

that this part of the Mass is very important and we should never be late for Mass.

5. Read the paragraphs that explain each action of the Introductory Rites. They include: Procession, Opening Song, Sign of the Cross, Greeting, Penitential Act or Blessing and Sprinkling with Holy Water, Gloria, and Collect (opening prayer).

We do many actions that help us become a community. We begin with a procession. This shows we are united together.

We sing a song. We offer God praise together. We sing with one voice.

All of us make the Sign of the Cross. We do this with great respect. We proclaim Christ is present. This is called the greeting. The priest may use words like this: "The Lord be with you."

Sometimes at Mass we are sprinkled with holy water. This reminds us of our baptism.

At other times we pray the Penitential Act. We remember we are sinners. We also remember that God always loves us.

After this we pray a hymn of praise together. This is called the Gloria. We sing praise to God.

Then we all pray together. The priest says, "Let us pray." Then there is silence. Each one of us prays silently in our hearts. What could we pray for at this time? The priest prays in the name of the entire community. This is called the opening prayer.

- Be creative with the information. Have the children act out the different actions and responses we do at this time. Let them process. Show them how to make the sign of the cross reverently. Encourage them to say the responses loudly.
- The sidebar on page 2 in the student's text provides an outline of the Introductory Rites and the complete text of the Gloria.
- Make sure the children have a sense of the following:

- The importance of gathering together
- The Introductory Rites as sacred time
- When we gather together we take on the form of a community, the Body of Christ
- Jesus is present in our midst.

6. Read the material on page four that talks about the importance of celebrating Mass every Sunday.

We come to Mass Sunday after Sunday for as long as we live. We come together as God's holy people, the Body of Christ. It is important that we are not late for Mass. Why?

It is important that we never miss Mass on Sunday. Why?

What happens when you put a puzzle together and find one piece missing? What happens when you put together a toy and find a part missing? The same thing happens when one person is missing from Mass. We miss them. When someone misses our birthday party, we feel sad. When everyone is not at Mass, there is a piece missing from the Body of Christ.

As you prepare to receive your First Communion, you must remember that Sunday is a very special day. It is a day when everyone gathers to celebrate the Mass. This is a very important part of being Catholic. Sunday is so special that it has many different names. Look at the names given to Sunday in the box to the right. What name do you like best? Why?

- Stress the image of the Body of Christ.
- Talk about what happens when part of that Body is missing from Mass on Sunday. To emphasize the importance of unity, you may want to invite the children to sit as a "divided" group and then invite them to sit as a community.
- Review the different names we give to Sunday that are in the sidebar.
- Explain that one of the great laws (precepts) of the Church is to participate at Mass every Sunday (see sidebar).

2. Open the hymnal to the opening song for your child. Encourage him or her to sing this prayer with everyone.
3. Make sure your child knows how to make the Sign of the Cross with the whole community.
4. Help your child to know the responses and prayers in the Introductory Rites and to pray them with meaning. (You can find these in your child’s materials for Session one). Give special attention to the following:
  - The response “And with your spirit” to the priest’s greeting.
  - Penitential Act.
  - Singing the Gloria.
  - The response “amen” at the end of the Collect (Opening Prayer).
5. Children learn by doing and seeing. You are the best model for enabling your child to participate fully in the Mass by your own active participation in sung prayer, gestures, and responses.

## Prayer before meals

*(A family member may light a candle before the prayer begins.)*

### Sign of the Cross

**ALL:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**PARENT:** Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

**ALL:** A light no darkness can overpower.

### Prayer of Blessing

*(If bread is available for this meal, you may want to hold it while the following blessing is prayed. Family members may choose to join hands for the blessing.)*

Lord God,  
you sustain all creatures and never cease to  
give your children the food they need.

We bless you for bringing us together in the  
love that unites us around this table  
where the food we take strengthens our  
bodies.

We pray that, nourished by your word, we  
may grow ever stronger in faith  
as we strive for the coming of your  
kingdom.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**R/. Amen.**

### Reading from Scripture

*(To prepare for Mass on Sunday you may want to read a few lines from the gospel that will be proclaimed at Mass on Sunday. The scriptural citations may be listed in your Sunday bulletin. You can also get the readings for Sunday online at <http://www.usccb.org/nab>. Take time to talk about the reading. How is God speaking to your family in the reading?)*

### Closing Prayer

*(Parents may place their hands on the heads of their child[ren] as they bless them.)*

**PARENT:** The Lord bless us and keep us.

**R/. Amen.**

**PARENT:** The Lord’s face shine upon us and be  
gracious to us.

**R/. Amen.**

**PARENT:** The Lord look upon us with kindness  
and give us peace.

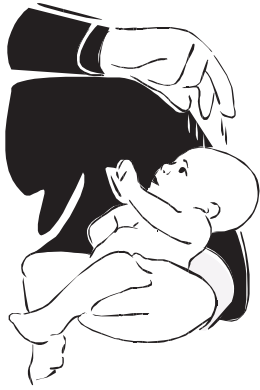
**R/. Amen.**

(ADAPTED FROM *CATHOLIC HOUSEHOLD BLESSINGS & PRAYERS*, WASHINGTON, DC: UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE, 1988; AND *BOOK OF BLESSINGS*, ICEL, 1275 K ST NW, SUITE 1202, WASHINGTON, DC, 1987.)

## Prayers at Bedside

### Sign of the Cross

**ALL:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



When you were baptized, many wonderful things happened to you. You were baptized into the faith of the Church. The community welcomed you with great joy! You became a part of the family of the Church. You belong to the Body of Christ.

Catholics “gather” together every Sunday to give praise and thanks to God. Sunday is a very important day. It is the Lord’s Day. We come to church with our families. We are welcomed at the doors of the church. We join with other people in our parish. We come together because we are a community. We are God’s holy people. We are the Body of Christ. When we gather together on Sunday, Jesus Christ is there with us.

When we come together, we make a beautiful mosaic. Do you know what a mosaic is? Look at the mosaic of the Body of Christ in your room. Who do you see in this mosaic? What does the mosaic tell us about the Body of Christ?

## Introductory Rites

We come from our homes every Sunday and gather as God’s holy people.

### Entrance Procession

### Opening Song

#### Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

#### Greeting

The Lord be with you.  
R/. And with your spirit.

### Penitential Act or Rite of Blessing & Sprinkling of Water

#### Glory to God

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

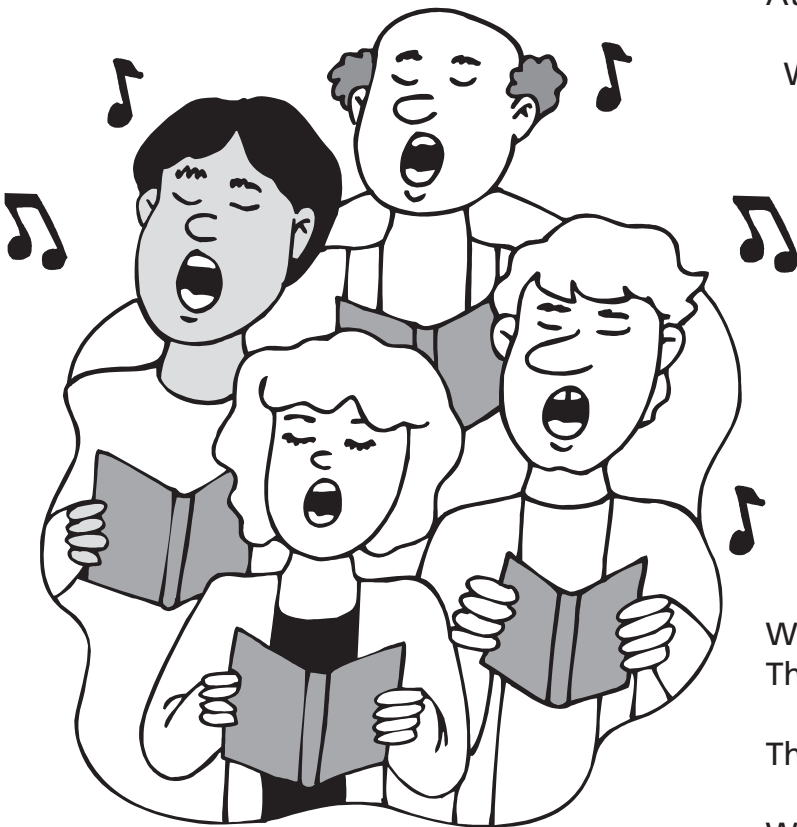
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

### Collect (Opening Prayer)

We come to celebrate Mass every Sunday.  
The first thing we do at Mass is gather together.  
This part of the Mass is called the Introductory Rites.  
This is a very sacred time.

We do many actions that help us become a community.  
We begin with a procession.  
This shows we are united together.

We sing a song. We offer God praise together.  
We sing with one voice.



All of us make the Sign of the Cross.  
We do this with great respect.  
We proclaim Christ is present.  
This is called the greeting.  
The priest may use words like this:  
"The Lord be with you."

Can you remember how we respond?  
Write the words here.

---

---

Sometimes at Mass we are sprinkled with holy water.  
This reminds us of our baptism.

At other times we pray the Penitential Act.  
We remember we are sinners.  
We also remember that God always loves us.

After this we pray a hymn of praise together.  
This is called the Glory to God.  
We sing praise to God.

Then we all pray together.  
The priest says, "Let us pray."  
Then there is silence.  
Each one of us prays silently in our hearts.  
What could we pray for at this time?  
The priest prays in the name of the entire community.  
This is called the Collect.

We do all these things at the beginning of Mass to unite us as God's holy people.  
These sacred actions help us to be a community.  
They prepare us to listen to God's Word.

<h2>Liturgy of the Word</h2>
<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p>Response: Thanks be to God. (Silence)</p>
<p><b>Responsorial Psalm</b></p>
<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p>Response: Thanks be to God. (Silence)</p>
<p><b>Gospel Acclamation &amp; Procession</b></p>
<p><b>Gospel</b></p> <p>Response: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.</p>
<p><b>Homily (Silence)</b></p>
<p><b>Profession of Faith</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nicene Creed</li> <li>• Apostles Creed (May be Used with Masses with Children)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Prayer of the Faithful</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs of the Church</li> <li>• Needs of the World</li> <li>• Needs of the poor and oppressed</li> <li>• Needs of the local community</li> </ul>

## Preparing for Catechesis on the Liturgy of the Word

### First Formation: Opening Prayer

The primary formation for Session two begins with the opening liturgical prayer. The prayers, music, scriptural readings, symbols, and gestures directly lead into the formal catechesis that follows. Make sure you have thoroughly

reviewed the prayer before your catechesis. The scripture readings in the opening prayer play a very important part in the catechesis that follows. Read the scriptures ahead of time before the catechesis.

### Environment for Your Teaching Space

The environment for your teaching space is very important. It is a “natural source” for catechesis. Symbols communicate meaning and the environment is a very important source of catechesis. It should complement the catechesis and not contradict it.

**Enthroned a Bible or Lectionary** in a prominent place in the room. Open the Bible or Lectionary to Matthew 13:9. Place it on a table to illustrate that we are fed on the table of God’s living Word.

**Pictures** Surround the room with pictures of the Bible, people proclaiming the Word, scrolls, images taken from the readings in the opening prayer, people engaging in the ministry of evangelization, etc.

**Seating** Seating may be arranged to foster the sense of community and enable the participants to listen to the Word of God.

**Atmosphere** Have music of psalms playing in the background as the children enter the room.

### Prepare ahead of time: Listening to God

One of the recommended activities for this session is using a conch shell to teach the children how to “listen” with their whole being to God speaking to them. This may be replaced with another activity that produces a similar experience of “listening.”

Another recommended activity is to hand each child a prayer card with a psalm on it as they enter the room. Psalm 40 will be used in the catechesis and may serve as an appropriate psalm to use here.

Do you remember the reading about  
the young boy named Samuel?  
He heard God speaking to him.  
He was quick to respond.  
He said to God, "Speak,  
and I will listen."

God still speaks to us today.  
He does this at every Mass.  
This happens at the Liturgy  
of the Word.

Every Sunday we listen to readings  
from Sacred Scripture.  
We hear about the wonderful things  
that God has done for us.  
We listen to three readings on Sunday.  
The first reading is usually from  
the Old Testament.  
We hear about the wonderful  
things God did for his people.  
Do you remember any of these stories?

The second reading is from  
the New Testament.  
We hear stories of the apostles  
and the first Christians.  
We see how they listened to  
the words of Jesus.

The third reading is always  
from the gospel.  
The word "gospel" means good news.  
We hear about the life and  
teachings of Jesus.

When we listen to the  
readings at Mass,  
we do more than just hear stories  
about what happened long ago.  
We believe that God actually  
speaks to us today.

At Mass we are to listen  
to the readings.

<b>Liturgy of the Word</b>
<b>Reading</b> Our Response: Thanks be to God! (Silence)
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>
<b>Reading</b> Our Response: Thanks be to God! (Silence)
<b>Gospel Acclamation &amp; Procession</b>
<b>Gospel</b> Our Response: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ. (Silence)
<b>Homily</b>
<b>Profession of Faith</b>
<b>Prayer of the Faithful</b>

## 2. Eucharistic Prayer

The principal focus for conversion catechesis for Session three is the Eucharistic Prayer. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) states: “Now the center and summit of the entire celebration begins: namely, the Eucharistic Prayer, that is, a prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. The priest invites the people to lift up their hearts to the Lord in prayer and thanks; he unites the congregation with himself in the prayer he addresses in the name of the entire community to God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the meaning of the Prayer is that the entire congregation of the faithful should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in offering the sacrifice. The Eucharistic Prayer demands that all listen to it with reverence and in silence” (GIRM, 78).

<b>The Eucharistic Prayer</b>
<b>Dialog</b>
<b>Thanksgiving/Preface</b>
<b>Holy, Holy, Holy</b>
<b><i>Epiclesis</i> (invoking the Holy Spirit)</b>
<b>Institution Narrative/Consecration</b>
<b>Memorial Acclamation</b>
<b><i>Anamnesis</i> (and Offering)</b>
<b>Intercessions</b>
<b>Final Doxology</b>

Unfortunately, catechesis on the Eucharistic Prayer has generally been very weak. Too often people see the prayer as only the prayer of the priest. They do not understand that the priest prays it in our name and they are unaware of the importance of every single part of it.

The liturgical reform after the Second Vatican Council restored its true meaning in the Eucharistic celebration. It especially emphasized three points about the prayer: 1) It is the central prayer of the Mass and of our faith; 2) Every single part of the prayer is important; 3) It is not just the prayer of the priest, but rather the prayer of the Church prayed in our name with one voice by the priest thus actualizing the unity of the Church.

The Eucharistic Prayer “summarizes what it means for the Church to celebrate the Eucharist” (IOM, 111). In and through this prayer we give “praise and thanks for God’s holiness and justice and for all God’s mighty deeds in creating and redeeming the human race, deeds that reached their climax in the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the Eucharistic Prayer the Last Supper is recounted; the mystery of Christ’s passion, saving death, resurrection, and ascension is recalled; the memorial sacrifice of his Body and Blood is offered to the Father; and the Holy Spirit is invoked to sanctify the gifts and transform those who partake of them into the Body of Christ, uniting them with the whole Church of God, living and dead, into one communion of love, service, and praise to the glory of the Father” (IOM, 112).

The Eucharistic Prayer is the great prayer of praise and thanksgiving by which the gifts of bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. It is also the prayer that sums up who we are as Catholics. By means of this prayer we are formed and transformed into what we pray.

## The Parts of the Eucharistic Prayer and their Meaning

**Dialog:** We begin the prayer by lifting up our hearts to the Lord. Here we affirm that we are gathered in Christ as one body and that our entire being is for God.

**Preface/Thanksgiving:** In this prayer of thanksgiving we acknowledge all the great things God has done for us and we give thanks.

**Acclamation (Holy, Holy, Holy):** Here we join ourselves with the angels singing praise to God. Heaven and earth embrace each other in this wonderful prayer of praise. We are truly a people caught up in the love of God.

**Epiclesis:** Here we call upon the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit to hallow the gifts of bread and wine and “make them the Body and Blood of Christ, and to gather those who receive them into a true communion of faith and love” (IOM, 118). We also pray that as the gifts of bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ that we, too, may be transformed.

**Institution Narrative/Consecration:** Here the words and actions of Christ at the Last Supper are repeated in obedience to his command to “Do this in memory of me.” Through the power of the Holy Spirit “these words achieve what they promise and express: the presence of Christ and his sacrifice among his people assembled in his name” (IOM, 119).

**Memorial Acclamation:** Acclamations are shouts of joy. Here the entire assembly proclaims its belief in the “Paschal Mystery of Christ’s death, resurrection, and presence among his people” (IOM, 120).

**Anamnesis and Offering:** We remember the saving deeds God has done in Christ so that their fullness and power may be effective here and now. It is an offering made by the whole Church.

**Intercessions:** We celebrate the Eucharist in communion with the entire Church and are united with all those living and dead. Here we name Mary and the saints who are examples

of those who lived the Paschal Mystery in their lives. We pray for the bishop of our diocese and intercede for the living and the dead.

**Doxology:** We conclude the prayer with praise and glory to God. Our “amen” confirms our belief in all that has been prayed in our name.

The Church has thirteen official Eucharistic Prayers:

- Eucharistic Prayer I
- Eucharistic Prayer II
- Eucharistic Prayer III
- Eucharistic Prayer IV
- Two Eucharistic Prayers for Masses of Reconciliation
- Four Eucharistic Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions
- Three Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children

## Preparing for Catechesis on the Eucharistic Prayer

### First Formation: Opening Prayer

The primary formation for Session three begins with the opening liturgical prayer. The prayers, music, scriptural readings, symbols, and gestures of this prayer lead into the formal catechesis that follows. All of these components of the prayer relate in some way to the words and symbols of the Eucharistic Prayer. Be sure to thoroughly review the prayer before your catechesis. Pay careful attention to the words of the prayers and the scriptural readings. Look at the symbols and ritual actions which invite the participation of the assembly.

### Additional Formation: The Eucharistic Prayers

The Church has thirteen official Eucharistic Prayers. They are listed above. The Eucharistic Prayers, except for those with children, are in the Roman Missal. As a catechist for this session

- Explain to the children that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. The word we use to explain this is “transubstantiation.” (The substance of bread and wine actually become the Body and Blood of Christ.)

9. Read the section on the memorial acclamation on page four.

We profess our faith with shouts of joy.

- Explain to the children that we are filled with such joy that we proclaim our belief in song in the Paschal Mystery.
- Invite the children to sing this acclamation.
- Ask them if they know any of the other acclamations.

10. Read paragraph three in column one on page four.

All this is possible, because Jesus died for us and rose from the dead to save us. We remember this saving event every Sunday. We thank God for this. We offer this sacrifice to God. We ask God to make us worthy to stand in his presence and serve him.

- Explain that every Sunday we remember the Paschal Mystery (Christ’s death, resurrection, and Ascension into heaven). This makes us a people of faith and hope.
- Explain that we offer this sacrifice to God and ask God to make us worthy to serve him.
- Invite the children to name ways they can serve God in this life.

11. Read the first paragraph in column two on page four on the Intercessions.

We do not celebrate Mass as individuals. We celebrate Mass as Church, the one Body of Christ.

At Mass we are united with everyone in the Church both in heaven and on earth. We ask that we may grow in love together with all the members of the Church. We remember Mary and the saints. We remember the pope and our bishop. We remember all those who have died. The celebration of the Eucharist unites us with all these people.

- Explain to the children that the Eucharist unites us with everyone, living and dead.
- Invite the children to name people they would like to remember at Mass.

12. Read the last paragraph on page four on the Great Amen.

At the end of this prayer the priest holds up the Body and Blood of Christ. We praise God once again for this great gift. We sing amen! We say “Yes, we believe.” Everything we have prayed is true.

- Explain to the children that our AMEN says “Yes, we believe.” We believe in everything that has been prayed in this prayer.

### We Live What We Pray

- This section invites the children to review the many ways they participate in the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass.
- It also invites them to remember the many ways they are called to live out this prayer daily. Ask the children if they can remember some of the ways they can do this.

**Catechist Resource.** For a wonderful theological and spiritual understanding of the Eucharistic Prayer read: *The Eucharistic Prayer at Sunday Mass*, by Richard McCarron, from Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago ([www.ltp.org](http://www.ltp.org)).

### Closing Prayer

**LEADER:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R/. Amen.

**LEADER:** Let us pray: (*Silence*)

in the social mission of the Church. It is an expression of the humble and contrite heart, the dispossession of self that is a necessary prerequisite for making the true offering which the Lord Jesus gave his people to make with him. The procession with the gifts expresses also our eager willingness to enter into the ‘holy exchange’ with God: ‘accept the offerings you have given us, that we in turn may receive the gift of yourself’” (IOM, 105).

Now we are ready for the Eucharistic Prayer. Too often people see the Eucharistic Prayer as only the prayer of the priest. We do not understand that the priest prays this prayer in our name. The Church teaches that the Eucharistic Prayer:

- ▶ Is the central prayer of the Mass and of our faith
- ▶ That every single part of the prayer is important
- ▶ That it is not just the priest’s prayer, but rather the prayer of the Church prayed in our name by the priest

The Eucharistic Prayer “summarizes what it means for the Church to celebrate the Eucharist” (IOM, 111). In and through this prayer we give “praise and thanks for God’s holiness and justice and for all God’s mighty deeds in creating and redeeming the human race, deeds that reached their climax in the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the Eucharistic Prayer, the Last Supper is recounted; the mystery of Christ’s passion, saving death, resurrection, and ascension is recalled; the memorial sacrifice of his Body and Blood is offered to the Father; and the Holy Spirit is invoked to sanctify the gifts and transform those who partake of them into the Body of Christ, uniting them with the whole Church of God, living and dead, into one communion of love, service, and praise to the glory of the Father” (IOM, 112).

The Eucharistic Prayer is the great prayer of praise and thanksgiving by which the gifts of

bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. It is also the prayer that sums up who we are as Catholics. By means of this prayer we are formed and transformed into what we pray.

The Church in the United States has thirteen approved Eucharistic Prayers: Eucharistic Prayers I, II, III, and IV; two Eucharistic Prayers for Masses of Reconciliation; four Eucharistic Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions; and three Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children.

## Activities for Parents

### What Can You Do in the Home?

1. Each day at times of prayer or just quiet time, ask your children how they “lifted up their hearts” to the Lord this day.
2. Talk to your child about the following points from their catechesis:
  - What are the things we can thank God for in our lives?
  - Do you feel “caught up” in the love of God? Name some examples.
  - How do you try to serve God daily?
  - Who should you remember in your prayers every day?
3. Read the gospel reading used in the prayer for this session: Luke 24:13–19, 25, 27–35. Talk to your children about the Emmaus story. Ask them how they recognized Jesus in the events of their day.

### What Can You Do at Mass?

1. Help your child to listen intently to the Eucharistic Prayer prayed by the priest.
2. Make sure they know the responses that we sing or say.
3. Remember, the best formation for children is seeing you actively listen and respond to this prayer.

This is a very important action.  
At Mass we always remember  
the needs of the Church.  
We also always remember the  
poor and those in need.  
We give our money to help  
the Church and the poor.  
What are the needs of your Church?  
What do the poor need?



Now we are ready to pray the great  
prayer of praise and thanksgiving.  
This is called the Eucharistic Prayer.  
The priest prays this prayer  
to God in our name.  
Through this prayer the gifts of  
bread and wine are changed.  
They become the Body and  
Blood of Christ.  
Through this prayer we ask to  
be changed as well.

## We ask to become a community of faith and love.

The Eucharistic Prayer has  
many important parts.  
The priest begins this prayer with  
“The Lord be with you.”  
We respond “And with your spirit.”

He then invites us to  
“Lift up your hearts.”  
We respond  
“We lift them up to the Lord.”  
We give our entire being to God.  
We know it is good to give  
God thanks and praise.  
How do you lift up your heart  
to the Lord every day?

Next we give thanks to God for all the  
wonderful things he has done.  
This prayer is called the Preface.  
Can you name some awesome  
deeds God has done?  
What can you thank God for?

We are filled with joy. Our lives are  
filled with the love of God.  
We praise God with the  
angels in heaven.

We sing: "Holy, Holy, Holy."  
Do you know the rest of this song?  
Have you ever felt filled with  
God's love? When?

The next part of the Eucharistic  
Prayer is very important.  
The priest holds his hands over  
the bread and wine.

He prays to God to send the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
so that the bread and wine  
may become the Body  
and Blood of Christ.

Later on in this prayer, we ask the  
Holy Spirit to change us too.

**We ask to become  
one body and  
spirit in Christ.**



What do you need to change in your  
life to become more like Christ?

Now we come to the heart  
of this prayer.

It is called the consecration.  
We repeat the words and actions  
of Jesus at the Last Supper.

**We follow his  
command to "Do this  
in memory of Me."**

The priest takes the bread, and  
praying in our name,  
repeats the words of Jesus  
at the Last Supper:

"Take this, all of you, and eat of it:  
for this is my Body, which will  
be given up for you."

Again, the priest takes the  
wine and prays:

"Take this, all of you, and  
drink from it,

for this is the chalice of my Blood,  
the Blood of the new and  
eternal covenant,  
which will be poured  
out for you and  
for many for the  
forgiveness of sins.  
Do this in  
memory of me."

**What a  
wonderful  
gift we  
have!**

The bread and wine become the  
Body and Blood of Christ.  
This is called transubstantiation.

We believe this. We rejoice!

## We profess our faith with shouts of joy.

We sing:

“We proclaim your Death, O Lord,  
and profess your Resurrection  
until you come again.”

All this is possible, because Jesus  
died for us and rose from  
the dead to save us.

We remember this saving  
event every Sunday.

We thank God for this.

We offer this sacrifice to God.

We ask God to make us worthy to  
stand in his presence and serve him.

What can you do to serve  
God in your life?

We do not celebrate Mass  
as individuals.

We celebrate Mass as Church,  
the one Body of Christ.

At Mass we are united with  
everyone in the Church both  
in heaven and on earth.

We ask that we may grow in  
love together with all the  
members of the Church.

We remember Mary and the saints.

We remember the pope  
and our bishop.

We remember all those who have died.  
The celebration of the Eucharist  
unites us with all these people.

Can you name some people you  
would like to remember in  
a special way at Mass?

At the end of this prayer the  
priest holds up the Body  
and Blood of Christ.

We praise God once again  
for this great gift.

We sing amen!

We say “Yes, we believe.”

Everything we have prayed is true.

**We Live What We Pray!** The Eucharistic Prayer is the great prayer of praise  
and thanksgiving. It is prayed by the priest in our name. We are called to participate in this prayer in  
many ways.

- ▶ Can you name some ways you participate in this prayer?
- ▶ You are also called to live out this prayer every day. Name some ways you can do this.

## We Believe

1. Review paragraphs three and four on page two and paragraph one on page three.

When we receive communion, we eat and drink the body and blood of Christ. We are fed. We are nourished. Jesus feeds all of our "hungers."

This is the most important part of the Mass. All that we have done at Mass leads to this moment. We gather as the Body of Christ. We listen to God's living Word as the Body of Christ. The priest prays the great prayer of praise and thanksgiving in the name of the Body of Christ.

Do you remember the name of this prayer? Now as a community we prepare to eat and drink of the body and blood of Christ. This part of the Mass is called the Communion Rite.

- Explain how it is important to be at Mass from the very beginning. All that we do from the beginning of Mass through the Eucharistic Prayer leads to the great moment of Communion.
- Invite the children to look at the parts of the Communion Rite on page 2. Ask them if they remember doing these actions at Mass.

2. Read paragraphs two and three on page three on preparing for communion and the Lord's Prayer.

Before we receive communion, we prepare for this most holy action. We do three things.

First we pray the Lord's Prayer. This is the prayer that Jesus gave us. We pray this prayer to our Father in heaven. We hope to be seated at the heavenly "banquet" when we die.

- Ask the children the following question: "How many of you know the Lord's Prayer?"
- Invite the children to pray the Lord's Prayer together. You may also want to have them sing the Lord's prayer using a version that is familiar to them in their parish.

# The Communion Rite

## The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

## Sign of Peace

## Fraction of the Bread

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us...

## Communion

The Body of Christ. R/. Amen.

The Blood of Christ. R/. Amen.

## Silence

## Prayer after Communion

- Explain that the Lord's Prayer is one of the main prayers of our faith, and it is prayed at every Mass.

3. Read paragraph four and five on page three on the Sign of Peace.

Then we exchange the Sign of Peace. This is a very sacred action. It shows our love and unity with everyone.

We may say, "The peace of Christ be with you," to the people around us. We do this with great reverence. It shows our unity as the Body of Christ.

- Impress upon the children that this is an important and sacred action in the Mass.
- Make sure you explain that this is not a social time in terms of greeting or saying hello to people. Rather it is a time where we show our “unity” and “love” for everyone present.
- Have the children exchange a sign of peace with one another.

4. Read paragraph six on page three with the children on the Breaking of the Bread.

Now the priest lifts up the consecrated bread and breaks it into many parts. We call this action the “Fraction of the Bread.” It reminds us that Christ died on the cross for us. During this time we sing: “Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.”

- Ask the children if they know what the word “consecrated” means. Explain that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ through the Eucharistic Prayer.
  - Catechists should be very careful with their terminology. For example, we do NOT teach that Jesus Christ is present IN the bread. We believe that the bread has become the Body of Christ. We believe that Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearances of bread and wine.
- Talk about the symbol of bread with the children and why Jesus chose that symbol for the eucharist. Explain how it is a perfect symbol for the Body of Christ.
- Do an activity around bread. You may want to explain (or show) how bread is made. Point out how the wheat is crushed and the dough is kneaded. These actions image Christ’s suffering and death on the cross. Point to the symbols of wheat and flour that

are in the room or ask the children what they mean.

- Explain that bread cannot be eaten unless it is broken. Take one of the bread symbols and break it apart. (Or use the bread sign that was part of the opening prayer.) Have the children share bread with one another. (Make sure that you do not have a child with celiac disease.) Explain how the Fraction of the Bread at Mass realizes all these meanings: Christ’s Body was broken for us so that we might be fed; Christ’s Body is meant to be shared by all present.
- Invite the children to sing a version of “Lamb of God.” Explain the importance of singing this at Mass.

5. Read paragraph seven on page three on the Procession and Communion Song.

Now we are ready to eat and drink of the Body and Blood of Christ. We are ready to receive communion. We process forward together. We pray in song together. This is called the communion song. We do all these things together to show our unity as the Body of Christ.

- Explain to the children the meaning of a procession. Point out that a procession is a “holy” walk that is different from just plain walking or getting in a line to buy something at the store. Explain how it symbolizes that we are a pilgrim people walking the journey of faith.
- You may want to have the children (or some of the children) demonstrate the difference between walking in a procession and regular walking or merely getting in a line.
- Explain to the children the proper way of holding our hands in prayer during the procession. It may be hands folded in

prayer or our palms placed together. Point out how our posture is important to the sacred moment. Invite the children to imitate this.

- Explain that the Communion song is THE prayer we pray during communion. Everyone should be singing until the entire community has received communion.

6. Read paragraph one, page four on receiving Communion.

We place our left hand as a throne beneath our right hand. The priest or minister proclaims: "The Body of Christ." We respond, "Amen." This means "I believe." Next we are offered the chalice. The priest or minister says: "The Blood of Christ." We respond, "Amen."

- Explain to the children the proper way we use our hands to receive communion: "We place our left hand as a throne beneath our right hand." Have the children practice this gesture.
- Explain to the children the proper way to receive communion from the cup. You may have the children rehearse these gestures now as well as at a special rehearsal time before their First Communion.
- Tell them that when they receive communion they will hear the words: "the Body of Christ" and "the Blood of Christ." Explain the importance of their response "Amen." Their amen affirms their belief in the body and blood of Christ.
- Explain that we receive communion from a priest, deacon, or an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.
- Remind the children that we receive communion at every Mass. We must at least do this once a year.

### Canon 919 #1

**"One who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain from any food or drink, with the exception only of water and medicine, for at least the period of one hour before Holy Communion."**

7. Read paragraph two on page four.

We continue singing until everyone in the church has received communion. After communion we sit in silence. We take time to thank God for this great gift. Then the priest prays the Prayer after Communion. We pray that our communion will change us.

- Emphasize the importance of silence after everyone has received Communion.
- Explain how the Prayer after Communion thanks God for the gift of salvation.

8. Read the paragraphs on the Concluding Rites.

Mass ends with the Concluding Rites. We receive a blessing. We are sent forth to go and live as the Body of Christ in the world.

- Explain that every Mass ends with a blessing and a sending forth or dismissal. Describe the importance of being sent forth to go out and live as a eucharistic people in the world.
- Explain that the response of "Thanks be to God" uses sacred words to express our intent to live as a eucharistic people in the world.

the natural and the sacramental level in the elements of bread and wine” (IOM, 125).

In other words, before we eat and drink of the body and blood of Christ we must express our mutual love and reconciliation with one another. This is a *condition* for communion. For how can we receive the “sacrament of unity” if indeed we are not united in love and reconciliation with one another? At the same time the fruit (result) of our eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ is the mutual love and reconciliation with one another which intensifies our unity.

Before we receive the body and blood of Christ, we must participate in three very important actions. We must pray the Lord’s Prayer, exchange the Sign of Peace, and participate in the Breaking of the Bread. Having done these actions, we are ready to eat and drink of the body and blood of Christ.

The communion procession is a very sacred action. It is more than merely lining up to receive communion. When we “process” we walk the journey of faith that began with our baptism. When we process to communion, we hold our hands in gestures of reverence. We sing together with one voice.

Communion has many levels of meaning. We eat and drink of the body and blood of Christ. We are nourished and fed on Christ’s Body. At the same time we truly become that which we eat: the Body of Christ. Listen to the words of St. Augustine:

If that is so, it is the sacrament of yourselves that is placed on the Lord’s altar, and it is the sacrament of yourselves that you receive. You reply amen to what you are, and thereby agree that such you are. You heard the words “the body of Christ,” and you reply “amen.” Be, then, a member of Christ’s body, so that your “amen” may accord with the truth.



Thus our amen in response to “the Body of Christ,” “the Blood of Christ” is an assent to all of the above.

## Activities for Parents

### What can you do in the home?

1. Use meal times to talk about the meaning of hunger and thirst. Just as our bodies need food and drink to live, so too do our spiritual lives need the body and blood of Christ.
2. Jesus used bread as the symbol for the Eucharist. During this week try to have bread present for your main family meal. Talk about the symbol of bread with your child. Point out how the wheat is crushed and the dough is kneaded to make bread. These actions image Christ’s suffering and death on the cross.
3. One of the most important teachings about communion is often missed by families. We believe that when we are dismissed from Mass that we are to go out and live what we have just prayed. Consequently, when the priest says, “Go forth, the Mass is ended,” and we respond “Thanks be to God,” we are agreeing to go out and live what we have

In the story of the loaves and fishes,  
the people followed Jesus.  
They listened to his words. They  
saw him heal people.  
The people were “hungry”  
for the words of Jesus.  
Very soon they grew hungry for  
food for their bodies as well.  
Jesus performed a miracle for them.

He blessed the food. He broke  
it. He asked his disciples to  
give it to the people.  
Jesus feeds our hungers, too. There are  
many different types of hunger.  
We get hungry for food. We can  
also hunger for other things.  
We can hunger for peace in the world.  
We can hunger for justice.

## We can hunger for love. What do you hunger for?

When we receive communion,  
we eat and drink the body  
and blood of Christ.  
We are fed. We are nourished.  
Jesus feeds all of our “hungers.”

This is the most important  
part of the Mass.  
All that we have done at Mass  
leads to this moment.  
We gather as the Body of Christ.  
We listen to God’s living Word  
as the Body of Christ.  
The priest prays the great prayer  
of praise and thanksgiving  
in the name of the Body of Christ.

## Communion Rite

### Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name; thy  
kingdom come; thy will be  
done on earth as it is in  
heaven. Give us this day our  
daily bread; and forgive us our  
trespasses as we forgive those  
who trespass against us; and  
lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.

### The Sign of Peace

#### Fraction of the Bread

Lamb of God, you take  
away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us.

#### Communion

The Body of Christ. Amen.  
The Blood of Christ. Amen.

#### (Silence)

#### Prayer after Communion

Do you remember the name of this prayer?  
Now as a community we prepare to eat and drink of the body and blood of Christ. This part of the Mass is called the Communion Rite.

Before we receive communion, we prepare for this most holy action. We do three things.

First we pray the Lord's Prayer. This is the prayer that Jesus gave us. We pray this prayer to our Father in heaven. We hope to be seated at the heavenly "banquet" when we die. Can you pray the Lord's Prayer?

Then we exchange the Sign of Peace. This is a very sacred action. It shows our love and unity with everyone.



We may say, "The peace of Christ be with you," to the people around us. We do this with great reverence. It shows our unity as the Body of Christ. Can you exchange the Sign of Peace with everyone in the room?

Now the priest lifts up the consecrated bread and breaks it into many parts. We call this action the "Fraction of the Bread." It reminds us that Christ died on the cross for us. During this time we sing: "Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us."

## Can you sing the "Lamb of God"?

Now we are ready to eat and drink of the Body and Blood of Christ. We are ready to receive communion. We process forward together. We pray in song together. This is called the communion song. We do all these things together to show our unity as the Body of Christ.

We stand in front of the priest or a special minister of the eucharist. We hold our hands in a very special way.

We place our left hand as a throne  
beneath our right hand.

The priest or minister proclaims:

“The Body of Christ.”

We respond, “Amen.” This  
means “I believe.”

Next we are offered the chalice.

The priest or minister says:

“The Blood of Christ.”

We respond, “Amen.”

We continue singing until  
everyone in the church has  
received communion.

After communion we sit in  
silence. We take time to thank  
God for this great gift.

Then the priest prays the Prayer  
after Communion.

We pray that our communion  
will change us.

Mass ends with the Concluding Rites.

We receive a blessing.

We are sent forth to go and live as  
the Body of Christ in the world.



The priest or deacon says:

“Go forth, the Mass is ended.”

We respond: “Thanks be to God.”

As Catholics we fully participate at  
Mass when we receive communion.

Your First Communion is very special.

It is the beginning of your full  
participation at Sunday Mass.

When we receive communion we are  
obeying the Lord’s command to:

“Take and eat” and “Take and drink.”

**We Live What We Pray!** When we receive the Body and Blood of Christ in communion we grow in our love of God and others. We are to be a “eucharistic people” in the world. We are called to live what we pray. Do you know what this means?

Just as we are fed on the body and blood of Christ in communion, so are we called to feed others. Many people in our world need to be fed. They have many “hungers.” The poor need food to eat. The lonely need someone to talk to. Those who are suffering need someone to help them. Those who are sad need someone to bring them joy. Some people have no friends. Other people suffer from wars.

- ▣ Can you name some other needs people have?
- ▣ What can you do to feed the needs of other people?