

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Course level III

Parts A, B und C, 2025, 2026, 2027

Training programme for the religious formation of children and youth aged 9 and older on the basis of Montessori pedagogy

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a path for the religious formation of the child from 3 to 12 years and older and is based on the certainty that there is a living relationship between God and the child.

The foundation stone for this constantly evolving catechetical approach was laid in 1954 when Sofia Cavalletti, a Bible and Semitic languages scholar, and Gianna Gobbi, a Montessori teacher, began working with children in Rome based on Maria Montessori's pedagogy.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd works with weekly meetings in the atrium, a specially prepared environment that is set up either permanently or in a multipurpose room. Presentations in the group and free work of the child alternate. It is also possible to work based on the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in a school.

Course level III

The contents of the three levels of the catechesis form a unit. They are interwoven in many ways and build on each other. Level III has its foundation in the previous levels and looks with a new perspective at the meaning of the materials and presentations for the younger children. The themes, materials, meditations and celebrations of Level III correspond to the needs and abilities of children and youth aged 9 and over.

Intention of the course

- to consider the religious nature and the essential religious needs of the child from the age of 9
- to deepen the method and the most important principles of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in view of all three levels
- to develop the adult's ability to observe and learn from the child
- to become able to listen to the Word of God together with the children, to rejoice in it and to relate it to one's own life
- to meditate the biblical and liturgical themes of level III
- to be able to work with the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd with children and youth of this age group after having prepared the material and writing album pages



From the contents

- The themes and meditations deepen our amazement at the history of God's kingdom and God's plan and invite us to participate in it.
- The history of Israel illuminates our roots and our common expectation of the promised time ahead.
- The study of the Bible with typology and meditations on the miracles of Jesus connects the biblical accounts of the Old Testament with the work of Jesus in his time and in the sacraments up to parousia.
- We get to know the prophets, their calling, their message and the teachings of Jesus in parables, maxims and prayers in ever greater depth.
- The many different materials on the sacraments combine the contents of the earlier levels to form a complete liturgy. In this way, the personal connection to Mass, baptism, anointing of the sick, confirmation and the sacrament of reconciliation continues to grow.
- Meditation over several weeks allows children and adults to grow into independent reflection on their own lives in preparation for the sacrament of reconciliation.
- Eucharist and prayer in community - organised by the children themselves - are an important element in level III.

Work in the course

Special units for each theme introduce the biblical and liturgical background. Presentations show how we can present the themes with children using the material and how to meditate Bible passages with children. During free work time, materials are produced, written elaborations (album pages) are created and presentations are practised. Audio recordings are possible.

Preparatory literature

Studying the literature is strongly recommended as preparation (English titles at www.cgsusa.org or in online-shops). The original titles are in Italian.

- Cavalletti. The Religious Potential of the Child 3-6 Years Old
- Cavalletti. The Religious Potential of the Child 6-12 Years Old
- Cavalletti. History of the Kingdom of God, Part I, From Creation to Parousia
- Cavalletti. History of the Kingdom of God. Part II. Liturgy and the Building of the Kingdom

Material work

Making the materials is an essential step in growing into the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and is part of the spiritual journey of this work. In order to make the material needed for the work with children in the atrium, the association offers various forms of support. Pre-cut wooden pieces for the wooden material can be ordered at cost price. These costs are not included in the course fee. The material website provides photos of the finished material and templates for the paper material. In addition to membership in the association, attendance in course III-A is a prerequisite for access to the level III materials website. Weekends for making material are offered.

Deepening during the year

Between the parts of the course, it is important that participants meet in small groups to deepen their knowledge and discuss their practical work. It also makes sense to take part in a materials course.

Who is invited to the course?

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd requires time and commitment from the adults. Many report that they experience the course and the work with the children as a great enrichment and support on their personal journey of faith. Invited are pastors, interested lay people, parents, educators, parish and pastoral workers, teachers, religious educators and voluntary parish workers. Because the topics of the different levels build on each other, attendance of courses I and II is a prerequisite for course III.

It is a great support for the work with the children if two people from an atrium or school take part in the course. Interested young people can also take part by prior arrangement.

Formation leaders and organisation

The course is led by a team of experienced formation leaders and assistants. The level III course comprises a total of approx. 18 course days in several parts over three years. It makes sense to enrol for the entire course. Please refer to the course organisation information sheet for details of the formation leaders, location, dates, registration, course fees, meals and accommodation.

Please bring

- Bible
- Writing utensils, coloured pencils in many colours, folders, scissors, glue
- A laptop is helpful for writing the album pages.

Completion of the training programme

Certificates of attendance are issued after each part. After completion of all three parts, album pages, literature study, colloquium with presentation of a topic, a level III certificate is awarded.

Organiser

Katechese des Guten Hirten e.V. Deutschland, www.katechesedesgutenhirten.de
Katechese des Guten Hirten Österreich, www.katechesedesgutenhirten.at
with the support of local organisations

