



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Level I Catechist Formation Course

for adults with an interest in the spiritual
development of children ages three to six

Part One ~ April 10-12 and
July 14-17, 2025

Part Two ~ November 13-15, 2025 and
March 12-15, 2026

Hosted by
St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church
11 North Broad Street
Hillsdale, Michigan 49242
stanthonyhillsdale.com
(517) 437-3305

Course Format

This course meets for three- and four-day segments throughout the year. Each day begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m. with a one-hour lunch break. The Sunday session runs from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Lunch, water, coffee and tea, and light snacks are provided throughout the course.

Course Description

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a practice of religious formation for children based on the educational method of Dr. Maria Montessori. CGS seeks to prepare a sacred, “hands-on” space for children called an atrium, in which both children and their catechists can hear, ponder, and celebrate the most essential mysteries of the Christian faith as revealed in the Scriptures and Liturgy.

Originally developed in Rome by Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi beginning seventy years ago, CGS continues to spread worldwide and is used with adaptations in various Christian traditions.

This formation course is sponsored by the National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGSUSA). Upon the participant’s completion of the course and its requirements, he or she will receive Level I Catechist Certification.

Course Objectives

- To explore with participants the general development and religious characteristics of the three- to six-year old child
- To facilitate meditation on the biblical and liturgical themes that form the focus of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
- To offer guidelines and assistance on preparing an atrium for young children, writing an album, and making materials
- To deepen the participant's ability to observe and learn from children, and to explore avenues for deepening the community's ability to do likewise

Course Texts

Cavalletti, Sofia. *The Religious Potential of the Child*, Vol. 1, 3rd ed. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2020.

Gobbi, Gianna. *Nurturing the Whole Child: Montessori Principles Applied to the Catechesis of Children*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2024.

Cavalletti, Sofia, et al. *The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey*, 2nd ed. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2014.

Course texts are available at www.cgsusa.org

Access to the online Materials Manual is an important aid to course participants. Materials Manual access is available to members of the United States Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. As part of this course, we will provide you with a one-year membership.

Registration

Online registration at [Level I CGS Catechist Formation Course #1-02535](https://www.stanthonyhillsdale.com/getinvolved/yff/catechist-formation-registration)

Also found at [stanthonyhillsdale.com/getinvolved/yff/catechist-formation-registration](https://www.stanthonyhillsdale.com/getinvolved/yff/catechist-formation-registration)

Or, contact Katy Caspar at CGS@stanthonyhillsdale.com for the link

Your spot is held once the above registration link is completed and course payment is received (see tuition information below).

Tuition

Tuition for the entire course is \$575, due no later than April 10 and payable to:

St. Anthony of Padua

Attn: CGS

11 N. Broad Street

Hillsdale, MI 49242

On memo line, please write: "#1-02535 (your name)"

You may also pay the tuition fee online using our [ParishSoft Giving page](#) (also linked on our formation registration webpage).

If you require an invoice, please contact Katy Caspar at CGS@stanthonyhillsdale.com

Financial assistance may be available.

- The [Tina Lillig Memorial Fund](#), operated by CGSUSA, provides need-based assistance of up to one-third course tuition. Apply by April 30 for this year's disbursement.
- Contact your parish and/or diocese for further tuition assistance opportunities.

Formation Team

Formation Leader | **Joanie Rymza** has served children in the CGS atrium since 2005, coordinating a large team of volunteers serving the Level I and II atria at Christ the King School in South Bend, Indiana, from 2007-2023. She also served for six years as the lead catechist in the Level II and III atria at Good Shepherd Montessori School in South Bend from 2007-2013. Joanie was recognized by CGSUSA as a formation leader in 2012 and enjoys offering Level I and II courses around the Midwest. She currently works with 9-12-year-olds in two different Level III atria in the South Bend area and was certified in Level T (Toddler) in 2024, just in time to welcome her first grandchild. Married to Guy for 32 years and mother of three adult children, Joanie holds both a Bachelor of Architecture and Master of Arts in Theology from the University of Notre Dame.

Assistant | **Katy Caspar** was called by the Good Shepherd in 2018 when she and a group of friends opened the Level I atrium at St. Anthony's Catholic Church. Since then, she has served as lead catechist and built atria for Levels I, II, and III. She is the Youth Faith Formation director and CGS Coordinator at St. Anthony's, is writing a Confirmation curriculum, and currently leads CGS sessions in Levels I and III. Married to Tim and mother of five children, Katy and her family reside in Hillsdale, MI.