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-How would you explain the idea of the American system of checks and balances in the branches of government to a six-year-old?

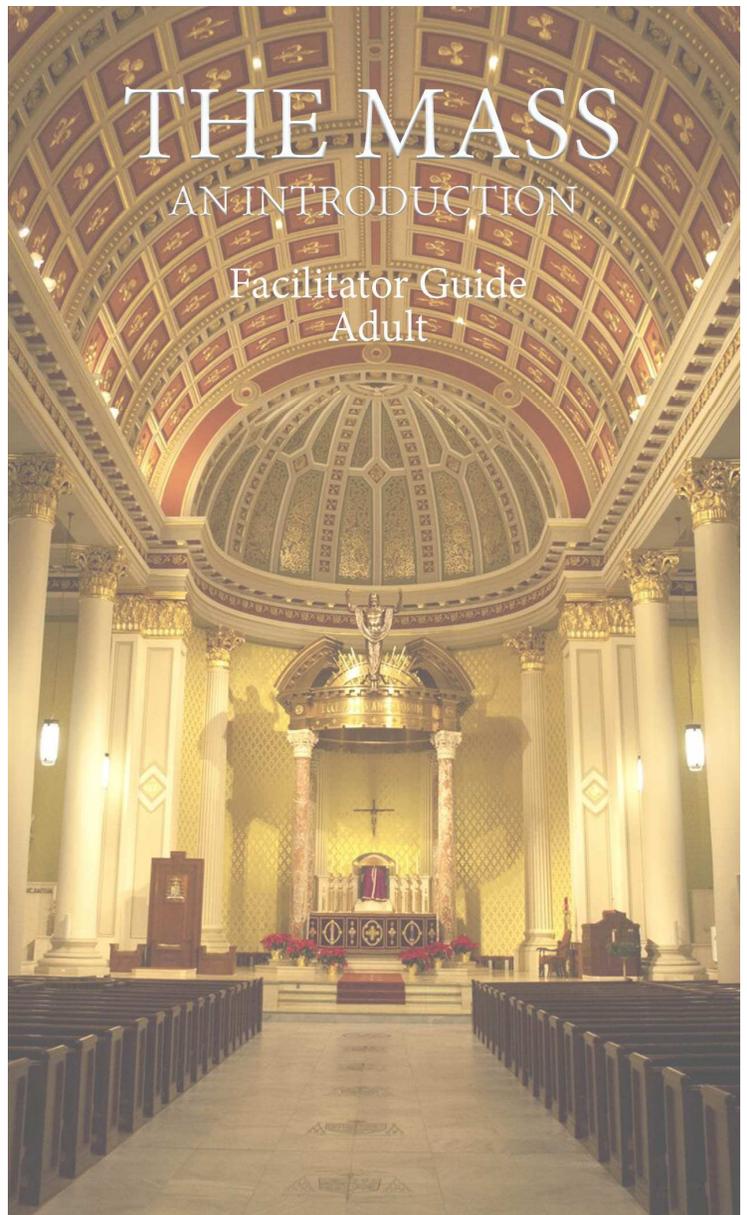
-There is no one right answer. The idea is that each attempt will take the lofty concept and put it in simpler terms, more common terms. Make sure that any attempt that is at all complicated is shown to be too complicated. The idea here is to show how one must make use of things that are relevant to the child for him/her to grasp. So too, God comes to us in ways that we can understand.

Go deeper: Read Exodus 33:18-23 and Exodus 34:27-35 Some things to notice:

-God makes it clear that Moses cannot look upon the face of the Lord without dying.

-God gives Moses a glimpse of his glory, and Moses' face is so transformed that the Israelites cannot bear to look at him.

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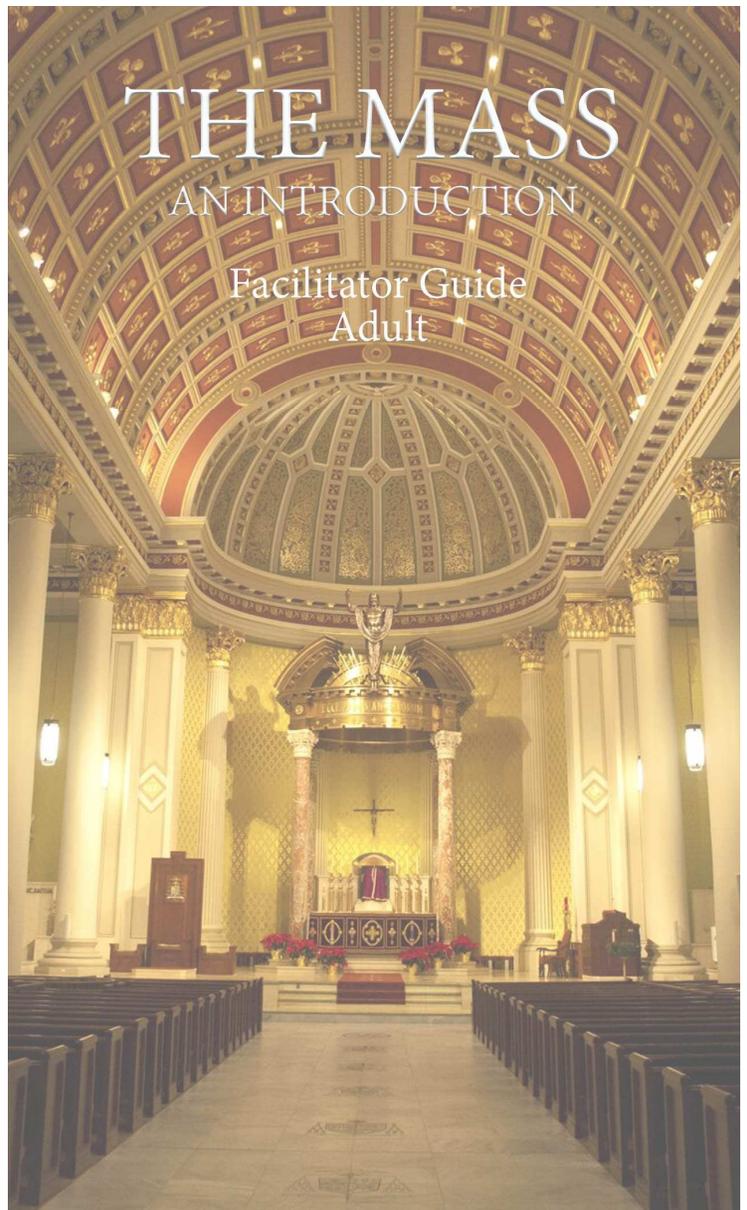
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THE MASS: AN INTRODUCTION

This introduction to the Mass is produced by the Archdiocese of Mobile, AL in association with 4 p.m. Media. There are many wonderful series produced about the beauty of the Mass and much of the symbolism within the Mass. This production is different, and much more basic. Why go to Church at all? Why worship in the context of a meal? Why the rituals? How can it be that God comes to us in such ordinary ways? In this four-part series we seek to answer these questions in a very conversational format.

This series can be effectively used as part of RCIA or an inquiry class, adult education and youth ministry. Each session is approximately fifteen minutes in length, making it ideal for a one-hour session. There is time for introduction and fellowship and time for discussion after the video session is shown. This written guide will help you facilitate the introduction and follow-up discussion. Please email the Office for Religious Education with comments, and especially with suggestions to include in the facilitator's guide.

Biographies:

Archbishop Thomas J. Rodi: Most Reverend Thomas J. Rodi is the bishop of the Archdiocese of Mobile. He was ordained for the Archdiocese of New Orleans in 1978 and served as a priest there until he was ordained bishop for the Diocese of Biloxi in 2001. Archbishop Rodi was installed as the ninth bishop of Mobile in April of 2008.

Dr. Norman McCrummen: Dr. McCrimmen is a native of the State of Alabama and is a former Presbyterian minister. Norman was received into the Church in July of 2011.

Dr. Alyson Meyer: Dr. Meyer is a native of New Orleans. Dr. Meyer attended Catholic schools from K-12 and then attended the University of South Carolina, from where she holds a Doctor of Pharmacy. She is an active young adult in the Archdiocese of Mobile.

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Go deeper: Read Exodus 12:1-10 and 21-28 Some things to notice:

- This Passover with all of the ritual is to be a perpetual remembrance, even once the Israelites have entered the Promised Land
- Recall from previous sessions and from general knowledge that it is precisely at this meal that Jesus tell us to, "Do this in memory of me."

SESSION 4

WHY DOES GOD COME TO US IN SUCH ORDINARY WAYS?

The purpose of this session is to explain why God chooses to come to us in such common place things like bread, wine and a book.

Discussion questions for before showing the video: (10-15 minutes)

Ask the following questions and solicit answers to the questions. Make it clear that you are not going to comment on the answers, just repeat them for everyone to hear.

- Ever wonder why God doesn't just appear to us?
- Have you ever had the experience of seeing someone famous or important, but you almost didn't recognize them because they were dressed so ordinarily?

Show the video (15 minutes)

Ask the following questions: *Insert answers from the video as necessary. Try to listen for these answers from the people who offer thoughts. When necessary, you can rephrase their answer slightly to make it fit what was offered on the video. Solicit other good answers in addition to what was offered on the video.* (15 minutes)

- Read Mk 6:3. How does this relate to the video?
 - Because Jesus was so ordinary, and everybody knew his family the people at the synagogue did not accept that he could be God. He was too ordinary.
- Can you think of very ordinary things that are very much more than

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SESSION 1

WHY WORSHIP AT ALL?

The purpose of this session is to answer the questions, "Why worship God?" "Why do I have to go to church?"

Discussion questions prior to showing the video: (10-15 minutes)

Ask the following questions and solicit answers to the questions. Make it clear that you are not going to comment on the answers, just repeat them for everyone to hear.

- Have your children ever asked, "Why do I have to go to Church? Why can't I love God from here?"
- How did or how could you respond to them?
- Have you ever heard some version of this, "Mass is...well...it's boring."
- How did or how could you respond to this?
- Do you think Americans work more hours or fewer hours than they did a century ago?
- Do you think more or less Americans attend church services regularly now than they did a century ago?

Show the video (15 minutes)

Ask the following questions: *Insert answers from the video as necessary. Try to listen for these answers from the people who offer thoughts. When necessary, you can rephrase their answer slightly to make it fit what was offered on the video. Solicit other good answers in addition to what was offered on the video.* (15 minutes)

- What is the most simple and direct answer to the question of, "Why do I have to go to Church?"
 - Because God commanded it
- Why did God command it?
 - Because he knew if we forgot who he was, we would eventually forget who we are
 - When we forget who we are, we begin to think we are just made for work instead of for joy, beauty, goodness etc. God does not want this.
 - It is very important that people don't see God's command as

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- Describe what a Mass might look like or seem like to a non-Catholic who has never attended one.
- Can you think of specific things in the Mass that you do not understand? (e.g. where does the Eucharistic Prayer come from?)
- Briefly describe a service from another Christian denomination. (Allow a few people to describe, but try to not repeat denominations)

Show the video (15 minutes)

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- From about what date can we be sure the Mass was structured essentially the way it is now?
 - from the middle of the second century, about 155. Note, this does not mean the Mass started then, but St. Justin writes about the practice at that time.
- Archbishop Rodi asked a man what led to his conversion, and he received an unusual answer. Do you recall the answer, and its significance?
 - "Early Roman art." Why? Because anytime Christians were depicted in Roman art from the first and second centuries there was a table or altar and a priest. The man realized that his church removed the altar and replaced it with an ambo, and replaced the priest with a preacher. He realized that if he wanted be like the early Church he needed to celebrate the Eucharist.
- Describe what might happen if St. Justin or another early Christian attended a Mass today. What are some of the elements they would recognize?
 - Priest, altar, Eucharistic Prayer, proclamation of the Bible, kiss of peace, petitions, communion, taking communion to the homebound, ...
- Imagine St. Justin or another early Christian walking into one of the non-Catholic worship services that we talked about before the video. What might the reaction be?

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being about his need to be worshipped, rather it is about him loving us and knowing what would happen if we forget him.

-More or less, where does the command to worship come in the list of the Ten Commandments?

-It is the Third Commandment. This is significant because it means God places it ahead of the other Commandments. The Commandments are in order of importance.

-What does Archbishop Rodi mean by a “weekend mentality”? What is the implication for this topic?

-We think of the weekend as our time to relax and rejuvenate ourselves so we can return to work for the next week. This is as opposed to a “Sabbath mentality” where people thought of it as a day set aside to worship God. The relevance is that when we develop a “weekend mentality” we resent the idea of going to worship, and we begin to define ourselves as being solely made for work.

Go deeper: Exodus 20:1-17. Some things to notice:

-Notice how much of the Commandments are directly related to our relationship with God.

-Notice the fact that the Commandments are ordered from most important to least, and that the Commandments pertaining to God are first.

SESSION 2

WHY WORSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF A MEAL?

The purpose of this session is to answer the question, “Why do we worship in the context of a sacred meal?”

Discussion questions prior to showing the video: (10-15 minutes)

Ask the following questions and solicit answers to the questions. Make it clear that you are not going to comment on the answers, just repeat them for everyone to hear.

-What events or ceremonies that take place with a meal?

-What is the best part of Thanksgiving dinner?

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-Can you remember the first time you invited your spouse home to dine with your family? Describe.

Show the video: (15 minutes)

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-Try to describe in your own words the difference between having a friend over versus inviting someone to join your family for a meal.

-Describe how you felt eating alone at home or at a restaurant.

-Describe how it felt when your friend wanted you to meet the rest of their family.

The point of all of the above discussion questions is to emphasize two points:

1. When people share a meal there is greater intimacy.

2. One on one personal friendship is great, but when we become friends with our friend’s whole family that is even greater.

Go deeper: Read Luke 22. Some things to notice:

-There is a purposeful tying together of the Passover supper (which became the Last Supper) with Jesus being handed over to his death, and his Passion.

-Jesus is very deliberate about the last night of his life, and what he commands us to do is found in verse 19.

SESSION 3

WHY IS THIS MEAL SO RITUALIZED?

The purpose of this session is to answer the questions, “ Why this meal? Why is the Mass so ritualized and not just a regular meal?”

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