

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd – Winter Session 2016

Parent Updates from Week 8 to Week 9

Week 8

Dear Parents and Grandparents;

In Week 8, the children re-visited the parable/allegory of the Good Shepherd and were presented with parable of the Found Sheep (Luke 15:4-6). The parable of the found sheep resonates with the little ones who again are exposed to the incredible love that Jesus has for each of them. They will always be found because of the essential truth that Jesus loves them completely.

In the parable, Jesus asks us to think about what it would be like if one of the sheep he loves so much and knows by name was lost.

What man among you with a hundred sheep, losing one, would not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the missing one till he found it? And when he found it, would he not joyfully take it on his shoulders? And then, when he got home, call together his friends and neighbors? He would say, "Rejoice with me I have found my sheep that was lost."

I wonder how that sheep felt when it was lost.

I wonder how the Good Shepherd felt when he found out that one of his sheep was missing.

How long will the Good Shepherd look for his lost sheep? For a long time ...until he finds it. I wonder if all shepherds will look for their missing sheep that long.

As the catechist manipulated the materials and had the Good Shepherd searching for the sheep around the Atrium, the children also rejoiced when that little sheep was found.

The Catechist and the children wondered how the sheep felt to have been found. I wonder who was happier, the sheep or the Good Shepherd?

How reassuring and comforting it is to know that Jesus will always seek his lost sheep until they are found. Jesus is not just any shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd.

As adults we can perhaps remember moments in our lives when we too were lost and then found. The Good Shepherd continues to search...

Week 9

In Week 9, the children were presented with the gesture of Offering (not to be confused with "Offertory") The gesture of Offering follows the gesture of Epiclesis during the Eucharistic Prayer.

The Catechist demonstrated the gesture by slowly raising high the Chalice and the Paten containing Jesus.

The children were reminded that the gesture of Epiclesis begins high -- slowly descending as the Holy Spirit is invoked to transform the bread and wine to Jesus.

What an incredible gift that God gives us in the transformation and the Eucharist.

The gesture of Offering is the response to God's gift to us -- of giving back to God. So we raise up to God what God has gifted to us. It is the time in the Eucharistic Prayer when the priest says the words, "Through Him, with Him, in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, forever and ever." And we respond joyfully with the Great Amen.

Introducing the children to the gestures of the mass will help them connect to the mass. Additionally it will allow them to slowly realize the wonderful gift that is the Eucharist. The realization will take time so it is important to begin this with the littlest ones even at age three.

The children were asked to pay particular attention when they next attend Mass and identify the two gestures. It would be helpful if, as parents, you can let them know just before the gestures are being made.

Stations/Way of the Cross for children: In keeping with the period of Lent and in anticipation of Good Friday, at the end of the Atrium session, the children were invited to follow Jesus on the way of the Cross which they readily accepted. The fifteen stations (the resurrection was included as the fifteenth station) were affixed around the Atrium and the children gazed at each station, their eyes filled with curiosity as we moved and prayed from station to station. It was a solemn group that followed Jesus on the way of the cross. It was beautiful.

The Catechists have been working furiously to create the materials for the upcoming presentations before Good Friday and Easter. Next Sunday, the children will be presented with the Cenacle presentation. We will have the beautiful hand-crafted Cenacle and the 3-D figures of Jesus and the 12 disciples ready for the presentation.

When the children return for the April session we will continue with the presentation of the Empty Tomb and the news of a resurrected Jesus.

Thank you for sharing your children with us at the Atrium.

God Bless,

Norma Dawes, Patti Hendricks, Suzanne Sheppard, Anita Kuriakose