Finding Jesus in This Lesson

Through the sacrifice Jesus instituted at the Last Supper, He gives us a memorial of His death and resurrection: a tangible expression of His love, a sign of unity and a bond of love meant for all believer. At this banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a promise of future glory is given to us. (See Sacrosanctum Concilium, 47.)

Jesus gives us “every spiritual blessing in the heavens” through Himself Ephesians 1:3, the Eucharist, the source and summit of the Christian life. (See CCC 1324.)

Begin with Scripture

“Then [Jesus] took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.’ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.’” Luke 22:19-20

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for remaining here with us through the amazing gift of the Eucharist! Not only do You give us all we need, but because you unite yourself with us now, we have the hope of being with You forever in heaven! We offer this lesson time to You and ask that You would help us to grow in our love for You and for everyone You love. Amen.

Preparation

During this week’s lesson, your family will continue going through the parts of the Mass, focusing on the Liturgy of the Eucharist. There is no additional preparation, but we would like to remind you that an excellent way to reinforce this lesson is to have your child bring their My Holy Mass Book to Mass for the next few weekends.

Lesson

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

A continuation of last week’s study of the Mass.

Last week, we learned that there are two parts of the Mass. Do you remember what they are? (Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist) Last week, we talked about the Liturgy of the Word, where we listen to readings from the Bible, and the priest explains them to us. Today, we will be talking about the other part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
My Holy Mass Book

ACTIVITY: This week, you will be focusing on the Liturgy of the Eucharist section (Pages 10-24). Continue to talk with your family about the Mass and the special meanings of each part.

Remind your children to bring their booklets with them to Mass and follow along. If you have not had a chance to review the Parents’ Pages, take some time this week to look it over and to share some of the information with your children.

PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR AND THE GIFTS
The first thing that happens in the Liturgy of the Eucharist is that the gifts are prepared. The altar servers set up the altar. Usually, some of the people bring up the bread, wine, and water to the altar, as well as “other gifts for the needs of the Church and the poor” Roman Missal. They represent all of us giving our gifts to the Father. This is the time for us to collect all of the gifts of love, prayer, work, and sacrifice from the past week that we want to give to God. These are added to the perfect sacrifice made by Jesus and given to God the Father.

The priest holds up the bread and wine in turn and prays that the Father would take these imperfect gifts and make them into the perfect Body and Blood of His Son. Before he prays over the wine, he mixes a few drops of water in with it, symbolizing our humanity (the water) sharing in Christ’s divinity (the wine).

Next, the priest washes his hands and prays that he would be cleansed from sin, in preparation for offering the Sacrifice of the Mass.
DIALOGUE/PREFACE
At the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer, we lift up our hearts to the Lord. Even though we are still inside the church building, at Mass we step outside of time and are present at Christ’s death and Resurrection.

SANCTUS
At Mass, we pray with the whole Church on earth, the communion of saints, and all the angels, so we pray the prayer of the angels in Isaiah 6:3, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts! … All the earth is filled with his glory!”

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER
This is the most important part of the Mass. The priest asks the Holy Spirit to come down upon the gifts and prays Jesus’ words at the Last Supper. This is when the bread and wine truly become the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. When the priest holds up the Body and Blood of Jesus for the people to see and adore, we pray to ourselves in the words of Thomas, “My Lord and my God!” John 20:28

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION
The priest says, “The mystery of faith.” The mystery he is talking about here is the Eucharist, Jesus’ sacrifice made present to us. We respond, remembering the passion, death, and Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and remember that He will return again someday.
THE GREAT AMEN
The priest concludes the prayer with the Doxology, praising the Trinity, “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.” And we all respond in agreement with our, “Amen!”

COMMUNION RITE
THE LORD’S PRAYER
The Our Father is the prayer Jesus taught us to pray. It is a prayer that looks forward to the end times, praying that God’s kingdom come. This is continued in the priest’s prayer, which says that we “await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.”
SIGN OF PEACE
Jesus told us, “If you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” Matthew 5:23-24 At the Sign of Peace, we offer peace to those around us before receiving Holy Communion, to be sure that there is no division among the Body of Christ, so we can be one with the Lord and with each other.

AGNUS DEI (LAMB OF GOD)
We recognize that on the altar it is Jesus, the Lamb of God, Who has sacrificed Himself for us.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD
In the Early Church, the communities were small enough that everyone could receive from a single loaf, which symbolized the unity of the Body of Christ. Now, our parishes are much too large for that, but the priest still breaks his large Host, and some of the pieces are distributed to the people.

COMMUNION
Now, we can receive Jesus Christ truly present in the Eucharist. If you cannot receive Holy Communion for some reason (i.e. you have not yet made your First Communion, you did not fast for at least an hour before Communion, you committed a serious sin and need to go to confession, etc.) you can still make a Spiritual Communion at this time. See the back page of this lesson for more information. (See CCC 1355.)
PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION
We are never closer to Jesus than right after receiving Him in Communion, when He is truly present in us, so we take this time to quietly offer Him our prayers and thank Him for coming to us.

Prayer After Communion

My Lord and my God, how can I ever thank You enough for coming to me? You are Lord of heaven and earth. I am so weak and small, and yet I hold You in my heart. You have been good enough to give Yourself to me. Please accept all that I am and have. I want to give my heart to You. Please help me to do everything You want me to do. Keep me close to You while I live, and let me come to You in heaven when I die. Bless my parents and all those I love, and make them happy. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, help me always, especially at the hour of death. Amen.
CONCLUDING RITE

THE BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Before we leave Mass, the priest gives us a blessing to help strengthen us for the work we are sent to do throughout the week. The word “Mass” comes from the Latin word “Missa,” from this part of the Mass. It means “sent,” because we are sent from Mass, strengthened by the Eucharist and the blessings of the Holy Spirit, to do the work of the Church. We leave the church as living tabernacles of Jesus Christ to spread the Good News to all whom we meet.
Spiritual Communion
for older saints

As you know, one of the Precepts of the Church is that Catholics must go to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, and receive Communion at least once a year during the Easter Season. However, there are legitimate reasons for missing Mass on Sundays or weekdays. Serious illness, dangerous weather, or other circumstances might keep you at home on a day when you wish to go to Mass.

At those times, Catholics are encouraged to make a “Spiritual Communion”. This means that you take a quiet moment to meditate on Jesus, truly present in the Eucharist. You can say a prayer such as the one below.

Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,
I believe that You are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire You in my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though You were already there, I embrace You and unite myself wholly to You. Let me not be ever separated from You.

Amen.