



In the Meadow

Where the sheep gather

A newsletter for the Organization Members of CGSUSA



Greetings!

Sofia understood that it was necessary for the child and the catechist to understand geography to be able to enter into biblical history. This month we explore the City of Jerusalem and how those sacred sites impact our experience of the Paschal Mystery. Through the naming and brief narration of the sites, the child comes to know the Passion, Death and Resurrection as one event.

This month, we also begin to offer "Songs for the Atrium", we hope to provide a song selection every month. We know that music is an important element of the Atrium.

Even if your catechists are shy about singing, remind them that music is the universal language. There is no culture where music is not present. Maria Montessori understood that music is one of the fundamental spiritual needs of all humans.

For the Parish Bulletin or Parent Newsletter or Catechist Note

The Characteristics of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

32 Points of Reflection

What are the principal points which distinguish this catechesis and because of which it is called the "Catechesis of the Good Shepherd"? The following characteristics are intended to represent the principal aspects of the catechesis as they have emerged after more than fifty years of work with children of different countries, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. These characteristics are reflective of the constants which have presented themselves in this work and are presented here with the invitation to go deeper into them for further reflection.

2. With this aim in mind, the catechist embraces Maria Montessori's vision of the human being and thus the attitude of the adult regarding the child; and prepares an environment called the atrium, which aids the development of the religious life.

For the Parishioner: Have you had the opportunity to visit your parish atrium? Visit www.CGSUSA.org to learn more about the mission and vision of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, that allows our children to fall in love with God. Check your parish library or with your coordinator of CGS to see if they have a copy of [The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey](#) so that you can read about the religious life of the child.

For the Parent: Have you had the opportunity to observe in your child's atrium? Are you

familiar with the materials that live on the shelves? Is there one material in the prepared environment that you would like to know more about? Ask your child's catechist if she has a copy of [The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey](#) so that you can read about the religious life of the child.

For the Catechist: The role of the catechist is to prepare the environment. Do you notice a material that has not engaged the children? How is it displayed? How easy is it for the child to access? Would moving it from a shelf to a table impact how the child uses this material? Is there a particular material that you have observed that the children enjoy - have you made observation notes on your album page?

For Parents

Parent Newsletter - Purple is for Preparation

This month we look at the color for the season of Lent and how we speak to the children about this season in the Atrium.

Please share this newsletter with the families in your community.

Our website contains our all previous parent newsletters:

[Parent Newsletter on Paschal Mystery](#)

[Parent Newsletter on the Last Supper](#)

Entire Parent Newsletter Library is found [here](#) .



All About the Atrium

CGSUSA Parent Newsletter

Purple is for Preparation

For Parents

This information may be included in your communication with parents.

How do I talk to my child about the events of Holy Week?

For the young child, it may be unsettling to hear about the events of Good Friday. Know that in the atrium, we always speak about the death and the resurrection of Jesus as one event. We do not speak about one without the other. The presentation of the City of Jerusalem assists the child in being formed in the paschal mystery* and understanding that Life conquers death.

- Pray with your child. Since it is Lent, you will have a purple cloth on your prayer table, along with a Good Shepherd statue. What other items can we place on our prayer table this week? A blessed palm? A simple cross? At the prayer table, you may ask your child, "Would we like to say (or sing) something to Jesus?"
- Read Scripture with your child. You will want to read beforehand the verses you are going to share with your child. Emphasize the importance of the

proclaiming the Word of God by reading slowly. The Little Gospels: Paschal Narrative are a wonderful resource to share with your child. After reading from the Bible or Little Gospels, invite the child to share his or her own reflection by asking, "What did you hear?"

*Those events that deal with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

For the Catechist

City of Jerusalem



Jerusalem is the most important of all the cities in the Land of Israel. Some of the sites we explore with the children include:

- The Temple - the most important building in the city, where the Jewish people believed God was present.
- The Cenacle - This building is where Jesus celebrated the Passover with his friends. It is called the Cenacle, which means dining room. Jesus said some very important words during this meal, "Take and eat, this is my body given up for you. Take and drink, this is my blood poured out for you."
- The Garden of Olives - where Jesus liked to pray.
- Calvary - where Jesus died. Jesus' body was placed in the tomb.
- Tomb of the Resurrection - On the third day, the women went to put oils on the body. A young man greeted them, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is risen!" This was the greatest news for the entire world!

The City of Jerusalem helps the child to understand that the Biblical stories did indeed occur, as well as providing a context for what the child hears.

For the Catechist and the Children

Songs for the Atrium

Formation Leader and Catechist Marty O'Bryan shares a call and response song *Blessed Be God*. Thank you to Pat Sauerman and Lynda Catalano for singing and signing the response!



For Reflection...for the Catechist in the Atrium

The Sources: *from Sofia and Gianna*

"During the weeks of Lent we present The City of Jerusalem in which we offer a raised-surface map of Jerusalem with moveable pieces of the sites of the paschal events*. The very brief narrative that accompanies the naming of the sites underscores the realness (or historical reality) of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection and the unity of these events. In a sense, all of these episodes are really one event: the greatest mystery of love!"

- Sofia Cavalletti, The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey, p 80



At the prayer table after The City of Jerusalem, seven-year-old Jacob asked, "Jesus, what is your favorite place in the city?"

Have you observed:

Is there a particular piece that is a favorite of the child or that the child is drawn to in this work?

At age five, Clare placed the figures of Jesus and the apostles from the Cenacle - one by one - inside the walls of the City of Jerusalem, near the small model of the house of the Cenacle.

Have you observed the child making a connection or synthesis with the City and other materials?

By the age nine, Payton had worked repeatedly with the City of Jerusalem materials. His work now took him to research various sites found within the city, using the bible, an atlas and other books on the Jerusalem.

What resources do the young people in Level Two and Level Three have for to know more about the city of Jerusalem?

We look forward to hearing from you. Please let us know what resources may be helpful to you as an Organization Member.

In the Shepherd's Care,

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