

BENEFITS OF CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD



HIGH-QUALITY

Guided by trained catechists who offer interesting and content-rich presentations, children explore the great mysteries of our faith. CGS is authentically and dynamically Catholic. It works well for children of all cultures and abilities, including those with special needs.

SUSTAINABLE

Catechists trained in CGS tend to commit to the program for the long-term. After the initial investment in catechetical materials, the parish may actually save money, avoiding the annual costs of purchasing consumable work books. CGS steers clear of a "throw away" culture.

EFFECTIVE

Children encounter the Lord and take in rich concepts, which become a part of who they are and who they want to be. They find their place in the Church, and they have a living and personal relationship with Christ the Good Shepherd.

ATTRACTIVE

CGS works with the child's natural interest and inspires a sense of belonging, so that children want to come. Parishes may find that enrollment rises with this approach. Parent-volunteers are often "recruited" by the growth they see in their children.

CHALLENGES WITH CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

PREPARING THE COMMUNITY

The Montessori roots of this method are often unfamiliar to the community. Intentional information sessions, open houses, and discussions with key stakeholders are important to addressing concerns about logistics. It is also helpful to see CGS opportunity in the present moment, rather than a critique of programs in the past. Many parishes run CGS as a parallel program to their traditional offerings, giving parents a choice and gradually transitioning volunteers and resources as interest grows.



GETTING FUNDS

Most parishes start with just a level I atrium for 3-6 year olds. They will make a one-time investment in specially-designed catechetical materials. If purchased new, these may cost \$2000. The costs may be greatly mitigated by finding community members who can do woodworking, sewing and calligraphy. Shelving, lamps, rugs and furniture are often donated. Additional costs include tuition for the training of catechists. Several local groups have secured grant money to help them begin their programs.

FINDING SPACE

One room (or "atrium") is required for the program for 3-6 year olds. Ideally another room serves 6-9 year olds and a third for 9-12 year olds, though the latter two may be combined. The space may be used for multiple sessions over the course of a week. This means a shift in scheduling religion classes. Other ministries may meet in the atrium, though child-sized furniture in the youngest level may not be comfortable for adults. Consider classrooms, conference rooms, choir lofts and storage spaces. Some parishes use a mobile atrium that is set up and taken down each session.

