

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD CATECHIST FORMATION PROGRAM

The Level One Formation course consists of 90 hours of study and prepares the catechist to work with child (ages 3 to 6). The catechist will become grounded in both theory and praxis, in order to create and facilitate a Level I atrium in a parish setting. The following topics are covered:

- **The Developmental and Religious Characteristics of the Three to Six Years Old Child:** Catechists will study the important aspects of the child's development, focusing particularly on their relationship with God
- **The Trinitarian God:** Catechists will study the relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, so as to understand how the child comes to know a God who is deeply relational. Traditional prayer language of the Church in which God is addressed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is considered.
- **The Economy of Salvation/Salvation History:** Catechists will explore the theme of Incarnation and how the person of Jesus Christ is presented to the 3-6 year old as the greatest gift of God – which is shared by Christ throughout the world with the coming of the Spirit. God prepared humanity for this gift through the prophets, which are also studied.
- **The Life of Jesus Christ (Incarnation and Pascal Mystery):** Catechists will enter into mystery of who Jesus, the greatest gift of God, is. In Jesus, is found the clearest revelation of how God works in history so the land in which he lived and the core events surrounding his birth, death, and resurrection will be studied.
- **The Teachings of Jesus:** Catechists will study the particular Gospels, which reveal that the primary, overarching theme in Jesus' preaching and teaching was the Kingdom of God. Several "Kingdom parables" will be studied in an attempt to grasp the true nature of this Kingdom. In addition, the image of Jesus as the "Good Shepherd" – who calls by name and invites all into an intimate personal and communal relationship to him for the "fullness of life" will be studied.
- **The Church:** Catechists will study multiple images from scripture in which humans are invited to share in both a personal and a communal relationship with God, thereby laying a foundation for a rich theology of Church, particularly in Baptism & Eucharist where the images of liturgical life reveal what it means to be Church.
- **The Liturgical and Sacramental life of the Church:** Catechists will study the articles of the Mass, the Church's rich language of liturgical signs, the rhythm of the liturgical year, key gestures and prayers in Liturgy and in the Rite of Baptism

- **Prayer:** Catechists will become familiar with different forms of how the young child prays. Prayer phrases from the larger Christian Tradition, Psalms and the Gospel are lifted up for reflection.
- **Christian Morality:** Catechists will learn to develop a learning space that is conducive for listening, in a most particular way for the voice of the Holy Spirit, who will guide the child consistently toward that which will bring him/her the 'fullness of life' the Good Shepherd promises. Such disciplined listening lays the foundation for the formation of conscience.
- **Education for Community Life:** Catechists will learn the foundations necessary for the children to learn how to relate to each other and live with each other in a healthy, Christian manner, through a series of exercises showing how to prepare the child to care for the environment, care of self, and care of the community around them.