

First Communion Prep during the COVID-19 outbreak

- Attend Sunday Mass via livestream. Make a prayer of spiritual communion.
- Practice a prayer of thanksgiving for your First Communion Day. Say: Thank You for coming to me in Holy Communion. I love You. Please help me love You more.
- Choose one day of the week to attend Mass. Choose a different church and a different country each time! If the Mass is not in English, watch how well you can follow along. The Mass is the same everywhere, all around the world.
- Examine your conscience before bed each night. Think of one way you served God, and one way you did not serve God. Say an Act of Contrition.
- Go to Confessions once a month—in the parish parking lot (How cool is that?!!)
- Finish the chapters in Faith & Life (Text & Activity book linked below)
- Read over your review questions.
- Pick one person each day. Offer up the sacrifice of waiting to receive Jesus for that person. Write his or her name down on your calendar.
- Pray for our priests.

Resources

[*Faith & Life: Student Text*](#)

[*Faith & Life: Student Activity Book*](#)

[*Review Questions*](#)

[*My Book of the Liturgy*](#)

[*Confession Guide*](#)

On the pages following, I offer some additional resources for you in continuing preparation and deepening understanding. Recall, though: the Church's expectation is that children have belief in and desire for the Eucharist. We do not expect full understanding—the Mystery of the Eucharist is beyond our understanding!—nor do we expect theological treatises from seven-year-olds. A child must believe that the bread looks like bread, but is not bread; it is the Body of Christ. The wine looks like wine, but it is not wine; it is the Blood of Christ. This additional information—and the prayer with which I accompany it as I send it to you—is that we might all deepen our belief and our desire for Our Lord, especially during this time of exile.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1322-1419)

"At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.'" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 47)

1322 The holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.

IN BRIEF (the summary of the teaching of the Church on the Eucharist)

1406 Jesus said: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; . . . he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and . . . abides in me, and I in him" (Jn 6:51, 54, 56).

1407 The Eucharist is the heart and the summit of the Church's life, for in it Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once for all on the cross to his Father; by this sacrifice he pours out the graces of salvation on his Body which is the Church.

1408 The Eucharistic celebration always includes: the proclamation of the Word of God; thanksgiving to God the Father for all his benefits, above all the gift of his Son; the consecration of bread and wine; and participation in the liturgical banquet by receiving the Lord's body and blood. These elements constitute one single act of worship.

1409 The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, that is, of the work of salvation accomplished by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, a work made present by the liturgical action.

1410 It is Christ himself, the eternal high priest of the New Covenant who, acting through the ministry of the priests, offers the Eucharistic sacrifice. And it is the same Christ, really present under the species of bread and wine, who is the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

1411 Only validly ordained priests can preside at the Eucharist and consecrate the bread and the wine so that they become the Body and Blood of the Lord.

1412 The essential signs of the Eucharistic sacrament are wheat bread and grape wine, on which the blessing of the Holy Spirit is invoked and the priest pronounces the words of consecration spoken by Jesus during the Last Supper: "This is my body which will be given up for you....This is the cup of my blood..."

1413 By the consecration the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is brought about. Under the consecrated species of bread and wine Christ himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real, and substantial manner: his Body and his Blood, with his soul and his divinity (cf. Council of Trent: DS 1640; 1651).

1414 As sacrifice, the Eucharist is also offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead and to obtain spiritual or temporal benefits from God.

1415 Anyone who desires to receive Christ in Eucharistic communion must be in the state of grace. Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive communion without having received absolution in the sacrament of penance.

1416 Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ increases the communicant's union with the Lord, forgives his venial sins, and preserves him from grave sins. Since receiving this sacrament strengthens the bonds of charity between the communicant and Christ, it also reinforces the unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ.

1417 The Church warmly recommends that the faithful receive Holy Communion when they participate in the celebration of the Eucharist; she obliges them to do so at least once a year.

1418 Because Christ himself is present in the sacrament of the altar, he is to be honoured with the worship of adoration. "To visit the Blessed Sacrament is . . . a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord"

1419 Having passed from this world to the Father, Christ gives us in the Eucharist the pledge of glory with him. Participation in the Holy Sacrifice identifies us with his Heart, sustains our strength along the pilgrimage of this life, makes us long for eternal life, and unites us even now to the Church in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints.

The Eucharist in Scripture:

A daily exercise in study & prayer for your family

Read the Bible aloud together. Many of these stories should be familiar to you from Religious Education classes and the readings we hear at the Mass. Discuss how these passages teach us about the Eucharist.

The Sacrament of the Eucharist is foreshadowed from the first chapters of Genesis and rooted in the Old Testament understanding of covenant. God made a special covenant with the people of Israel. We see this in the promise He made to Noah, to Abraham, and continually throughout the Old Testament. This covenant was a promise of love. God promised to love, protect, and care for His people. It was a covenant sealed in blood (we see this in the blood sacrifices, many of which are listed below). The Eucharist is the perfect fulfillment of the Old Testament promise. God became Man and sacrificed Himself on the Cross. He gives Himself to us in the Eucharist—which is mystically and truly the same sacrifice as the Sacrifice on Calvary. What a mystery! What a miracle!

- **Genesis 3: Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden of Eden.** By eating the fruit of the tree, Adam and Eve brought death into the world. The fruit (Jesus) of the tree of the Cross brings eternal life!
- **Genesis 15:9-11: God tells Abraham to sacrifice the animals as a sign of the Covenant.** What does Covenant mean?
- **Genesis 22: The testing of Abraham & the sparing of Isaac.** It is not Abraham’s only Son, but God’s Only Son Who will be the perfect sacrifice.
- **Genesis 14:18: Melchizedek, King of Salem.** This “priest of God most high” greets Abraham in the Valley of the King with bread and wine, prefiguring the Church’s own offering of bread & wine, “fruit of the earth, work of human hands”.
- **Numbers 18:12: Bread & Wine, a sacrifice of thanksgiving.** In the Old Covenant, that of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the People of God offered bread and wine among the first fruits of the earth, in thanksgiving to God.
- **Exodus 12:1-14: Passover.** Bread & wine received a new significance at the Exodus, the flight of the Israelites into the freedom of the Promised Land from the slavery of Israel. The wine, the cup of blessing, at the Jewish Passover meal is a sign of festivity & joy; but it has also a far more significant dimension; the expectation of the Messiah and the rebuilding of Jerusalem.
- **Exodus 16:2-13: The Israelites receive manna in the desert.** As we hear in Deuteronomy 8:3, this has a special meaning: “And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.” This is God’s sign to the people that they live by the bread of the Word of God.
- **Exodus 24:1-11: The Law & the Covenant.** After God gives the Law to Moses, the Covenant is sealed with the pouring of blood (sacrifice) and the eating of the sacrificial food (communion). Only those ready to enter fully into God’s covenant by following his law could share in the sacred meal. Through the prophets God promised his people a ‘covenant of peace’, “I will be their God, and they will be my people.” In Jesus the new covenant, sealed not in the blood of sacrificial animals but in the shedding of his own blood, is made. The lamb sacrificed at Passover is replaced

by Jesus, the Lamb of God. The offering and sharing of bread and wine in the Old Testament are linked with sacrifice, freedom, joy.

Jesus, who was Jewish, and perfectly fulfilled the Law and the Covenant, brought dramatically new meaning to the blessing of bread and wine when He instituted the Eucharist. Even before the Last Supper, He revealed to us the Mystery of the Eucharist, as we will see in the following passages.

- **Matt. 14:13-21, 15:32-39: Loaves and Fishes.** The miracles of the loaves, enough to feed the multitude, prepare us for the gift of the bread of the Eucharist, available to all.
- **John 2:1-11: The miracle of water to wine at the marriage feast of Cana.** This “first of the signs” heralds the wedding feast in the Father’s kingdom.
- Mark 14:25 ‘I tell you solemnly, I shall not drink any more wine until the day I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God.’
- Other meals shared by Jesus: with Levi (Mark2:15...), with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1...), at the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke7:36...); these were meals which proclaimed the kingdom and its openness to all who accept Christ. In the world of Jesus the shared meal was always a sign of peace, trust and community.
- John 6:32-58 The first announcement of the Eucharist, after the multiplication of the loaves, divided the disciples. It was a hard teaching for many to accept.
- John 13 tells of the Last Supper but writes of the washing of the disciples’ feet rather than the Institution of the Eucharist
- Matt.26:26-29, Mark4:22-25, Luke 22:14-20 the three synoptic Gospels have handed on to us the account of the institution of the Eucharist. By celebrating the Last Supper with his apostles in the course of the Passover meal, Jesus gave the Jewish Passover its definitive meaning. Jesus’ passing over to his father by his death and Resurrection, the new Passover, is anticipated in the Supper and celebrated in the Eucharist, which fulfills the Jewish Passover and anticipates the final Passover of the Church in the glory of the kingdom.
- 1Cor. 11:23-25 The oldest account of what happened at this meal is contained in Paul’s first letter to the people of Corinth, written about AD57.
- Acts 2:42, 46 From the earliest days the Church has followed the command of Jesus to ‘Do this in memory of me.’
- St. John speaks of the second tree in the Garden of Eden.
- St. John speaks of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb. In the Mass, Heaven touches Earth. We are united in the same sacrifice as that on the Cross and the same Feast as the Blessed enjoy in Heaven!

The Mass

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

The purpose of the Introductory Rites is to bring the people together into one body, a worshipping community, preparing them to hear the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.

- Entrance song and procession
- Sign of the Cross and Greeting
- Penitential rite
- Gloria
- Opening prayer

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Having unified our hearts, minds and voices and having acknowledged God's presence, we are now ready to open our ears so that the word of God might touch and transform us. The Word of God, sacred scripture is what gives the Church her mission. In the liturgy it is proclaimed, celebrated, made alive – so that we may live our lives according to its teaching.

- 1st reading
- Responsorial psalm
- 2nd reading
- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel
- Homily
- Prayers of the faithful

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

At the last Supper, Christ instituted the Sacrifice and Paschal meal that make the Sacrifice of the cross present in the Church. From the days of the Apostles the Church has celebrated that Sacrifice by carrying out what the Lord did and handed over to his disciples to do in his memory. The celebration of the Eucharist has always retained this basic shape: taking the elements of bread and wine in the preparation of the gifts, the act of thanksgiving in the Eucharistic prayer, the Breaking of the bread, the giving and sharing of the Body and Blood of Christ in Communion.

- Preparation of the Gifts
- Eucharistic Prayer
- Communion rite
- The Lord's Prayer
- The Sign of Peace
- The Fraction Rite (breaking of the bread)
- Distribution of Communion
- Prayer after Communion

THE CONCLUDING RITES

In the Concluding Rite we are sent forth to put into effect in our daily lives what we have celebrated. We are called to witness to Christ in the world and to bring the Gospel to the poor.

- Blessing
- Dismissal

Eucharistic Hymns (good for memorization!)

Hymns by St. Thomas Aquinas

*Tantum ergo Sacramentum
Veneremur cernui:
Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui:
Præstet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.
Genitori, Genitoque
Laus et iubilatio,
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benedictio:
Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudatio. Amen.*

*Down in adoration falling,
Lo! the sacred Host we hail;
Lo! o'er ancient forms departing,
newer rites of grace prevail;
faith for all defects supplying,
where the feeble senses fail.
To the everlasting Father,
and the Son who reigns on high,
with the Holy Ghost proceeding
forth from Each eternally,
be salvation, honor, blessing,
might and endless majesty. Amen.*

*O salutaris Hostia,
Quæ caeli pandis ostium:
Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fer auxilium.
Uni trinoque Domino
Sit sempiterna gloria,
Qui vitam sine termino
Nobis donet in patria. Amen.*

*O saving Victim, opening wide,
The gate of heaven to man below!
Our foes press on from every side;
Thine aid supply, thy strength bestow.
To Thy great name by endless praise,
Immortal Godhead, one in Three;
Oh, grant us endless length of days,
In our true native land with Thee. Amen*

Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All

*Jesus, my Lord, my God, my All,
How can I love thee as I ought?
And how revere this wondrous gift,
So far surpassing hope or thought?
Sweet Sacrament, we thee adore;
Oh, make us love thee more and more.
Oh, make us love thee more and more.*

*Thy Body, Soul, and Godhead, all,
O mystery of love divine.
I cannot compass all I have,
For all thou hast and art are mine.
Sweet Sacrament, we thee adore;
Oh, make us love thee more and more.
Oh, make us love thee more and more.*

*Had I but Mary's sinless heart
To love thee with, my dearest King,
Oh, with what bursts of fervant praise
Thy goodness, Jesus, would I sing.
Sweet Sacrament, we thee adore;
Oh, make us love thee more and more.
Oh, make us love thee more and more.*