

August 23, 2024

Dear Parents,

I am happy to invite you to a ministry at St. Charles that is especially designed for those youngest members of our parish who are not yet enrolled in kindergarten. The ministry is called the **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd** and this will mark the sixth year of this ministry here at St. Charles. It is open to children who have turned three by August 1, 2024 and are able to use the restroom on their own.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a Montessorian-based approach to religious formation that introduces children to the Bible and to the Liturgy. Most importantly, it fosters a relationship with Christ and helps the child draw close to God "all by myself." You can find out more about this international approach that began in Rome in 1954 by visiting www.cgsusa.org.

This ministry takes place in a large room on the lower level of our church that has been specially prepared and is called the "atrium." The Montessori approach requires many "hands-on" materials since the young child does not think abstractly, but rather uses the senses of touch and sight to ponder more deeply what is being revealed to them. If you or someone you know is handy with woodworking, sewing, art, calligraphy, or related skills and would like to help make materials, please let us know! We welcome your gifts of time and talent!

The catechesis follows the seasons of the liturgical year and meets once a week. This year the catechesis will be offered on Friday morning from 9:00 am to 10:30am. The year will run from October 4 to May 16, 2025 on days when St. Charles Catholic School is in session. If your child is enrolled in Preschool or Pre-K at St. Charles, we can also connect with those classes and/or the Extended Day program for your convenience.

Space is limited. In the beginning weeks we will meet in split sessions and for shorter amounts of time. Eventually both groups will combine for a full length session. This allows the children enough time to go more deeply into their work with the materials as their ability to focus and concentrate increases.

Our veteran catechist, Anne Mazzella, has worked with the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for more than twenty years, first in Cincinnati and then here in Lima starting in 2019. She is always ready to welcome other adults who would like to be assistants to her in the atrium. This year, we are pleased to welcome a new catechist, Cristine Shaw. Anne will be mentoring her in this transitional year while she completes her formation course as a catechist in Toledo this year.

Anne and Cristine will be offering an Open House in the atrium (lower level of church) in between the Sunday Masses (9:15-10:15) on September 15. Please come and take a look on that day or feel free to contact Anne at amazella01@gmail.com to set-up a personal tour. We also ask that you **please register by Friday, September 20**. Just complete and return the enclosed registration or sign-up online by going to www.stcharleslima.org and then choosing Kids & Students and then CGS. We look forward to the opportunity to help our youngest members become Living Stones here at St. Charles as we live our mission:

**To build a community of faith
united by Christ in the Eucharist,
living as disciples,
sharing God's love and grace.**

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Kent Kaufman, Pastor