



SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR OUR VERY YOUNGEST **K-6 graders beginning Sunday, September 20, 2016**

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd *Falling in love with God and God's Kingdom*

I have called you by name, you are mine... Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you. –Isaiah 43: 1, 4

Our goal in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is for the children to fall in love with God through Jesus, the Good Shepherd and to see God's Kingdom as a place they want to be.

In the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, we center on the person of Jesus when speaking with children about God's love. In the parable of the Good Shepherd (John 10) we hear of a shepherd who calls and of sheep who respond—first by listening and then by following. This action and response introduces the child to the foundation of the covenantal relationship. This same covenant is a central theme in the Bible; God's search for us and our response to God's initiative.

For children, the most important element of the parable is that the Good Shepherd knows and calls each sheep by name—in a very explicit way, the Good Shepherd has a personal relationship with all of us.

The deepest need in young children is to be in relationship and through the image of Jesus the Good Shepherd they find someone who gives love and to whom they can give their love, establishing everlasting relationship. The fact that the Good Shepherd calls each of his sheep by name, not that he gives his life for the sheep, has the greatest impact for the young children. The child's capacity to be in love with God has its roots in this parable. Children truly enjoy the presence of the Good Shepherd in their lives.

Beginning this September, St. John's will begin grounding our youngest children in this love through the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. On Sunday, September 13, Ministry Fair Sunday, our new "Level 1 Artium" (classroom) will be open for all to come and see, and then on the following Sunday, September 20, we will begin the journey with our children for the program year.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an approach to religious formation based on scripture and liturgy and grounded in Montessori philosophy and pedagogy.

Please contact Sherry Bass, (sherrybass45@gmail.com) to inquire about volunteer opportunities or to register your child.