

Chapter 7 Eucharist

Background Focus for Parents

The consecration of the bread and wine at Mass is the most solemn moment of the entire liturgical celebration. This is when the bread and wine, through the power of the Holy Spirit, become the Body and Blood of Christ. Not changing in form but in substance, the Eucharist becomes the true and Real Presence of Jesus, not merely a symbol of it. The gift of the Sacrament of the Eucharist is the gift of Jesus himself, promising to be with us always (Matthew 28:20) and to strengthen us as his disciples. It is a truly awesome gift we receive each time we go to Mass. This chapter teaches about the Eucharist and its beginning at the Last Supper. Although the changing of the bread and wine to the Body and Blood of Jesus can be challenging for children to fully grasp, it is helpful to remind them that Jesus gave us this gift of himself and that the Church has been celebrating the Eucharist ever since the Last Supper.

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to begin in prayer by leading in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence. Pray: Jesus, you gave us the Sacrament of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. We thank you and look forward to receiving this incredible gift. Amen. Close with another Sign of the Cross.

Activity

- Ask your child to share anything they know or have heard about the Last Supper. Encourage them by asking them questions such as these:
 - Why is it called the Last Supper?
 - Who was there?
 - What happened?
- Leave unanswered questions or errors in details for later discovery as you will read about the Last Supper in today's lesson and will see how the Last Supper is connected to the Eucharist, we receive each Sunday.

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find Mark 14:12–26 in the Bible.
- Discuss these two words your child might not know yet:
 - Disciple: a close follower of Jesus
 - Covenant: a serious agreement between two people or between God and people
- Read the story and ask the following for comprehension:
 - What did Jesus say after he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples? (This is my body.)
 - What did Jesus say after he took a cup, gave thanks, and handed it to the disciples? (This is my blood.)
- Say: Did you ever wish you could have been with Jesus when he walked the earth? Jesus wants to be with you so much that he did a fantastic thing. As we learned in the Bible story, Jesus gave us a farewell gift at the Last Supper: the Eucharist.

Now, at every Mass, through the power of the Holy Spirit, bread and wine become Jesus' Body and Blood (they still taste like bread and wine, don't worry! He comes to us AS bread and wine). They are really, truly JESUS! He comes as food so that he can enter us and be one with us and nourish us, just like food! Through the Eucharist, Jesus makes us more like himself. When we receive Holy Communion, we receive Jesus into our hearts. We grow closer to him and to one another. Jesus' Body and Blood give us strength to follow him more closely.

- Emphasize the following points:
 - Jesus gave us the Eucharist at the Last Supper.
 - At every Mass, the bread and wine become Jesus' Body and Blood.
 - The Eucharist strengthens us to follow Jesus more closely.

God's Treasure of the Eucharist

- Ask your child if they remember the different parts of the Mass (Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Concluding Rites).
- Remind the children that the Liturgy of the Eucharist follows the Liturgy of the Word and it begins with people bringing the gifts of ordinary bread and wine to the altar.
 - After the gifts are brought forward, the priest leads the assembly in the Eucharistic Prayer.
 - The Eucharistic Prayer is a prayer in which we give thanks to God for the gift of his Son, Jesus, and for all the blessings in our lives.
 - Tell the children that the **consecration** is when the bread and wine, through the priest's words and actions and the power of the Holy Spirit, become the Body and Blood of Christ. Point out that the priest uses the words of Jesus from the Last Supper during this time.
 - Explain that after the consecration, we proclaim the mystery of our faith
 - We then conclude the Eucharistic Prayer with the Great Amen.
 - When we say amen, we are saying yes to the gift of the Eucharist.

Closing

- Invite your child to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson and ask them to share some of the key things they learned. Ensure that the following points are made:
 - Jesus gave the gift of the Eucharist at the Last Supper.
 - The bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus at Mass.
 - The Eucharist strengthens us to follow Jesus more closely.