

# The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd



2011 - 2012

St. Timothy's  
Episcopal Church

**Welcome to the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*  
at St. Timothy's Church**

The *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* is a Christian formation process for children ages 3 to 12 years in which they experience and form an authentic, faithful relationship with God.

The Catechesis seeks to offer children tools to fall in love with God and remain in His love, to acquire a moral foundation—a deep understanding of self and others, and finally to bring children to the moment when they choose to follow Jesus. Using love as a starting point, life is about choices, and one of our goals is to help children prepare to make those choices.

**Catechesis Atria**

**Room 2**

**Good Shepherd Atrium**—Level I—Ages 3-6  
Lead Catechists: Renee Brown and Ruth Franke

**Room 3**

**Lamb of God Atrium**—Level I—Ages 3-6  
Lead Catechists: Kirsten Sommer and Honey Favorito

**Room 5**

**True Vine Atrium**—Level II—Ages 6-9  
Lead Catechists: Kara Owens, Jenifer Stitt, and Holly Varley

**Room 9**

**The Kingdom of God Atrium**—Level III—Ages 9-12/13  
Lead Catechists: Chris Gardner, Fran Malone,  
and Tracy Hickenlooper

**Rotating Catechists:** Judy Gardner

## **The Atrium is a place where love grows**

### **The Atrium is...**

- A place for the proclamation of and response to the Word of God.
- An environment which is carefully prepared to foster the religious life of the child.
- An environment in which work easily becomes meditation and prayer.

### **In the Atrium...**


- The work focuses on the relationship with Jesus, the Good Shepherd.
- The child is free to choose his or her own work according to his or her ability.
- The child handles materials and experiences ritual celebrations like those seen and experienced in church.



### **Atrium Time**

The atrium time begins immediately following the 9:00 a.m. service on Sunday mornings. Those attending the 11:15 service should meet in the atrium at approximately 10:10 a.m. The children are dismissed at 11:15 a.m.

We are a community and to be on time will help your child participate respectfully and transition from the outside world into this special place.



## **Discipline in the Atrium**

When a child is having difficulty with discipline inside the atrium, our first response will always be to redirect the child with kind words or an activity. If the child does not respond or cannot control his body, he or she will be asked to sit down and wait for a few minutes until he or she is ready to join the group and work. Most of the time these two procedures are enough to help the child settle down and engage in working, but if a child is disturbing the entire group, he or she will be removed from the atrium to the hallway and asked to stay outside (always accompanied by an adult) for a few minutes. If the child is crying and cannot be comforted, the presence of the parent will be requested. Disrespectful conduct to catechists, materials, and others is not tolerated.



## **Safety of Our Children**

We strive to provide a safe, clean and loving environment for our children. With our lovely atria and a dedicated team we have consistently grown our number of children over the past four years.

We use 2 to 3 adults in each room. Every adult working with children is required to attend a Child Abuse Prevention course. Bathroom visits are supervised.

Be sure you have completed a registration form so we have a current number to reach you in case of an emergency.

## **As a parent, what can you do?**

- Make coming on Sunday a priority.
- Pray with and for your children.
- Don't question your children after atrium time, let the information come out naturally.

## **How can you help?**

- Offer to make materials or clean materials.
- Offer to help with special celebrations.
- Volunteer in the atrium.



**Program Coordinator:  
Judy Gardner  
474-4445 extension 17  
[children@sainttimothys.com](mailto:children@sainttimothys.com)**

## Prayer for the Care of Children

**Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*(Book of Common Prayer)*

“ But Jesus asked the children to come to him. "Let the little children come to me," he said. "Don't keep them away. God's kingdom belongs to people like them” [Luke 18:15-17](#)

## ***Answers to the most frequently asked questions about Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:***

### ***Why does Catechesis class last until 11:15 a.m.?***

The ideal environment for helping children to meet and hear God is quiet and prayerful. For children it often takes an hour or more to help them settle into a prayerful state. Our atrium work uses the following schedule: 1. Circle time (to catch-up on the week's events and "Good News"); 2. Presentation and work time (For hearing about God, Jesus and our liturgy and experiencing it); 3. Prayer table time (3-6 year olds) and Communal Prayer time (1<sup>st</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> graders) (A time to pray for our concerns and sing).

### ***Why do the children line up outside of the classroom before class?***

This method of faith formation is very different from what we are accustomed to as parents. The atrium is established as a place of meeting the Holy One, a Sacred Space; therefore, all children are greeted at the door so they may be gently reminded of the transformation that occurs as they enter the classroom.

### ***Why is the door shut to my child's room?***

This is done to maintain the integrity of the atrium and to keep as much noise as possible out of the room. Children are invited to be in prayer at all times, and having the door shut allows this opportunity to occur more freely.

### ***Why aren't parents allowed to be in the room during the lesson time?***

Parents are allowed in the classroom, but we ask that you schedule your visit in advance. We strive to keep the focus of the class on the presentation and to allow the children to "work" as they feel called to do. We do not want to introduce any situation that may take away from this event. Please speak to Judy Gardner or your child's teacher to schedule a classroom visit.

### ***My child doesn't bring home artwork each Sunday. Why not?***

All work, whether something on paper or a practical life application, is considered holy. For this reason, we never throw away work

completed in the atrium. Arts and crafts are just one way typical church school lessons are reinforced; however, our focus is on the interior life of the child. We use many Montessori practical life skills that build on moving forward into the heart of our lessons. Some children do choose to do artwork, such as tracing or coloring, which are specific to certain presentations. These are kept in a file folder in the atrium where the child is free to resume the work if he or she feels called. But all work is considered holy.

***We are not able to attend every Sunday. Does this prohibit my child from coming into the class?***

No. We recognize that events occur from time to time that prevent individuals and/or families from being present. In the event that a presentation is made and your child is absent, the catechist will be glad to work one-on-one with your child to see that the materials are covered.

***What is the source of the curriculum used in Catechesis?***

The curriculum is rooted in the Bible and the liturgy of the Church. It is developmentally age appropriate and specific in the method in which it is presented, following the calendar of the church year.

***Why do children learn practical life skills in Christian Formation?***

Each of our activities allows the child to do the following:

Develop dexterity skills needed to move forward into the lessons. Learning how to properly pour beans, rice, and water prepares the child for the presentation on the preparation of the chalice for the Eucharist.

Recognize the beauty of the items in the church. Children use real glassware and silver items in their work.

Participate in the life of the church. They are invited to care for the atrium through polishing, flower arranging, and plant tending.

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Please contact Judy Gardner  
at [children@sainttimothys.com](mailto:children@sainttimothys.com)  
if you have additional questions.



## St. Timothy's Website

Check out St. Timothy's website at  
[www.sainttimothys.com](http://www.sainttimothys.com)!

All the information you need about our Nursery and the Children and Youth Programs can be found on our website. There you will find a link to register your child, photos from past and recent events, youth worship participant schedules and much, much more! New items of interest are continually being posted to our website, so check back often.

## **A Litany for Children**

(from *Guide My Feet* by Miriam Wright Edelman)

O Lord of light and source of all creation,  
we praise and glorify You for the children you have given us.

**Accept our thanksgiving, O Lord.**

For their lives, their inquiring minds and receptive spirits,  
for their health and growth,

**We humbly praise You, O God.**

For their beauty and innocence, their laughter and tears,  
their joyous ways that fill us with wonder and delight,

**We humbly praise You, O God.**

For their youthful vision by which You lead them  
trustingly into the future,

**We humbly praise You, O God.**

For Your constant protection which keeps them from harm,

**We humbly praise You, O God.**

For our families and Your loving forgiveness  
which allows parents and children to make mistakes and,  
confessing them, to continue to live in harmony,

**We humbly praise You, O God.**

For our children's growth in faith and their simple trust  
in You in these complex and troubled times,

**We thank You, O Lord.**

That Your Spirit will remain with them as they grow,  
guiding them in the ways of justice, righteousness and peace,

**We pray to You, O Lord.**

For all those who in the faith minister to and teach our children  
and are models of truth and goodness,

**We thank You, O Lord.**



## Children's 2011-2012 Calendar of Events

- August 21**  
Senior High School Youth Barbecue  
6:00 pm
- August 21 & 28**  
Youth Acolyte Training  
following the 9:00 am service
- August 28**  
Youth Lay Reader Training  
following the 9:00 am service
- September 4**  
Child Orientation – Catechesis  
during 9:00 am service  
Parent Orientation – Catechesis  
following 9:00 am service
- September 11**  
Church School year begins 10:00 am
- October**  
Safe Church Training
- November 27**  
Family Sunday — Advent Wreaths  
Parish Hall 10:00 am
- December 10**  
St. Nick Celebration
- December 11**  
Atrium Open House for Parents 10:50 am
- December 18**  
Advent/Christmas Pageant 9:00 am service  
(No Church School)
- December 24**  
5:00 pm Christmas Eve Family Service
- December 25**  
No Church School
- January 1**  
No Church School
- January 4 – 28**  
Holy Eucharist Preparation Course  
for 2nd & 3rd Graders
- January 8**  
Holy Baptism at 9:00 and 11:15 am services
- February 12**  
Family Sunday – Share the Love  
Parish Hall 10:00 am
- February 29 – March 28**  
Lenten Series for All Ages
- March 31**  
Palm Saturday
- April 1**  
Palm Sunday (No Church School)
- April 8**  
Easter Sunday (No Church School)
- May 20**  
Last Day of Church School Picnic
- June 11 – 15**  
Vacation Bible School
- June**  
Appalachia Service Project Trip