

# Eucharist Guidelines

June, 2000

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown gratefully acknowledges the dedicated efforts of the following committee members for their service on the Eucharist Committee:

Susan Blazosky  
Charleen Blum  
Deborah Hetrick  
Jennifer Long  
Reverend Robert Mazur  
Thomas McConnell  
Reverend David Peles  
Aileen Ropp  
Monsignor Timothy Swope  
Jeanne Thompson

Francine Swope—Secretary

We would also like to acknowledge the following resource person for his contribution to the Eucharist process:

Monsignor Michael Servinsky

## GUIDELINES FOR FIRST EUCHARIST

### INTRODUCTION

**It is important to recognize the difference between *religious education*, whether it is presented in a Catholic school, parish religious education program or home schooling, and *sacramental preparation*, which is parish based. These guidelines assume that in addition to attending a Catholic school, parish religious education program or home schooling, the child receives sacramental preparation and celebrates the sacrament in the parish of current membership. These guidelines also presume the parental right, assumed at the Baptism of their child, to educate their child in the Catholic faith tradition and requests parents to engage in the faith formation of their child before their child enters the Catholic school or parish program. It is the obligation of the parish to educate, support and encourage parents in assuming their rightful responsibility to educate their children in the Catholic faith tradition.**

Since Canon Law requires the bishop to implement the Church's mandates and adapt it to diocesan need, Bishop Joseph has issued a directive titled: "Catechetical and Liturgical Directives for the Celebration of Baptism of Infants, First Eucharist, Confirmation and First Reconciliation" (May, 1998). The Education Office, in consultation with other appropriate diocesan offices, proposes guidelines to assist parishes with the implementation of the Directives. These guidelines provide parishes with material to assist parents in their own faith formation and that of their children.

The first reception of Eucharist should ideally occur at a Sunday Mass during the Easter Season of second grade.

1. Eucharist preparation teams are encouraged for all parishes. The team may consist of pastor, Director of religious education, catechist, Catholic school teachers and parents who are knowledgeable in catechetics. It is the responsibility of the team to prepare parents to teach their child, provide communal formation and support for the family and to instruct on the Rite of Eucharist.
2. The responsibilities of the pastor are the following:
  - By virtue of his office the pastor is bound to provide for catechetical formation of adults, young people and children, to which end he is to employ the services of the clerics attached to the parish, members of institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, with due regard for the character of each institute, and lay members of the Christian faithful, above all catechists; all of these are not to refuse to their services willingly unless they are legitimately impeded. The pastor is to promote and foster the role of parents in the family catechesis mentioned in Canon 774 #2. (Canon 776)

In accordance with the norms established by the diocesan bishop, the pastor is to make particular provision:

- that suitable catechesis is given for the celebration of the sacraments;
- that children are properly prepared for the first reception of the Most Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Confirmation by means of a catechetical formation given over an appropriate period of time. (Canon 777 #1 and 2)
- "According to their respective offices in the Church, both pastors of souls and all other members of Christ's faithful have a duty to ensure that those who ask for the sacraments are prepared for their reception. This should be done through proper evangelization and catechetical instruction, in accordance with the norms laid down by the competent authority." (Canon 843 #1)
- become a member of and ensure adequate training for the Eucharist team.
- "those who ask for the sacraments have been prepared for their reception". (Canon 843 #2) This obligation may be fulfilled by the pastor and/or parish staff interviewing the parents and /or the child.

3. Sacramental preparation and celebration of the Sacrament of First Eucharist is to be parish based and family inclusive. It is presumed that candidates and their parents participate weekly at Sunday Mass at their parish. **Parish based sacramental preparation is in addition to education in the Catholic school, parish religious education program or home schooling.** Sacramental catechesis and celebration is modeled on the Order of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.
4. Reception of First Eucharist is celebrated on Sunday, the Day of the Lord. If necessary an additional Sunday Mass may be needed. This Mass should reflect the normal practice of the parish and not be a “First Communion Class” Liturgy.
5. First Eucharist preparation is to involve candidates, family members and godparents. (if possible).
6. Retreats are as follows:     1st grade— **Gathering for the Journey: Family Sacramentality**  
  2nd grade— **Food for the Journey: Eucharist**
7. As part of the faith formation, it is presumed that candidates are already actively involved in service which is required in Catholic schools, parish religious education programs and for those home schooling. Families of the children are invited to participate in parish based Christian service which is integral to living and proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ into which children were baptized.
8. The Rites are as follows:

**Rite of the Blessing of Candidates for Eucharist**

**Rite of Choosing Eucharist**—after parental preparation is complete; for example at the conclusion of the **Food for the Journey, First Eucharist Retreat**

**The Rite of Holy Communion**—on Sunday, the Day of the Lord, during the Easter Season of the candidates 2nd grade year

**ONGOING FAITH FORMATION PROCESS**  
**PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF FIRST EUCHARIST**

**First Phase: Call from God**

**Time:** Ongoing from Baptism.

**Aim:** Assist in deepening an appreciation of the baptismal call to meet Christ in Word and Sacrament.

**Content:** The faith formation process in the family, Catholic school, parish religious education program, or home schooling continues and includes Word, Worship, Teaching, Community and Service. Parents, children, godparents and family attend the **Gathering for the Journey: Family Sacramentality** Retreat, which provides preparation for First Penance/Reconciliation and First Eucharist. This retreat is to be conducted in the spring of first grade.

**CELEBRATION OF THE RITE OF BLESSING OF  
THE CANDIDATES FOR FIRST EUCHARIST**

**Second Phase: Formation of the Individual and Family**

**Time:** Following the Rite of Blessing of the Candidates, normally in January of second grade.

**Aim:** To understand the importance of the Eucharist in the life of a Christian.

**Content:** The faith formation process in the family, Catholic school, parish religious education program, or home schooling continues support and formation. Parents and candidates attend two preparation sessions and the **Food for the Journey: Eucharist** Retreat.

**CELEBRATION OF THE RITE OF CHOOSING  
THE SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST**

**Third Phase: Preparation and Reflection**

**Time:** Following the Rite of Choosing Eucharist and prior to the Celebration of Eucharist, during the Easter Season of the second grade.

**Aim:** Prepare for the **Celebration of First Eucharist**

**Content:** The faith formation process in the family, Catholic school, parish religious education program, or home schooling continues. The parents, children and godparents review the **Celebration of Eucharist** prior to the reception of First Eucharist.

**CELEBRATION OF THE RITE OF FIRST EUCHARIST**

**Fourth Phase: Continuing Growth in Faith**

**Time:** Following the Sacrament of First Eucharist.

**Aim:** Return to the table of the Lord every Sunday to be nourished by Word and Sacrament in order to go forth to love and serve the Lord and others.

**Content:** The faith formation process is to continue primarily in the family, and is supported by formal participation in Catholic School, parish religious education, or home schooling and includes Word, Worship, Teaching, Community and Service. Ongoing participation in the Sacrament, Sunday after Sunday is expected of all Catholic Christians.



# FIRST PHASE: CALL FROM GOD

**TIME:** Ongoing from Baptism through first grade.

**AIM:** Assist in deepening an appreciation of the baptismal call to meet Christ in Word and Sacrament.

**CONTENT:** Affirmation and support of family life helps to ground faith formation as they gather and participate every Sunday at the table of the Lord.

The parish provides and nourishes communal faith development.

It is assumed that children entering the preparation process for First Eucharist have faithful attendance in Catholic School, parish religious education programs or are faithfully home schooled from the beginning of first grade.

The liturgical life of the parish should encourage and support the faith journey of families. Regular participation at Sunday Mass is integral to the life of the baptized. The community gathers around Word and Sacrament to praise God.

Service is integral to living and proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ into which children were baptized. Parents and godparents are encouraged to live a life of ministry to others.

Parents, children, godparents and family members attend the **Gathering for the Journey: Family Sacramentality** Retreat, the preparation for First Penance / Reconciliation and First Eucharist.





## **RITE OF BLESSING OF THE CANDIDATES FOR FIRST EUCHARIST**

Explanatory Notes:

- (1) *The Rite is celebrated with candidates for First Eucharist along with their families. This Rite can take place anytime after the Food for the Journey: Eucharist Retreat and the beginning of second grade.*
- (2) *A priest, deacon, or lay minister may lead this rite.*

**Leader: + In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. All: Amen.**

**Leader:** These young children gather in preparation for their reception of First Communion. Their parents join them in this process of sacramental formation. We gather to ask God's blessings on these children and their families.

**Let us pray:**

Lord, Our God, teach us to cherish in our hearts the dying and rising of your Son by which you redeemed the world. In flame our hearts with a love for the gift of the Eucharist. May our participation in the Eucharistic mystery intensify our love of you, our God, and of our own brothers and sisters. We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

### **LITANY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST:**

Children preparing for First Eucharist Reception

Leader: Jesus, bread of heaven:	Children: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, bread of life:	Children: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, bread of thanksgiving:	Children: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, our Savior:	Children: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, our salvation:	Children: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, our resurrection:	Children: Have mercy on us.

Parents of children preparing for First Eucharist

Leader: Jesus, life giving bread:	Parents: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, new covenant:	Parents: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, food for everlasting life:	Parents: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, crucified for us:	Parents: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, risen from the dead:	Parents: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, reigning in glory:	Parents: Have mercy on us.

All respond: Children and family members

Leader: Jesus, food for the journey:	All: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, perfect sacrifice	All: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, mystery of the altar	All: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, Son of Mary	All: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, Lover of all	All: Have mercy on us.
Leader: Jesus, Lord of life	All: Have mercy on us.

**Leader:** Jesus has taught us to call God our Father,  
confident of the Lord's abiding love we pray. . . .

**All:** Our Father, who are in heaven. . . .

**PRAYER OF BLESSING**

(The leader of prayer imposes hands over the families preparing to receive the Sacrament of Eucharist.

The imposition of hands is a liturgical gesture found in the Old Testament, continued in the New Testament, and still used in the church today. It expresses identity and solidarity between the one imposing hands and those receiving the blessing.)

**Leader:** Lord, bless these children preparing to receive our Lord Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time. Bless their families who support them in this preparation. May the Eucharist be for each one of us our sacred nourishment for the journey of life. May the Eucharist always strengthen us to go out from Mass to serve the needs of our sisters and brothers. Bless us, Lord, and give us your protection. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

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

Possible Songs:

Gift of Finest Wheat  
At That First Eucharist  
Eat This Bread

Table Song  
Let Is Be Bread  
Humbly Let Us Voice Our Homage

## SECOND PHASE: FORMATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY

**TIME:** Following the Rite of Blessing of the Candidates.

**AIM:** To understand the importance of the Eucharist in the life of a Christian.

**CONTENT:** Affirmation and support of family life helps to ground faith formation in our baptismal call to discipleship and stewardship renewed at the table of the Lord.

The parish provides and nourishes communal faith development.

It is assumed that children entering the preparation process for First Eucharist have celebrated First Penance / Reconciliation in Advent and have faithful attendance in a Catholic School, parish religious education program or are faithfully home schooled.

The liturgical life of the parish should encourage and support the faith journey of families. Regular participation at Sunday Mass is integral to the life of the baptized. "The Church obliges the faithful to take part in the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and feast days and, prepared by the sacrament of Reconciliation, to receive the Eucharist at least once a year, if possible during the Easter season" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1389*). The community gathers around Word and Sacrament to praise God.

Service is integral to living and proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ into which children were baptized. Parents and godparents are encouraged to a life of ministry to others.

First Communion kits are not integral to the formation or preparation for First Communion. If kits are used adequate catechesis and follow-up, especially of the rosary and scapular, must occur.

Parents and candidates attend two preparation sessions that will give them the necessary information and material to enable them to prepare their child for First Eucharist. See Appendix, page C-32.

Parents, children, godparents and family members participate in the **Food for the Journey: Eucharist** Retreat.

In accordance with **Canon 843 §2**, the pastor or his delegate must ascertain whether adequate catechetical formation has been attained.



## RITE OF CHOOSING THE SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST

Explanatory Notes:

- (1) *The Rite is celebrated after the second phase (Formation of the Individual and Family) and before the third phase (Preparation and Reflection). This Rite is prayed with the candidates for First Eucharist and their families.*
- (2) *A priest, deacon, or lay person may lead this Rite.*

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

As the celebration of first Eucharist approaches for these children, we gather to pray that this great Sacrament will always be the center of their lives.

**Let us Pray:**

Lord, may the Eucharist always be the source of strength in our lives. The Body and Blood of Christ are essential for our daily living. Make us desire and cherish this Sacrament of divine Food and Drink. Help us to grow in love of the Eucharist. We pray this through Christ Our Lord.

**All:** Amen

**READING** - (Choose one):        **Luke 22:14-20**  
    **Luke 24:28-35**  
    **John 6:48-51**

**LEADER:**        God has given us the great sacrament of Eucharist. You are choosing to come to the holy table on your First Communion to receive Jesus Christ as holy Food and Drink. And so I ask the children preparing for First Eucharist:

**TO CHILDREN:**

Do you want to receive Jesus Christ at Mass when you celebrate your First Eucharist? . . . **Resp: I do.**

Do you believe that bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ at Mass? . . . **Resp: I do.**

Do you want to celebrate at Mass every Sunday? . . . **Resp: I do.**

**TO PARENTS:**

Do you also want, with all your heart, to celebrate Christ's life at Sunday Eucharist? . . . **Resp: I do.**

Will you make every effort to bring your child to Sunday Mass every week? . . . **Resp: I do.**

**LEADER:**        God cares for the Church, the people of God, as a shepherd watches over his flock. Looking forward to the celebration of First Eucharist, we pray the prayer Jesus taught us.

**ALL:**        Our Father, who are in heaven. . . .

## **PRAYER OF BLESSING**

(The leader of prayer imposes hands over the families preparing to receive the Sacrament of Eucharist.

The imposition of hands is a liturgical gesture found in the Old Testament, continued in the New Testament, and still used in the church today. It expresses identity and solidarity between the one imposing hands and those receiving the blessing.)

God, Giver of all good gifts, bless these children and their families as they choose to celebrate the great Sacrament of the Eucharist. The Mass is our public prayer of thanks and praise to you, our Sovereign Lord. Through Jesus Christ, may these families always find nourishment at the table of the Word and the table of the Eucharist. Bless these pilgrims on their journey and sustain them with the Food from heaven. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

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

Possible Songs:

One Bread, One Body  
Taste and See  
O Saving Victim

Bread for the World  
Life Giving Bread, Saving Cup  
We Remember

## THIRD PHASE: PREPARATION AND REFLECTION

**TIME:** Following the **Rite of Choosing the Eucharist** and prior to the **Celebration of the Eucharist**.

**AIM:** Prepare for the celebration of First Eucharist.

**CONTENT:** Affirmation and support of family life helps to ground faith formation in full, active and conscious participation of each member gathered with the Sunday assembly.

The parish provides and nourishes communal faith development.

It is assumed that children continuing the preparation process for First Eucharist have faithful attendance in Catholic School, parish religious education programs or are faithfully home schooled from the beginning of first grade.

The liturgical life of the parish should encourage and support the faith journey of families. Regular participation at Sunday Mass is integral to the life of the baptized. The community gathers around Word and Sacrament to praise God.

Service is integral to living and proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ into which children were baptized. Parents and godparents are encouraged to a life of ministry to others.

Parents, children and godparents review **Rite of Holy Communion**.

Practice for the **celebration of the Eucharist** should be simple and direct.





## **THE RITE OF EUCHARIST**

### Explanatory Notes:

(1) *The celebration of First Eucharist ideally occurs during the Easter Season. Always celebrated within Mass, First Communion takes place at a Sunday Eucharist. (Ideally, First Eucharist would take place at a regularly scheduled Sunday Mass. If space does not allow for this, then another time for Mass is scheduled on Sunday.)*

(2) *The diocesan guidelines for Liturgy apply at First Eucharist. Fully initiated believers are to proclaim the Scripture readings. In the absence of the deacon, the children and their families may pray the intercessions. Bringing up the gifts, hospitality ministry, and cantoring the hymnody can be assigned to the families involved in First Eucharist. The liturgical ideal is that the celebration of First Eucharist be similar to the families' Sunday after Sunday celebration of Mass.*

### **Introductory Rites**

Entrance Song  
Greeting  
Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling with Water  
Penitential Rite  
Glory to God  
Opening Prayer

### **Liturgy of the Word**

First Reading  
Psalm (Sung)  
Second Reading  
Gospel Acclamation (Sung)  
Gospel  
Homily  
Profession of Faith  
General Intercessions

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts  
Prayer Over the Gifts  
Eucharistic Prayer and Sung Acclamations

### **Communion Rite**

Lord's Prayer  
Sign of Peace  
Breaking of the Bread  
Communion  
Communion Song  
Period of Silence  
Prayer After Communion

### **Concluding Rite**

Greeting  
Blessing  
Dismissal



# FOURTH PHASE: CONTINUING GROWTH IN THE FAITH

**TIME:** Following the Sacrament of First Eucharist

**AIM:** Return to the table of the Lord every Sunday to be nourished by Word and Sacrament in order to go forth to love and serve the Lord and others

**CONTENT:** Affirmation and support of family life helps to ground faith formation in full, active and conscious participation in the Sunday gathering for the celebration of Sunday Mass.

The parish provides and nourishes communal faith development.

After having received First Eucharist, it is assumed that children will continue to have faithful attendance in Catholic School, parish religious education programs or are faithfully home schooled.

The liturgical life of the parish should encourage and support the faith journey of families. Regular participation at Sunday Mass is integral to the life of the baptized. The community gathers around Word and Sacrament to praise God.

Service is integral to living and proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ into which children were baptized. Parents and godparents are encouraged to a life of ministry to others.



**APPENDIX**

Bulletin Inserts Explaining the Eucharist Process.....	Page	C-21
Canons.....	Page	C-23
Glossary.....	Page	C-25
Godparents.....	Page	C-28
History of Eucharist.....	Page	C-29
Parental Responsibility.....	Page	C-31
Parent Sessions.....	Page	C-32
Persons With Disabilities.....	Page	C-33
Resources.....	Page	C-34
Retreat Information for the Eucharist Process.....	Page	C-35
A. General Instructions for Retreats.....	Retreat 1	
B. <b>Food for the Journey</b> —Eucharist.....	Retreat 3	
Review of the <b>Rite of Holy Communion</b> .....	Page	C-37
Symbols and Ritual Action.....	Page	C-39
Theology of Eucharist.....	Page	C-41



## **BULLETIN INSERTS EXPLAINING THE FIRST EUCHARIST PREPARATION PROCESS**

### **First Eucharist Preparation Process**

Following the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Advent, Winter Ordinary Time and Lent are the months of preparation for the first reception of the Eucharist. Candidates for the Sacrament along with their parents and family will gather to pray and discuss the place of the Eucharist in their lives. These parish meetings are in addition to the classes at a Catholic school, at religious education program, and home schooling. Sacramental formation is an essential aspect of preparation for the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ. Pastors, along with the parish teams and parents, are responsible for this formation. Eucharist is the source of life for all Catholics. The celebration of the Mass is the summit of our spiritual activity. Preparation for this Sacrament of life is a very important process.

### **First Eucharist Preparation Process**

Catholics assemble at Sunday Mass to offer praise and thanks to God through the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. At Eucharist, believers are invited to meet God in Word and Sacrament. The Scriptures proclaim God's faithfulness to us. Bread and wine become the Body and Blood of the Lord. In order that our children properly understand the central Sacrament of the Faith, the parish provides a process of sacramental formation. Through workbook lessons, shared discussions, and experiential prayer, both children and family are nurtured and formed in our Eucharistic identity. The Bible, the community of believers, the priest, and the bread and wine are very important to the Mass. In preparing for First Eucharist, the parish prepares both young candidates and their families to fully participate in the mystery of Christ's dying and rising, the Body and Blood of Christ

### **First Eucharist Preparation Process**

Jesus Christ is sacramentally present in the bread and wine that becomes his Body and Blood. This holy food and sacred drink are the nourishment that pilgrims need on journey to God's kingdom. As our young children and their families enter the process of preparation for reception of First Eucharist, the parish offers a sacramental formation process that imparts knowledge of the Church's greatest gift, the Eucharist. Those preparing to receive their First Communion along with their families, will gather to discuss the Sacrament of the Eucharist. This sacramental formation process will also invite our children and their families to go forth from Mass to love and serve the Lord. Eucharist sends believers out to build up the Body of Christ. This formation process explains why Catholics gather each Sunday to celebrate Mass. Both our children and their families will be formed in an understanding and love of the Eucharist.





## CANONS

**CANON 843 - §2.** Pastors of souls and the rest of the Christian faithful, according to their ecclesial function, have the duty to see that those who seek the sacraments are prepared to receive them by the necessary evangelization and catechetical formation, taking into account the norms published by the competent authority.

**CANON 898** – The faithful are to hold the Eucharist in highest honor, taking part in the celebration of the Most August Sacrifice, receiving the sacrament devoutly and frequently, and worshiping it with supreme adoration; pastors, clarifying the doctrine on this sacrament, are to instruct the faithful thoroughly about this obligation.

**Canon 899 - §1.** The celebration of the Eucharist is the action of Christ Himself and the Church; in it Christ the Lord, by the ministry of a priest, offers Himself, substantially present under the forms of bread and wine, to God the Father and gives Himself as spiritual food to the faithful who are associated with His offering.

**§2.** In the Eucharistic banquet the people of God are called together, with the bishop, or, under his authority, a presbyter presiding and acting in the person of Christ; and all the faithful present, whether clergy or laity, participate together, in their own way, according to the diversity of orders and liturgical roles.

**§3.** The celebration of the Eucharist is to be so arranged that all who take part receive from it the many fruits for which Christ the Lord instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

**Canon 912** – Any baptized person who is not prohibited by law can and must be admitted to Holy Communion.

**Canon 913 - §1.** For the administration of the Most Holy Eucharist to children, it is required that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so as to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity, and can receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion.

**§2.** The Most Holy Eucharist may be given to children who are in danger of death, however, if they are able to distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food and to receive Communion reverently.

**Canon 914** – It is the responsibility, in the first place, of parents and those who take the place of parents as well as of the pastor to see that children who have reached the use of reason are correctly prepared and are nourished by the divine food as early as possible, preceded by sacramental confession; it is also for the pastor to be vigilant lest any children come to the Holy Banquet who have not reached the use of reason or whom he judges are not sufficiently disposed.

**Canon 915** – Those who are excommunicated or interdicted after the imposition or declaration of the penalty and others who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to Holy Communion.

**Canon 916** – A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to celebrate Mass or to receive the Body of the Lord without prior sacramental confession unless a grave reason is present and there is no opportunity of confessing; in this case the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible.

**Canon 917** – A person who has received the Most Holy Eucharist may receive it again on the same day only during the celebration of the Eucharist in which the person participates.

**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.

**§3.** Those who are advanced in age or who suffer from any infirmity, as well as those who take care of them, can receive the Most Holy Eucharist even if they have taken something during the previous hour.

**Canon 920 - §1.** All the faithful, after they have been initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, are bound by the obligation of receiving Communion at least once a year.

**§2.** This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season unless it is fulfilled for a just cause at some other time during the year.

**Canon 924 – §1.** The Most Sacred Eucharistic Sacrifice must be celebrated with bread and wine, with which a small quantity of water is to be mixed.

**§2.** The bread must be made of wheat alone and recently made so that there is no danger of corruption.

**§3.** The wine must be natural wine of the grape and not corrupt.

**Canon 925 –** Holy Communion is to be given under the form of bread alone or under both kinds in accord with the norm of the liturgical laws or even under the form of wine alone in case of necessity.

**Canon 926 –** In accord with the ancient tradition of the Latin Church, the priest is to use unleavened bread in the celebration of the Eucharist whenever he offers it.

**Canon 931 –** The celebration and distribution of the Eucharist may take place on any day at any hour, except for those times excluded by the liturgical norms.

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Altar** - holy table where we gather to celebrate the Eucharist on which we offer Christ as sacrifice and Sacrament. The proper reverence to the altar is a bow.

**Altar Bread**- (host, unleavened bread) made from wheat flour is consecrated at Mass and becomes the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Ambo**- liturgical furniture where the Word of God is proclaimed and sung.

**Amen** - an affirmation to the Paschal Mystery, the dying and rising of Christ.

1. The great Amen is sung at the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer.
2. Each individual responds, "Amen" as they receive the "Body of Christ" and the "Blood of Christ".

**Assembly** (congregation)- where two or three are gathered in God's name Christ is present. At Mass the community of believers gathers to praise and thank God in Word and Sacrament.

**Bishop** - ordained man sharing in the fullness of the priesthood of Jesus Christ who oversees the life of the diocesan church.

**Blessed Sacrament**- the consecrated elements of the Body and Blood of Christ reserved in the tabernacle.

**Breaking of the Bread, the (Eucharist)**- the term used by the early church for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

**Candles**-placed in the sanctuary area, around the altar and ambo, symbolizing Christ as the light of the world. Candles are a sign of reverence and festiveness.

**Chalice (the cup)**- the sacred vessel used to hold the Precious Blood of Christ.

**Ciborium** – the sacred vessel used to hold the consecrated Bread, the Body and Blood of Christ, at the Eucharist.

**Communion Rite** - within the Liturgy of the Eucharist this Rite includes the Our Father, Sign of Peace, Breaking of the Bread, Reception of Communion, the Communion Song, Period of Silence, and the Prayer after Communion. The communion song accompanies the procession of the faithful receiving the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Consecrate**- the priest praying on behalf of the assembly recounts the words of institution given by Christ at the Last Supper. In this recounting through the power of the Holy Spirit the elements of bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

**Corporal**- the cloth over the altar cloth on which is placed the bread and wine which will become the Body and Blood of Christ. This cloth is intended to catch consecrated particles of the Lord's Body and Blood.

**Covenant**- the unbreakable bond of love between God and God's people .

**Deacon** - the ordained man commissioned to assist the bishop and priest in the celebration of the Eucharist. It is the Deacon's role to Proclaim the Gospel and pray the general intercessions.

**Easter Season** – the Great Fifty Days of the liturgical year, which celebrates the Paschal Mystery in joyful exaltation as one feast day. This season begins on Easter Sunday and ends on Pentecost Sunday. The Easter Season is the appropriate time for the celebration of all the sacraments, especially the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist).

**Eucharist** - the Church's most important act of praise and thanksgiving to God. In this action of the Sacrament Jesus is present under the form of bread and wine. Christ is also present in the priest, Scripture and the Assembly.

**Eucharistic Prayer**- the official prayer of praise and thanksgiving celebrating the Paschal Mystery in which we offer Christ, ourselves, and our gifts to God. It begins with the Preface and ends with the Great Amen.

**Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion** (Eucharistic Minister)- the fully initiated and formally commissioned man or woman designated to minister the Body and Blood of Christ to the assembly and the sick.

**Holiness** - the state of God's unconditional love and the human response to God's gifts. Nourished by Word and Sacrament we are strengthened to live out our baptismal call to holiness.

**Holy Communion- (Eucharist)** reception of the Body and Blood of Christ which increases our union with Christ and the Church.

**Holy Sacrifice of the Mass**- the commemoration of the Lord's Supper, which allows us to enter into the movement of Christ's supreme act of love on Calvary in the Paschal Mystery.

**Last Supper**- the last meal Jesus celebrated with his disciples on the night before he died. Here we follow the command of Jesus to repeat his actions and words to eat His body and drink His blood. The Eucharist calls us to service exemplified by Jesus when he rose from this meal and washed the feet of the disciples. His followers have been commanded to do as he has done.

**Lectionary**- contains selected readings from both the Old Testament and New Testament used for the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word.

**Liturgy of the Eucharist**- the second part of the Mass, which asks us to gather around the table of the Lord. It contains the Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar, Eucharistic Prayer, Communion Rite, and the Concluding Rite (see the Sacramentary).

**Liturgy of the Word**- the first part of the Mass, which asks us to gather around the ambo (table of the Word). It contains the Introductory Rites, the Proclamation of God's Word, Homily, Profession of Faith and General Intercessions (see the Lectionary).

**Mass** (see the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass) This word derives from the Latin, *Ita Missa Est*, which means "go, you are sent."

**Mystery of Faith** (Eucharist)- the proclamation of the death and rising of Christ contained in the consecrated elements of bread and wine.

**Paschal Candle**- the largest candle in the church, blessed and lighted at the Easter Vigil, which represents the risen presence of Christ. Normally located by the baptismal font, it is placed near the altar or ambo during the Easter Season.

**Presider's Chair**- the liturgical furniture at which the ordained leads the assembly at prayer during Mass.

**Priest (presbyter)**- the ordained man commissioned to celebrate the Eucharist.

**Purificator**- the cloth napkin used to wipe the sacred cup containing the Precious Blood of Christ.

**Real Presence**- the mystery of faith proclaims that under the consecrated species of Bread and Wine Christ himself, living and glorious, is present in a real, true sacramental manner. The fullness of the sign of the Eucharist is to receive both the elements of consecrated Bread and Wine. The presence of Christ is fully and completely present in the consecrated Bread; the presence of Christ is fully and completely present in the consecrated Wine.

**Sacramentary**- the official liturgical book of the Church containing the prayers of the presider, the Eucharistic Prayer, and the instruction for the celebration of the liturgy. This book is used for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

**Sanctuary**- the part of the church building where the altar, ambo and presider's chair are located.

**Sanctuary Lamp**- a candle that marks the worthy location of the tabernacle.

**Scripture (bible)**- the inspired and revealed word of God proclaimed and broken open in the Liturgy of the Word.

**Sign of the Cross**- the ritual sign in which one signs themselves in the form of a cross. It is the sign of our redemption that invokes the Trinity. The sign of the cross opens and closes the celebration of Mass.

**Sunday, the Day of the Lord**- the day of resurrection, the first day of the week, when Christians gather to celebrate Christ's presence in Word and Sacrament.

**Tabernacle**- the sacred receptacle for the reservation of the Eucharist. The purpose of the tabernacle is first to reserve the Eucharist in a worthy place for the sick and those absent from Mass. The tabernacle also reserves the Eucharist for public and private devotion. The proper reverence for the Eucharist in the tabernacle is genuflection except in the case of liturgical processions.

**Vestments**- the sacred garments worn by the bishop, priest, and deacon during the celebration of the Mass.

**Wine**- made from naturally fermented grapes it is consecrated at Mass and becomes the Body and Blood of Christ.

## GODPARENTS

**Canon 774 §2.** Parents above others are obliged to form their children in the faith and practice of the Christian life by word and example; godparents and those who take the place of parents are bound by an equivalent obligation.

At Baptism godparents were encouraged to model Christian living by a faith-filled life. It was asked in the diocesan baptismal curriculum that godparents attend other sacraments for the child whom they sponsored. As another Sacrament of Initiation that your godchild is receiving, you are encouraged to attend First Communion. You are also invited to attend preparation sessions and Rites whenever possible and be included in the formation of the child for the Sacrament of First Eucharist. Parishes and families should encourage their active participation as a means of helping them to fulfill the baptismal promise made to the child at Baptism.

Suggestions for godparents both for those who live close and for those who do not live geographically close, regarding ongoing Christian modeling are:

- attend the First Communion
- send celebration cards, inspiring books that are age appropriate on the anniversary of the Baptism
- give spiritually formational gifts during the significant seasons of the church year such as Advent / Christmas, Lent / Easter (videos, scripture stories, saint books, etc.)
- when able to visit, make a point of attending Mass with godchild
- pray continually for godchild, parents, and family

## **HISTORY OF THE EUCHARIST**

Christian people, as a whole, have had a much longer history of unity than disunity. For over fifteen hundred years, Christians were for the most part, “in communion” with one another. The Eucharist is a sign of Christian unity, and yet since the Reformation has been one of the greatest barriers to disunity.

### **First Century**

- Strong evidence of a Eucharistic life in the New Testament Church
- Strong influence of domestic Judaism on early Christians
- Christian rituals emerged from mealtime traditions of Israel (food, meal, sacrifice, Berakah – blessing).
- Vessels were of a non-sacred nature. A simple cup, pitcher, and basket served the bread and wine.
- Community, not things, were most important.
- Believers (more than any single food) are the body of Christ.
- Table fellowship – central characteristic of Jesus’ ministry.

### **100-313: The Domestic Church**

- Models for Eucharistic Prayers emerged
- New Testament Canon emerged
- Evidence of vessels for both bread and wine
- Used same kind of bread for Eucharist that they baked and ate at home.
- The memory of Jesus sharing himself through bread and wine shaped the ritual.
- Bread from the community’s celebration of Eucharist was sent to members who were not present.

### **313-750: Rise of the Roman Church**

- Worship moved from the home to public buildings (basilica) after conversion of Constantine.
- Emergence of Eucharistic piety.
- Ordinary leavened bread still used for Eucharist.
- Transition from household vessels to liturgical vessels.
- Size of vessels mirrored the size of the community.
- Rise of clerics.
- Roman Canon and Eucharistic Prayer I was formalized in Latin.

### **750-1073: (Early Middle Ages) Frankish Domination**

- Unleavened bread became customary after the 9<sup>th</sup> century
- Widespread understanding of the Eucharist as the reenactment of the life and death of Christ.
- Priest’s hand were consecrated.
- Practice of placing bread on people’s tongue developed.
- Increased focus on Christ’s presence located in the bread and wine.
- Vessels were more important than community itself, ignored the other modes of Christ’s presence, especially the assembly.

### **1073-1517: (Late Middle Ages)**

- Seeing was believing, viewing the consecrated bread and wine was the ritual highpoint. - Elevation of Bread introduced.
- Seeing the bread became substitute for receiving it.
- Monstrance developed to increased theological and devotional focus on the Eucharist and the desire to see the host.
- Corpus Christi Feast developed as did processions with the Sacrament.
- Introduction of Benediction and Forty Hours.
- Private devotions began to occur simultaneously with Mass.

### **1517-1903: The Reformation and the Counter Reformation**

- Reception of Communion remained an infrequent event.
- The tabernacle was changed from a vessel to an architectural element.
- Council of Trent affirmed transubstantiation.

### **1903 and Beyond – Vatican II**

- Renewed belief in the centrality of the assembly in public worship
- Vessels are sacred not because of beauty and design, but because they mediate Christ's presence to the Assembly.
- Presence of Christ in both the Bread and the Cup
- Renewed emphasis on Christ's presence in the proclaimed Scripture.
- Vernacular used after 1965.
- Full, conscious, and active participation.
- Presence of Christ in the Presider, who now faces the people.
- Gathered assembly is sent out to preach the Good News of salvation to all.
- Church gives the option of returning to the earlier practice of receiving Communion in the hand.



## PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

**CANON 226 §2.** Because they have given life to their children, parents have a most serious obligation and enjoy the right to educate them; therefore Christian parents are especially to care for the Christian education of their children according to the teaching handed on by the Church.

**Canon 914-** It is the responsibility, in the first place, of parents and those who take the place of parents as well as the pastor to see that children who have reached the use of reason are correctly prepared and nourished by the divine food as early as possible, preceded by sacramental confession; it is also for the pastor to be vigilant lest any children come to the Holy Banquet who have not reached the use of reason or whom he judges are not sufficiently disposed.

By choosing to have their child baptized as a Catholic Christian, parents stated their intention to raise the child Catholic and to provide for ongoing faith formation. Sacramental preparation and celebration is central to the spiritual life of a Catholic. Because parents are the primary educators of their child out of love for them they should prepare them, whenever possible, for the reception of the Sacraments and share their faith with them.

The following guidelines will assist parents:

1. Create a tradition of family meals and blessings in the home.
2. Provide a consistent nurturing Christian presence in the home and be role models.
3. Pray with their child on a regular basis, such as bedtime, before meals, in the morning etc. Prayers such as the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Act of Contrition, Prayer to the Guardian Angel etc. Parents are also encouraged to read scripture stories to their children. The family rosary is an important church tradition parents are encouraged to pray with their children. If the child was enrolled in the scapular parents should discuss the significance with the child.
4. Be full and active members of a parish community
5. Participate in the following retreats:
  - 1st Grade- **Gathering for the Journey: Family Sacramentality** Retreat
  - 2nd Grade- **Food for the Journey: Eucharist** Retreat
6. Attend the **Rite of Blessing of the Candidates**, the **Rite of Choosing Eucharist** and the **Rite of Holy Communion** with their child.
7. Attend the required sessions that provide the material necessary to prepare their child for first Eucharist.
8. Participate in Christian service, whenever possible, i.e. ministering to others.
9. Attend parish penance services, especially the parish communal Lenten penance service, with their child to reinforce the importance of confession in the life of a Catholic Christian.

## PARENT SESSIONS

The goal of the parent sessions is to present the necessary information for parents to teach their child about the Sacrament of Eucharist from the selected text. Much of the preparation for First Eucharist focuses on the Mass. The information presented should help parents attain information regarding the celebration of Mass and provide the necessary skills and self-confidence in their ability to teach their children.

Texts present the following information, which should be included in the first session:

- Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.
- Sunday, celebrating the Lord's Day of resurrection.
- Church environment (prominence of the altar, ambo and chair.)
- Gathered assembly of believers and liturgical ministries.
- Parts of the Mass

### **1. Liturgy of the Word**

- A. Introductory Rites: Entrance Song, Greeting, Gloria, Penitential Rite, and Opening Prayer
- B. Proclamation of Scripture
  - 1. Old Testament (Acts of the Apostles in the Easter Season)
  - 2. Psalm (always sung)
  - 3. New Testament Letters or Book of Revelation
  - 4. Gospel
  - 5. Homily
  - 6. General Intercessions

- Parents will pray and discuss scripture stories of gathering and forgiveness.

The second session has the same objective as the first session, reviews completed text material and answers any questions that have arisen.

Texts present the following information, which should be included in the second session:

### **2. Liturgy of the Eucharist**

- A. Preparation of the Altar and Gifts: Prayer over the Gifts
- B. **Eucharistic Prayer**
- C. Communion Rite: the Lord's Prayer, Sign of Peace, Breaking of the Bread, Communion distribution, Communion Song, and Prayer after Communion
- D. Concluding Rite: Blessing and Dismissal to go forth and serve God and others

- Parents will pray and discuss scripture stories of sharing food, gathering and serving others.

## **PERSONS WITH DISABILITY**

**Canon 777- §4** Catechetical instruction may also be given to those handicapped in body or mind insofar as their condition permits.

**Canon 912-** Any baptized person who is not prohibited by law can and must be admitted to Holy Communion.

**Canon 913 §1.** For the administration of the Most Holy Eucharist children, it is required that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity, and can receive the Body of Lord with faith and devotion.

Those with mental disability have the right to be prepared, according to their capacity, for the reception of Holy Eucharist. In order to receive this Sacrament, persons should be able to distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food, even if this recognition is evidenced through manner, gesture, or reverential silence rather than verbally #20 *Guidelines For Celebration Of The Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*.

Preparation of a developmentally disabled person for the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation before that of Eucharist is also extremely difficult (Adapted from *Opening Doors* - Section M. Available from the Education and Family Life Offices.) It will be at the discretion of the parents, pastor and catechist as to whether a child with mental disability will be catechized for the Sacrament of Penance / Reconciliation and at what point catechesis will occur. The reception of the Sacrament should bring comfort to the person.

## RESOURCES

### EUCHARIST MATERIALS AND SECOND GRADE TEXTBOOKS

#### Textbooks

Benziger Publishing Company – *Come Follow Me*, 11 chapters (16-26) on Eucharist and liturgy.

BROWN-ROA – *Walking by Faith*, 7 chapters (9-10; 13-15; 21-22) on Eucharist and liturgy.

Loyola Press – *Christ Our Life*, 8 chapters (15-22) on Eucharist and liturgy.

Wm. H. Sadlier, Inc. – *Coming to Jesus*, 8 chapters (15-19, 22-24) on Eucharist and liturgy.

Silver Burdett Ginn – *This is Our Faith*, 11 chapters (9-20) on Eucharist and liturgy.

#### First Eucharist Materials

Benziger Publishing Company – *First Eucharist* – 8 chapters. Parents need the Catechist Guide. Separate family book.

[www.glencoe.com](http://www.glencoe.com)-contains information for family catechesis.

BROWN-ROA – *Celebrating Our Faith*- contains 8 chapters. Parents need the Teacher's Guide.

Liguori – *First Eucharist*- does not contain material on the Mass.

Our Sunday Visitor – *Around the Lord's Table*, 8 lessons. Parents need the Teacher's Guide.

Pflaum – *Together in Jesus* 6 lessons in leaflet or book format. Parents need the Catechist / Parent Edition. Contains a "Family Focus" poster that could be a core for family sharing. This edition also contains information for children with mental retardation.

Wm. H. Sadlier – *First Eucharist*, 5 chapters. Parents need the Catechist/Parent Guide.

Silver Burdett Ginn – *The Gift of Eucharist*, 9 chapters. Parents need either the Family Guide or Catechist/ Leader's Guide.

St. Anthony Messenger Press – *We Share the Eucharist* – 7 chapters, all inclusive.

Tabor – *Welcome to the Table!* - 6 chapters. Parents need the Catechist Guide.

## **RETREAT INFORMATION FOR THE EUCHARIST PROCESS**

Information Included in this Section:

General Instructions for Retreats

**Food for the Journey**—2nd grade Eucharist Retreat



## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR RETREATS

1. Each retreat follows the same format.

**We. . . .our experiences**

**. . . .listen. . . .**scripture gives us a deeper understanding of the significance of our life experiences. Scripture stories are the lens we use to reflect on our stories of daily living.

**. . . .with faith. . . .**share the wisdom and teaching of the church

**. . . .for the journey. . . .**what we have learned as a result of this process.

2. The retreats may be used as written, parts of a retreat may be used in existing retreats, or the “necessary catechetical components” may be incorporated into your own retreat.

**Note: All sessions and retreats must be incorporated into the Eucharist process. The “necessary catechetical components” for each retreat are to be used. These “catechetical components” are listed on the back of the cover page for each retreat.**

3. Adult facilitators for retreats can be assisted by youth and young adults. The witness and role modeling of youth and young adults is very important to the faith formation.
4. Two to three facilitators are recommended for each retreat. Facilitators are not necessarily the persons who share their Christian stories. If separate storytellers are present, the facilitators should share their stories briefly.
5. All summaries and the “Review of the Process” are presented by an adult facilitator.
6. Flip charts, large sheets of paper, or a large blackboard are to be used for each retreat. Participants should be able to see all the written material.
7. Appropriate Christian and contemporary music should be used throughout all retreats. Some examples of where music may be purchased are: the Franciscan Store, Loretto; or the Lamb’s Way, Altoona.
8. The prayer table, placed where it can be seen by all, must be used and should be covered with an appropriate colored cloth and contain a bible, candle and cross. You may want to “set the table” during the opening song of the opening prayer service.
9. Participants will be asked to bring pictures and/or objects necessary to each retreat. Participants should be given specific directions for the use of the pictures and objects prior to the retreat.
10. Small groups may be prearranged.





**FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY:  
EUCHARIST  
2nd Grade**

**Objective:** To connect everyday family life experiences of meals and sharing with the Sacrament of Eucharist.

5:00-5:10 PM	Welcome and Ice Breaker
5:10-5:25 PM	Gathering
5:25-5:40 PM	Opening Prayer Service
5:40-6:00 PM	Snack Break/dinner
6:00-6:30 PM	1st section <b>We.....</b>
6:30- 6:50 PM	2nd section... <b>listen....</b>
6:50-7:20 PM	3rd section... <b>with faith...</b>
7:20- 8:00 PM	4th section... <b>for the journey.</b>

Materials for the retreat:

Picture of a family meal

## **NECESSARY CATECHETICAL COMPONENTS**

### **1ST SECTION – We. . . . .**

The everyday life of the family.

The importance of family meals (as a preparation for an understanding of the Sacrament of Eucharist).

### **2ND SECTION - . . . . .listen. . . . .**

Scripture stories present Jesus gathering with friends and family at a meal.

The importance of table fellowship for an understanding of gathering, sharing, eating and healing (Eucharist).

### **3RD SECTION - . . . . .with faith. . . . .**

Connect family meals with the celebration of Eucharist as gathering, blessing, sharing, eating and healing.

Take families to the church and discuss the similarities between home furniture and church furniture. Include the special church furniture and sacred objects and their significance.

### **4TH SECTION - . . . . .for the journey.**

To remember, to recall our personal history of faith.

To connect this history with Eucharist.

To understand the importance of Eucharist for our daily lives.

## **GATHERING TIME (10 minutes)**

**Welcome by the Pastor or Facilitator (Introduction of the facilitators, if necessary)**

**Explain the Goals:** (list on a flip chart)

To affirm and strengthen the bonds of family life

To help those present understand the importance of meals for the family and for an understanding of Eucharist

To come to a deeper understanding of our faith history through the faith stories from the bible

To know the significance of church furniture and sacred objects that are an integral part of the Mass.

To give participants practical skills for making connections between the experiences of daily life and their Christian faith

## **ICE BREAKER**

All are to be given blank family crests and instructions (pg. Retreat 10) as they arrive. Ask them to complete family crests following the printed instructions.

## **Table Introductions (15 minutes)**

**Directions:** Gather participants into groups of 6-8 people. Invite each family to introduce themselves to their group using the family crest. Next, share their family picture of a meal and the ordinary or special event during which the meal occurred.

## **Opening Prayer Service (15 minutes)**

**Directions:** Introduce the prayer service and begin with an opening prayer. Prayer table should contain a bible, cross and a candle.

Song: choose one with a Eucharistic theme. Open with prayer.

Facilitator-shares their family picture of a meal and significance of the event. Place their family picture and shield on the prayer table.

-invites about one-half of the participants to place their family picture and family crests on the prayer table. Return to their seats.

Facilitator-shares their family picture of a meal and significance of the event. Place their family picture and shield on the prayer table.

-invites about one-half of the participants to place their family picture and family crests on the prayer table. Return to their seats.

After everyone has placed their pictures and shields on the prayer table a facilitator closes with the following or similar prayer:

**Dear Lord, we are gathered here together to learn the importance of gathering and meals for our families. Open our eyes and hearts to a greater understanding of the importance of our everyday family life for a deepening of the Christian faith and an understanding of the Mass and Eucharist. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

## **Snack Break (meal) (20 minutes)**

### **First Section We..... (30 minutes)**

**Direction:** Distribute the booklets and ask participants to write their names on the cover. (Children may do the following exercises separately to facilitate a deeper level of sharing by the adults). Facilitators share their answers to pages 2&3 in the booklet. Each person is to complete pages 2 & 3, Remembering My Story, and then share this information with their group.

List times when families gather for meals on the flip chart under **We...**

Facilitators are then to share a memory of a time at a meal table when they knew God was present. Those presents are to turn to page 4 and answer the same question.

**Facilitator summarizes:** The experience of eating together as a family is very important to help establish a sense of family. It does not matter whether families eat in dining rooms with good dishes, at a picnic table with paper plates or at Burger King or McDonald's. What matters is that the family takes time to be together, eat together and share their lives. It is often not what is eaten that is important but the sharing of our lives. We nourish not only our bodies but also our spirits as we eat together. Sharing food reminds us of our need for each other's presence and support. Eating together and sharing family stories encourages family togetherness and community. Eating, sharing life and experiencing community is also a normal event throughout the life of Jesus. There are many stories in scripture through which Jesus teaches in the context of sharing a meal.

(If children have shared separately bring them back with their parents.)

### **Second Section.....listen.....(20 minutes)**

Facilitator writes **.....listen....** on the flip chart.

**Direction:** There are many times in scripture when Jesus ate meals with others. What are some of those stories? List them under **...listen...** on the flip chart. (Make sure the Last Supper, eating with the disciples from Emmaus and the healing of the man with dropsy, Lk 14:1-6, are mentioned.)

**Explain:** There are many scripture stories where Jesus teaches and heals in the context of a meal. Refer to the stories listed and make the connection with eating and the lesson Jesus is teaching. For example, the feeding of the 5,000 shows us how Jesus cares for basic needs by sharing food with others. At the Last Supper eating bread and drinking wine takes on a new significance, the presence of Christ. In the breaking of the bread the disciples from Emmaus recognize Jesus. During a meal Jesus heals a man with dropsy showing his care and compassion.

**Direction:** Each family is to select one of the stories listed on the flip chart under **...listen....** Read the story in the bible. On page 4 of the booklet each family connects how they live with what Jesus taught.

**Facilitator Summarizes:** In the context of a meal Jesus teaches us many lessons. He heals and teaches us how to love and care for one another. Jesus teaches us that sharing what we have with others is important if we are to live as his disciples. Jesus tells us we will experience him in the breaking of the bread whenever we gather in his name. Families have the power to make Jesus present to others in the way we love, care, and forgive each other and in the way we extend ourselves as a family with our hospitality and care for others.

### **Third Section....with faith.....(30 minutes)**

Facilitator writes...with faith... on the flip chart.

**Explain:** The Catholic Church teaches us the importance between sharing food and celebration of the Eucharist. In the early days of the church people gathered and in the breaking of the bread believed Jesus was present with them. Today when the church gathers at Mass, we believe Jesus is present not only in the Bread and Wine but also in the priest, the gathered community and scripture stories. During the liturgy simple words, actions and materials reveal something profound- that God is present in the ordinary- in the food (bread and wine), in the people gathered, in the priest, and in the stories of our ancestors of faith found in scripture.

God is also present in our ordinary lives. Our family meals hold the same human elements as the Liturgy. We gather, prepare the food, ask a blessing, share stories, eat and express thanksgiving. Through the simple act of gathering and eating together healing also occurs in our families. Eating as family during our ordinary daily lives is holy. Eating the Body and Blood of Christ with our gathered brothers and sisters in Christ is holy. We cannot fully understand the holiness of Eucharist if we do not first understand the holiness of eating and sharing as family.

Video- Celebrating Sacrament Series, *Eucharist, Celebrating Community* by Twenty-Third Publications.

**Direction:** All go to the church. When they reassemble a reflection on God's house occurs. The following are showed, if appropriate and explained: (refer to glossary)

- Chair, Altar, Ambo, Font, Cross, Tabernacle, Paschal Candle, Word (Lectionary)
- The presence of Christ in the gathered assembly, Word, Bread, Wine and the Presider
- The Mass as both meal and sacrifice

### **Review of the Process (5 minutes)**

**Explain:**

1. **We....**refers to an experience, in this case family meals.
2. **...listen...** refers to connecting the experience of family meals to the meal stories of Jesus found in scripture. Scripture gives a deeper meaning to our family stories and experiences.
3. **....with faith...** refers to what we know about God through our Catholic tradition. In the context of Eucharist, a communal meal, we experience and celebrate the presence of God in our lives.
4. **.....for the journey-** is the final step that will help us reflect on the faith stories found in scripture, which teach us about the meaning of Eucharist for our lives.

### **Fourth Section.... For the journey (15 minutes)**

**Explain:** Give directions for the prayer service.

Ask adults/children to read Readings. Ask a musically talented adult to help lead the singing. Have a song sheet supplied so all can participate well.

Set the table with a nice cloth, a loaf of bread and enough wine for everyone.

## **Prayer Service**

### **Opening Song:** Eucharistic theme

**Leader:** Remembering is important. In remembering, we join our lives with the lives and history of others. In remembering, we recognize those who have given our lives meaning and purpose. In remembering, we recall our history and we prepare ourselves for the future.

**All:** Let us remember.

***First Reading:*** Exodus 16:4-8

**All:** Lord, help us to remember that you provide for our needs.

***Second Reading:*** Luke 22: 14-20

**Leader:** We remember Jesus, who gave his life for us.

**All:** Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.

**Leader:** We remember Jesus, who shares his life with us in the gift of Eucharist.

**All:** When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.

***Third Reading:*** Luke 24: 28-35

**Leader:** We remember Jesus, who was raised from the dead and lives with us.

**All:** Lord, by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free. You are the savior of the world.

**Leader:** We remember that Jesus will come again in the final triumph of God's kingdom.

**All:** Dying, you destroyed our death. Rising, you restored our life. Lord Jesus, come in glory.

**Peace:** Ask those assembled to share a sign of peace and unity.

**Leader:** It is as one family that we pray the prayer Jesus taught us, Our Father.....

### ***Breaking and Sharing:***

**Leader:** In the breaking of this bread, we invite Jesus into our hearts, into the hearts of our families and, through us, into the hearts of the whole world.

Direction: As a symbol of friendship and unity the leader breaks a piece of bread off the loaf and invites others to also share. All are invited to drink of the one cup.

**An appropriate song may be sung.**

**Leader:** Jesus, we remember your life, death and resurrection as we share this bread and wine. Let us share your life with one another through the way we love and care for others. Teach us to be generous with the gifts you have given to us.

**All:** Amen.

## **RESOURCES**

Booklets, family crests and pencils

Flip charts or poster board and dark markers

Prayer table covered with a cloth, candle bible and a cross

Music – Cassette or CD Player and tapes or CD's; Song sheets or missalettes

Video on the Eucharist, Celebrating the Sacrament Series, *Eucharist, Celebrating Community*, Twenty-Third Publications. (The Education Office has copies of this video.)

A loaf of bread large enough for those assembled

Enough wine for those assembled

## **REVIEW OF THE RITE OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Focus: To review the Rite, with emphasis on symbols and ritual action.

### **NECESSARY ELEMENTS**

1. The Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Number 10).
2. The place of the Eucharist within the sacramental system as a Sacrament of Initiation.
3. Review of the Communion Rite within the Liturgy of Eucharist
  - A. Lord's Prayer
  - B. Sign of Peace
  - C. Breaking of the Bread
  - D. Communion
  - E. Communion Song
  - F. Period of Silence
  - G. Prayer after Communion

Resources:

#### The Rites

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Section One, Chapter One, Article 1 and 2; Chapter Two, Article 1; Section Two, Chapter One, Article 3.

“The Rite of First Eucharist”, pg. C-15

“Glossary”, pg. C-25

“Symbols and Ritual Action”, pg. C-39





## **SYMBOLS AND RITUAL ACTION**

**Altar-** the holy table where we gather to celebrate the Eucharist on which we offer Christ as Sacrifice and Sacrament.

**Ambo-** the liturgical furnishing, the table of the Word, where Scripture is proclaimed and sung.

**Amen-** an affirmation to the Paschal Mystery, the dying and rising of Christ.

1. The great Amen is sung at the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer.
2. Each individual responds, "Amen" as they receive the "Body of Christ" and the "Blood of Christ".
3. the response after all orations

**Assembly** (congregation)- the community of believers, gathered in God's name, to praise and thank God in Word and Sacrament.

**Bow-** the ritual action which is the proper reverence shown to the altar.

**Bread-** made from unleavened wheat it is consecrated at Mass and becomes the Body and Blood of Christ. It feeds the hunger of the human heart.

**Breaking of the Bread, the-** one of the ritual actions of the Communion Rite, a sign of the sharing in the one Bread of Life, which is Christ. This action signifies we, who are many, become the one body.

**Commingling-** the celebrant drops a part of the host into the chalice which originally showed the unity of the Eucharist in the early church, i.e., the deacon taking a piece of the bishop's host to the neighboring eucharistic communities.

**Dismissal-** the sending forth of the assembly by the priest/deacon that sends the community into the world to praise and serve the Lord.

**Eating and Drinking-** that which sustains human life is ritualized at Mass with the consuming of the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Epiclesis-** the invocation prayed by the priest, which calls on God through the power of the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. During this ritual action the presider imposes his hands over the bread and wine which becomes the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Gathering-** the ritual action at the beginning of Mass during which the ministers and assembly are called together to celebrate the memorial of the Lord's meal and sacrifice.

**Genuflection-** the ritual action which is the proper reverence shown the Eucharist, on the altar, in the monstrance, and in the tabernacle.

**Listening-** the ritual action through which all of our senses enable us to hear the Word of God. Some of the ways the Holy Spirit empowers us to hear God's Word are: through the proclamation of Scripture, the gathered assembly, song and the ritual prayers of the priest.

**Lord's Prayer-** the Our Father, given to us by Jesus Christ, and prayed at the Communion Rite. The priest leads this prayer with his hand extended in the orans position.

**Posture** - the uniformity in standing, kneeling or sitting to be observed by all, which is a sign of the community and oneness of the assembly. It both expresses and fosters the spiritual attitude of those participating.

**Praise and Thanksgiving**- The Greek word *Eucharistia* means to give thanks to God.

**Preparation of the Altar** - following the Liturgy of the Word, the Lord's Table is now made ready for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The altar cloth may be placed on the Table. The *Sacramentary* and chalice are then placed on the altar.

**Presentation of the Gifts**- the gifts of bread and wine, along with monetary gifts of the community, are brought to the altar by members of the assembly. The presider is presented with one container of bread and one container of wine, which are placed on the altar. The monetary offerings, also in one container, are put in a suitable place, but not the altar.

**Procession**- ritual action during which:

1. Gathering of the assembly with the liturgical ministers to begin Mass. This entrance procession is accompanied by song.
2. Communion procession-the movement of the assembly toward the Table to eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ. This procession is accompanied by song.
3. Gifts, which will become the Body and Blood of Christ, are brought to the altar by members of the assembly at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

**Receiving Communion**- the ritual action done with reverence and respect exhibited in song and posture that accompanies eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ. Communicants have the option to receive the Body and Blood of Christ either on their hand or on their tongue. Either the consecrated Bread or the consecrated Bread and Wine may be consumed. The appropriate response is "Amen".

**Sign of the Cross**- a sign in the form of a cross made by the Christian as prayer honoring the Trinity. This ritual action opens and closes the celebration of the Mass.

**Silence**- the ritual action which:

1. Recollects those present at the penitential rite and after the invitation to prayer.
2. Furthers meditation after the readings and homily.
3. Offers God thanks and praise after the entire assembly has received Communion.

**Singing**- the ritual action of prayer offers God thanksgiving, praise, petition, and contrition. Minimal singing includes the Eucharistic Acclamation, the Gospel Acclamation, the two processions (Entrance and Communion) and the Psalm.

**Water**- the Christian symbol of our entrance into the life of Christ, Baptism.

1. As the Christian gathers for Mass, individuals sign themselves with water affirming our baptismal identity.
2. The ritual option of sprinkling with holy water recalls the community's common call to holiness in Baptism.

**Wine**- nourishment that sustains life. As the Blood of Christ it quenches the thirst of the human heart.

## **THEOLOGY OF EUCHARIST**

Jesus Christ said, "I am the living bread come down from heaven; if anyone eats this bread, he will live forever; ...he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal and...abides in me, and I in him" (John 6:51, 54, 56). Each week on the day of the Lord, Christians assemble as the body of believers, as Church, to publicly praise and thank God at Mass. As pilgrims on journey to God's kingdom, we gather to be nourished in Word and Sacrament. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Number 10.)

The Eucharistic celebration consists of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Two parts so closely connected that they form one single act of worship: "For in the Mass the table of God's word and of Christ's body is laid for the people of God to receive from it instruction and food" (General Instruction of Roman Missal Number 8). The Scriptures are the holy stories that tell of God's love, faithfulness and mercy. The table is prepared with bread and wine that become the Body and Blood of Christ. From the beginning of the Church, believers have gathered every Sunday to follow the command of Jesus to repeat his actions and words, and to hear the voice of God proclaimed in Scripture.

At Liturgy, Christ is present in the priest. The ordained leads the community at Mass and pronounces the words of consecration spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper. Christ is present in the consecrated elements. Bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ himself. Christ is present in the Scripture. It is Christ who speaks to us in the gospels. And Christ is present in the assembly gathered to worship. Wherever two or three are gathered, there is God. Thus Christ is present in the priest, the sacred elements, the Word, and the people. (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Number 7).

The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, liberation from slavery and sin to forgiveness and freedom. It is the work of salvation accomplished by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. In the Eucharist Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once and for all on the cross to his Father. As sacrifice, the Mass is offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead. The grace of this Eucharistic worship can obtain spiritual and temporal benefits from God.

The Church professes a consistent faith throughout the ages that the elements of bread and wine are transubstantiated into the Body and Blood of Christ. This mystery of faith proclaims that 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, his soul, his divinity are present in the form of the consecrated elements present on the altar, (Catechism of the Catholic Church Numbers 1376 and 1377).

Anyone who desires to receive Christ in Eucharistic communion must be in a state of grace. Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive Communion without having received absolution in the Sacrament of Penance (Matthew 5:23). Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ insures the communicant's union with the Lord, forgives venial sins, and preserves the believer from serious sins (Catechism of the Catholic Church Number 1416). The Church warmly recommends that the faithful receive Holy Communion each time they participate in the celebration of Mass. Catholics are obliged to receive the Body and Blood of Christ at least once a year at Mass (Canon 920).

Holy Communion has a more complete form as a sign when it is received under both kinds (General Instruction of Roman Missal Number 240). Believers are encouraged to receive the consecrated Bread and the consecrated Wine at communion. On the night before He died, Jesus took the bread and the cup and instructed us to "take and eat" and "take and drink". Eating the sacred Bread and drinking the precious Blood invites believers to enter more fully into the sign of Eucharist as sacrifice and meal.

After the first reception of Holy Communion, believers are obliged to gather at Eucharist each Sunday. Catholics assemble at Sunday Mass to offer praise and thanks to God by participating fully, actively, and consciously (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Number 14). It is our duty and right as the baptized to enter into full participation at the celebration of the sacred mysteries of faith. Being nourished at the table of God's Word, eating the Sacred Bread (the Body broken for our redemption) and drinking the precious Wine (the Blood poured out for our salvation) at the table of the Sacrament, Christians are commissioned to go forth from the Eucharist to love and serve the Lord. The Eucharist has strengthened us to give hope to the despairing, joy to the sorrowing, and healing to the afflicted. The Mass empowers us to bring Good News to the poor. Eucharist sends us out to build up the Body of Christ.

2/00 (3)  
Fr. Robert Mazur