



Family Formation Sacramental Preparation

The Mass: The Liturgy of the Word

First Communion: Lesson 3

MEMORY VERSE:

Be sure to practice the memory verse assigned.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Bible

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

1. Parents: read through this lesson.
2. Light a candle to remind you that Jesus is there with you.
3. Pray, asking the Lord to bless your lesson time.

EUCCHARISTIC MIRACLES

In the eighth century, in the Church of Saint Legontian, a monk had grave doubts about the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. To his amazement, after the consecration, the Host changed into visible Flesh and the wine changed into visible Blood.

Several investigations over the years have proven the Flesh is real Flesh, and the Blood is real Blood. Tests show they belong to the human species and are a part of heart tissue.

It is an extraordinary miracle that the Flesh and the Blood, which were left in their natural state for 12 centuries, are still preserved today in Lanciano, Italy.

It is important to remember that while our faith does not rely on miracles like this, sometimes God does show His power and goodness through amazing deeds. Glory to God!

LESSON 3

The Mass: The Liturgy of the Word

The Mass is a wonderful gift that Jesus gave to all of the Church at the Last Supper. The Mass is a mystery and a miracle where we can bring all of our joys and sorrows from the past week, put them together with the perfect sacrifice of Jesus, and offer them to God the Father. Jesus is truly present at each Mass in different ways; He's there in the Scriptures, in the priest, in all of us, and He's especially present in the Eucharist. During each Mass, we also remember the Resurrection of Jesus. Because of this, each Sunday is a little remembrance of Easter. The Mass is a celebration that is shared by Catholics around the world. In the next two lessons, we learn more about this great celebration.



Look up Acts 2:42.

Here we find that from the beginning of the Church, people came together to do three things:

- listen to the Word of God
- "break the bread" (the Eucharist)
- and pray

Today, the Mass continues the same Tradition as in the early Church. Our Mass has two special parts:

The Liturgy of the Word
The Liturgy of the Eucharist

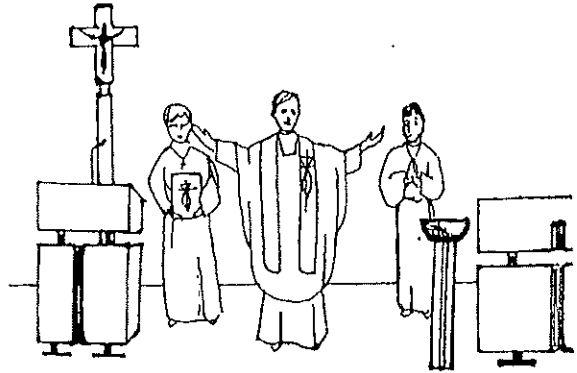
Throughout both parts of the Mass, we pray prayers of thanksgiving, praise, contrition, and petition (asking God for something).

The Liturgy of the Word

WE SAY "I'M SORRY"

We begin Mass by making the Sign of the Cross and greeting the priest. In the penitential rite, the priest gives us a short time to remember our sins and to pray together to ask God to forgive us.

We still need to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation, but God is always ready to forgive us. This prayer, called the Confiteor, tells God that we are sorry for our sins and prepares us to hear His Word and receive Him in the Eucharist.



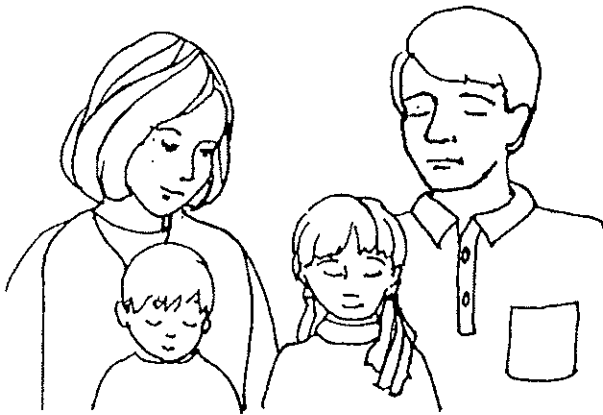
We then sing the Gloria (except during Advent and Lent). We are so thankful that God forgives us, takes care of us, and loves us, that we sing the Gloria in worship of Him.

VENIAL SIN: A sin which damages, but does not completely break, your relationship with God. 1863

DID YOU KNOW:

Your venial sins are forgiven at every Mass during the penitential rite? It's still important to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation regularly though.

The priest then begins the opening prayer which leads to the readings. He says, "Let us pray."



WE LEARN FROM THE BIBLE

We sit to listen to the Bible readings. Usually during the Mass, we read from the Old and New Testaments. After each reading, the lector says, "The Word of the Lord," and we respond, "Thanks be to God."

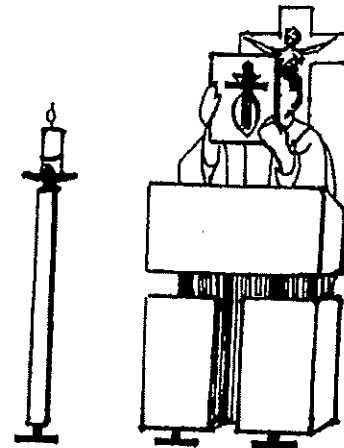
In between the readings, we typically either pray or sing a Psalm. We should listen carefully and hear what God is telling us through these Scriptures.

WE LEARN FROM THE WORDS OF JESUS

We stand and greet the words of Jesus by singing "Alleluia!" The words of Jesus are found in the four books of the Bible called the Gospels.

The Gospels are the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. As the priest announces the Gospel reading, we trace three little crosses, one each on our forehead, lips, and heart, while silently praying, "Lord, may Your Word always be in my mind, on my lips, and in my heart."

The priest says, "The Lord be with you." We reply, "And with your spirit." The priest says, "A reading from the holy Gospel according to _____." We reply, "Glory to You, O Lord." When the Gospel reading is finished, the priest says, "The Gospel of the Lord." We reply, "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ."

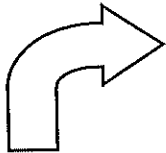


WE LEARN FROM THE MESSAGE OF THE PRIEST

Following the readings, we sit while the priest presents his thoughts and reflections on the readings. This is called the homily. A homily explains the Scriptures and teaches us how to be better Christians. Then we stand to make a Profession of Faith. These words of the Creed express what we believe as Catholic Christians. The Prayers of the Faithful are then prayed with the whole community. You can add your own prayers silently as well.



This is the end of the first part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word. In the next lesson, you will learn about the Liturgy of the Eucharist.



Together, as a family, look up this Sunday's Gospel reading. You may find the readings listed in a variety of places:

- your parish bulletin
- in the back of a Catholic Bible
- on the *Family Formation* liturgical calendar
- on the calendar given by your parish at the start of the new year
- on *Our Sabbath Scripture Book* story pages

Discuss how Jesus' words and actions are important to everyone.



Family Formation Sacramental Preparation

The Mass: The Liturgy of the Eucharist

First Communion: Lesson 4

MEMORY VERSE:

Be sure to practice the memory verse assigned.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Bible

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

1. Parents: read through this lesson.
2. Light a candle to remind you that Jesus is there with you.
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EUCCHARISTIC MIRACLES

During the funeral for his sister, Gorgiona, Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, related that for several years Gorgiona had suffered from a sickness which doctors were unable to cure.

Having the Blessed Sacrament reserved upon an altar in her home, which was permitted to some in the early days of Christianity, she turned to the Lord, the Divine Physician, one night and prayed earnestly for a cure. In imitation of the woman in the Gospel who touched the hem of Christ's garment and was healed, Gorgiona approached the altar, rested her head upon it, and resolved not to leave until she was cured. After anointing herself with blessed oil, she wept bitterly before the Blessed Sacrament.

Saint Gregory tells us that Gorgiona experienced a complete restoration of health that very night.

LESSON 4

The Mass: The Liturgy of the Eucharist

OFFERING OF GIFTS

We begin the Liturgy of the Eucharist with the presentation of the gifts. Usually, a family is asked to bring the gifts of bread and wine to the altar. They also bring up the monetary gifts in the envelopes collected by the ushers. We are reminded to offer our gifts and our whole selves to God.

After the presentation of the gifts, the priest prepares the bread and wine that are to be used in the Eucharist. This is called the offertory. Offering the bread, the priest says, "Blessed are You, Lord God of all creation, for through Your goodness we have received the bread we offer You: fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the Bread of Life." We reply, "**Blessed be God forever.**"

He then pours wine and a few drops of water into the chalice praying, "Blessed are You, Lord God of all creation, for through Your goodness we have received the wine we offer You: fruit of the vine and work of human hands, it will become our Spiritual Drink." We respond, "**Blessed be God forever.**" The priest then washes his hands as an altar server pours water over them. This is a sign that the priest is asking God to purify him from his sin for the preparation of the Eucharist. The offertory ends with a prayer asking God to accept the gifts and to bless them.

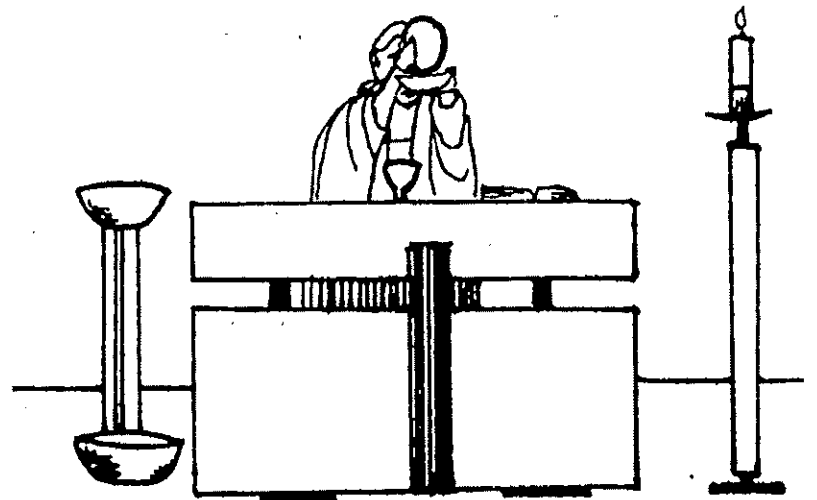


THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER



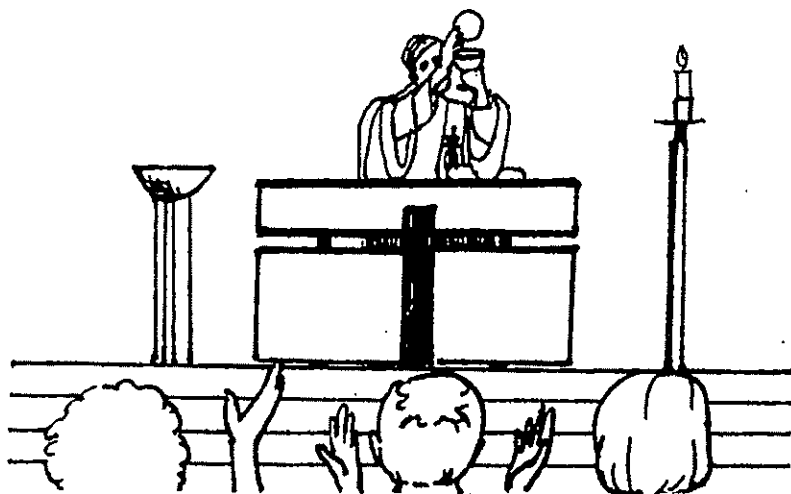
The heart of the Mass is the Eucharistic Prayer (Canon). We begin with an introduction to the prayer. When the priest asks us to "Lift up your hearts," we say, "We lift them up to the Lord." He says, "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God." We reply, "It is right and just."

These words come from Passover prayers like the one Jesus shared with His disciples. Then we worship with the angels, singing, "Holy, Holy, Holy." We kneel to show reverence for the most important part of the Mass. The priest can pray one of several different Eucharistic Prayers. The prayers start with the priest asking God to protect the Church and all who teach the Catholic faith. He prays for the faithful and remembers the saints. Then, the priest takes the host (bread) into his hands and says, "At the time He was betrayed and entered willingly into His Passion, He took bread and, giving thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take this, all of you, and eat of it: for this is My Body which will be given up for you." The priest raises the consecrated Host (Jesus) for all to see and



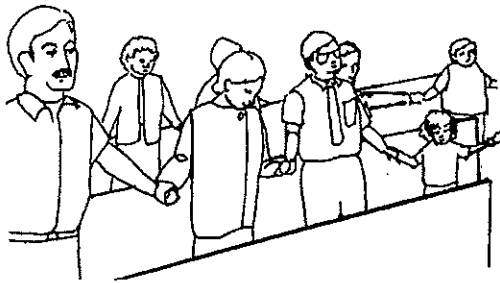
adore and then genuflects to Jesus. He takes the chalice and says, "In a similar way, when supper was ended, He took the chalice and, once more giving thanks, He gave it to His disciples, saying: Take this, all of you, and drink from it: for this is the chalice of My Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of Me." Again, the priest will raise the chalice for all of us to see. Jesus is fully present in the Eucharist.

After the consecration, there is a Memorial Acclamation that is usually sung. This response is a remembrance of Jesus' passion, death, Resurrection, and second coming, which is all celebrated in the Eucharist. We continue the Eucharistic Prayer by asking for Christian unity and remembering all faithful Christians who are in heaven.



THE GREAT AMEN

Then the priest raises the chalice saying, "Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, O God, Almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is Yours, forever and ever." The congregation replies with the great "**AMEN**": Yes Lord, we believe!



THE LORD'S PRAYER AND SIGN OF PEACE

We all join together then to say the Lord's Prayer and to offer peace to one another. Just as Jesus broke bread at the Last Supper, the priest then breaks off a piece of the Host

and drops it into the chalice. This is a sign that the Body and Blood of Jesus were united at the Resurrection and are today united in heaven. We then repeat the words of John the Baptist: "**Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us. (repeat) Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.**" The priest then holds up a Host and says, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb." We reply, "**Lord, I am not worthy that You should enter under My roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**"



Look up Luke 7:6-7, and see who spoke these words first to Jesus.

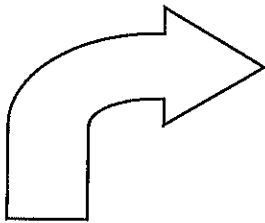
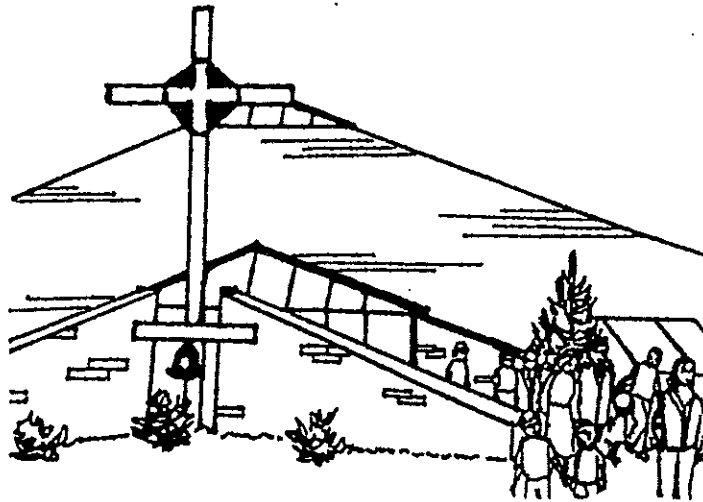
COMMUNION

The congregation comes toward the altar for Communion. When the priest or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion presents us with the Host, he or she says, "The Body of Christ." We reply, "**Amen.**" (**YES, I believe!**) We receive the Host reverently and go back to our seats and pray, thanking Jesus for His gift to us. Communion is followed by a time of silent thanksgiving and, sometimes, a worship hymn.



FINAL BLESSING

The priest ends Mass with a final prayer and blessing. He sends us forth with, "Go forth, the Mass is ended," (or one of three other options) to which we reply, "Thanks be to God." We thank Him for all of His blessings.



Parents: Remember to tuck the "My First Holy Communion" Mass booklet (provided in the Activity Pieces pocket at the back of this workbook) into your child's Bible for next Sunday. Help your child follow along, and say the responses, and look up the Scriptures to more fully enter into the celebration.

The Mass of All Ages

Excerpt from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*



As early as the second century we have the witness of St. Justin Martyr for the basic lines of the order of the Eucharistic celebration. They have stayed the same until our own day for all the great liturgical families. St. Justin wrote to the pagan emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161) around the year 155, explaining what Christians did:

On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place.

The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits.

When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things.

Then we all rise together and offer prayers for ourselves ... and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation.

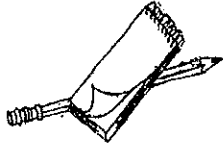
When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss.

Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren.

He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks (in Greek: *eucharistian*) that we have been judged worthy of these gifts.

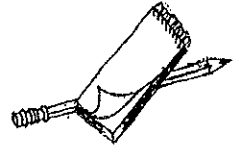
When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying: 'Amen.'

When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the "eucharisted" bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.



Review

Lessons 3 and 4



Choose the correct word from the box to complete each sentence below.

Old	Word
homily	New
faith	Eucharist

1. The two main parts of the Mass are called the Liturgy of the _____ and the Liturgy of the _____.
2. We hear God's Word from the _____ and _____ Testaments and the Gospels.
3. When we say the Nicene Creed, we are saying a profession of _____.
4. The priest will explain the Scripture to us in his _____.

True or False?

5. The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the presentation of the gifts.
true false
6. The priest washes his hands at the offertory to make sure they are clean.
true false
7. The Eucharistic Prayer is the heart of the Mass.
true false
8. "Amen" means thank you.
true false

Please refer to Page 57 for correct answers.

