153-1155

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

- + Order of the Mass
- +OCIA 218-230
- +Order of Baptism for Children 32-71
- +Order of Penance 1-20, 41-47

- +Order of Anointing of the Sick
- +Order of Confirmation
- (+Armor of Light Med: Eph 5:8; Rom 13:11-14; Lk 15:4-6; Lk 15:8-9, 11-32; Mt 7:1-5; Mt 18:23-35; Lk 12:16-21 + maxims)
- +Lk 12:13-21

Christian Morality/Catholic Social Justice Teaching

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Three

Based on the firm foundation of love and listening established in the previous atrium experiences, the 9-12 child is invited to meditate on several moral parables and maxims in the teaching of Jesus that show us how those who love and listen to God are called to live. The moral life is presented as a joy-filled path leading to ever more abundant life. It is the natural overflow of a right and loving relationship with God – the fruit of life in the True Vine.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 9-12 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

- +*The Moral Life /Moral Formation & the 9+ child* (See the Teaching of Jesus – moral parables and maxims & Liturgical Life – the Armor of Light Meditations)

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

(See passages under section on Teaching of Jesus)

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +On conscience / Inner Teacher: GS 16; CCC 1776-1785
- +Moral life grounded in love / joy: CCC 1770, 1723-1724
- +On the virtues: CCC 1803-1829
- +Toward an understanding of sin: CCC 1846-1851

Relevant CGS Literature

- +RPC II (2nd ed.), 83-122
- +LV, 54-61

Prayer

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Three

The spontaneous prayer of the younger child evolves into a more structured form of communal prayer for the older child. In the 9-12 atrium, the child is invited to continue linking their prayer ever more tightly to the prayer life of the larger Church – especially through the practice of the Liturgy of the Hours. The children plan prayer rituals for themselves that include readings from scripture, praying the psalms, petition, praise, and song. Several traditional scriptural prayers of the Church are introduced formally.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 9-12 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

- +*Celebrations and Prayer with the 9-12 Yr. Old Child*
- +The Bible in the Prayer Corner (Bible in various translations)

- +Communal Prayer in the 9-12 Atrium
- +The Our Father
- *Psalm 23 (complete)
- +The Magnificat
- +The Nunc Dimittis

(cont. Specific Presentations and Adult Background)

- +The Benedictus
- +Atrium Celebrations of the Key Feasts of the Liturgical Year

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

- +Jn 8:12
- +General structure of Liturgy of Hours
- +Ps 23:1-6
- +Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4
- +Lk 1:68-79
- +Lk 2:29-32

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +On prayer: CCC 2558-2567, 2623-2643, 2659-2660; DC (2020) 86-87
- +Prayer corner: CCC 2691
- +On understanding & praying Scripture: DV 11-26, 21-26; CCC 101-114, 131-133
- +Psalms: CCC 2585-2589
- +Liturgy of the Hours: CCC 1174- 1178; CSL 83-101
- +Our Father: CCC 2759-2856
- +Magnificat: CCC 2619

Relevant CGS Literature

- +LV, 62-66

Education for Community Life

With emphasis on Mission and Evangelizing

Overall Approach to this Theme in CGS, Level Three

Building on the foundation laid in earlier atrium experiences, the 9-12 year old children are expected to continue to care for the atrium environment and to follow atrium guidelines on how to live as a community in the atrium space. These guidelines and practices lay a solid foundation for communal life outside the atrium as well. In presentations on the teaching of Jesus, the guidelines and practices of harmonious communal living continue to be directly addressed and discussed - in context of the atrium community, but also in relation to the larger world we live in.

Specific Presentations & Adult Background Offered in 9-12 Formation Course in which the Theme is Addressed

- +*Practical Life in the 9-12 Atrium*
- {+ see also presentations under “The Teaching of Jesus”, “Liturgical Life”, and “Communal Prayer”}

Specific Scriptural (NAB) and Liturgical Foundations Referred to in the Presentations & Meditations

N/A

Relevant Ecclesial Documents

- +Human meant to be in community: GS 24-32; CCC 952, 959, 1878-1880
- +On common good: CCC 1905-1917
- +Family life: DC (2020) 124-126, 226-231

Relevant CGS Literature

- +LV, 75-80

Course Description:

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a Montessori-based religious formation method 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 catechists 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 Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi approximately 70 years ago, the Catechesis continues to spread worldwide and is used with adaptation in various Christian traditions. This Level III 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 9-12 year olds. **(Prerequisite: CGS Level One & Level Two Formation)**

Course Objectives:

- To explore with participants the general developmental and religious characteristics of the 9-12 year old child.
- To facilitate meditation upon the biblical and liturgical themes of the Catechesis.
- To offer guidelines and assistance to catechists in setting up an atrium for 9-12 year olds, preparing an album, and making materials.
- 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.

Required Course Texts:

Cavalletti, Sofia. *Religious Potential of the Child: 6 to 12 Years Old*. 2nd ed. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2020. (RPC II, 2nd ed.)

_____. *The History of the Kingdom of God I: From Creation to Parousia*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2012. (HKG I)

_____. *The History of the Kingdom of God II: Liturgy and the Building of the Kingdom*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2013. (HKG II)

Rojcewicz, Rebekah. *Life in the Vine: The Joyful Journey Continues*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2021. (LV)

Recommended Course Texts:

Cavalletti, Sofia. “History of the Jewish People (Adult Supplement).” Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004. (HJP)

Cavalletti, Sofia, and Coulter, Patricia. *Ways To Nurture the Relationship with God*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2010. (WNRG)

Code of Abbreviations for Ecclesial Documents:

CCC – Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994)

CSL – Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum concilium*) (1963)

DC (2020) – Directory for Catechesis (2020)

DCE – Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum educationis*) (1965)

DCM – Directory on Children’s Masses (*Pueros baptizatos*) (1973)

DV – Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei verbum*) (1965)

EM – Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery (*Eucharisticum mysterium*) (1967)

GS – Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) (1965)

GDC – General Directory for Catechesis (1997)

GNLY – General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar (1969)

GIRM – General Instruction on the Roman Missal (1975)

LG – Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*) (1964)

LMI – Lectionary for Mass: Introduction (1981)