



The Atrium Light

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
(Perth, Western Australia)
Vol. 1 Issue 1

Upcoming Events

For your Marriage Catechesis for Couples

Inspired by CGS, Catechesis for Couples is a marriage enrichment opportunity for couples to create sacred space, deepen connection, and explore their relationship through the eyes of childlike faith.

To book email:

goodshepherdwa@cgsa.org.au

Date: Saturday, 12 July, 2.30am-5.30pm

Cost: \$60 per couple

(subject to numbers, bookings close
WEEK BEFORE)

Come and See Adults in the Atrium

A chance for adults to experience the sacred space offered in the atrium for themselves. This will be a 2 hour evening session where there will be time for receiving a presentation and plenty of time for quiet reflection.

To book email:

goodshepherdwa@cgsa.org.au

Date: Thursday, 17 July, 7-9pm

Cost: \$30 Per person

(subject to numbers, bookings close
WEEK BEFORE)

For the latest on upcoming events
visit: www.cgsa.org.au/events

CGS Session Availability

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd currently have availability for enrolments in these sessions each week:

Monday : 9:45am -11:45am.
Level 1,2,3

Thursday : 4 pm- 5:30 pm.
Level 1,2,3

Friday : 9:30 am -11:30 am.
Level 1,2,3



Level 1 - Exploring the Empty Tomb

Celebrating Easter in the Atrium

Happy and blessed Easter to all our children and families. As we love to point out with the children, the season of Easter is still being celebrated until Pentecost. This is longer than the time we spent preparing for it during Lent.

The Resurrection is the most significant event in the Church year, and in the Church itself. Jesus' love was so great that he could not remain dead, instead by conquering death he enabled us to share in his eternal life. In the Church cycle we focus on what this meant for the life of the early Church, Jesus' appearances and the gift of the Eucharist, Jesus remaining with us for all time.

The Level 1 (3-6 year old children)

continue to celebrate the gift of Jesus, with the older children (5 year old) focusing briefly on the historical event of the Resurrection through the Empty Tomb materials. But for most of the children, we look at how Jesus continues to remain with us in the gift of Baptism and in particular in the Eucharist. Through Baptism, God invites us to become part of his family, to share in the light of the Resurrected Jesus. That light is carried within us and we share it with those we encounter. The focus on the light of Baptism is particularly

meaningful to children at this age, who have shown us that light speaks very strongly to them. Jesus is the light, who guides us, warms our hearts and consumes us with his love.

We continue in this term to look more closely at some of the gestures of the Mass that children have shown us speak most strongly about God's covenantal relationship with them. The first and most significant for the children is that God is a giver of gifts, and he gives us himself in the Eucharist, through the Holy Spirit. The gesture of Epiclesis (the laying of hands and invocation of the Holy Spirit) over the gifts of bread and wine that transform them into Jesus' own body and blood, speaks specifically of this. The Eucharistic Prayer III reads, *"Father, you are holy indeed, and all creation rightly gives you praise... And so, Father, we bring you these gifts. We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit, that they may become the body and blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ..."*

Later we share the gesture of Offering (the giving back to God the greatest gift he has shared with us, his own self) and the Doxology prayer. We note how important the receiving and enjoyment of the gift

Continued over

Easter: An important season

Cont'd from pg 1

first, enables us then to offer our own gift I return to God. So these reciprocal gestures are first looked at separately, and only later held together With the Epiclesis and Offering gestures, at first we regard the gesture itself, what are these actions showing us? Only later, after the child has had time to contemplate these actions, do we offer the prayer words said to accompany these gestures (around age 5).

A third profound gesture that we share with the children is the gesture of Mingling, where the much wine and small drops of water are mingled. This is easy to miss at Mass as it is done quietly. We lift up with the children that the wine is strong like God and the water is weak like us. How much wine? How much water? Can they be separated once mixed? What does this mean? And later, we offer the words to further contemplate what this means *"By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in His divinity who humbled Himself to share in our humanity."*

Level 2 (6-9 year old children) are much more aware of the events surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus, so they may look at the story of the Resurrection offered in each of the Gospels as well as some of the appearance narratives.

Term 2 also is a chance to focus on the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. In Baptism the children look closely at the gestures and articles and parts of the Order of Baptism. Some children like to research about their own Baptism. In Eucharist we look closely at the gestures they have already visited in Level 1, now looking more at the words surrounding the gestures. The children are self-directed with booklet guiding them to meditate more on the gestures and their meaning.

We also offer a material to bring these gestures together into the order of the Mass, and some children create a first missal, lifting out the parts of the Mass that are significant to them, such as the Liturgy of the Word, the Gestures of the Mass, the words of Consecration and the Our Father.

Level 3 (9-12 year old children) continue on the same theses of Baptism and Eucharist looking at the complete order of the Mass and Baptism, reading through all of the prayers and many children write out their own complete Missal for the



Eucharist.

Particular elements are looked at such as the Propers, Prefaces, Mystery of Faith and Prayers of Intercession and the Our Father. A material we call the Memorial, looks at the action of Jesus carried on throughout the history of the Church until this present day, where Jesus remains with us in the gift of himself in the Eucharist. Not only are we present with Jesus in His death and resurrection, but all people of all time are with us at the moment of consecration. We ask, will Jesus always be with us in this way? Will that change when we meet him face to face?

Infant Toddler (0-3 year old children) are beginning to discover new things in the environment and are introduced to the themes of the Liturgical Year, beginning with the colours we see and the gift of the Holy Bible, and the Light. During the Paschal season, they may be introduced to the prayer "Alleluia" and continue to consider the gifts that God showers on his people, the awesome gift of all of creation.

All children will celebrate Pentecost in a special way, including a time to choose to consider more one particular gift of the Holy Spirit. Most often this is done with having seven lighted red candles representing each of the seven gifts of the Holy spirit, from which each child selects a gift, and their own candle is lit from the candle depicting their choice.

Volunteers if you feel in your heart the desire to work in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, we are always seeking more helpers. If you would like to be trained to become an assistant in the atrium, please email marie@cgsa.org.au or call 0405310197.

BOOKSTALL ITEMS

Family Prayer Table Kit - \$45

All you need to prepare a sacred prayer space in your home along with suggestions about praying with your children. Contained in a beautiful storage box.

Flower Arranging - \$7

A simple way to bring the beauty of creation into your home that meets the needs of the child. Set includes a vase, artificial flower and booklet on flower arranging with your child.

Nurturing the Whole Child – Montessori Principles Applied to the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd by Gianna Gobbi - \$45

A clear and balanced explanation of Montessori principles and their practical application in the religious formation of children. A profound, prayerful reflection on the religious needs and capacities of the young child.

A Year with Sofia Cavalletti by Ann Garrido - \$50

Daily reflections on the Spiritual and Theological Influences of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Providing a short excerpt for each day from significant theologians and scholars who informed Cavalletti's understanding of Scripture, liturgy and the spiritual life, as well as questions for further meditation.

A Catholic Mother's Companion to Pregnancy by Sarah A Reinhard - \$50

A book to accompany expectant mothers from conception to baptism with weekly reflections and prayers rooted in the mystery of the Rosary and related to the baby's physical development.

MEETING ROOM BOOKINGS

We are happy to welcome casual or regular use of our board room and kitchen for your meetings. Subject to availability and suitability. Contact us to discuss:

goodshepherdwa@cgsa.org.au

Parenting with Faith:

Guiding Our Children in Love and Sacrifice



Parenting is one of the greatest vocations, a sacred calling that shapes the hearts and souls of our children. As Christian parents, we are entrusted with the beautiful yet challenging task of raising our children in faith, nurturing their spiritual growth, and modeling Christ's love in our daily lives.

Faith as the Foundation

Faith is the cornerstone of a Christian home. Our children learn more from what they see in us than what they hear from us. By making faith a natural and visible part of our daily lives, we instill in them a trust in God's presence and guidance.

Daily Prayer: Praying as a family—whether before meals, at bedtime, or during moments of need—teaches children that prayer is not just a routine but a relationship with God.

Sacred Spaces: Creating a dedicated place in the home for prayer, reflection, or scripture reading helps make faith a tangible part of everyday life.

Living the Liturgical Year: Celebrating feasts, saints' days, and seasons like Lent and Easter brings faith into the rhythm of family life, making it something to experience rather than just learn about.

The Sacrificial Love of Parenting

Parenting is an act of self-giving love, often calling us to sacrifice for the sake

of our children. Lent, with its themes of sacrifice and self-discipline, offers a powerful reminder that love often requires us to give of ourselves.

Modeling Sacrifice: Our children watch how we serve others, how we put their needs above our own, and how we live out our faith through acts of charity and humility.

Encouraging Small Acts of Self-Giving: Teaching children to make sacrifices, whether by sharing, helping without being asked, or choosing kindness over self-interest, helps them grow in virtue.

Embracing Patience and Mercy: Just as God is patient with us, parenting calls for endless patience. The way we respond to challenges—whether with frustration or grace—teaches our children about God's love and mercy.

Raising Children with Easter Hope

Just as Lent prepares us for Easter, our role as parents is to prepare our children to live in the hope of Christ's Resurrection. Hope is the virtue that sustains us through struggles and teaches our children that God is always working for their good.

Teaching Forgiveness: Just as Easter reveals the depth of God's mercy, we must model forgiveness within our families, showing our children that reconciliation is at the heart of Christian life.

Instilling Joy in Faith: Easter is a season of joy! Faith should not feel burdensome but should fill our homes with peace and joy. Celebrate victories, acknowledge blessings, and teach children to recognize God's hand in their lives.

Trusting in God's Plan: Parenting often feels uncertain, but trusting in God's plan for our children teaches them to do the same. Remind them that their worth and future are in God's hands, not just their own efforts.

Parenting with faith means walking the journey with our children, guiding them with love, and leading them toward Christ. Like Lent, it requires patience, sacrifice, and trust, but like Easter, it is ultimately a journey of joy and resurrection. May we parent with hearts rooted in faith, hands ready to serve, and eyes always fixed on Christ, the source of our hope.



Catechist Corner

Veronika Metcalf

Bio

My name is Veronika Metcalf and I am a Catechist in Level 1 (age 3-6) and Level 2 (age 6-9).

I work part time at KEMH as a medical scientist but my joy and main interest is the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program.

I am married to Kim with three children (in their 20's) and have been a catechist for 25 years.

The catechesis endeavours to create a retreat environment so that the child can encounter God. This is also the experience for the adult in the atrium and so instead of saying we "train" as Catechists we describe it more as "formation". I have been blessed to have worked with the Sisters of Missionaries of Charity in South Korea,

PNG and Mongolia in giving formation to them as part of their personal formation. Many of them also go on to start atria for the children in their areas.

I am currently the chair of the national board for the CGS in Australia and the secretary for the W.A. association.

This year in June/July I am travelling with my husband to Spain to walk the Camino Santiago. In the jubilee year this is a great joy and a gift for us both to be able to walk together.

The children of the catechesis and the catechists I serve with are a very important mainstay in my life and I pray to be able to do this for many years to come.

Update from the Chair of the Board

As we continue to live into our lovely space here in Scarborough, we find new opportunities and new challenges. Our main mission is to reach out to children and adults to share the gift of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in Western Australia. With this new growth we also face the challenge of finding more volunteers to work with the children. If you think you can spare time to volunteer as a catechist assistant, please let us know and we will prepare you to work with the children in our very particular method.

At the end of 2024 we opened our new Infant Toddler Atrium and there has been quite a lot of interest as we slowly find our way. It is so lovely to be able to share this work with these youngest children and their parents. It is my hope that we will be able to open a second Infant Toddler session by the end of this year. We also have a waitlist for our Level 1 (3-6) Atrium on Friday morning with spaces in most of our other sessions. It is challenging to try to find a balance between meeting the needs of families and ensuring we can offer a sacred space for children with our small numbers in groups. During June and July, we will have two of our catechist team away overseas with their families. Please keep them in your prayers as they travel. If you are available to be an extra pair of hands during this time, please let me know.

A larger space means other work required, such as gardening, maintenance,



and paying our bills, so we are having to be creative to find ways to raise funds. In May we once again held our annual High Tea close to Mother's Day. It was a lovely afternoon sharing time with mothers and some of the Dominican Sisters, whose home used to be at our site, and other friends. The money raised will be added to what we raised last year at our Spring Fair to go towards the cost of shade sails in the 3-6 courtyard and the Infant Toddler courtyard.

We are also looking at ways to build our community with Craft Days and Family Games Nights as well as Adult Retreats. Keep your eye out and if you can join us in these special community building activities that also support our work. You may also be invited to help with larger garden maintenance projects with a call to a busy bee. This is likely

to occur in early Spring. We are also seeking funds to provide our office with a computer system and air conditioning in our Chapel area. We have very much appreciated the families who have contributed to our costs by providing various consumables each term.

We continue to look for ways to expand the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in other places within Western Australia. We will be exploring that further later this year.

Some of our lead Catechists are also involved in roles internationally in the work of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Last year we hosted a regional Formation Leaders Retreat for those who train catechists of children aged 6-9 years. This included people from Singapore, New Zealand and Australia. Next year in January we plan to once again host a regional retreat for Formation Leaders of children aged 3-6 years. Our catechists have also been invited to a celebration in Melbourne during a weekend in August where we will be celebrating 30 years of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in Australia.

I am very appreciative of all of our Catechists and volunteer helpers, for the financial and prayer support. All of our families are so generous in helping where they can, and I pray that the word gets out of the precious gift we have in this work so we can share this into the future.

God bless,
Marie Fernandez (Chair)

Board members

Chair: Marie Fernandez
Vice Chair: Anne Diamond
Secretary: Veronika Metcalf
Treasurer: Carmel Acres
Members: Ann Stynman
Christine Giuffre
Derek Boylen

Contact Us

Questions or enquiries?
Feedback or suggestions?
We'd love to hear from you!

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Catechesis Characteristics



The Atrium: A Place of Prayer

The atrium is designed to enable children to pay close attention to God through God's many gifts to us and to help children become more and more capable of responding to God, both personally and communally...

children, this primarily takes the role of enraptured listening and deep engagement in their chosen work, delight, praise, and thanksgiving. For the older children, the need and capacity arise for intercessory and penitential prayer, in addition to praise and thanksgiving. We see the older children most at home in prayer when they are praying for the needs of others (including animals) and for the world...

... The children's prayer language is further nurtured when they sing.

... To honour the mystery of the child means to honour the child's most natural form of response to God, his or her most natural form of prayer. For the youngest

Life in the Vine Rebekah Rojcewicz,
Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
Publications, 2020, p63-6444