



Christ Church Cathedral

Children's Christian Formation

The United States Association of

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

We are excited to offer our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) program from 10:00-11:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings!

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program is a beautiful Montessori-based method that embraces the relationship of the child and God and encourages us to come alongside the child as they wonder and discover more about the Good Shepherd. We offer this program for children ages 3 years*—5th grade (*3-year-olds who are potty trained). To learn more, we invite you to watch a brief video from cgsusa.org.

The philosophy of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program is that even very young children have a religious life, that God is present to them in their deepest being, and they are capable of developing both a conscious and intimate relationship with God. We provide guidance and vocabulary to enable them to become aware of their relationship with God and to express it. Classes are structured to offer a time of prayer and song, a time for the presentation, and a time for individual work by the child. The work of the child is their prayer and is the most important part of the class.

[Read more about Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.](#)

Children are grouped by age or grade level and attend class in specially prepared rooms called “atria.” An atrium contains attractively displayed handmade materials that are designed to invite children to deepen their relationship with God at their own pace. The program is biblically based and follows the rhythms of the church year. Based on the conviction that God and the child are in a relationship, the program focuses on the specific needs of the child.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is divided into three levels that correspond to the Montessori planes of development. Children from ages three to six are in Level I, children in grades one through three are in Level II, and children in grades four and five are in Level III. As the child matures, the essentials of our religious faith are presented in increasing detail and sophistication. At each level, presentations focus on the life and teachings of Jesus and the liturgy of the church. For more information, please contact [Canon Anna Russell Friedman](#).



Level I Curriculum - Children ages 3 to 6 years

Prayer

The Prayer Table – each atrium has a prayer table that is the central “gathering place”. Its purpose is to offer a place to support the prayer of the child. Prayer table cloths reflect the colors of the church year. Children are encouraged to set the prayer table.

Prayer Cards – children are encouraged to select prayer cards for display on the prayer table which reflect their thoughts. 23rd

Psalm – this psalm is read and explored; the psalm is a form of prayer and talks about God’s protective and restoring love for us. The Good Shepherd (an image the children are familiar with) will take care of our needs. Song and Art– all presentations are supported by art and music.

Practical Life Exercises – activities done to establish, maintain and restore order to the environment and to oneself. One catechist describes the benefits of these exercises as follows: “the Holy lives in our lives and we can experience God in our most simple acts when we open our hearts and minds to Him. God is present in our ordinary lives and His spirit can permeate our daily practical work.”

Bible

Scripture Booklets – most presentations are accompanied by scripture booklets that contain the scripture passages on which the presentation is based. Often we will read these passages directly from the Bible. Land of Israel– a globe, a puzzle map and a large topographical map are introduced to encourage the children to realize that Jesus was a real person who lived in a real place – Israel. The cities of Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem are introduced as well as the regions and waters in Israel.

Infancy Narratives:

All of these lessons are presented with figures, readings from the Bible and time to wonder at the events.

Annunciation (Luke 1:26 – 38)

Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39 – 49, 56)

Nativity and the Adoration of the Shepherds (Luke 2:1 – 20)

Adoration of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12)

Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2:21 - 33, 36 – 39)

Paschal Narratives:

Jerusalem – a large topographical model of the walled city of Jerusalem is used to tell the events of the last days of Jesus’ life. Jerusalem is a real place where Jesus visited, celebrated the Last Supper, was arrested, tried, condemned, crucified, died, was entombed and resurrected.

Last Supper (Mark 14:12-17, 22-26; Luke 22:7-13, 17-20) – figures of Jesus and the disciples at the Last Supper are used and the lesson is read from the Bible. This meal was the first time the words, “This is my body, this is my blood” were said by Jesus. In this lesson we announce that Jesus gives himself to us in the bread and the wine.

Women at the Tomb (Mark 16:1-8) – a model of the empty tomb, with only the figure of an angel in it, and the figures of three women, are used, along with the Biblical text from Mark to announce the physical resurrection of Jesus in a historical setting. The angel instructs the women to share the good news of Jesus’ resurrection.

Pentecost – in this celebration we announce the gifts given by the Holy Spirit to the disciples and announce that these gifts are given to all.

Parables:

The Good Shepherd (John 10:3b-5, 10b-11 and 14-16) – this parable is read and a sheepfold, sheep and the figure of the Good Shepherd are used to announce the steadfast love of God. Jesus is the Good Shepherd and we are his beloved sheep.

The Found Sheep (Luke 15:4-6) – this parable is read and the materials from the Good Shepherd presentation are used to reinforce the image of how very precious we are to God as unique individuals and to explore concretely the love, care and trustworthiness of God.

The Mystery of Life and Death (John 12:24) – this parable is read and wheat plants at various stages of growth are used, to announce that death is the natural passage to risen life and that risen life is richer and fuller than life now.

Kingdom Parables:

Mustard Seed (Mark 4: 30-32) – this parable is read and a tiny mustard seed is given to each child to encourage the child to wonder at the power and strength of the Kingdom of God. *Pearl of Great Price– (Matthew 13:45-46)* this parable is read and a model of a home, figures and pearls are used to encourage the child to wonder how the Kingdom of God is like a precious, beautiful pearl which is worth searching and sacrificing everything for. *Leaven (Matthew 13:33)* – this parable is read and yeast, flour and water are used to illustrate the wonder at the mystery and power of the Kingdom of God, the additional message of patience is also present in this lesson. *Grain– (Mark 4:26-29)* this parable is read and wondered about to encourage the child to understand that the Kingdom of God is eternally growing and expanding through faith and beyond our own understanding. *Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44)* – this parable is read and wondered about to encourage the child to think about the mystery of God’s grace and unsurpassed worth/value of the Kingdom of God.

Messianic Prophecies:

Prophecies are presented to the children to increase their understanding of Jesus and to increase their understanding of the plan God has for us. *Prophecy of Names (Isaiah 9:6)* – this prophecy introduces some of the many names for Jesus – Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. *Prophecy of Light (Isaiah 9:2)* – this prophecy proclaims that Jesus is the light of the world. *Prophecy of Mary, the Mother of Christ– (Isaiah 7:14)* this prophecy proclaims that Jesus was born to a young woman and is God incarnate. *Prophecy of Bethlehem (Micah 5:1)* – this prophecy proclaims the birthplace of Jesus as Bethlehem. *Prophecy of the Star and Scepter (Numbers 24:17)* – this prophecy proclaims that Jesus is a historical figure from the lineage of Jacob who will be an eternal light and ruler of the world.

Liturgy

Eucharist:

Altar and Articles of the Eucharist – through the use of models the children learn the names and uses for the: altar table, fair linen, paten, chalice, cross, candles, lectern, pulpit, ambry, lectionary, altar book, gospel book, sanctuary lamp, corporal, purificator, lavabo bowl, lavabo towel, book stand, cruets, ciborium, credence table and sacristy cabinet.

Liturgical Colors – this lesson introduces the colors of the church year and the vestment – the chasuble.

Liturgical Calendar – through a puzzle of the liturgical calendar, the children learn that God’s time is different from our time and the church year revolves around the important events of Redemption. The children also learn the great feasts of the year – Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.

Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd – this lesson uses the materials from the Good Shepherd lesson and a new sheepfold (the church) to show how the love of the Good Shepherd can be found in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is present in the bread and the wine and that is God’s gift to us.

Gestures of the Eucharist:

Preparation of the Chalice – this lesson helps focus the child on the gesture of the Preparation of the Chalice as a visual sign of our union (water) with Jesus (wine).

Epiclesis – this lesson helps focus the child on the gesture of the Epiclesis as a visual sign of our asking for God’s gift of the Holy Spirit.

Offering – this lesson helps focus the child on the gesture of the Offering as a visual sign of our response to God’s gift to us.

Peace– this lesson helps focus the child on the gesture of the Peace as a visual and tactile sign of unity and sharing within the Body of Christ.

Baptism:

Light and White Garment – candles and a white garment are used to announce that Jesus is the light of the world and that through Baptism we become part of the light.

Water and Word – water, the Bible and chrism are used to announce that we are given the gifts of new life, joy, the strength of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God at our baptism.

Gestures – the gestures are visual signs with great meaning. The gesture over the water asks God to send the Holy Spirit into the water so that it might have the power to give us new life. The sign of the cross on the forehead marks us as Christ’s own forever. The cross over the congregation is a sign of Christ’s help and protection over all of us.

Level II Curriculum - Children in 1st through 3rd grade

Prayer

Prayer Services – children continue to pray at the prayer table, and begin planning and leading prayer services for the entire class using familiar songs, readings and prayers.

Song and Art – music and art continue to support the curriculum at this level with more advanced songs, including “part” singing and rounds. At this age children learn about illuminated masterpieces and calligraphy. Frequently their art synthesizes work they have seen.

Bible

Books of the Bible – this lesson helps the child understand that the Bible is one book - made up of many books - which reveal the history of the Kingdom of God, it also begins to give the children a structure to locate various books in the Bible.

Bible Study – the children begin to read the Bible and participate in group studies of New Testament stories. This is favorite work for children once they begin to be comfortable with reading. Some of the Bible passages explored during these years include the announcement to Zachariah (Luke 1:5-25); the Birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:57-80); the Baptism of Jesus (found in all the Gospels); the Feeding of the 5000 (Mark 6:30-44 or parallel text); the Healing of the Man born Blind (John 9); the Healing of the Paralytic (Mark 2:1-12 or parallel text) and various resurrection appearances in all four Gospels.

Land of Israel – a pin map is used to highlight additional cities and geographic features important in the Gospels. The children also use the Bible to locate biblical accounts of events which occurred in these cities or at these geographical locations.

Infancy Narratives:

The lessons presented in Level I are represented in more depth. The Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23) is presented for the first time with figures, the Biblical narrative and time to wonder at the work of God as seen through the actions of Mary and Joseph. The infancy narratives are looked at thematically as the children begin to see how they work together to demonstrate the love of God for his people through the gift of Jesus, and the response, still continuing, of all to this gift.

Paschal Narratives:

Passion Narrative Study – (Matthew: 26:57-68, 28:1-8; Luke 19:29-38, 23:1-12, 33-46; John 18:1-14, 28-37, 19:16; Acts 1:412, 2:1-11) this work includes a series of readings from the Bible associated with the Passion of Christ and the gift of redemption.

History of the Kingdom of God:

History of the Kingdom of God – this lesson begins by introducing the children to the three great moments in sacred history creation, redemption and Parousia (a time when God will be all in all, no more war or sickness, etc.). Once these terms are understood, the lesson progresses by unrolling a timeline of history and telling the story, rooted in the Bible, of creation over the expanse of time, focusing on the wonder of the preparation of our world for us, God’s creatures; the coming of Christ; where we are today; and, what we know about the time of Parousia.

Unity of the History of the Kingdom of God – this more individual work helps the children personalize the information learned in the History of the Kingdom of God work.

Gifts of God – this lesson shows how over time, God has slowly, carefully and lavishly prepared earth to receive and nourish humanity. The gifts of God for humankind culminate in Christ and continue until Parousia. In response, humanity has a special responsibility to assist God, with both hands and heart, in the transformation of the world, bringing it into the fullness of the life that God desires.

Parables:

Wolf and Hireling (John 10:11-16) – this parable is read and wondered about to call the child’s attention to the steadfast, protective and sacrificial love of the Good Shepherd.

Kingdom Parables:

Synthesis of the Kingdom of God Parables – this work revisits the parables heard in Level I and encourages the child to focus on two aspects of the Kingdom: its beauty and preciousness; and its growth and transformation.

Moral Parables:

Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37) – this familiar parable is read and wondered about to explore the idea of compassion and actions taken in response thereto.

Found Coin (Luke 15:8-9) – this parable is read and wondered about to deepen the child’s understanding of God’s love which is unconditional, active and unfailing even when we are separated from God. It also continues the theme that when we are in unity with God and the people of God it is a time for celebration.

Insistent Friend (Luke 11:5-8) – the parable is read and wondered about to begin to explore persistent intercessory prayer.

Pharisee and Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14) – this parable is read and wondered about to explore our posture before God as one of humility and relationship.

Ten Bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-12) – this parable is read and wondered about to announce the invitation to the banquet of the reign of God and the necessity of individual responsibility for preparation for Jesus’ coming.

Forgiving Father (Luke 15:11-24) (also commonly known as the Prodigal Son) – this parable is read and wondered about to announce that God’s gifts are freely given and God’s forgiveness is unconditional.

Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-13) – this parable is read and wondered about to announce the universal invitation to the Kingdom of God and the call to respond and prepare for it, it also begins to introduce the message of God’s judgment.

Maxims and Summary of the Law (Matthew 5:48, 5:42, John 13:24, Matthew 5:44, Luke 10:27, Matthew 7:12, Matthew 6:6, I Corinthians 6:19, Matthew 5:37, Matthew 18:21) – this lesson introduces some of the passages from the Sermon on the Mount that give us the guidelines for forming our moral codes. It also highlights and explores the meaning of the most important law – “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul, and with all your mind and all your strength and love your neighbor as yourself.”

Prophecies:

Star and Scepter II (Numbers 24:17) – this revisiting of one of prophecies from Level I focuses anew on the child who Jesus is and what the kingdom He rules over is like.

Synthesis of the Prophecies – encourages the children to look again at the Level I prophecies as a whole to answer the question, “Who are you Lord?”

Valleys and Mountains (Isaiah 40:35) – through prophets, God prepares people for His gifts – including the vision of Parousia and in return, God’s people are called to prepare themselves and their world to receive God’s gifts.

The Peaceable Kingdom (Isaiah 11:6-9) – this prophecy provides a vision of the peaceable kingdom as an image of the Parousia that Advent anticipates.

The Shoot of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1-3) – through the prophet Isaiah, God foretold the birth, lineage and spiritual gifts of Jesus.

Liturgy

Eucharist:

Mystery of Faith – this lesson explores the words of the liturgy, “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again” and encourages the child to connect to these words in a personal way.

The Lord’s Prayer – the children are introduced to this familiar prayer that Jesus prayed and begin to meditate on it line by line.

Synthesis of the Eucharist – this lesson shows the structure and order of the Eucharist, including our response to each other and to God within the liturgy.

Origin of the Eucharist – this lesson traces the development of the Eucharist from the Last Supper to today and encourages us to enjoy the continuity of the gift of the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Prayer Book – the children begin working on their own, handwritten, version of essential prayers from the Prayer Book.

Liturgical Calendar – this lesson builds on the presentation in Level I and teaches the children how to find the date for Easter, a date set by the lunar calendar.

Gestures:

Fraction – this lesson introduces the breaking of the bread as a sign of Jesus’ sacrifice for our unity.

Lavabo (Washing of the Hands) – the lesson focuses on the gesture as a symbol of purification of the whole person as well as the community in preparation for the sharing of the Eucharist.

Preparation for Solemn Communion – these meditations on several different parables are presented to the children over a five week period and are intended to deepen their understanding of the connection between the Bible and liturgy, strengthen their desire for the Eucharist and introduce the Rite of Reconciliation.

True Vine (John 15: 1-11) – presented in two different settings, the first meditation focuses on our union with Christ and one another and our call to remain in Him with God’s help; the second study focuses on our personal obstacles to this union and God’s desire to work with us to remove those obstacles.

Found Coin (Luke 15:8-9) – this parable announces that God’s love is active, unconditional and diligent and that unity with God and the people of God is to be celebrated.

Forgiving Father (Luke 15:11-24) – this parable announces God’s unconditional love and forgiveness when there is repentance.

Centurion’s Servant (Matthew 8:5-13) – this parable explores faith as trust, belief in God’s authority, power, love and mercy.

Baptism:

Rite of Baptism – this work introduces the prayers that accompany the liturgical signs used in the Rite of Baptism.

Level III Curriculum - Children in 4th and 5th grade

Prayer

Prayer Services – children plan and carry out prayer services, choosing music, readings and prayers.

Spiritual Journals – the children each have a spiritual journal that they can add to each week. It contains various “prompts” but this is the work of the child and anything can be written in the Journal.

Prayer – various forms of prayer are explored – contemplative prayer, labyrinth, breath prayer, the Episcopal rosary and the many types and kinds of prayers found in the liturgy.

Seder – the children plan and participate in a Seder meal, learning the symbols and words of the celebration. This event takes one week to plan and a second week to celebrate.

Liturgy of Light – the children plan, participate in and lead the Liturgy of Light celebration for all the other classes. This celebration is patterned after the beginning of the Easter Vigil and the lighting of the Paschal candle.

Song and Art – at each level of the Catechesis, art and music are used to supplement the materials. At this age, the children have an Autoharp to play as well as the “music maker” (a lap harp). Art materials include a light box with tracings of stained glass windows as well as liturgically based materials. Additional art materials include watercolors, booklet-making, sewing, clay, building materials or other items that enhance the lessons.

Outreach – in response to the children’s concerns for the needs of the larger world and their community, the children become actively involved in outreach.

Sacred History

Plan of God – this is a time line from the beginning of humankind’s earliest appearance on earth, through the present and on to the time of Parousia (when God will be all in all). The purpose of this lesson is to show that God has a plan for us and that we have a part in that plan. We are called to participate in this plan through our work and the gifts of creation. Important events highlighted on the time line include the various inventions through the ages (inventions which continue on long after the inventor has died). We also look at the rise and fall of various civilizations mentioned in the Bible. We look at the history of the Jewish people and the birth of Jesus. The sacraments are included as part of this study. This work serves as the backbone for much of the other work in the atrium over the next three years. The lesson itself is taught over two to three weeks.

Individual Plan of God – this is an individual lesson where the child works through the main points of the Plan of God lesson and puts himself into the lesson, this lesson also expands on the “covenant” relationship.

The People and the Peoples of God – this lesson examines the roles of cultures throughout history. Its primary focus is on the Peoples of God – Jewish, Moslem and Christian.

My Century – in this lesson, the children focus on the 20th (or 21st) century and its role in the Plan of God. The children identify important events and discuss whether they are “for or against” the Plan of God.

The Kingdom of Heaven and My Place in It – this lesson reminds the child that each individual has a role/place in the Plan of God and that we all need to work to further the Plan of God. Parousia – (I Corinthians 15:20-22; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 5:13; Joel 2:28-29; Isaiah 60:19-20; Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 2:4-5; Isaiah 35:5-6; John 11:25-26; Matthew 24:30-31; Isaiah 11:6-7; Revelation 21:4-5) Parousia is a term first introduced to the children at age six. It is continually developed and is very familiar to the children. In this lesson we focus on twelve Biblical texts which further expand the child’s understanding of Parousia, therefore, providing a scriptural basis for what the child already knows.

History of Israel – a timeline of the history of the Jewish people is used to tell their story. Israel’s history as a chosen nation in covenant relationship with God testifies to God’s faithful presence through times of light and darkness. Christians and Jews share a common history and a common hope for the time when the Light of God will fill the world. This presentation is taught over two weeks.

History of Worship in Israel – The Temple and the Synagogue – this lesson introduces the places and forms of worship in Jewish history.

Bible

Bible Study– Bible studies are used to examine the events of Jesus birth, his life, his miracles, and his death and resurrection appearances. These are first begun in Level II and continue into Level III.

Typology:

All typology studies are taught over a series of lessons; each contains the primary Bible study of the topic listed below and supplemental studies linking the lesson to the time of Redemption and to the time of Parousia. Below, are listed the primary focus of each of the following studies.

Creation – (this entire study covers 5-6 weeks) – Genesis, 1-2 - this lesson explores the two Genesis accounts of creation for a Biblical understanding of creation, Creator and the place of humankind in creation. In this lesson the role of myth in Biblical literature is also discussed. As this lesson is developed we focus on the images of Adam and the Garden of Eden and connect them to similar images from the time of Redemption. Finally, we look at Isaiah 65:17 and Isaiah 60:19-22 and how the message of these passages ties to the creation texts.

Sin – (this entire study covers 4-5 weeks) – Genesis 3 - this lesson explores the Genesis account of the Fall/Sin for a Biblical understanding of temptation, evil, loss of innocence, consequences of sin and God's constant love for humankind. The main images focused on in this lesson are the Garden of Eden and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. These same images and others identified by the children are considered further as we try to identify images with similar or opposite meaning which are present during the time of Redemption. Finally, we look at additional Bible references found in Isaiah 25:6-8, Revelation 21:1-5, Romans 5:12-21 and I Corinthians 15:20-28 and tie these to the lessons of the Genesis passages. The message the children receive at this point is the transformation of sin and death to salvation and eternal life at the time of Parousia made possible through the obedience of Jesus.

Flood – (this entire study covers 4-5 weeks) – Genesis 6:5 through 9:17 - this lesson explores God's response to evil in the world in the Biblical account of the flood. We introduce the "Priestly" and "Yahwist" accounts and provide simple guidelines to aid the children in identifying passages associated with each account. The primary types identified in this lesson are Noah, water, the ark and the dove. These images and others identified by the children are further explored during the time of Redemption. At the time of the flood, God dealt with evil by destruction; in Redemption, God transforms evil with love. Finally, we note God's promise of eternal fidelity and mercy in Isaiah 54: 9-10.

Abraham – (this study covers 8 weeks) - Genesis 11-25 – this lesson explores Abraham's journey in faith and shows God's developing relationship with God's people. The concept of a covenant relationship is explored. Additional studies associated with this lesson focus on worship during the time of Abraham and nomadic life at that time. The type developed in this lesson is the sacrifice of Isaac. This and others identified by the children are further explored in light of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Finally, we look at offering as a response to God's gifts by examining Revelation 5:11-14, Isaiah 54:1 and Isaiah 60:1.

Exodus – (this study covers 8-9 weeks) – Exodus 1-17 – these lessons look at how God powerfully delivers, protects and provides for the Jewish people with an emphasis on the Promised Land as a sign of hope and fulfillment in the desert. The types explored in this study include the Paschal lamb, the Red Sea, manna and the Promised Land. These types are further explored as we look at God's ongoing liberating work and care for us during the time of Redemption. Finally, we explore the meaning of universal freedom during the time of Parousia in light of the Exodus by looking at Revelation 21:4-5, Isaiah 35:46, Isaiah 60:19-21 and I Corinthians 15:20-22.

Moral Parables:

Talents – (Matthew 25:14-30) – in this lesson we study the parable which contains the message that we each have God given gifts and we are called to use them in the service of God.

Workers in the Vineyard – (Matthew 20:1-15) – in this lesson we study the parable and look at the freedom and generosity of God and the constant call to work in the Kingdom of God. We also look at the concept of fairness.

Debtors – (Matthew 18:21-35) – in this lesson we study the parable which contains the message that God forgives our debts, no matter how great or small; that God has a tremendous capacity to forgive; and that we are also called on to forgive.

Ten Bridesmaids – (Matthew 25:1-13) – this parable is familiar to the children from Level II, in Level III we continue the study focusing on how we "keep our light shining."

Maxims – (Matthew 5:42, 44, 37, 6:6, 7:7, 12, 22; John 13:34; Luke 6:27; I Corinthians 6:19) we continue our study of maxims in Level III. The ones studied focus on the order and rules of creation, and the rules of humankind. We announce God's order and our place in it.

Prophets:

Call – (Isaiah 6:1-8; Jeremiah 1: 4-10; Amos 7:12-15; Ezekiel 2:8-3:4) in this series of lessons, we compare and contrast the calls of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and Ezekiel.

Struggles – (I Kings 18:17-39, 19:1-15; Jeremiah 26:1-19, 36, 37, 38:1-13; Bel and the Dragon) in this series of lessons, we explore the struggles of God's prophets and how God strengthened them during difficult times. The prophets studied include: Elijah, Jeremiah and Daniel.

Moral – (Isaiah 1:10-19, 29:15-16, 40:3-4, 58:1-9; Amos 5:21-24; Jeremiah 7:1-10) in this series of lessons, we explore the moral preaching of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Amos by looking at times the people turned from God, and how God used the prophets to point them back to God.

Messianic Content – (Isaiah 7:14, 9:2, 9:6, 11:1-4, 11:6-9, 35:4-6, 53:4-7, 60:1-3, 60:4-6, 60:19, 60:21; Numbers 24:17; Micah 5:2; Ezekiel 34:11-16, 34:23-31; Jeremiah 31:31-34) in this lesson, we broaden the messianic prophecies from the life and work of Jesus to their place in Israel's history and to the time of Parousia. We explore them for signs of hope, comfort and encouragement.

Liturgy

Eucharist:

Structure of the Eucharist – in this lesson we examine Rite II of the Holy Eucharist and announce that there is a structure to the Eucharist and that the Eucharist contains a series of prayers, some of which change and some which do not.

Color-Based Material – this lesson continues the study of the structure of the Eucharist including the prayers of the Liturgy of the Word, the preparation of the Gifts, the Eucharistic prayer and Communion. It also identifies the gestures of the Eucharist associated with each prayer.

Propers – we examine the Propers of the Eucharist, what they are and how they change according to the liturgy.

Preface – we examine the preface as part of the Eucharistic prayer. We look at how the preface changes throughout the liturgical year.

The Memorial – we focus on the Eucharist as a living reminder of our redemption and of Christ's continuing presence in the history of salvation. We look at the constant elements of the Eucharist including the words of Jesus, the bread and the wine, the community of believers and the ministry of the celebrant.

Intercessions – these prayers are examined in order that the child becomes aware of the unity that God brings to the world particularly in the celebration of the Eucharist. This unity extends throughout history and into the future.

History of Bread – this lesson celebrates the wonder of the work of heaven and earth in the creation of the Eucharistic Bread.

The Synagogue and the Origin of the Liturgy of the Word – this lesson explores the ancient and modern traditions of worship in the Synagogue and highlights the Liturgy of the Word, used today in our service, as based on the traditions of synagogue worship. This lesson is taught over two weeks.

Baptism:

The Complete Rite – in this two week lesson, we look at the complete rite of Baptism as found in the Book of Common Prayer.

Other Sacraments:

The Bible and Sacraments – in this lesson we introduce the sacraments as the continuing work of Christ. The Bible is lived in liturgy and the sacraments are rooted in the Bible. Sacraments are both personal and communal.

Confirmation – in this lesson we explore the gift of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament and in the sacrament of Confirmation when we make a mature, conscious affirmation of our baptismal covenant.

Reconciliation – in a series of four lessons, the children examine reconciliation as a way of acknowledging when they have “missed the mark” and allowing them to move forward and focus on God rather than on past mistakes.

Prayer Book– the children are encouraged to produce their own prayer book that includes the prayers from the Holy Eucharist and the Rite of Baptism as well as their own prayers.

Conclusion

In the words of Dr. Sofia Cavaletti who developed the program, “If we want to help the child draw nearer to God, we should with patience and courage seek to go closer to the vital nucleus of things. This requires study and prayer. The child ... will be our teacher if we know how to observe....”

Sources:

The Religious Potential of the Child, Sofia Cavaletti

The Religious Potential of the Child 6 – 12 Years Old, Cavaletti

Course Notes, Catechesis Training Levels I, II & III

“Catechesis of the Good Shepherd”, by the Rev. Robert J. Gaestel

Good Sources for Parents:

The Good Shepherd & the Child – A Joyful Journey, Cavaletti, et al. – this is an easy to read overview of the philosophy and theology of the program.

Sing with Joy: Music of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Catherine Maresca (and Beverly Sanders), includes a CD by the Cathedral choristers – a music book used in Level I (3-6 year old children)

Songs of Love: Music of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Catherine Maresca (and Beverly Sanders), includes a CD by the Cathedral choristers – a music book used with the 6 – 12 year old children

A is for Altar, B is for Bible, Judith Main – an illustrated child's book.

The summary was prepared by Becky Rochford to provide information to the parents of Christ Church Cathedral, Nashville, TN