

## **St. Francis of Assisi Office of Faith Formation Catechesis of the Good Shepherd**

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an approach to the religious formation of children. It is rooted in the Bible, the liturgy of the church, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori. Children gather in an atrium, a room prepared for them, which contains simple yet beautiful materials that they use.

You may be wondering how these materials help the religious life of children? If an adult hears a beautiful passage from the Bible, the adult might take a Bible, find the passage, and read it slowly again and again. He or she may think deeply about the words and perhaps speak to God in a thankful or hopeful prayer. But a little child, too young to read, needs another way. In the atrium the child can ponder a biblical passage or a prayer from the liturgy by taking the material for that text and working with it – placing wood figures of sheep in the sheepfold of the Good Shepherd, setting sculpted apostles around a Last Supper table, or preparing a small altar with the furnishings used for the Eucharist. Children learn to copy parables from the Bible, lay in order written prayers from the Rite of Baptism, or trace the route of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem on a topographical map of the Holy Land.

If you have children ages 3, 4, or 5, please come to learn of this beautiful way of growing in the faith for God's littlest ones!

Good Shepherd catechists are Sue D'Adamo (St. Francis Coordinator of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd), Maureen Zeiss (Coordinator of Special Education) and Nancy Doran, Director of Religious Education.

If your child is presently in "I Am Special," he or she may still join our atrium children.

The atrium will be open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.