

Dates Part A

October 8 - 11, 2026
November 19 -22, 2026

Dates Part B

February 11 - 14, 2027
April 8 - 11, 2027

Times

Thursdays 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Fridays 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Saturdays 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
Sundays 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Location

St. Mary Church
St.726 218th Pl
Pella, IA 50219

Cost

Part A \$200 Part B \$200
Entire Course \$400

Registration

Mail To:

Erin Gaul
St. Mary
St.726 218th Pl
Pella, IA 50219

Or

pellastmarycgs@diodav.org

Or

<https://stmarypella.org/catechesis-of-the-good-shepherd-cgs/>

Course Description

This is a retreat style course, allowing for a prayerful & contemplative experience for adults and a model of the children's atrium experience. Presentations are offered from scripture & liturgy as given to children. Adults will receive background information on the themes from this approach including a foundational study into Maria Montessori's work with children. This work began in Rome in 1954, with the approval of the bishops of Rome, including Pope John Paul II. Dr. Sofia Cavalletti, a scripture scholar, and Gianna Gobbi, a Montessori teacher, developed CGS by observing and working with children.

Course Objectives

- To present the guiding principles of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
- To explore the vital religious needs & capacities of the 3-6-year-old child
- To offer the adult time to prayerfully reflect & personally consider the Biblical & liturgical themes presented to the 3 to 6-year-old child.
- To broaden the adult's ability to observe & learn from children's spirituality.
- To cultivate the capacity to deeply listen to & enjoy with children the Word of God.
- To offer guidelines & assistance in preparing the atrium, writing the catechist's album pages, and making materials.

Catechesis of the

Good Shepherd

Level I Parts A & B

Fall of 2026 & Winter/Spring 2027

Registration Form

(Please write checks payable to St. Mary)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Home Parish/ City _____

Denomination/Diocese: _____

E-mail _____

Intended use: (Are you taking this training in order to help minister at your home parish/ school / for personal formation / etc.) _____

What is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd?

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a Montessori-based Catholic faith formation program where children can grow in their relationship with God through a deep engagement in scripture and the liturgy in a carefully prepared environment.

God and the Child

CGS is based on the belief that God and the child are already in relationship. Our work, as adults, is to provide a place for the child and God to come together and grow.

The Atrium and Materials

The atrium is a specially prepared room where children can come to know Jesus, the Good Shepherd. The atrium is prepared with materials that children work with as a way of meditating upon the essentials of our faith found in scripture and in liturgy. Examples of materials found in the atrium include figures of Jesus & the disciples used to meditate on the Last Supper, maps of Israel & Jerusalem to help children understand Jesus as a real person in time, a model altar & materials to reflect on the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and a Baptismal Font & Paschal candle to explore the significance of Baptism.

Course Materials

- The Religious Potential of the Child 3rd Edition Sofia Cavalletti
- The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey, Revised and updated
- Listening to God with Children (If out of print, alternative book available)

Formation Leader

Monica Miller began her CGS journey in 2004 with a fellow parishioner's invitation to "come and see." She immediately fell in love with the atrium. Seeing her first presentation, *The Kingdom of God and the Pearl of Great Price*, allowed her to recognize the value of this approach and its ability to aid both the child and the adult in a mutual listening before the Word. Since then, she has helped begin CGS in 3 parishes.

Monica has an undergraduate degree in theology from Franciscan University of Steubenville, post graduate theology credits at the University of Notre Dame, and a Montessori Primary Certification from North American Montessori Centre. She became recognized as a Level 1 formation leader in 2020. Other experiences include teaching theology at conventional Catholic Middle and High Schools, 15 years living on an Organic farm, and educating & raising six children. Currently, Monica works as the Coordinator of Faith Formation at St. Patrick Parish in Cedar Falls, IA serving 200 children and 40 catechists in CGS levels Toddler- Level 3.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd



Level I, Parts A & B Formation Course

- For parents & catechists working with children ages 3-6
- To help build a foundation and understanding for parents & catechists working with younger or older children