



*Office of the Bishop*

August 29, 2022

## **Letter of Recommendation**

Dear Fathers,

Grace and peace be with you.

As you know, the formation of children in the Catholic faith is a critical imperative. Today's children will become the faith leaders of tomorrow. To ensure a sound foundation in the Catholic faith, I highly recommend Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) as an approved approach to faith formation and sacramental preparation for children ages 3 through 12.

Through contemplation and enjoyment of Scripture and Catholic Liturgy, even the youngest child can fall in love with Jesus. This strengthens the foundation for a lifelong faith<sup>™</sup> practiced in community. CGS is based on the belief that children already are in relationship with God, as evidenced through the work of Dr. Maria Montessori, biblical scholar Dr. Sofia Cavalletti, and Gianna Gobbi, a longtime Montessori educator.

Through 50-plus years of collaborative work, Dr. Cavalletti and Miss Gobbi developed CGS for children's faith formation. It provides experiential ways to ponder Scripture and Liturgy based on sound Catholic theology. The Cavalletti books used by the adults in catechist formation have received the *Nihil Obstat* and *Imprimatur*. Among them are The Religious Potential of the Child, volumes 1 and 2; The History of the Kingdom of God, parts 1 and 2; The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey.

Instead of textbooks, CGS children use hands-on materials, the Bible, and the Roman Missal for their formalized faith formation.

Several parishes in our diocese, including Our Lady of the Presentation, St. Therese North, Holy Spirit, St. Andrew the Apostle, and St. Gregory Barbarigo, Maryville, already have adopted CGS for their children: some as an option in their religious education, some as their sole formation method, some in conjunction with the Catholic School curriculum. Three levels serve the children appropriately for their human development: Level I for age 3 through kindergarten, Level II for first through third graders, and Level III for fourth through sixth graders.

I also recognize the adult CGS formation courses as valid catechetical training.

Catechists of this method are certified through extensive formation, 90 to 120 hours of class time at each level, under the standards of the U.S. Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd ([www.cgsusa.org](http://www.cgsusa.org)) and the International Council of CGS (Consiglio) in Rome. Under their guidance, the SonFlower Region of CGS, which serves the counties of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph and the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas ([www.cgsksmo.org](http://www.cgsksmo.org)), offers our diocese catechist formation courses in all three levels. Having certified CGS catechists is of paramount importance to the growth of this program, so courses are scheduled continually.

With this endorsement, my hope is to enable this method respecting the child's spirituality to be more widely available in our diocese. One way is for you to introduce CGS as a catechetical option at your parishes. Another is to encourage adults not only to undertake CGS catechist formation, but also perhaps to underwrite some tuition expenses for those who want to be formed. To learn more about how to do this, please contact Marc Cardaronella in the Office of Catechesis and Faith Formation.

Jesus said, "Let the children come to Me." I encourage you to consider building a path for the children to the Lord with Scripture and Liturgy as offered through Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James V. Johnston, Jr." with a small cross symbol to the left of the name.

Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.  
Bishop of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph