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Session Time Frame

The sessions in this guide have been created to work in periods of 60 to 75 minutes. The sessions' core activities—located at the beginning of the sessions under the "At a Glance" heading—will fit a 60-minute session. If you have more time, consider using the optional 15-minute session extensions. The session outlines include additional discussion questions and media suggestions that can be incorporated to create sessions that go beyond 75 minutes.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR DATES

1st Sunday of Advent	
2nd Sunday of Advent	
Immaculate Conception	December 8
3rd Sunday of Advent	
4th Sunday of Advent	
Christmas Eve	December 24
Christmas Day	December 25
Mary, the Mother of God	January 1
Epiphany	
Presentation of the Lord	February 2
Ash Wednesday	
1st Sunday of Lent	
2nd Sunday of Lent	
3rd Sunday of Lent	
4th Sunday of Lent	
5th Sunday of Lent	
Palm Sunday	
Solemnity of Saint Joseph	March 19
Annunciation	March 25
Holy Thursday	
Good Friday	
Holy Saturday	
Easter Sunday	
2nd Sunday of Easter	
3rd Sunday of Easter	
4th Sunday of Easter	
5th Sunday of Easter	
6th Sunday of Easter	
Ascension	
7th Sunday of Easter	
Pentecost	
Most Holy Trinity	
Body and Blood of Christ	
Sacred Heart	
Birth of John the Baptist	June 24
Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul	June 29
Feast of the Transfiguration	August 6
Assumption	August 15
All Saints	November 1
All Souls Day	November 2
Christ the King	

2 THE EUCHARIST: THE HEART OF ALL LITURGY

2

Session Overview

In this session the participants will learn how to say thank you in different languages. After an opening prayer, the participants will play a game that shows how gratitude creates relationships. Then a group activity will look at eight movements of the Eucharist and the actions flowing from it to see how these strengthen our relationships with God and others. Finally, the participants will reflect on ways to be thankful each day. In the optional session extension, the participants will use a stick figure drawing to explore the many persons involved in the Eucharist.

Objectives

Enable the participants to do the following:

- understand that the Eucharist is a response of thanksgiving to the Father through Christ
- recognize that to give thanks is to give oneself to another in relationship
- discern different ways to live with a thankful attitude

At a Glance

A. Quick-Start Activity	(5 minutes)
B. Welcome and Opening Prayer	(5 minutes)
C. "Thank You" Around the World	(15 minutes)
D. The Eucharist Is Saying Thank You	(20 minutes)
E. Attitude of Gratitude	(10 minutes)
F. Closing Prayer	(5 minutes)
Optional Session Extension: The Body of Christ	(15 minutes)

LITURGICAL CALENDAR DATES

Materials and Preparation

Materials Needed

Gather the following items, one for each participant:

- ☐ slips of paper with a thank you word from another language (see resource 2-A, “Thank You’ in Many Languages”)

Gather the following additional items:

- ☐ a marker
- ☐ a roll of masking tape
- ☐ a CD with the song, “Malo! Malo! Thanks Be to God,” by Jesse Manibusan (optional) (*Spirit and Song*, OCP Publications, 1993), and a CD player
- ☐ a “gift” such as a wrapped package, gift bag, or balloon
- ☐ a CD of reflective music and a CD player (optional)

Preparation Tasks

- ☐ Copy resource 2-A, “Thank You’ in Many Languages.” Cut the copy apart as scored. Have the slips and a roll of masking tape available for the participants to pick up as they enter the meeting space.
- ☐ Write on the board the languages from the “Language” column in the chart in step C, leaving space for participants to tape their words next to each language.
- ☐ Write on the board the following directions for the quick-start activity:
 1. Pick one slip from the table [or other central location]. Each slip has a term for “thank you” written in another language.
 2. Share your term with other participants.
 3. Work with others to figure out what language your “thank you” is written in.
 4. Tape your slip to the board next to the correct language or your best guess of which language is correct.
- ☐ Copy resource 2-B, “Eight Steps to a Eucharistic Way of Life,” and cut the copy apart as scored. On the back of each slip, write the number that appears on the printed side.

Catechist Prayer

Lord, for everything that has been, I say, “thank you.” For everything that is, I say, “Glory be.” For everything that is to come, I say, “Yes.” Amen.

Background Reading

- *The Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers*, chapter 24
- CCC, numbers 1359–1361 (Thanksgiving and praise to the Father); 2062 (Life as a response of thanksgiving); 2637–2638 (Prayer of thanksgiving)
- Luke 17:11–19

Session Steps

A. Quick-Start Activity (5 minutes)

Greet the participants as they enter the meeting space, and invite them to begin the quick-start activity. Point out the following instructions on the board, but also share them verbally if any participants need help referencing the board:

1. Pick one slip from the table [or other central location]. Each slip has a term for “thank you” written in another language.
2. Share your term with other participants.
3. Work with others to figure out what language your “thank you” is written in.
4. Tape your slip to the board next to the correct language or your best guess of which language is correct.

B. Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Welcome** everyone and make any announcements. **Review** the prayer and postures described in part 4.
2. **Light** a candle, make the Sign of the Cross, and lead everyone in saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.”
3. **Invite** a volunteer to proclaim Luke 17:11–19.
4. **Pray** the following:
 - Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit . . .
[Bow during this invocation to the Trinity. Rise again during these words:] as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Note: This prayer can be found on page 502 in *The Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers*.

5. Briefly **explain** that today’s topic is the Eucharist and how it teaches us to be thankful.

C. "Thank You" Around the World (15 minutes)

1. **Review** the results from the quick-start activity. **Review** the pronunciations and **correct** any mismatched words and languages using the following guide:

Thank You!	Language
<i>Malo!</i>	Tongan (Tonga)
<i>Obrigado!</i>	Portuguese
<i>¡Gracias!</i>	Spanish
<i>Kamsahamnida!</i>	Korean
<i>Si yu 'us maa'se!</i>	Chamorro (Guam)
<i>Terima kasih!</i>	Malay (Malaysia)
<i>Maraming salamat!</i>	Tagalog (Philippines)
<i>Danke schön!</i>	German
<i>Dziękuję!</i>	Polish
<i>Mèsi bokou!</i>	Creole (West Indies)
<i>Xie xie!</i>	Mandarin (China)
<i>Arigato!</i>	Japanese
<i>Grazie!</i>	Italian
<i>Cám Ôn!</i>	Vietnamese

- If possible, **play** "Malo! Malo! Thanks Be to God" and **invite** the participants to sing along.
2. **Write** *efcharisto* on the board. **Sound** it out for the participants: eff-ha-REE-stoh. Ask the participants if the word looks or sounds familiar. Explain that it is Greek for "thank you," and it is related to the word "Eucharist" (**write** "Eucharist" on the board), which means "thanksgiving."
3. **Ask** the participants to name times when we say thank you. [*Answers may include when we get a gift, when someone helps us, when we feel sad and someone comforts us, when someone says a nice thing about us, when someone shares something with us and so on.*]
4. **Introduce** the "'Thank You' Around the World" game. **Get** the "gift" and have the participants stand in a circle. **Instruct** them to take their paper slips from the board. They should hold their slips from the quick-start activity and practice saying their words or phrases out loud. Then **ask** them to think of something nice to say to the person standing to their left. Offer ideas like: "I think you are smart." "I like your laugh." "You are good at basketball." "When I was lonely, you were nice to me."

Explain how the game is played, modeling the steps with one of the participants:


- ▶ Everyone takes turns doing the following:
 1. Say something nice to the person on your left.
 2. Give that person the gift.
 3. Those who receive the gift say their thank you term.
 4. The gift recipient starts the process again with step 1.
- ▶ The goal is to get the gift around the circle as fast as possible. The game ends when the gift gets all the way around the circle without anyone forgetting to say thank you.

Check for understanding with a few participants by having them model and verbalize the steps with a partner. Then **begin** the game.

5. Afterward, **ask** the participants how they felt about hearing something nice about themselves or being thanked. **Comment:**
 - ▶ Saying thank you takes two people—one to do something good and one to respond. Saying thank you strengthens our relationships. It is like giving ourselves as a gift in response to a gift we received.

D. The Eucharist Is Saying Thank You (20 minutes)

1. **Invite** the participants to be seated. **Explain** that the Eucharist is like the “Thank You’ Around the World” game. God blesses us, and we respond with a thank you. **Ask** the participants to **name** some blessings God has given them or their friends and families. **Write** the blessings on the board.
2. **Explain:**
 - ▶ When we receive a gift from God, we respond with a thank you. One of the ways we say thank you is by celebrating the Eucharist.
3. On the board **draw** eight circles (large enough to write the words from resource 2–B in the center) in a circular pattern so you have a circle of eight smaller circles. Connect adjacent circles with a line. **Explain** and **ask:**
 - ▶ At the Eucharist everything we do is a response to God for all he has done. What is the first way we respond to God at the Eucharist? *Hint:* It’s the first thing we do at Mass.

- 
4. **Give** a participant the slip of paper marked with a 1 and invite that person to read what is on the other side of the paper. Have the person write those words in the top circle on the board. **Comment and ask:**
 - ▶ The first thing we do at Mass is gather. When Jesus called the first disciples, they asked him, "Where do you live?" He said, "Come and see." They responded by following him. What is the next thing we do at Mass?
 5. **Give** a different participant the slip of paper marked with a 2 and invite that person to read what is on the other side. Have the person write those words in the next circle (going clockwise) on the board. **Comment and ask:**
 - ▶ Then we hear stories of how God loves us. When we experience something good like that, we respond with a thank you. What's the special way we say thank you at Mass?
 6. **Invite** someone to read the slip marked with a 3 and write the words in the next circle. **Comment and ask:**
 - ▶ The Eucharist is how we say thank you. In the prayer called the Eucharistic Prayer, we thank the Father for everything he has given us, especially for his Son. Jesus thanked the Father by giving his life to others. At Mass, we remember Jesus.
 7. **Invite** someone to read slip 4 and write the words in the next circle. **Comment and ask:**
 - ▶ We remember Jesus by doing what he did. He shared a meal with his friends and gave himself to them on the cross. At Mass we share in Jesus' Body and Blood through Communion. Jesus also did other things to share himself with others. What are some things Jesus did?
 8. **Help** the students to remember stories of Jesus' serving others. **Invite** someone to read slip 5 and write the words in the next circle. **Comment and ask:**
 - ▶ Jesus was sent to show others his Father's love. At Mass we are sent to go and serve others as Jesus did. What are some ways during the week we can serve others?
 9. **Help** the participants to name the ways they can serve others. **Invite** someone to read slip 6 and write the words in the next circle. **Comment and ask:**
 - ▶ When we serve others, we show them God loves them. This is a nonverbal way of telling others about God. What are other ways we tell others about God's love?

10. **Invite** someone to read slip 7 and write the words in the next circle.

Comment:

- ▶ When people realize that God loves them, they respond. One way people respond is by changing their lives. They do good things for others too.

11. **Invite** someone to read slip 8, and write the words in the last circle.

Comment and ask:

- ▶ When others notice we serve as Jesus did, they will want to know more about him. Like Jesus, we invite them to “come and see,” and the whole cycle starts again, like one big circle that just keeps going.

12. **End** by having the participants stand in a circle to do a “wave” (as at sporting events), starting with one person and moving all the way around the circle. You can also add a cheer so as the wave comes around, the first half of the circle yells out, “Come and see!” while the second half responds, “Go and serve!”

E. Attitude of Gratitude (10 minutes)

1. **Play** reflective music if available. **Ask** the participants to reflect on the following:
 - ▶ Thanking God doesn't end at Mass. We can thank God every day by giving our best selves to God.
 - ▶ For example, when we awaken, we can thank God for giving us another day. We can also care for the environment because we are thankful for the earth God gives us. Or we can be nicer to friends, parents, and teachers because we are thankful God gives us people who care for us.
 - ▶ Think of the person or thing you are most thankful to God for. Now think of one way you will thank God this week for that. Will you be extra nice? Will you say a prayer each morning? Will you share your gifts in a new way? What will you do?
2. As the music continues, distribute a pen or pencil to each participant and **provide** the following instructions, allowing the participants to complete each step before going on to the next one:
 - ▶ Write down on the slip of paper with your “thank you” word what you are most thankful for.
 - ▶ Now add how you are going to thank God for that this week.
 - ▶ Fold the slip and put it in your pocket. Keep it in your pocket this week as a reminder.

Note: If the participants are comfortable sharing, invite them to form pairs and share what they wrote. Ask them to check in with each other next week and share how they did.

3. **Conclude** with the following:

- Our entire lives can say thank you to God if we live as Jesus did. He lived every day remembering the Father loved him and called him to share that love with others. Jesus gave his best self by loving us in the ultimate way. He gave us his life. At Mass we say, “*Eucharisto*, thank you, God, for giving us the life of Jesus.”

F. Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Read** aloud each of the gifts and blessings written in the circles on the board. After each gift or blessing, **instruct** the participants to respond with the words “Thanks be to God.”
2. **Ask** the participants to take out their handbooks. When all are ready, tell them to turn to page 267 in the handbook. Introduce the prayer:
 - Jesus shows us how to live a life of thanksgiving. So let us pray together.
3. **Invite** all to read aloud together the prayer in the “Pray It!” sidebar. **Close** with the Sign of the Cross.

Note: If doing the optional course project, you may wish to take time now to explain the project and hand out any take-home instructions for parents.

Chapter 24: The Eucharist: The Heart of All Liturgy

best response is to give thanks. Sometimes we say “thanks from the bottom of my heart.” This means we want to show gratitude by giving our trust, fullest, best selves.

We do the same in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the heart and high point of the Church’s life. We gather in response to God’s love. We try to bring our best selves and give heartfelt thanks to God. But our thanksgiving falls short of the extraordinary goodness of God. Because we are members of the Body of Christ, however, our thanks are joined to Christ’s sacrifice of praise to the Father. Christ gave his fullest, best self in thanksgiving to the Father when he offered himself on the cross, once for all. Through Christ’s perfect offering, we receive the grace of that perfect love between the Father and Son in the Holy Spirit.

Making the Past Present

Jews and Catholics do a special kind of remembering called *anamnesis*. Every year at **Pasover**, Jewish people tell the story of how their ancestors escaped slavery in Egypt on the night the angel of death passed over the land (see Exodus, chapter 12). But the Jews don’t tell the story as if it were only a past event. They believe that the same thing that

PRAY IT!

Lord Jesus,
Sometimes it’s hard
to pray at Mass.
I get so distracted,
and sometimes I don’t
understand what
is happening.
Help me just to
respond as best I can,
to believe what I pray,
and to live what I believe,
so I can be your
Body for all those who
need you most.

Amen

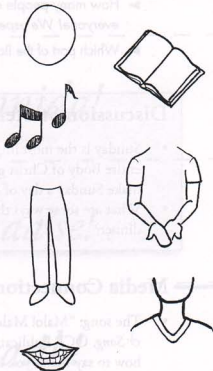
Optional Session Extension

The Body of Christ (15 minutes)

This optional session extension works best after step D, "The Eucharist is Saying Thank You" activity.

1. **Announce** that the group will put together the Body of Christ to see how many people it takes to be Christ's Body.
2. **Ask** whom we need in order to celebrate Mass. Answers include priest, readers or lectors, singers or musicians, altar servers, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist (Communion ministers), deacons, ushers or greeters, and so on. As people call out answers, **draw** on the board a stick figure with the corresponding body part or item for that liturgical minister. Purposefully omit the eyes and ears and the vertical line that makes up the torso until someone mentions that all the people are part of the Body of Christ. Comment on each part as you draw:

- ▶ *[priest: circle for the head]* He leads us in the prayer and represents Christ, who is the head.
- ▶ *[readers or lectors: book]* They read for us stories from the Bible.
- ▶ *[singers or musicians: musical notes]* They sing to God.
- ▶ *[altar servers: two arms]* They help the ministers.
- ▶ *[Communion ministers: two legs]* They feed us Christ's Body and Blood, giving us strength to go where God wants us to go.
- ▶ *[deacons: neck]* They serve the priest and people in the prayer.
- ▶ *[ushers or greeters: a smile]* They welcome us.



If other ministers are called out, like cross bearers or people carrying gifts to the altar, add other body parts or items, such as a cross, fingers, hair, feet, and so on.

3. If the participants do not mention all the people gathered, **ask:**

- ▶ Who is missing from the drawing of the Body of Christ?

Comment:

- ▶ All the other people are missing! The Body of Christ needs all the people, even if they aren't doing one of these special things.

Draw ears, eyes, a vertical line as the torso, and a heart. Then **comment:**

- ▶ All the baptized assembled together are part of the Body of Christ. All are holy and necessary. Christ helps all the people celebrate together and give thanks to the Father.



4. **Ask and discuss:**

- ▶ How many people do we need to make the Body of Christ? [*We need everyone! We especially need you!*]
- ▶ Which part of the Body of Christ are you? Which part do you want to be?

Discussion Starters

- Sunday is the most important day of the week because it is when the entire Body of Christ gathers to thank God. What are some ways we can make Sunday a day of thanksgiving?
- What are some ways the Sacrament of the Eucharist is like Thanksgiving dinner?

Media Connections

- The song: "Malo! Malo! Thanks Be to God," by Jesse Manibusan (*Spirit & Song*, OCP Publications, 1993), is, in an echo format, teaching us how to say thank you in different languages. It works well during part 1 of Step C, the "'Thank You' Around the World" activity.
- The crew of the *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* reality show helps people in need by renovating their homes. Each episode shows people giving without expecting anything in return. Those who receive can respond only by saying thank you and handing on the blessing they have received. Clips can be viewed at the ABC Web site. The clips work well at the end of step D, the "Eucharist is Saying Thank You" activity.

"THANK YOU" IN MANY LANGUAGES

Malo!

Obrigado!

¡Gracias!

Kamsahamnida!

Si yu'us maa'se!

Terima kasih!

Maraming salamat!



Danke schön

Dziękuję!

Mèsi bokou!

Xie xie!

Arigato!

Grazie!

Cám Ôn!

EIGHT STEPS TO A EUCHARISTIC WAY OF LIFE



Come and see.

1

Hear God loves you.

2

Say thank you.

3

Share a meal.

4

Go and serve.

5

Tell others.

6

They respond.

7

Invite them.

8