

Saint Louis  
Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS)  
Catholic Montessori Atrium Handbook



**Fall 2016 – Spring 2017**

***Level I (ages 3-6 years old)***

*Wednesdays & Thursdays 10-11:30 am*

*Wednesdays & Thursdays 4:15-5:45pm*

***Level II (ages 6-9 years old)***

*Mondays 4-6 pm*

*Tuesdays 3:45-5:45 pm*

***Level III (ages 9-12+ years old)***

*Mondays 4-6 pm*

*(children must have 1 year of Level 2 Atrium experience)*

**The registration fee is \$50 (\$25 before August 15, 2016)\***

*\* Registration fee is waived if you pay the tuition in full by 6/15/16.*

*Please see the registration form for annual tuition costs.*

*Checks can be made payable to “Saint Louis Church”.*

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*2907 Popkins Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306*

*Atrium: (703) 660-9270; Fax: (703) 765-1750*

*<http://saintlouisparish.org/atrium> Contact: [atrium@saintlouisparish.org](mailto:atrium@saintlouisparish.org)*

*✧ Revised August 2, 2016 ✧*

**MASS and ADORATION**

Parents and children are encouraged to attend the 8:45am Holy Mass at Saint Louis before morning atria as well as adore Our Lord Jesus in the Adoration Chapel between 7am Monday and 4pm Saturday. Please see the rectory for the chapel code.

**ILLNESS and ABSENCES**

Please keep children who are sick at home until they recover. In the event of an illness or absence, we are unable to let children make up Atrium sessions on other days in order to keep consistency with each session.

**CHILD’S PAPERWORK**

Each child will have a folder in which to keep their papers (coloring, pasting, etc.) At the end of the year, we will send the work home. We ask parents not to expect paperwork after each session, since one of the key Montessori principles is that young children work for the process and not the end product.

**CANDLES**

Candles are lit in the Atrium when Scripture is read and during sacred moments. An adult always supervises the children when they are near candles. Only the adult handles matches.

**WAIT LIST**

A waitlist is established after the maximum number of children is reached. Please fill out a registration form to register for the waitlist. If space becomes available, we will contact those on the waitlist. To keep it fair to all waitlisted families, we will attempt to contact the first family on the waitlist within a 48-hour period, after that time the next family will be offered the open space.

**REFUNDS**

During the first 3 weeks of Atrium, we assess the child's readiness for the Atrium. If we deem that the child is not ready (i.e. not potty-trained or not able to follow simple instructions and work independently), we will ask them to wait 6 months. Please contact us within the first 3 weeks to receive a 75% refund of the annual tuition costs. After the first 3 weeks, tuition is non-refundable. Registration fees are non-refundable.

**ATRIUM BEHAVIOR**

Following the discretion of the catechist or assistant, if a child hurts another person in the Atrium (by hitting, kicking, biting, pinching, scratching, etc...) then we will ask them to skip the next week of Atrium. This is to cultivate an atmosphere of respect in the Atrium. If it happens a second time, the child will be asked to wait until the next semester before returning.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

- The registration fee of \$50 is due at registration (\$25 before Aug. 15, 2016).
- The registration fee is waived if you pay the annual tuition in full for all enrolled children by June 15, 2016.
- In order to avoid a \$25 late fee, HALF of the total annual tuition must be paid by August 15, 2016. The remainder is due by February 15, 2017.

## **LOCATION**

The Atrium is the white building located between Msgr. Walsh Hall and the adoration chapel. It is across the parking lot from the School and the Church, near the corner of Hwy 1 and Popkins Lane. The front door is labeled "Saint Louis Montessori Atrium."

## **CALENDAR**

The Atrium follows the liturgical seasons of the Catholic Church from late September to May. Please see the Atrium calendar for the annual schedule.

## **DRESS CODE**

Please have your children wear clothing that allows ease of movement, while keeping in mind the respectful attitude due to this special place. No blinking shoes or ballerina tutus please.

## **TOURS**

Registered children receive a brief Atrium tour the first week of Atrium. Please contact the Atrium at least 2 weeks before Atrium begins to schedule a tour.

## **PLANTS and FLOWERS**

Children enjoy caring for God's creation. Please provide a plant with a saucer for your child to care for in the Atrium. Please sign up during arrival to bring fresh flowers for one or two weeks during the semester.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

The Atrium is a special place of prayer and enjoyment of God, where children listen to the Good Shepherd's voice during catechetical presentations and can meditate on God's Word while working. In order to cultivate a prayerful environment, we teach children to use the slow Atrium walk and quiet Atrium voice. Please model a quiet manner of walking and speaking to help your children become accustomed to using their Atrium walk and Atrium voice.

## **ARRIVAL**

Before arriving at the Atrium, please be sure children have eaten a well balanced meal and have gone to the bathroom. Please sign in for your children when you arrive. Since the Atrium is a reverent environment, like a church, please encourage your children to use their Atrium voice and Atrium walk

when entering. On-time arrivals are essential so that you do not disrupt group presentations given at the beginning of Atrium. If late arrivals become habitual (more than 3 times), the catechist will discuss an alternative plan for your child(ren). Toys from home are not permitted in the Atrium.

## **DISMISSAL**

At the end of Atrium, the children gather around the prayer table to listen to the Word of God, pray and sing. When Atrium is over, children are called by name to line up for dismissal. Please sign out for your children when you pick them up. Children will only be released to designated persons authorized by parents or legal guardians. If you arrive late, your child will wait for you in the Atrium. In the best interest of your children and the catechists, please be prompt in collecting your children.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

We are very grateful for parental help! It is a wonderful way to be involved in your child's Atrium experience while offering help to the program. We need volunteers to assist during the Atrium, clean-up after Atrium, artistically paint figures, sew, and do wood-working. Please contact Maria Blazevich (703) 660-9270 if you are interested in volunteering.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER / EMERGENCY CLOSURES & DELAYS**

We follow Fairfax County's School Policy for inclement weather or emergency closures and delays. To check the status of Fairfax County Public Schools, visit [www.fcps.edu/news/emerg.shtml](http://www.fcps.edu/news/emerg.shtml) or listen to WTOP 103.5 FM radio station.

If Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) close, the Atrium is closed. If FCPS are delayed 1 hour, all Atrium sessions are open. If FCPS are delayed 2 hours, the morning atrium session is delayed 1 hour and will run from 11am-12:30pm, and afternoon sessions are open. If Fairfax Afterschool programs are closed, the afternoon Atrium session is closed.

If Fairfax Saturday programs are closed, the Saturday Atrium session is closed. If Fairfax Saturday programs are delayed 1 hour, the Saturday atrium is open. If Fairfax Saturday programs are delayed 2 hours, the Saturday atrium is delayed 1 hour and will run from 11am-12:30pm.

Due to Religious Education schedule constraints, we are unable to make up missed days caused by inclement weather. The Atrium schedule already factors in snow days. The Diocese of Arlington requests 30 catechetical hours annually for religious education programs. The Atrium already adds at least ten extra hours to their calendar each year to accommodate days off due to inclement weather or other non-weather related emergencies.