

CHRISTIAN FORMATION
Director of Christian Formation
Tommie Moore

Christian Formation for our youngest...

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a faith formation experience for children ages 3 to 12 years old. Catechesis is based upon the belief that young children can and do experience God. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd's work is done in an Atrium, an environment created to nurture children's spirituality. This is done by proclaiming the Gospel through the parable method, prayer, singing, silence, and exploring liturgical events. Hands-on materials are used to help children and adults reflect together upon the great mysteries of the Christian faith.

We are fortunate to have as our certified catechists: Tricia Edmonson, Michelle Hester, Joellen Murphree, Kamme Riddle, Stacy White, and Marrion Winders. Assisting in the atria each Sunday are Sue Ann Averett, Kelly Fleming, and Emily Jackson.

Michelle Hester, who serves as our volunteer Coordinator of Children's Ministries, works closely with our catechists and assistants. In that volunteer role, Michelle works to enrich existing programs and explore new Christian Formation opportunities for our children through study, service and worship. Among other duties, she is responsible for developing, planning and coordinating programming for children (1st through 6th grade); recruiting, retaining and training adult volunteers; coordinating and scheduling Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and coordinating Jr. EYC efforts. Michelle is a retired pre-school teacher and has a passion for religious education and formation. She and her family have been involved in ministry at Christ the King ELCA for many years. For all who give so freely of their time in Catechesis, I am deeply grateful for their commitment.

For our youth in 7th – 12th grades...

Participants in this class explore topical, Bible-based lessons based on current events and other trending subjects that have an immediate relevancy to youth. In 2018, with the wise guidance of Josh Westmoreland, our youth delved in to such topics as:

- A mugging in Edmonton took an unusual turn when the person who chased down the mugger then bought the mugger a cup of coffee. We talked about how to mirror God's grace in this world whenever the opportunity presents itself.
- We all try to do good in this world and we wondered how long we would be able to continue doing a good thing. We talked about what it means to run our life's race with endurance.
- Around Veteran's Day, we paused to recognize our country's veterans and reflect on what it means to be willing to make a sacrifice.

In July, we dove into "Jonah's BIG 3 Day Adventure" with a 3-day Vacation Bible School, ending with a celebration picnic with water games. The children had a whale of a good time following Jonah on his adventure and exploring what he (and they) learned along the way.

As you can see, our time with your children is very full and our conversations with them are always enlightening. We look forward to our time with them in the new year, as we continue helping them explore and learn to live out their faith.

For adults:

“The Sunday Lectionary” class, led by the very capable Les Alvis continued in 2018 with a strong following. In 2018, approximately 1,144 parishioners and visitors attended this class, which meets year-round in the south breakout room of the Parish Hall on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. This class studies the Biblical texts appointed by the Revised Common Lectionary and is made for those who wish to journey deeper into the message and meaning of each Sunday’s lesson. The class critically analyzes the Biblical texts, asking questions such as: Who wrote the text and when was it written? What is the historical and social context of the text? What was the author’s intent in writing the text? The class then discusses what the texts tell us about God and what the texts mean for us today. All are invited to join in for the weekly, lively (and entertaining) discussions.

Education for Ministry is a 4-year course studying the entire sweep of the Christian tradition from the earliest period to the present. Participants learn the disciplines of biblical exegesis and interpretation, systematic theology, church history, ethics, liturgics, and ascetical theology. Through study, prayer, and reflection, EfM groups move toward a new understanding of the fullness of God’s kingdom. Participants are given weekly assignments to study with the help of resource guides. In the weekly seminars, members have an opportunity to share their insights and discoveries, as well as discuss questions which the study materials raise for them.

Ken Murphree and Virginia Chambers, both EfM graduates, served as co-EfM mentors in 2018. Their role is not that of a teacher but as a guide for the group as they navigate the study material. Ken retired as EfM mentor in December and I am grateful for the leadership, experience, knowledge and discernment he brought to his role as mentor.

In October, at the beautiful home and grounds of Jimmy and Margaret Robbins, Daughters of the King hosted a “Quiet Day” retreat, with time to be alone with God, listening to His voice, as well as time to meditate and reflect. This has become an annual event, and I encourage you to consider participating in 2019.

The total 2018 budget for adult and youth Christian Formation was \$4,025. Of that amount, we spent \$2,912.32 on Catechesis of the Good Shepherd atrium supplies, material repairs/replacements, our youth curriculum, supplemental materials, Education for Ministry mentor training, scholarships, and Vacation Bible School.

My deepest thanks to all of the volunteers for sharing their gifts through teaching during 2018. They are a dedicated group of folks and it shows! I encourage you and your children to take advantage of the Christian Formation offerings in 2019. And if you have ideas about topics for Christian Formation, I welcome your input!