

# Contents

<b>A Complete Sacramental Preparation</b> .....	G4
<b>Scope and Sequence</b> .....	G5
<b>A Family and Parish-Based Preparation</b> .....	G6
<b>Components</b> .....	G8
<b>A Parish Welcoming Rite</b> .....	G9
<b>1 We Gather Together</b> .....	G10
Adult Background	
Preparation Hints	
Plan for the Session	
<b>2 We Listen</b> .....	G12
Adult Background	
Preparation Hints	
Plan for the Session	
<b>3 We Give Gifts</b> .....	G14
Adult Background	
Preparation Hints	
Plan for the Session	
<b>4 We Remember</b> .....	G16
Adult Background	
Preparation Hints	
Plan for the Session	
<b>5 We Receive Jesus</b> .....	G18
Adult Background	
Preparation Hints	
Plan for the Session	
<b>6 Jesus Is With Us Always</b> .....	G20
Adult Background	
Preparation Hints	
Plan for the Session	
<b>A Sending Forth Rite</b> .....	G22
<b>Come to Me Retreat Day</b> .....	G23



# We Gather Together

## Adult Background

In the Eucharist, the Catholic community celebrates its faith in Christ as the Son of God, who has drawn us into fellowship with God through His life, death, and resurrection. The celebration of the Eucharist always includes: the proclamation of the word of God; thanksgiving to the Father for all his gifts, especially the gift of Jesus; the consecration of bread and wine; and sharing the eucharistic meal by receiving Holy Communion. (See *Catechism*, 1408.) In the Eucharist Jesus satisfies our hunger and thirst for life and brings us into union with God and with one another. "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35).

We demonstrate our faith in Christ by the way we live as a community—by our care, concern, and love for one another. When our parish community has gathered to celebrate the Eucharist, the Mass begins with the Introductory

Rites. This part of the celebration includes a procession of the ministers in the midst of the gathered community, words of welcome, and an invitation to prayer. We then ask for God's forgiveness in the penitential rite and proclaim God's praise saying, "Glory to God in the highest." In this way the assembly is prepared to listen with prayerful attention to the proclamation of God's word.

## Preparation Hints

Prepare in advance the place where your group will meet. Make the environment as pleasing, welcoming, and prayerful as possible. Some ways to do this include: preparing a prayer corner with an open Bible, having soft music playing as the children enter, displaying flowers and posters, arranging chairs in a circle in one part of the room and desks or working surfaces in another. Sometimes it helps to have a special sound, such as a chime, to signal a time of prayer.

## Special Needs Child

Mainstreaming children means involving them as participating members of the group. Involve them in all activities.

### Visual Needs

- ♦ preferential seating

### Auditory Needs

- ♦ headphones, tape recording of the Bible reading and Mass responses

### Tactile-Motor Needs

- ♦ helper to assist in making the *Preparing for Jesus* booklet 1

## Resources

*Mass for Young Children:*

*Parts I & II* (video)

St. Anthony Messenger/

Franciscan Communications

1615 Republic Street

Cincinnati, OH 45210

(1-800-488-0488)

## Materials for This Session

- ♦ Sadler's Songs: *First Eucharist*

cassette or CD

## Plan for the Session

### Beginning — min.

❖ If the children do not know one another, have name tags available and provide time for them to tell one another their names. You might wish to save the tags for use in the next session.

Give each child a copy of *First Eucharist*. Read the title together and invite comments about the front cover. Invite the children to make the sign of the cross with you, slowly and reverently. Then have them open their books to pages 6 and 7. Read the first sentence with enthusiasm and warmth.

Ask the children to talk about the picture on these pages. Help them to articulate the sense of welcome that is portrayed. Ask them to talk about how they felt welcomed by you and the group. Then read page 6 with the children.

❖ You may wish to use Sadlier's *Songs: First Eucharist* cassette. Let the children listen to the song on page 7 a few times before singing it together. Then allow them to tell how they feel about preparing together for Holy Communion. Then introduce the gospel story.

### Middle — min.

❖ Point out the image of the candle and Bible at the top of page 8. Explain that when this image appears it means a story from the Bible follows. Each time you read from Scripture, you might want to place your book inside the Bible. After the reading, invite a child to return the Bible reverently to the prayer table.

Now read aloud the story on page 8. Ask the question at the end. If time allows, read the story a second time and have a few children act it out as you read.

Then ask the children to be very still. Invite them to look at the picture on page 9 and to imagine themselves there with Jesus. Let them continue looking at the picture as you read the closing paragraph on page 8.

❖ Point out the image of the chalice and host at the top of page 10. Tell the children that when they see this image on a page, they will know they will be learning about the Eucharist. Read the first paragraph aloud. Help them to tell, in their own words, what the Mass is.

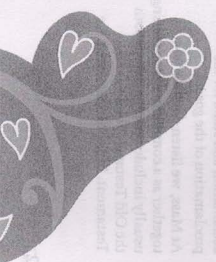
Have volunteers read the next two paragraphs and ask the children to tell what is happening in the picture. The responses we say at each part of the Mass will be found on the right side of the Eucharist page in each lesson. The responses are printed in blue for the children. Go over page 11 together.

### End — min.

❖ The activity on page 12 helps the children to strengthen their understanding of what they have learned in this lesson and to decide how they will live their faith.

Do the activity together. Then use the music cassette to help the children learn *My First Communion Song*. Sing it together to end the session.

❖ Have the children take home their books to share page 13 and the *Preparing for Jesus* booklet 1. Encourage them to work on the *At Home* activity and booklet with their families.





# 2 We Listen

Point of  
Reference *Catechism  
of the Catholic Church*  
♦ 1190, 1349

## Adult Background

From the earliest days of the Church, the reading of Sacred Scripture has been an essential part of the liturgy.

"The meaning of the celebration is expressed by the word of God which is proclaimed and by the response of faith to it" (*Catechism*, 1190). It is at the Liturgy of the Word during the celebration of the Eucharist each week that most Catholics experience their principal contact with Scripture.

Throughout the liturgical year and within the cycles of the lectionary readings, Catholics hear God's word from most of the books of the Bible. Preeminent in the Liturgy of the Word is the gospel reading, because the gospels are the heart of Scripture for us. This is also why we sing a gospel acclamation and stand for the proclamation of the gospel.

At Mass, we listen to God's word together as a community. The readings usually include selections from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the deepest sense we

are truly nourished in our lives and sustained as a community of believers by the word of God.

## Preparation Hints

This session focuses on the Liturgy of the Word. Help the children develop a sense of reverence for the word of God. If possible, give them the opportunity to plan a simple Liturgy of the Word that could become a part of their First Communion Mass. Emphasize how important it is that each of us take an active part in the Mass.

## Special-Needs Child

Assign each child a partner who is accepting of differences.

## Visual Needs

♦ Mass responses cut from sandpaper

## Auditory Needs

♦ tape recording of Mass responses

## Tactile-Motor Needs

♦ assistance in cutting out heart and writing the prayer petition

## Resources

*Long, Long Ago* and *There's So Much to Do* (video)

*The Marvelous Mystery Series*

Our Sunday Visitor

200 Noll Plaza

Huntington, IN 46750

(1-800-348-2440)

*We Listen to God's Word* (video)

Harcourt Religion Publishers

1665 Embassy West Drive

Dubuque, IA 52002-2259

(1-800-922-7696)

## Materials for This Session

♦ Sadlier's Songs: *First Eucharist*  
cassette or CD

♦ heart cutout, long string or yarn,  
markers

## Plan for the Session

### Beginning — min.

❖ To create a calm and soothing atmosphere, have instrumental music playing softly as the children come into the room. Invite them to sit around you in a circle and to be very still. Have them take deep, quiet breaths and, as they exhale, whisper the name of Jesus. Spend a minute or two on this prayer.

❖ Now have them open their books to pages 14 and 15 and look at the pictures as you read the poem. Invite them to talk about their favorite sounds. Then read page 15 together. Spend a few minutes on the closing questions.

### Middle — min.

❖ Read the first paragraph on page 16 to introduce the psalm. Invite the children to show how well they can listen as you, with great expression, read the psalm. Then you might want to have the children read it, taking turns with each line.

Allow time for the children to share their responses to the questions and to put themselves in the picture on page 17. Encourage them to draw themselves praising God. They may also add particular things they wish to praise God for.

If time allows, pray the psalm again. Invite the children to create gestures to go with the word pictures.

❖ Read the first paragraph on page 18. Have the children talk about what they see in the pictures on pages 18–19. Invite them to share their thoughts about what happens during the Liturgy of the Word at Mass. Stress how important it is that we listen well to God's word as it is read, or proclaimed, to us.

Go over the responses on page 19. Point out that the word *lector* means "reader." Help the children read the Nicene Creed together on page 71.

### End — min.

❖ Talk together about what each would like to pray for in the Prayer of the Faithful. Emphasize that this is the time we pray for our Church, our world, our parish community, our families, and people in need. Help the children write their prayers on page 20. You might want to develop these ideas into petitions for the Prayer of the Faithful at their First Communion Mass.

❖ Help the children cut out the heart in the back of their books and discuss the listener activity. After they have written their ideas on their hearts, invite them to attach the hearts to one long string. Then have the children "lift up their hearts" as they sing the closing song. Keep the string of hearts displayed where all can see them.

❖ Have the children take home their books to share page 21 and the *Preparing for Jesus* booklet 2. Encourage them to work on the *At Home* activity and booklet with their families.

# 3 We Give Gifts

Point of  
Reference  
♦ 1350

## Adult Background

Having heard the word of God and prayed together for the needs of the Church, the world, and our own parish community, we begin the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We shift our focus from the lectern to the altar—the table of the Lord and “the center of the whole eucharistic liturgy” (from *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, #49). The priest who presides over the eucharistic assembly accepts our gifts of bread and wine—the same gifts that Jesus used at the Last Supper.

Our Eucharist has roots in God’s saving activity among His people. It is rooted in the celebration of the Jewish Passover meal—a memorial of Israel’s release from slavery in Egypt. In the Eucharist, we remember and celebrate the sacrifice of Jesus—His “passing over” from death to new life. We are reminded of the significance of our gifts of bread and wine by the words of the priest during this preparation time: “Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble and contrite hearts.”

## Preparation Hints

This session will familiarize the children with the prayers and rites of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Be sure to emphasize the signs of the sacrament, the bread and wine that become the Body and Blood of Christ. Talk with the children about the many grains that make up the bread and the many grapes that make up the wine. In the bread and wine, they become one. In the Eucharist, we become one with Christ and one another.

## Special-Needs Child

It is especially important to “catch” special-needs children doing *right* and to praise them for it.

### Visual Needs

♦ peer helper to assist with coloring activity

### Auditory Needs

♦ headphones, tape recording of Mass responses

### Tactile-Motor Needs

♦ assistance in making the *Preparing for Jesus* booklet 3 and Mass cutout

## Resources

We Celebrate Jesus Within

Our Eucharist (video)

Harcourt Religion Publishers

1665 Embassy West Drive

Dubuque, IA 52002-2259

(1-800-922-7696)

*The Little Grain of Wheat* (video)

Trehaus Communications, Inc.

P.O. Box 249

Loveland, OH 45140-0249

(1-800-638-4287)

## Materials for This Session

♦ markers or crayons  
♦ Mass cutout (optional)



## Plan for the Session

**Note:** You might want to set aside

time during this session to have the children work on the Mass cutout in the back of the book. Have them name the objects they see in the sanctuary. Continue to use this Mass cutout as a visual resource throughout the program.

### Beginning — min.

❖ Have the children read the opening sentence on page 22 with you. Invite a discussion about the pictures in the large gift box. Then ask the question and encourage responses.

Read the first paragraph on page 23.

Invite the children to suggest gifts they can give to God. Have the children identify some of these gifts in the pictures. Remind them that Jesus said that whatever we do for others, we do for Him. Then introduce the gospel story by reading the last paragraph.

### Middle — min.

❖ Allow time for the children to look at the picture on page 25. Ask:

- Whom do you see in the picture?
- What do you think Jesus might be saying?

Then invite them to imagine themselves in the picture as you read the Scripture story on page 24.

❖ Ask the children to tell what they heard Jesus saying in the story. Then read the rest of the page.

❖ Stress that God loves us so much He gave us the gift of His Son.

❖ Ask the children what gifts we offer God at Mass to say thank you. Display the word *Eucharist* and help the group understand its meaning—"giving thanks." Talk with the children about the meaning of the word *sacrifice*. Then read page 26 together. Have the children look at the picture. Ask them to point out the gifts of bread and wine.

❖ Go over, on page 27, the responses we make during the Preparation of the Gifts. Encourage the children to practice these at home and to join their parish community in responding at Mass this week.

### End — min.

❖ Ask the first question on page 28. Help the children identify Jesus in the Eucharist as our greatest gift.

Read the next question to introduce the activity. Then have the children complete their stained-glass windows. When all are finished, invite them to show their windows in turn. Then pray together, "Blessed be God forever."

Close the session by encouraging the children to choose an act of love they will do this week. Invite each child to tell what he or she has decided to do.

❖ Have the children take home their books to share page 29 and the *Preparing for Jesus* booklet 3. Encourage them to work on the *At Home* activity and booklet with their families.