



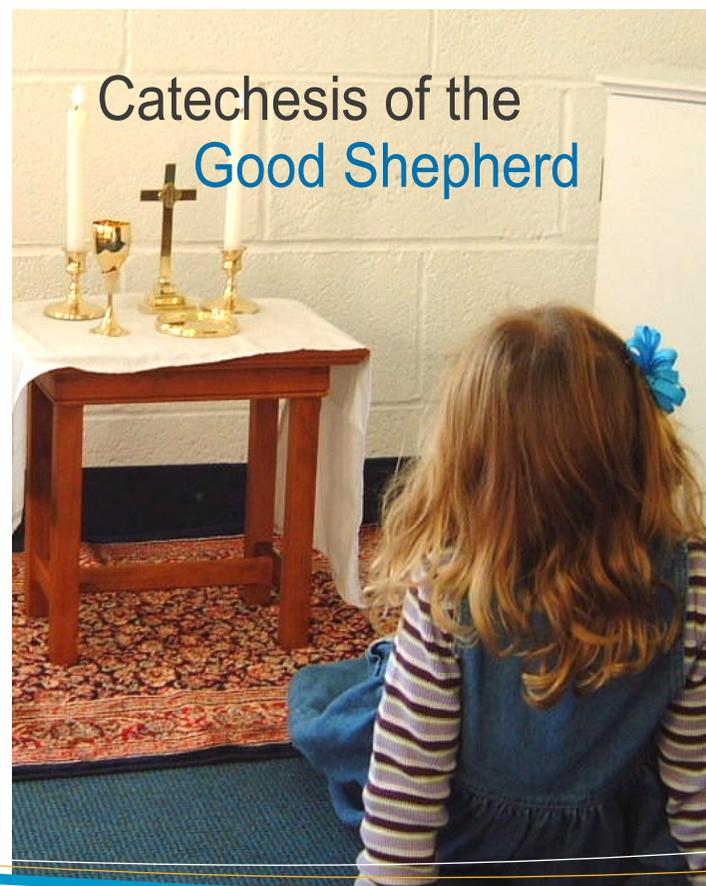
atrium

The Anglican Parish of St Luke

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

ST LUKE'S PARISH ATRIUM

- Commences February 2013
- Meets from 9.45am and during the 10.00am service
- Meets in the Parish Ministry Centre.
- Currently open for ages 3-6 *only*
- Please contact the Parish Office for more information



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

THE PROGRAM

Children come to the atrium once a week for approximately one hour. It is ideal for them to begin at the age of three, however children can join the program at any age.

The program is designed for three age levels.

3 – 6 YEARS

At the first level, children are introduced to the environment and materials. The use of these materials enables the child to slow down, and develop a rhythm conducive to prayer and meditation. Through arranging the materials on the altar the child becomes familiar with the articles of the Eucharist increasing the understanding of its sacredness and how we live our relationship with God in a particular way in the liturgy. The central theme for this age group is the True Vine, remaining connected to Jesus and bearing fruit that will last.

6-12 YEARS

At levels two and three, the themes are extended and new themes introduced, including meditations on the Bible, and the history of the Kingdom of God. The child at this age can seek guidelines through moral parables and biblical stories. The proclamation and meditation stress God's constantly forgiving love. The children study the history of salvation from creation, through to redemption and explore the plan of God for Covenant relationship. Together, catechists and children reflect on the connections they are making between the Bible and the liturgy.

THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF ST LUKE

*Serving the City and East of Toowoomba
Focused in Christ, Joyful and Inclusive, Compassionate in Witness*

4639 1910
4639 5127 (fax)
PO Box 2434, Toowoomba QLD 4350
stluke.tmba@bigpond.com
www.stlukestoowoomba.org.au
www.facebook.com/StLukesParish

Open Monday - Friday 9am - 1pm



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Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

ST LUKE'S PARISH ATRIUM

The Anglican Parish of St Luke
Toowoomba

PURPOSE

To assist the involvement of adults and children in a common religious experience in which their religious values of childhood predominate.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a Christian formation process for children aged 3 to 12 years, in which they experience and form an authentic, faithful relationship with God. The catechesis is grounded in scriptural and liturgical study framed by Maria Montessori's principles of education. This allows children to hear the Gospel through the use of sensorial rich materials. The children are free to work with these materials that represent essential proclamations of the Christian message.

The adult's task is to prepare the sacred space for the children, called 'the atrium', so that they can respond to this holy relationship, first proclaimed to them through Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

The atrium is a place of community and worship rather than a classroom for academic study. It is a place to be with and enjoy God, listen to the Word, and to pray. It is designed to reflect the beauty of creation and God's abiding love.

THE ENVIRONMENT - THE ATRIUM

The Atrium is a specially prepared environment that helps the relationship between God and the child to flourish. After a theme has been presented based on scripture, liturgy or practical life, the child is free to choose an activity that will make possible the inner dialogue with the "Interior Teacher".

The Atrium does this by facilitating recollection and silence. It is a place for religious life, and community and is not a classroom for instruction. It is a place for preparation for involvement in the larger worshipping community.

THE MATERIALS

The materials in the Atrium invite children to explore and deepen experiences at their own pace. The most important characteristic of the materials is their close link to the biblical and liturgical sources. The shelves might include maps and miniature environments representing the elements of the parables and historical events from Scripture. The arrangement of the altar and its related furnishings, conveys the centrality of the Eucharist. The Baptismal font and other liturgical items initiate the child into the liturgical life of the church.

Dr Sofia Cavaletti, who founded the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in Rome in 1954, believed that God and the child have a unique relationship with one another, particularly before the age of six, and that the growth of this relationship should be assisted by the adult, but is directed by the Spirit of God in the child.

*"If we want to help the child
draw nearer to God,
we should
with patience and courage
seek to go always closer
to the vital nucleus of things.
This requires study and prayer.
The children will be our teachers
if we know how to observe them."*

Sofia Cavallatti



CREATING A SACRED SPACE FOR CHILDREN TO RESPOND TO JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD