

# Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

## Level 1, Years 2 & 3: December 2024

### Advent Celebration

As always, we begin Advent with a special celebration. We placed purple on the prayer table the first time and then celebrated with our “Come, Lord Jesus” song. On our prayer table we placed an Advent wreath with four candles, a prayer card, and the Holy Family -- with an empty manger. We prepare and await the coming of Jesus at Christmas during these four weeks of Advent.

### Messianic Prophecies

We listen closely to five Messianic Prophecies during the children’s three years in the Level 1 Atrium. With each, we share that prophets are people who listened closely to God and shared His messages with the world. As we wonder about each prophecy, we hear how God was preparing His people for a great gift He was going to send. The ones in purple were saved for our Year 3 children.

- [Isaiah 9:1 - Prophecy of the Great Light](#): The people who walked in darkness have seen a Great Light!
- [Isaiah 9:5 - Prophecy of the Names](#): For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.
- [Isaiah 7:14: Prophecy of the Mother](#): Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; the young woman, pregnant and about to bear a son, shall name him Emmanuel.
- [Micah 5:1a: Prophecy of the Birthplace](#): But you, Bethlehem-Ephrathaha, least among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel.
- [Numbers 24:17b: Prophecy of the Star & Sceptre](#): A star shall advance from Jacob, and a scepter shall rise from Israel.

### The Annunciation & The Visitation

We also enjoy two Infancy Narratives during Advent. First is the Annunciation which took place in Nazareth. We know all about Nazareth and the symbol of the Holy Spirit! We watched and listened as the Angel Gabriel visited Mary in her home and announced that she was chosen to bring God’s Son into the world. We wondered, did Mary know this would be one of the most important days of her life? What was it like to see the angel and hear his message? We loved hearing the Angel Gabriel saying, “Do not be afraid.” Did Mary say yes? **Yes!**

With the Visitation, we hear what Mary did next -- she traveled *in haste* to her cousin Elizabeth’s house. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth proclaimed a beautiful prayer (one that was quite familiar to a number of children) and shared that the infant in her womb, John, leapt for joy at Mary’s greeting. How did he know that Mary was so special? And her son? Who could have told him, we wondered. Then we hear Mary’s response, her beautiful Magnificat.

