

CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION PRESCHOOL – GRADE 8 PARENT HANDBOOK

Good Shepherd Parish
Tallahassee, Florida



"Let the children come to me."

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**CALENDARS AND FORMS ARE ON THE GOOD SHEPHERD WEBSITE
UNDER CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION**

Good Shepherd Children's Faith Formation Philosophy Preschool – Grade 8

The primary purpose of catechesis is to foster a living, conscious, and active faith through the light of instruction. Therefore, catechesis is a life-long process that begins with the formation of a child's faith.

Catechesis is to promote genuine participation in the liturgy of the Church. This reaches beyond explaining the meaning of ceremonies. Catechesis forms minds and hearts for prayer, for thanksgiving, and for repentance while building a community spirit founded on a correct understanding of the Catholic faith.

Parents are recognized as the first and foremost catechists of their children. Catechetical programs are intended to support parents in nurturing their children's faith. These programs provide witness to belief and worship and foster community service. They also help parents in their catechetical role.

The intrinsic, unique value of every person is to be recognized and respected. The CFF team strives to foster an atmosphere of respect, service, and love, and to ensure that justice, mercy, and peace are integral parts of catechesis.

The Good Shepherd Faith Formation team is committed to proclaiming the Good News. Through the Catholic faith the Good News is celebrated, community is fostered, service is offered, and worship is demonstrated for the glory of God.



Attendance at weekly Mass is crucial to faith formation and is expected of all our students and their families.

Children's Faith Formation (CFF) Programs PK-4 – 8th

Classes Offered

We offer Preschool (3 year-olds) through Grade 8, and sacrament preparation classes. We also offer a Montessori-like program for 3 to 5 year-olds called *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. See *last page for more info*.

**** **SEPTEMBER 1 is the age determination date.** ****

Sacraments

Infant Baptism classes: Contact Parish Office (893-1837) for all unbaptized children under the age of 7.

Unbaptized Children 7 Years and Older: Participation in a two-year program is required:

- Year 1 (Inquiry) – attend same grade level as in school.
- Year 2 (Sacrament Prep) – attend RCIA for Children (RCIC) class. We have two RCIC classes: Grades 3-5 and Grades 6-9.

First Reconciliation and First Communion

Grade 2: Students are prepared for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion in Grade 2. Completion of a Grade 1 religious education class is a **prerequisite** for entrance into Grade 2 CFF classes. Good Shepherd children attending Trinity Catholic School and Sacred Heart Home Educators will celebrate these sacraments at Good Shepherd.

RCIC: Sacrament preparation will be incorporated into the RCIC classes for students who have not received these sacraments.

Confirmation

Grade 8: Confirmation prep begins in the 2nd semester of Grade 8. Confirmation is celebrated in Grade 9 in this diocese. Effective 2016, completion of a Grade 7 religious education class is a **prerequisite** for entrance into Grade 8 CFF classes. Good Shepherd children attending Trinity Catholic School and Sacred Heart Home Educators will celebrate this sacrament at Good Shepherd.

RCIC: Grade 8 students in RCIC-Y will be prepared for Confirmation; the sacrament is given in Grade 9.

A copy of the Baptismal Certificate is required in all sacrament preparation classes for those already baptized. If parents do not have the Certificate, or a copy of it, then they must request Certificates from the Parish Office.

Middle School Youth Ministry

This is an integral part of the total outreach to our Middle School youth. Youth Gatherings occur 3 times a semester during CFF classes; these Gatherings are **mandatory** and should not be considered an optional class.

We also host Edge Nights most Friday evenings, as well as service opportunities, trips, retreats, and Diocesan events.

Jonathan (Jono) Shea is the Middle School Youth Minister. Please contact Jono at sheaj@gsparishtlh.org or 893-1837 with questions about Edge or the Middle School Ministry.

Home Programs

In extenuating circumstances, special arrangements can be made for catechesis to take place in the student's home environment. Grade level books are available for purchase. Home program materials should be completed and returned to the CFF Office by May 1st.

GENERAL POLICIES & INFORMATION

Registration: All students must be registered in the Parish and the CFF Program in order to attend classes. Registration begins late-April for the upcoming school year.

Fees: There are class fees but these may be split or waived as needed. *In no case will a child be denied a class because of fee issues.*

Catechists **We need catechists & volunteers!** Catechists (teachers) work in teams of two and must have completed the Diocesan catechist requirements: fingerprinting, background check, and online abuse and safe environment training.

*Interested parents should see the CFF Director for more information and an application form. Aides and substitutes are also needed. **Volunteers to help in the CFF Office are always needed!***

Classes: The average class size is fifteen students.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes because attendance is a factor in the evaluation of a student's readiness for sacramental programs. Absences are addressed by required make-up work and parental discussion or email with the catechist(s). Attendance is taken in all classes and at the Middle School Gatherings that replace regular classes three times during the Fall and three times in the Spring.

Books: Grades 1-5 – Books will be taken home weekly and returned to class at the next meeting.
Grades 6-8 – Books will stay in the classroom and be taken home only at the end of the school year.

Lost & Found: Boxes for Lost & Found are located in the Church hallway outside the restrooms and in the CFF Office. Lost books are kept in the CFF Office.

Behavior: Catechesis entails respect for all people. Such respect is a hallmark of classes at Good Shepherd, and children will be coached in this with rules and guidelines established by the CFF Office and catechists.

Safety: Student safety is a priority. For this we have Safety Monitors before, during, and after class. Horseplay or running in class or in the hall will not be tolerated, nor will noise on the stairs that may disrupt parishioners in the chapel.

Arrival/Dismissal: PK-4 through Grade 2

Students must be accompanied to their classroom by a parent or designated adult (not an older child or sibling). If a catechist is not present in the classroom, the accompanying adult is to stay with the child until a catechist is present. Children are to get drinks of water or visit the restroom before class.

******STUDENTS MUST BE PICKED UP IN THE CLASSROOM AT THE END OF CLASS BY A PARENT OR DESIGNATED ADULT (NOT AN OLDER CHILD OR SIBLING).***

Arrival/Dismissal: Grade 3 through Grade 8

CHILDREN MUST BE DROPPED OFF AND PICKED UP AT THE FRONT CIRCLE ONLY:

- Children attending classes in the Parish Center enter the glass doors on the main floor.
- Children attending classes in the Cercy House Annex (select middle school classes only) walk from the front circle, between the church and parish center, and down the sidewalk to the Annex. A Safety Monitor will be stationed along this path for supervision before and after classes.
- **Evening students** must be picked up in the front circle as usual or meet parents in the Pastoral Center Lobby.

Students should go to the appropriate pick-up area immediately after class. They are always to follow instructions from the Safety Monitor until the parent(s) arrive.

- **Children are never to go into the parking lot.**
- **The circular drive is a loading zone only, not a waiting or parking area.**

Students are to use the stairs, not the elevator. Exceptions are made on an individual basis.

Fire Drill: Students will participate in a fire drill once during the year.

Parents are expected to . . .

- Reinforce classroom lessons and teachings and to discuss their faith on a regular basis with their child.
- Help the child memorize prayers and information their child is to know and retain.
- Encourage their child's regular class attendance that includes Middle School Gatherings.
- Inform the CFF Director of any special needs or issues affecting the child's participation.
- Attend sacrament preparation and other special meetings.
- Speak with their child's catechist(s) periodically to see how everything is going and to help out with their child's program as needed.
- Notify the CFF Office of any changes in address, phone numbers, or email.
- Feel welcome to present the CFF Director with any concerns, problems, ideas, or suggestions pertaining to the program or to their child's faith formation.

Students are expected to . . .

- Be on time for class and to come prepared and ready to learn.
- Bring any required book(s) and assigned work with them to class.
- NOT bring toys, games, or other items to class that may distract or disturb other students.
- Set cell phones on vibrate for emergencies only and otherwise not use cell phones in class.
- Consume only bottled water in class. However, special needs will be addressed by the CFF Director in consultation with the parent(s).
- Wear appropriate attire: shoes, shirts/T-shirts, jeans, shorts, pants, or skirts. No objectionable slogans on shirts.
- Respect church property by not sitting on tables or leaning back in chairs.
- Cooperate during fire drills or other emergency procedures.
- Visit the restroom or get a drink of water PRIOR to class.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a Montessori-based Catholic faith formation program in which children grow in their relationship with God through a deep engagement in Scripture and Liturgy. It is rooted in the Bible, the liturgy of the church, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori. Children gather in an "atrium," more like a church than a classroom, a carefully prepared space which contains simple yet beautiful materials they use to help them absorb the most essential proclamations of our Catholic faith.

For more information, contact Diana Grosh, 850-893-1837, or groshtd@gsparishtlh.org.