

# Programs for Children at Holy Cross Parish

## CATECHISM CLASSES Preschool to Grade 6

Our catechism program meets in the “atrium,” a special room devoted to the religious life of the child. We use the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a Montessori-based religion program. See back of this sheet for more information about the atrium program.

Wednesday mornings 9:30-11:30  
Thursday afternoons 4:00-5:30

**Catechism Classes begin Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>  
and Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>.**

### **Family Sessions**

Occasional family sessions are held throughout the year, usually on a seasonal theme (Advent, Lent, etc.).

### ***New***

Holy Cross is pleased to offer Level I Classes in *French* this fall. Interested persons should submit completed forms as soon as possible or call **Sister Bibiana at 233-7367 or Louise Fillion at 237-4415.**

## CHILDREN'S LITURGY:

Children's Liturgy of the Word takes place at Holy Cross during Mass at 10:00 and 12:00. Children leave after the opening prayer and return at the preparation of the gifts. This will begin on **Sunday October 2, 2011.**



## COST

**Holy Cross Parishioners:** \$30 per child, \$40 for two or more children in the same family.

**Children from other parishes:** \$60 per child, \$75 for 2 or more in a family.

**Sacramental Preparation:** please add \$20 additional per child for books.

Note: If finances are a problem, please speak to Sister Bibiana. For more information, call Sister Bibiana Akpana Ikwun, HHCI, Catechetics Coordinator 233-7367.

## SACRAMENTS

**Reconciliation, Confirmation,  
and First Communion**  
**Wednesdays, 6:30-8:00 pm**



Preparation for the sacraments does not take place during catechism classes but in a separate program that includes the parents. Children may register for both programs.

In the Sacramental preparation at Holy Cross, a child's initiation into the Catholic Church is completed in one big year with the reception of three sacraments - reconciliation, confirmation and first communion.

The process begins in September and culminates in May/June at a celebration held with the Archbishop where the children are confirmed and receive their first communion. First reconciliation takes place before Christmas.

Our program is **family-based**, meaning that parents are integrally involved in the preparation. A parent or godparent attends the sessions with the child and works at home with a family book. While children need to be at least in grade 2, **the program is not tied to any grade level**, but is based rather on the question, “is my child ready?” In fact, we encourage you to wait until grade 3 unless your child is especially anxious to receive the sacraments. There is no need to rush your child. We offer this program every year. Because of the serious time commitment on the part of parents, you might also ask yourself, “is my family ready?”

**Confirmation:** A confirmation program for older children who have had first communion but have not yet been confirmed is scheduled as needed.

There will be a **parent meeting** for those whose children will be preparing for the sacraments on **Wednesday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm** in the church basement. Classes for those who will register and attend the meeting will begin on **Wednesday, October 5, 2011.**

Registration forms are available at the Parish web site, the Parish Office during official hours and the back of the church. Please return them by **September 1, 2011**, by mail or place in the offering basket on Sundays.

# The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd - The Atrium Program

At Holy Cross children hold their catechism classes in the atrium.



## What is the atrium?

The atrium is a specially prepared room on the second floor of the parish centre. It is a sacred, quiet environment where children can work with beautiful materials which allow them to draw deeper into the essentials of our faith (all handmade by people from our parish). In the ancient Roman church the “atrium” was the room outside the main church where people were prepared for baptism. At Holy Cross we have **three** atriums, one for Level I: 3 years old to grade 1; one for Level II: Grades 2-4 and Level III for Grades 5-6.

## What method do we use?

The “method” we use in the atrium is known as the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Based on principles of Montessori, it was developed over the last 50 years by Sofia Cavalletti in Rome and is rapidly growing across the world. Ours was first in western Canada but it is slowly expanding in Winnipeg.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has been described as the meeting of two mysteries - the mystery of God and the mystery of the child. Children seem to have a relationship with God even before we try and “teach” them anything. They have a special attraction to prayer, holy things, ritual, silence and beauty. We provide the environment where they can experience these things. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd uses carefully chosen themes from the Bible and liturgy to present to the children. After hearing a presentation (e.g. the parable of the Mustard Seed, the geography of Israel, the miniature altar) children are free to move quietly around the room working with any material they want. This includes art response and materials that provides care for the environment such as flower arranging or brass polishing.

## What do the children learn?

Level I, for children ages 3-6 who are so rich in love, focuses on the child’s capacity to know and enjoy God who is love. We avoid giving them “kidee” religion but provide the deepest, most essential themes of faith, above all, that Christ died and rose again. Some of the themes covered: Jesus as our Good Shepherd, the parables of the Kingdom of God, the geography of Israel, stories of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the vessels of the altar, the gestures of the mass, the vestments of the priest.

Level II (ages 6-9) and level III (ages 9-12) expand on everything the children received in Level I, delving into the Bible and liturgy in much greater detail. Children are also introduced to the history of the kingdom of God (from Creation to the Parousia), the books of the Bible and how to work with the Bible, the maxims (“sayings”) of Jesus, and his moral parables.

## Websites:

For more information you can look up these websites:

- Archdiocese of Toronto: [www.archtoronto.org](http://www.archtoronto.org)  
*Church Teaching/Catechesis*
- Good Shepherd Catechesis (U.S. office):  
[www.cqsusa.org](http://www.cqsusa.org)
- The Center for Children and Theology:  
[www.cctheo.org](http://www.cctheo.org)



If we want to help the child draw nearer to God, we should, with patience and courage, seek to go always closer to the vital nucleus of things. This requires study and prayer. The child will be our teacher if we know how to observe children.

-Sofia Cavalletti

[see attached page for schedule of classes](#)



# Holy Cross Parish

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## Information For Sacraments

**Child's Full Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
 (First – Middle – Last)

**Date of Birth** \_\_\_\_\_ **Place of Birth** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Parent E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Father's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mother's Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Maiden Name** \_\_\_\_\_

### My child will be receiving these Sacraments:

### FOR OFFICE USE

<input type="checkbox"/>	Baptism	Date: _____	Minister
<input type="checkbox"/>	First Communion	Date: _____	Minister
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirmation	Date: _____	Minister
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	Date: _____	Minister

### Information Regarding Baptism (if already baptized)

**Note:** If your child was not baptized at Holy Cross, please obtain and submit a copy of their Baptismal Certificate with this form.

**Church of Baptism:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Baptism:** \_\_\_\_\_



### Sponsor

NAME
ADDRESS
POSTAL CODE
PARISH

NAME
ADDRESS
POSTAL CODE
PARISH

#### A reminder:

- Only **ONE SPONSOR** is required, two is acceptable
- At least **one of the sponsors must be of the Catholic faith**
  - Sponsors must be at least 16 years of age
- Parent cannot act as sponsors for their own children