One of the universal rites of passage for two-year-olds is the unrestricted use of the word why. Upon learning this simple word, your child wants to know why everything in the world takes place, and even the most intelligent answers are met with one further question: Why? No matter what our age, we want to know why we do the things we do, especially if we are going to dedicate time and effort to them. So, why do we gather for Mass?

The Vatican II document, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, explains that from the time of the Apostles, the Church has come together to celebrate the Paschal Mystery—Christ’s passing from Death to Resurrection—by which he reconciled our sinful human nature to the Father and merited our salvation. We recall the Paschal Mystery by reading the Scriptures and celebrating the Eucharist, in which “the victory and triumph of his death are again made present” (Council of Trent, sess. 13, 11 Oct 1551, Decree on Holy Eucharist, chap. 5, quoted in Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 6). Jesus left us this memorial to perpetuate his sacrifice and its effects, for which we give thanks “to God for his inexpressible gift” (2 Corinthians 9:15, quoted in Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 6).

**Reflection Questions**

- How do you explain to your child your reasons for attending Mass?
- Are you able to keep these reasons in mind as you prepare for and participate in the Mass?

**Activity**

Help your child to create a short book about why we attend Mass. For younger children, write the text yourself and assist them in illustrating it. Older children may be able to generate reasons for attending Mass on their own, which they can then write out, adding their own pictures. You may suggest they use people or symbols specific to your parish. Invite your child to share his or her book frequently with others, and to review it together before you attend Mass. Add to this book as other reasons to participate in Mass come to light, whether through religious education classes or through the prayers and homilies at Mass.