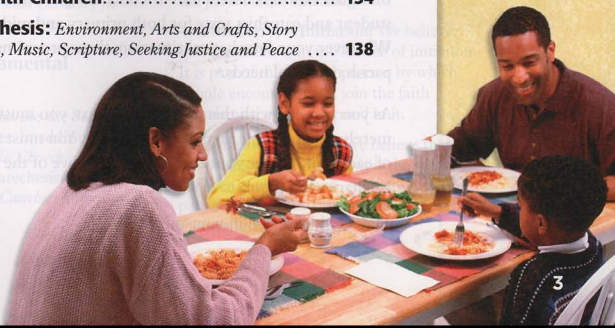


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CHECK THE CATECHISM

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches in paragraphs 2177 and 2178 that the Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life. This practice of the Christian assembly dates from the beginning of the Church in the time of the Apostles.

Faith Formation

Coming Together to Pray

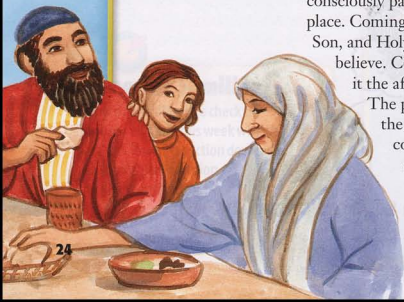
When Catholics gather for Eucharist, they are living out their need for communion with God in the company of others who also share a strong desire to praise and thank God together. It is important to gather, to assemble, and to worship as a community of faith joined as one voice raised in prayer. While there are many opportunities in the course of a day for solitary prayer, when we assemble with our faith community for Mass, we pray in unity with each other. The assembly is a vital part of the liturgical celebration. We believe that Christ is present in the assembly of the faithful, gathered together in his name; he is present in his Word, when the Scriptures are read; in the person of the minister; and above all, in the Sacrament of Eucharist. When the assembly prays at Eucharist, we become signs of the presence of Jesus, to one another and to the world. Eucharist calls us to lead a life of charity and justice.

What liturgical prayers express your praise and thanks to God?

Liturgy and the People of God

Liturgy, which is participation of the People of God in “the work of God,” presumes that those who gather will fully and consciously participate in the prayer and worship that takes place. Coming together to praise and thank God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary for those who believe. Celebrating Eucharist as One Body brings with it the affirmation of all that it means to be a Catholic. The prayers, the songs, the gestures, the posture, the sacred space, the presider, and the assembly all contribute to the liturgical experience of praise and thanksgiving that is Eucharist.

In what ways do you engage in “full, active, and conscious” participation in liturgical celebrations at your parish?



- Every Sunday we gather to celebrate the Eucharist.
- At Mass we remember Jesus, hear the Word of God, pray together, and share in Holy Communion.
- We are one Church, the Body of Christ.

Background

The Importance of Coming Together

Every human person is made by God to live in community. Children of this age enjoy being together with other children, especially classmates and family members. Take advantage of their natural longing to be with others as you teach this lesson. Explain that Jesus wants us to follow him, but he knows that we need one another to do so. Jesus gives us the Church community, our parish, so that we can come together to celebrate the Eucharist, to pray together, and to be a source of strength for one another.

Growth and Development

It is helpful to remember two characteristics of primary age children as you teach this lesson:

- **Children at this age like to learn and play with others.**
Create opportunities for the children to work together in small groups or share life and faith experiences with one another.
- **Children at this age are usually inclusive.** Most children do not wish to see other children left out. Each time they include others, praise them for caring about one another.

A CATECHIST'S PRAYER

Jesus, Son of God, each time I gather with these children, you are here in our midst. May our coming together be a sign of unity in you. Amen.

Vocabulary Preview

Christians

Catholics

Eucharist

procession

mercy

Scripture

1 Corinthians 10:17: Eucharist makes us one.

Acts 2:42-47: Early Christians gathered for Eucharist.

1 Corinthians 12:27: We are the Body of Christ.

Related Resources

Books

Miller, Charles E. *Mass on Sunday (And Other Reasons for Being Catholic)* (Paulist Press, 1-800-218-1903 or www.paulistpress.com). This book is an upbeat and often humorous explanation of Catholics gathering for Mass and engaging in other Catholic practices. (Adult)

Stanton, Sue. *Child's Guide to the Mass* (Paulist Press, 1-800-218-1903 or www.paulistpress.com). This book is a wonderful child's look at why we gather for Mass and what happens there. (Children)

CATECHIST ORGANIZER

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the children should be able to

- identify Sunday as the day Catholics gather to celebrate Mass
- explain why Christians gather for Eucharist
- describe what takes place during the Introductory Rites

Materials Needed for Basic Lesson Plan

Page 13	Gathering	Pencils, crayons, drawing paper
Pages 14-15	Christians Gather	Let's Talk questions
Pages 16-17	Christians Today	Pencils
Page 18	We Follow Jesus	Pencils, copies of selected gathering hymns
Page 19	Give God Glory	Prayer
Page 20	Home and Family	

Materials Needed for Additional Activities

Catechist Edition		
Page 27	Sensitivity Toward Families	
Page 28	Using Scripture Illustrations	
Page 29	Share a Simple Meal	Grape juice, pita bread, paper cups, napkins
Page 30	Role-Play a Procession	Poster board, yarn or string, lectionary, large cross
Page 31	A Little Catechism	Student page 77
Page 33	Connect with Families Through Prayer	
Page 32	Resource Master	Copies of page 35



Quick Check

I'll do this evaluation as soon as I finish this week's lesson.

Did I follow my session plan? Why or why not?

How can I tell that I met the learning objectives for the lesson?

What activities did the children enjoy the most?

How could I improve this lesson?

Lesson Plan

1 Gathering

Talk with the children about their experiences of playing at a friend's house and having to go home. What were their feelings?

Read the story. Ask the children why Tommy's mother might have wanted him home for dinner. (*For example, it might have been Dad's birthday.*) Help the children focus on the importance of

being with their families at mealtime and how eating together shows that they are one family.

Ask the questions and invite responses. Then provide the children with drawing materials for the drawing activity. When the children are done, allow volunteers to share their pictures with the group.



Gathering

By sharing in the same loaf of bread, we become one body, even though there are many of us.

1 Corinthians 10:17

Tommy was at a neighbor's house, playing video games, but now it was time for him to go home.

He phoned his mom. "Can I stay here longer and keep playing?"

"It's about time for dinner," she said. "Just this once!" Tommy pleaded.

"No," she answered. "I really want you to be with us for dinner. Our family wouldn't be complete if you were missing."

Tommy was sad he could not play longer, but his mom was right. Coming home to eat together was important. It showed they were a family.

- Talk about a time your whole family got together for a meal. Where did you eat? What food was there? What did you talk about?
- Draw a picture of your family eating together. Include yourself in the picture.



TEACHING TIP

Sensitivity Toward Families

Many of the children in your group live in families where eating meals together is a regular occurrence. However, that is not the situation in all families. Be sensitive to those children who don't want to share information about their family's meals. Point out that many family members today lead very busy lives and that it is not always possible to eat together as a family. Suggest other ways families show they are one, such as visiting relatives, going to church, or playing together.

Lesson Plan

1 Christians Gather

Present the text. Then list on the board the four actions the first followers of Jesus performed when they came together.

To help the children make connections between the early followers of Jesus and his followers today, point to each action listed on the board and explain that Jesus' followers still do these same things when they gather together at

Mass. (*We pray; we share a meal—Eucharist; we talk about Jesus; we discuss what we can do to help others.*)

Next, write the word **Christians** on the board. Circle the word *Christ* within the word *Christian*. Then ask the children why the followers of Jesus are called Christians. (*The name means "followers of Christ."*)

IDEAS THAT WORK

Using Scripture Illustrations

Children of this age haven't yet developed a good sense of history. It will aid their learning to spend time comparing the way the early Christians helped others (see illustration that depicts them sharing food with each other) and the way Catholics today help those in need (see photo of volunteer collecting money for the needy on student page 18). Help the children recognize that the early Christians and Christians today are called by Jesus to share love and compassion with those in need.

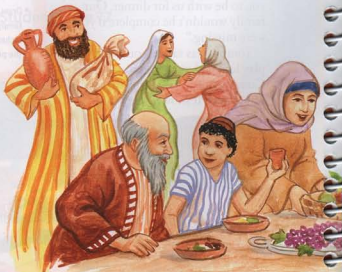
Christians Gather

WORD OF GOD

Together you are the Body of Christ. Each one of you is part of his body.

1 Corinthians 12:27

Jesus liked to get together with his family and friends for a meal. After Jesus died, his friends still came together to pray and eat in their homes. During the meal they talked about Jesus and what he had said and done. They talked about ways they could help others. They began to call themselves **Christians**, a name that means "followers of Christ." They felt like members of one family.



2 Let's Talk

Have the children read along with you as you read aloud each question. Allow time for their responses. Allow the children to ask questions about the lesson.

3 Word of God

Read aloud 1 Corinthians 12:27. Explain that this is one way we can think about how we belong to Jesus and to one another. Point out that the Body of Christ is another way to refer to the Church.

“The followers of Jesus spent their time learning from the Apostles, and they were like family to each other. They also broke bread and prayed together.”

“Everyone was amazed at the many miracles and wonders that the Apostles worked.”

“All the Lord’s followers often met together, and they shared everything they had. They would sell their property and possessions and give the money to whoever needed it. Day after day they met together in the temple. They broke bread together in different homes and shared their food happily and freely, while praising God.”

Acts 2:42–47

LET'S TALK

- After Jesus died, what did his friends and followers do when they got together?
- What did the followers of Jesus call themselves?
- How did they act like a family to each other?
- When do you gather with your Church family?

OPTIONS

Share a Simple Meal

As a sign of unity and friendship in Jesus, share a simple meal of juice and cookies with the children. (Be sure to check with the children’s families regarding food allergies before giving the children anything to eat.) As you and the children share your meal, tell them how pleased you are that you and they are forming a community of friends as followers of Jesus.



Lesson Plan

1 Christians Today

Invite the children to follow along as you read aloud the text. Ask them to raise their hands when you get to each word in bold. Explain that these are important faith words to learn and remember.

After reading the text aloud, ask volunteers to share what they remember from their own experiences of gathering at the beginning of Mass. Assist them in recalling the Introductory Rites by asking where the priest and other

ministers stand as they wait to walk in the procession. Ask how the priest welcomes everyone to the Mass.

Invite the children to make the Sign of the Cross with you. Then ask a volunteer to explain what the Sign of the Cross reminds us when we gather for Mass (*Baptism*). Then practice the greeting by saying the priest's words *The Lord be with you*. Invite the children to respond, *And with your spirit*.

IDEAS THAT WORK

Role-Play a Procession

Have the children role-play the entrance procession. Prepare poster board signs that name the priest and ministers ahead of time. Have the children wear the signs around their necks using yarn or string and line up in the order in which each minister would stand in a real Mass procession. Use props, such as a lectionary or Bible and a large cross or crucifix. Include as many children as possible in the procession by adding altar servers and Eucharistic ministers. If there are too many children, repeat the activity with a different group of children. When the children are ready, lead them in procession around the room. Have them join you in singing a familiar opening hymn.

Christians Today

Every Sunday Catholics gather as the early Christians did, to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus. They gather to praise and thank God. They remember Jesus, pray together, and take part in a special meal called the **Eucharist**. The Eucharist is also called the Mass. An ordained Catholic priest celebrates the Mass with the people. The Eucharist is at the heart of the life of the Church.



At the beginning of Mass, there is a gathering time. You greet other members of God's family. You stand and sing a song together as the priest and ministers walk in **procession** to the altar. The ministers include altar servers, the lector, and possibly a deacon.

Lesson Plan

Finally, write on the board, *Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.* Explain that the word *mercy* means “loving forgiveness.” Then practice the prayer with the children. If possible, play a recording of a version of the Gloria that is often sung in your parish. Invite the children to sing along with the refrain.

At the altar the priest says, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” You answer, “Amen.” These words say you believe that the Blessed Trinity is present at Mass—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Then the priest greets the people saying “The Lord be with you.” You respond, “And also with you.”

You and the people around you praise God and thank him for his **mercy**. You pray, “*Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.*”

Then you pray, “*Gloria to God . . .*”

Activity

You gather at Mass to praise and thank God. Think about all that God has given you.

Name three things for which you are thankful.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

WE CELEBRATE

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

THIS WE BELIEVE

When we gather with other Catholics to celebrate the Eucharist, we are one Church. As members of the Church, we have received the gift of faith.



A LITTLE CATECHISM

Invite the children to open their books to *A Little Catechism* on page 69. Choose one or more of the selections for memory work or reinforcement. In this Catechist Edition you will find the catechism on pages 102–127.

1. Review with the children the Mass responses that are recited during the Introductory Rites on page 77.
2. Read aloud the Gloria on page 77, and have the children repeat each line after you.

Lesson Plan

1 We Follow Jesus

Read the introductory paragraph. Remind the children that the people in their parish pray together and help each other just like the early Christians.

After reading the text aloud, ask volunteers to share what they remember from their own experiences of gathering at the beginning of Mass. Assist them in recalling the Introductory Rites by asking where the priest and other

Read the activity directions. You may want to do the first exercise with them as a model for them to follow. Have volunteers share their responses.

RESOURCE MASTER

Use the Resource Master on page 35 to reinforce the main objectives to this lesson.

ANSWER KEY

Across

5. Christians

Down

1. Eucharist

2. Church

3. Christ

4. Mass

6. Amen

WE FOLLOW JESUS

PARISH CONNECTION

Learn a gathering song that people sing in your parish.

The early Christians gathered together to remember Jesus. They prayed together and praised God. They were like family to one another. They helped those in need.

How are you and members of your parish like the early Christians?

Draw a 😊 next to each way.

We gather together for Mass.

We help those who are poor.

We have no time for people who are sick.

We care for one another.

We give thanks to God.

We never give money to help the needy.

We pray for one another.



2 Give God Glory

Divide everyone into three small groups. Assign each group to be either Reader 1, Reader 2, or Reader 3. Allow them to practice reading their parts silently. Explain that the part labeled All is everyone's part. You should take the part of Leader.

When the children are ready, gather them for prayer. Begin the prayer and invite each group to read aloud its assigned parts. You might wish to end by singing a familiar hymn and by praying the Sign of the Cross.

Give God Glory

Leader: Every time we gather as God's children, we give God glory. We can give God glory and praise right now as we say:

All: Glory to God in the highest.

Reader 1: We worship you.

We give you thanks.
For you are our Father,
the God almighty.

All: Glory to God in the highest.

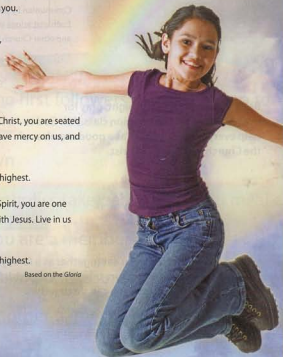
Reader 2: Lord Jesus Christ, you are seated at God's right hand. Have mercy on us, and hear our prayers.

All: Glory to God in the highest.

Reader 3: Most Holy Spirit, you are one with the Father and with Jesus. Live in us and make us all one.

All: Glory to God in the highest.

Based on the Gloria



IDEAS THAT WORK

Connect with Families Through Prayer

One way to involve the children's families in each week's lesson is by connecting with prayer. This week encourage the children to pray "Give God Glory" with their families at mealtimes. You might also send a note home that encourages the families to help their children recognize and participate in the Gloria the next time it is prayed at Sunday Mass.

Word Bank

Mass
Christians
Amen
Church
Gloria

Lesson Plan

1 Introduce the Family Page

The activities on this page provide ways for the children to share what they have learned with their families. Go through the various activities and encourage the students to follow through with them. Answer any questions they may have.



Online for families

Remind the children to check the RCL Benziger web site this week with their families. There is a section devoted to sacramental preparation.
www.RCLBenziger.com

HOME
and
Family



Family Note

Dear Family,

I have learned that the first followers of Jesus were like a family. They prayed together, shared with one another, and helped the needy. You can help me prepare for Holy Communion by telling me how the Eucharist brings you closer to Jesus and other Church members.

ON YOUR OWN

Before you go to sleep tonight, pray for everyone in your Communion class. Ask God to help everyone live and act as a good member of the Church, the Body of Christ.

Family Chat

Discuss how the Eucharist helps you feel that you are part of the Church.

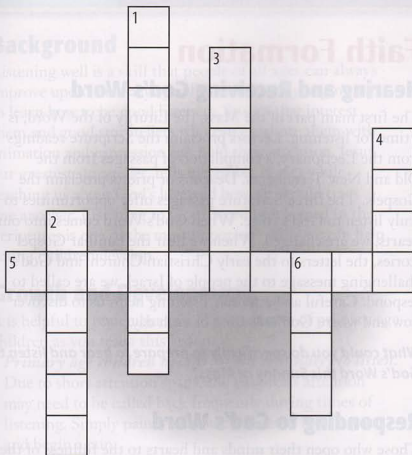
WITH YOUR FAMILY

The next time you eat together as a family, talk about ways to show you are one with the parish family. Choose a parish activity you can do together.

Name _____

Gathering as One Body

Finish each sentence. Use the answers to complete the crossword puzzle.



Word Bank

Mass
Christians
Amen
Church
Christ
Eucharist

Across

5. The first followers of Jesus began to call themselves _____.

Down

1. Catholics take part in a special meal called the _____.

2. You are a member of the Catholic _____.

3. We are one Church, the Body of _____.

4. Another name for Eucharist is the _____.

6. _____ means "so be it."