THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF
ST. GABRIEL
BEING CHRIST · EVERY DAY · EVERYWHERE

"Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it." Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them. Mark 10: 13-16

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

PARENT HANDBOOK
2026-2027

Listening to God with Children

The philosophy of the Catechesis of The Good Shepherd

Welcome to the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) at St. Gabriel. The Good Shepherd Program is a well-rounded, inclusive faith formation program for children from preschool through 8th grade that meets all religious education requirements and standards, including sacramental preparation for First Reconciliation & First Eucharist. The program is whole heartedly supported by the leaders of St. Gabriel, endorsed by the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, and is rich in the concepts and teaching of our Catholic faith.

Unlike traditional religious education, CGS does not take place in a classroom, nor does the program utilize textbooks, lectures or desks. Instead, CGS takes place in a specially prepared place called the atrium. The atrium is an environment that meets the unique needs and capabilities of children, and where they will come to know and love Jesus.

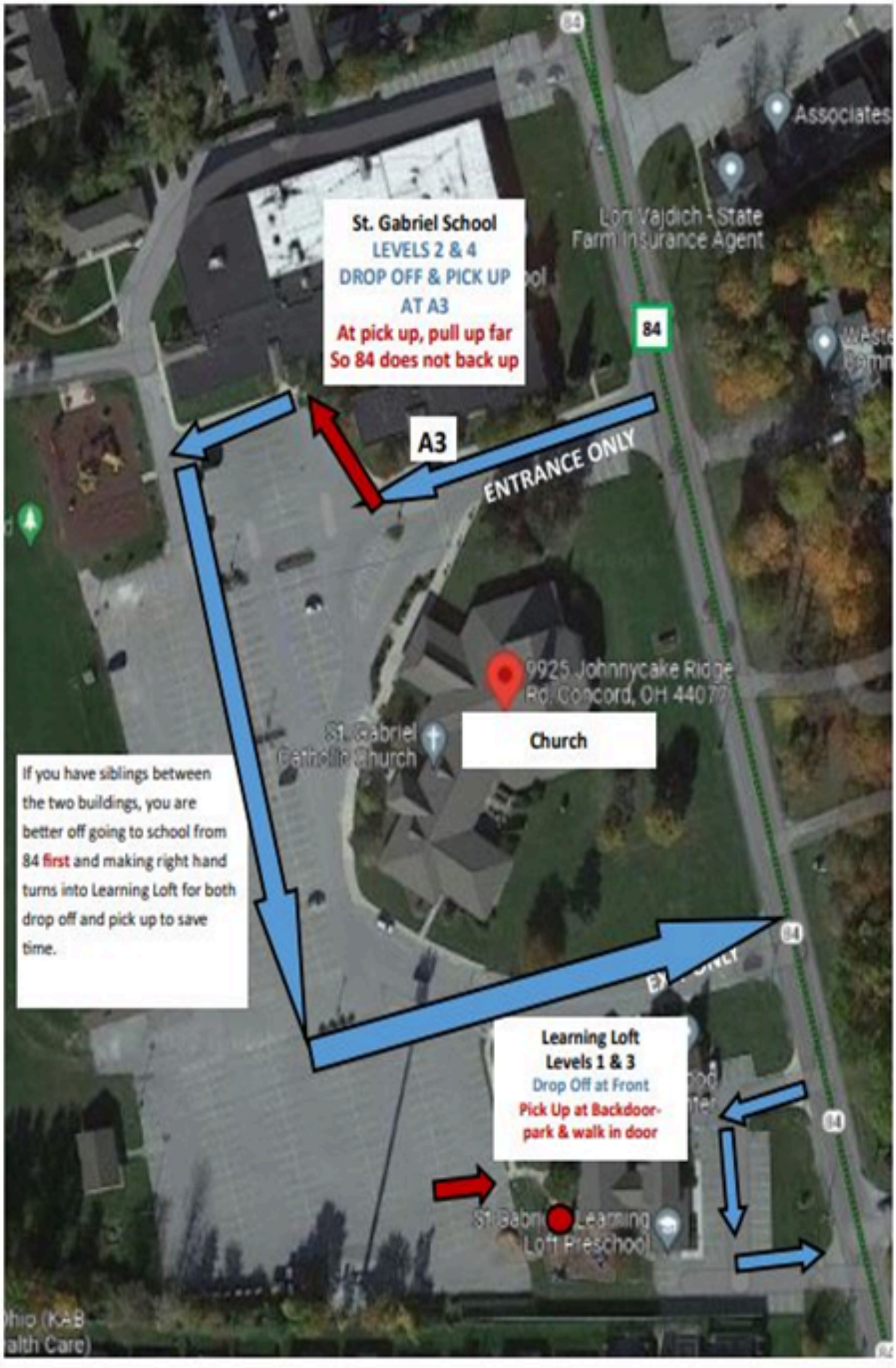
The curriculum follows the liturgical year and is entirely based on scripture and liturgy. Lessons are given in a variety of ways to enable the catechist to focus on each child's individuality and their spiritual development. The hands-on materials used to present lessons are designed to speak to the children in a special way, and are dynamic, interactive and multisensory. The atrium allows the children the freedom to revisit lessons previously presented in order to deepen their relationship with God. Additionally, children in the second grade are fully prepared for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. With the Good Shepherd Program, your child will feel the joy, awe, and love of Christ and His teachings, and will experience the liturgy in a way that draws them to the Mass. Each experienced catechist has completed training in their respective level in order to provide a theologically sound program tailor made to encourage and facilitate your child's faith formation.

You and your child will experience what parishes across the diocese, the country and even internationally have already witnessed with the CGS. Weekly sessions run mid-September through April. Sessions meet in the atrium of the Learning Loft and Religious Education Office, while older groups meet in the the Day School Grizzly Den.

For more information, please e-mail Alicia Henrikson at AHenrikson@st-gabriel.org or Laura Keverline at laurakeverline@gmail.com. Also, please visit parish web site www.st-gabriel.org for more information under Youth Faith Formation.

SUNDAY Good Shepherd Arrival Dismissal

MONDAY Good Shepherd Arrival Dismissal



Inclement Weather or Unscheduled Atrium Cancellation

In the event that St. Gabriel day school is closed due to inclement weather, Atrium for that day will also be cancelled. (NOTE: When Mentor OR Riverside School Districts are closed, St. Gabriel is also closed)
However, if the day school was in session and the weather becomes bad in the afternoon, the catechists will notify the parent by e-mail. Please respond to this email. If you do not respond, we follow up with a phone call. It is imperative we have everyone's best e-mail updated.

Parent Involvement

You are your child's first and foremost teacher of their faith. We welcome this partnership with you. Research shows that how you participate actively in your faith has the most bearing on how your child will grow in their faith into their adult life. That being said, there are many opportunities for you to partake in the Atrium.
Minimally, we ask that you:
· Attend Mass with your children weekly
· Ensure your child attends Atrium weekly
· If your child is in their Sacrament Year (usually 2nd grade) attend all meetings and retreats for vital information.
· Some sessions may request parent participation for special occasion.
IF you are unable to partake in the above, please speak with your catechist.
If you want more opportunities:
Please volunteer in the atrium. We can really use parent help! As a parent helper, you must be fingerprinted & VIRTUS trained & only one CGS short training is necessary. Certified Good Shepherd catechists are necessary for the continuation and growth of the program at St. Gabriel. The Parish continually seeks out and encourages people who are VIRTUS trained to partake in the training. Please contact Alicia Henrikson for more information. This is a wonderful opportunity to grow in faith with your child, as well as give other children the gift of knowing the Good Shepherd, Jesus.

Dress, Supplies, & Snacks

· Attire for Atrium session is comfortable play clothes that can get messy with art supplies we use. At our Liturgical Celebrations we ask that they where church attire.
· Your child does not need to bring any supplies to CGS. Please do not let them bring toys, electronic devices or cell phones of any type.
· Snack schedules and policies are set by the individual catechists. IF snack is served at your child's atrium session, please do not send items containing nuts as we have a **NO NUT POLICY**.

Children's Work Progress

Each child's progress will be monitored by their catechists. There are no grade assignments or homework, but each individual will be followed regarding which lessons have been presented to the child. The work that each child completes during Atrium will be kept in a folder, which will be sent home periodically. Additionally, parents have the opportunity to observe their child in the atrium at any time, and catechists are available after sessions should you desire a more individualized or detailed accounting of your child's work.

Attendance

BE PRESENT

It is very important that every effort is being made to bring your child to Atrium each week (except of course when he/she is ill). The material and faith formation concepts build upon what was previously presented and will have much more meaning and spiritual integration if your child maintains regular attendance. Important information will also be sent home or e-mailed to you on a regular basis.

If your child cannot attend Atrium either due to illness or a family obligation, please inform your child's catechist as soon as possible, so that we can plan accordingly. Please use e-mail to inform the Catechist of absence. If it is last minute, please leave a voice mail. We also have catechist cell phone numbers available. Texts are acceptable.

Empowering God's Children

Empowering God's Children®

The Diocese of Cleveland remains committed to protecting children and young people who are entrusted to our care. During each Academic and Ministry Year, the Diocese of Cleveland is requiring use of Empowering God's Children® in all parish faith formation programs and Catholic Schools. This program will replace Praesidium's Called to Protect. "Empowering God's Children," is a safety prevention program provided by Virtus and designed specifically for youth grades K-12. As caring adults, we have the great responsibility of ensuring the safety of children and youth. The prevention of child sexual abuse requires more than adult awareness, education, and training about the nature and scope of the problem. We must also give children and youth the tools they need to help us keep them safe by educating them regarding boundaries, safe and unsafe behaviors and healthy relationships. Anna Lee, our St. Gabriel Safety Coordinator will provide all necessary training and instruction of this program to our catechists. Families will be receive a program overview and a Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide for review. Program lessons will be presented to our youth at some point during the year during regular class times. You will be informed of the exact dates by your child's Catechist. Prior to this date a detailed letter and opt-out form will be sent out.

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting Policy

If you know, believe or suspect that a child under eighteen years of age or a mentally retarded, developmentally disabled, or physically impaired child under twenty one years of age has suffered or faces a threat of suffering any physical or mental wound injury, disability, or conditions of a nature that indicates abuse** or neglect of the child you SHALL

1) Immediately report your suspicion to Lake County Department of Job & Family Services @ 440-350-400 or 440-918-4000 and/or the local municipal police department and/or Lake County Sheriff's Department at 440-350-5620. If a child's welfare or safety is in imminent danger call 911

2) Immediately notify your Principal or Program Coordinator that a report has been made, or jointly make that call together.

3) After reporting your suspicion to civil authorities, report your suspicion to the diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator at response services@dioceseofcleveland.org or 216-334-2999 if the suspected abuser is a priest, deacon, religious, seminarian, representative, employee or volunteer of the diocese or of any parish or diocesan entity.

**examples include, but not limited to, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse

Confidentiality : The details of suspected and /or reported abuse are to be kept strictly confidential to the extent reasonably possible and should only be shared as necessary to comply with one's reporting obligations and the Policy.

(reviewed and approved by Kevin T. Burke, General Counsel for the Diocese of Cleveland—Mar 15, 2021)

A Sample Three-Year Cycle for the Level One Atrium

Liturgical Season	3+	4+	5+
Opening Weeks of Year	+Orientation to the Atrium / Intro to Prayer Table +Introduction to the Bible in the Prayer Corner +Practical Life (about 4–5 weeks)	+Reorientation to Atrium +Reintroduce Bible in Prayer Corner +Practical Life (about 2 wks)	+Reorientation to Atrium & Practical Life (about 2 weeks) +Reintroduce Bible in Prayer Corner
Ordinary Time - Fall	+Altar I +Liturgical Colors +Sign of the Cross I +Visit to Church	+Altar II +Liturgical Calendar +Sign of Cross (revisited) +Genuflection +Visit to Church	+Altar III +Liturgical Calendar (revisited) +Visit to Church
Advent	+Globe & Raised Surface Map +Prophecy of the Light +Prophecy of the Names +The Annunciation	+Regions of Israel Puzzle Map +Prophecy of the Place +Prophecy of the Mother +The Visitation	+Prophecy of the Star & Scepter (+other Advent/ Christmas presentations not given earlier)
Christmas	+Christmas/Epiphany Celebration +The Nativity & Adoration of the Shepherds	+Christmas/Epiphany Celebration +The Adoration of the Magi	+Christmas/Epiphany Celebration +The Presentation in the Temple
Ordinary Time after Christmas	+Mustard Seed +Precious Pearl	+Mustard Seed (revisited) +The Hidden Treasure +The Leaven	+Mustard Seed (revisited) +The Growing Seed
Lent	+The Good Shepherd +Psalm 23:1 +Cenacle	+The Found Sheep +Psalm 23:1-2 +City of Jerusalem +The Mystery of Life & Death	+Psalm 23:1-3 +Cenacle (revisited)
Easter	+Liturgy of the Light Celebration +Baptism I	+Liturgy of the Light Celebration +Baptism II +Eucharistic Presence	+Liturgy of the Light Celebration +Empty Tomb +Eucharistic Presence (revisited) +Baptism III
Pentecost	+Pentecost Celebration	+Pentecost Celebration	+Pentecost Celebration
Extra Time during the Year*	+Preparation of the Cruets +Epiclesis	+Preparation of the Chalice +Offering	+Preparation of the Chalice (revisited) +Epiclesis (") +Offering (") +Sign of Peace +Lavabo

Level II Curriculum	1st	2nd	3rd		1st
KINGDOM OF GOD				**PASCAL MYSTERIES**	
God w/No Hands/1st moment				Mystery life-death-grain of wheat	
La Fettucia				City of Jerusalem	
Blue Unity Strip				Cenacle(Last Supper)	
History of Gifts				Empty Tomb	
PARABLES OF KINGDOM				Pentecost Resurrection Narratives	
Mustard Seed				Messianic Entry into Jerusalem	
Precious Pearl					
Syn. Kingdom Parables					
MORAL PARABLES				**EUCHARIST**	
Good Samaritan				Altar I, II, III	
Pharisee and Tax Collector				Origins of Eucharist	
Insistent Friend				Mystery of Faith	
Ten Bridesmaids				Syn. Of Mass	
Sower				Vestments	
				GESTURES	
PRAYER				Breaking of Bread	
				Sign of Peace	
Bible/books of bible				Lavabo	
Our Father				Epiclesis	
Hail Mary/Rosary /Magnificat				Offering	
				Triple sign of cross	
				Sign of cross	
GEOGRAPHY-PIN MAPS				**INFANCY NARRATIVE**	
Cities				Annunciation / Visitation	
Water				Adoration / Presentation	
Mountains				Syn of Infancy Narratives	
LITURGICAL CALENDAR				Flight into Egypt	
GOOD SHEPHERD				**BAPTISM** Syn. of Baptism/Rite of Baptism	
GS wolf / Hired Hand /Found Sheep				**RECONCILIATION**	
Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd					
Psalm 23: 1-6				True Vine I & II	
				Found Coin / Found Sheep	
MAXIMS				Forgiving Father	
				Centurion Servant	
Summary of Law				Rite of Reconciliation	
Love the Lord God				**RETREATS**	
1. Love enemies				1st Communion	
2. Ask & it will be given				Reconciliation	
3. Say yes when you mean					
4. Your body is temple					
5. Pray for those who persecute U				**CELEBRATIONS**	
6. New command Love one..					
7. Pray in room				Thanksgiving	
8. Do to others..				Epiphany	
9. Be perfect as heavenly Father				Liturgy of Light / para liturgy	
10. Be good to those who hate you				Pentecost / para liturgy	
11. Forgive 77 times 7				Last Supper/Ceder Meal	

Level III Curriculum

The History of the Kingdom Of God	
	History of the Kingdom of God, Individual work, La Fetuccia
	History of the Kingdom of God and the Holy Bible (Open Book)
	History of the Kingdom of God, Individual Gifts strip
	Holy Bible and the Parousia
	History of the Kingdom of God and My Place in it
Plan of God	
	Plan of God
	Peoples of God
	Holy Bible and the Sacraments
	Plan of God 2-Individual Strip
	2000 years
	My Century
History of the Jewish People	
	History of the Jewish Peoples
	Worship in Israel
	The Synagogue, The Origin of the Liturgy of the Word
The Prophets	
	Call and Vocation of the Prophets
	The Struggles of the Prophets
	Content of the Prophecies
Miracles of Jesus	
	The Encounter with Bartemeaous One Day at Peters House The Heeling of the Paralytic A Day in Naim In a deserted Place The return of the 12 and the Feeding of the Five Thousand
Prayer	
	Communal Prayer
	Our Father Synthesis
	Additional prayers for the Level III atrium
Sacraments	
	Anointing of the Sick
	Baptism
	Blessing of the Chrism
	Confirmation (theology)
Eucharist	
	Structure of the Mass
	Prayers of the Mass
	The Propers
	The Memorial
	The Mystery of Faith
	The Mystery of Faith and the Prayers of Intercession
	The Story of Bread
Reconciliation	
	Reconciliation meditations and preparation for second confession
The Virtues	
	Level III Maxims
	Maxims in the Cosmos
Parables f the Kingdom	
	Pearl
	Mustard Seed
Moral Parables	
	Workers in the Vineyard
	Parable of the Talents
	The Debtors
	Ten Bridesmaids
	Vine and the Branches
Typology Studies	
	Creation (and timeline)
	Sin (and timeline)
	Flood (and timeline)
	Abraham in History of His Time
	Abraham and Worship
	Abraham Timeline
Moses, Exodus and the Gift of Law	
	Vocation of Moses and Passover
	Sojourn in the Desert
	Gift of Law
	Moses/Exodus (and timeline)

Communication is Key!
Below are the Lead Catechists emails.
Please don't hesitate to reach out to us!

SUNDAY

Atrium Level	Catechist	E-Mail
Level I	No Level 1	No Level 1
Level II	Julie Eckertson	jeckertson11@gmail.com
Level III	Claire Kwitowski	clarekwitowski@gmail.com
Level IV	Laura Keverline	laurakeverline@gmail.com

MONDAY

Atrium Level	Catechist	E-Mail
Level I	Darcie Warmuth	Darcie.garofalo@gmail.com
Level II	Alicia Henrikson	AHenrikson@st-gabriel.org
Level III	Claire Kwitowski	clarekwitowski@gmail.com
Level IV	Laura Keverline	laurakeverline@gmail.com

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To find vital information on St. Gabriel such as Calendar of Events, Youth Faith Formation Enrollment, News, and other valuable resources, please visit

www.St-Gabriel.org

Good Shepherd Coordinators
Alicia Henrikson, 440-354-7858,
AHenrikson@St-Gabriel.org
Laura Keverline, 440-463-4082
Laurakeverline@gmail.com

Karen Brenizer, Sacramental Administrator
2nd Grade/Confirmation Questions-440-352-8282
or KBrenizer@St-Gabriel.org

Religious Education Office,
Nicholle Fulginiti, Administrative Secretary
440-354-7551 or NFulginiti@St-Gabriel.org

Ricci Vuyancih, Parish Catechetical Leader
440-354-7551 or RVuyancih@St-Gabriel.org

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One Body in Christ