



Knowing the love of the Good Shepherd even in the ordinary of everyday life

Arthur, age 3 ½, has seen the presentation of the parable of the Good Shepherd for the first time just last week. Today he chooses this material and he invites me to read the scripture for him.

Together we ponder some of the words from the parable. Every time Arthur says “the GOOD Shepherd”, he emphasizes “GOOD” and literally jumps up for joy with a big smile on his little face.

He then turns to the figure of the Good Shepherd, very interested in his clothes and satchel. I explain that this is what shepherds used to wear in Jesus' days and Arthur wants to know if the satchel is like a purse, then, through our conversation he concludes that it could hold useful things a shepherd might need, but also extra food for the sheep.

He then picks up the Good Shepherd and “sprinkles him” over the sheep, kind of like a salt shaker, saying repeatedly “Good food, good water.” Then he sets the shepherd down “to have his own lunch.”

A moment later he picks up the Good Shepherd once more and moves him near each sheep, holding him the way we would hold a tooth brush, saying, “And now the Good Shepherd wipes everyone's faces.”

He becomes very quiet for a moment then says to me with what strikes me like the dignity of a wise elder, “You know – my Mom does that for me sometimes.”

At that moment I had a hard time keeping a straight face, as well as holding back some tears.

Just when the children had arrived at the Atrium that day and had entered the Atrium with my fellow catechist, Arthur's Mom had related to me, how busy her afternoon had been, trying to feed everyone an early supper as the family was going somewhere right after Atrium. “I planned it all so well”, she related, “but I forgot how long it takes to wipe all the children's faces after their meal.”