

August 2, 2021

Dear Parents of 4th, 5th, and 6th Graders,



It is with great enthusiasm that we welcome our 4th, 5th, and 6th graders back to in-person Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in our Level 3 atrium on Sunday mornings. Catechesis is our primary faith formation offering for children at IPC. Our first day of catechesis will be on Sunday, August 15th, during the regular Sunday school hour from 9:50-10:50 am. The Level 3 atrium is located on the first floor of the Children's Ministries Education Hall in room 107. It will be your child's Sunday school classroom during this school year 2021-22.

How is the Catechesis Level 3 atrium different from Levels 1 and 2? Our Level 3 atrium space looks much different than our Level 1 and 2 atria, with large, regular sized tables, tall shelves, and soft overhead light fixtures. The children are much more social and really enjoy gathering together to talk about their week at the large work tables or on the area rug. There is a strong focus on building our own community as they establish what they want the Level 3 atrium to be for them this year. Although there are several focused group time activities there is also time for them to work independently or in smaller groups. Some favorite activities include creating their own artwork in their personal prayer book, playing hymns on the lap harp in the prayer corner, exploring pictures and facts about Bible times in our corner library, or using the hands-on religious works to explore sacred history in the context of other peoples and cultures, or calculating the liturgical calendar for the current year. At different times during their year we will do an extended Bible study of the Old Testament thinking about our Jewish ancestors' relationship with God. As in the Level 2 atrium, we continue to explore Biblical moral teachings, but now have additional hands-on lessons to delve into the history of the Jewish people, Jesus' miracles, and the Life of the Prophets. Our trained teachers, called catechists, are still there to guide the children's work, but the children work much more independently and are able to direct their own wondering and exploration as they work together. We are fortunate this year to also have a focus on music and worship as Beth Middleton, our Children's Music Director, will visit the Level 3 atrium on select Sunday mornings.

In addition to catechesis on Sunday mornings, this year our older elementary children will have several other special events to grow their faith through fellowship, service, and Bible study. Please mark your calendars for these special Sunday events with more information to come!

- 3rd - 5th grade Bible Retreat (CFAF)/11 am Worship Bible Presentation - September 25th & 26th, 2021
- 5th and 6th Visit to Temple Emanu-El and service project - tentative Feb. 2022
- 3rd- 6th grade Extended Atrium Day - March 6th, 2022, 10 am - 12 pm

We recognize there are lots of scheduling challenges to Sunday mornings, but we would like to encourage you to bring your child to the atrium as often as you can to give them a special time to slow down, hear God's word, and build relationships with their IPC friends. Please check our Children's Ministry calendar for many more fellowship and special events throughout the year, including IPC Kids Midweek Music and More starting on Sept. 8!

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