

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Using <i>Called to His Supper</i>	5
Tips for Catechizing Seven- and Eight-Year-Old Children	7
Session 1 — We Are Catholic Christians (children's book pages 1-7).....	9
Session 2 — Jesus Is With Us at Mass (children's book pages 8-13).....	20
Session 3 — Jesus Gives Us What We Need (children's book pages 14-20).....	30
Session 4 — The Eucharist Is Our Family Meal (children's book pages 21-27).....	41
Session 5 — Jesus Celebrates the Last Supper (children's book pages 28-33).....	51
Session 6 — We Remember Jesus at Mass (children's book pages 34-39).....	61
Session 7 — We Receive Holy Communion (children's book pages 40-44).....	71
Session 8 — Jesus' Love Unites Us (children's book pages 45-49).....	82
Session 9 — Jesus Is the Bread of Life (children's book pages 50-55).....	92
Family Faith Celebrations	103
• A Celebration of Baptism.....	106
• A Celebration of God's Word	114
• A Celebration of Sharing.....	121
Bibliography	126

SESSION 2

(children's book pages 8-13)

Jesus Is With Us at Mass

BACKGROUND FOR CATECHISTS, TEACHERS, AND PARENTS

The central act of worship of the Catholic Christian community is the Mass, often referred to as the celebration of the Eucharist.⁴ The Mass is a sacred mystery that brings us together as one family and binds us together in love as one body — the Body of Christ.

In *Doors to the Sacred*, Joseph Martos writes that the Mass is “a complex sacramental sign which can express and reveal a variety of Christian values and meanings.” Despite the ritual complexity of the Mass — or perhaps because of it — people of all ages and through all times have found in the Mass spiritual nourishment, strength, comfort, and cause for rejoicing, as well as a way of expressing their love and gratitude to God.

When we celebrate the Eucharist, we believe that Christ is present. For many generations of Catholics, Christ's presence at Mass referred only to his real presence in the consecrated bread and wine. However, the documents of Vatican II have made us aware that, in addition to Christ's presence in the Eucharist, he is also present

- in the people who assemble for worship,
- in the proclamation of the readings from Scripture, and

- in the person of the priest who leads the community in this sacred mystery.

Although the Mass is one continuous action, it has two main parts — the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. At Mass, we are fed by the Word of God at the Liturgy of the Word, and by the body and blood of Christ at the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The Word of God is a living Word with the power to touch and transform our lives. When the readings from Scripture are proclaimed at the Liturgy of the Word, God speaks to us. Jesus is present, offering us love and forgiveness, guiding us by his teachings and example, and challenging us to be his disciples today.

The Liturgy of the Word is as important for children as it is for adults. Although children may not understand the readings in as much depth as adults, God still speaks to them. As they listen to the readings Sunday after Sunday, children can gradually come to know Jesus better, learn what is expected of them as his followers, acquire the stories of their ancestors in faith, and develop a reverence for the Word of God. As they grow in their ability to understand and reflect on them, children can use the readings proclaimed at Mass as important guides for their lives, to help them develop deeper relationships with Christ.

In approaching Scripture with children, it is important to remember how literal they are.

4. “Eucharist” comes from a Greek word meaning “to give thanks.”

After you have shared a story, it is helpful to invite the children to say what they heard and what they think God is saying. The message they hear may not be what you expect!

It is also important to help children realize that readings from the Bible are full of meaning. No matter how many times we may have heard a reading, or how well we think we understand it, there will always be more that we can learn from it. God's Word continues to speak to us in new ways throughout our lives because we continue to change, bringing new experiences and new concerns to it.

Some parishes have a separate Liturgy of the Word for children, which gives them an opportunity to hear and relate to the Sunday readings on their own level. In any case, parents should be encouraged to help their children become familiar with the Sunday Gospel reading or a portion of it, even a meaningful verse or two, before they attend Mass. A family discussion of the homily and how it relates to their lives can also help the children take to heart what they have heard during the Liturgy of the Word.

Catechism References: #1324-27, 1346-49

Scripture Reflections for Session 2

- Matthew 18:20 (Jesus' Presence)
- Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 (Parable of the Sower)

AIMS

- To help the children understand that when the community comes together to celebrate the Eucharist, Jesus is present.
- To help the children understand that when they hear the Scripture readings and homily at Mass, Jesus is speaking to them.
- To encourage the children to listen carefully to the readings and the homily and keep the message of Jesus in their heart.

PREPARATION

- Display the poster that the children made in Session 1.
- Bring the Baptism song that you played in Session 1.
- Display an open Bible on a table covered with a cloth that reflects the color of the liturgical season. Place a candle and a small plant near it and mark the Parable of the Sower with a post-it note (Matthew 13:1-9).
- Copy Parent Notes to send home.

Optional:

- Provide a fine felt marker for each child.
- Bring "We Hear God's Word" by Christopher Walker or a similar song for Step 4.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Jesus is with us as we come together to celebrate Mass.
- Jesus speaks to us in the readings and in the homily.

LESSON PLAN

1. Review

- Begin this lesson with the Baptism song that you sang in the first lesson or with a short prayer.
- Invite the children to share what they learned about their Baptism from their parents or other adults.
- When they are finished, review the previous lesson. Either show the children the vocabulary words from Lesson 1 and ask them to use them in a sentence or ask the questions below:
 - Whose family do we become a part of when we are baptized? (God's family.)
 - What is another name for God's family? (The Church.)
 - What is a Christian? (Someone who follows Jesus' example of love.)
 - What kind of Christians are we? (Catholic Christians.)
 - What is the most important thing that Catholic Christians do together?

(Celebrate the Mass.)

- What kind of celebration is the Mass?
(Our family celebration, a celebration of love, or our Sunday celebration.)
- Finally, call the children's attention to the poster that they made the previous week and help them recall what it meant.

2. Jesus Is With Us at Mass

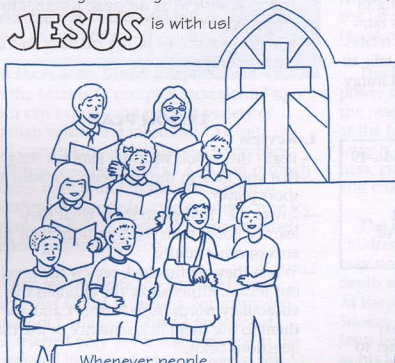
- Ask the children to remember a time when they went to Mass with their family. Ask them who they saw at Mass (friends, young people, older people, babies, the priest, choir members, etc.). Remind them that everyone who gathers together for Mass belongs to God's family.

- Tell them that when we come to Mass, Jesus is also there with us, even if we don't see him there. Explain that Jesus promised to be with us whenever we come together to pray. Ask them why they think Jesus made that promise. (He loves us and wants to be with us.)
- Invite them to open their books to page 8 and look at the picture with them. Tell them that when we see a crucifix or a cross in Church, it helps remind us that Jesus is with us.
- Invite them to draw a picture of themselves in the blank place on the right side of the illustration.
- When they are finished, read page 8 with them.

PAGE 8

When we gather together to celebrate the Mass,

JESUS is with us!



Whenever people
gather in my name,
I will be with them.

Matthew 18:20

Coming together with Jesus gives us

JOY.

**Invite the children
to draw themselves
in the blank place
to the right of the
people.**

NOTES

3. We Begin Our Celebration

- Read page 9 with the children and help them complete the missing words. If some children need help making the Sign of the Cross, practice it with them. (Note: The illustration is a mirror image.)
- Talk with the children about the meaning of the words “Lord, have mercy” and ask them why they think we begin our celebration by asking God to forgive us. Lead them to see that by asking for forgiveness, we are beginning our celebration in the best possible way: with everyone at peace with God and one another.
- Read the sentence at the bottom of the page with the children and remind them

that God always forgives us when we are sorry and want to change.

- Pause to lead the children in a brief prayer asking for God’s forgiveness, such as the following:

O loving God, we are sorry for the times we have not followed the example of your son, Jesus. We ask for your forgiveness . . .

• For the times we have quarreled with others, Lord, have mercy.

Children: Lord, have mercy.



• For the times we have not told the truth, Christ have mercy.

Children: Christ, have mercy.

• For the times we have hurt others with our words, Lord have mercy.

Children: Lord, have mercy.

PAGE 9

We begin our celebration by making the sign of the cross. The sign of the  reminds us of Jesus’ great  for us.



In the name of the F _____
and of the S _____ and of the
H _____ S _____.
Amen.

Then we ask God
to forgive us for
the times we
failed to love as
Jesus did.

Lord, have _____.
Christ, have _____.
Lord, have _____.



Have the children complete the missing words: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, mercy.

NOTES

- Turn to page 10 with the children. Tell them that after we ask for forgiveness at Mass, we sing a joyful song called the “Gloria” to praise and thank God for his goodness and love.⁵ Invite them to trace the words, and then read the sentence together.
- Ask the children to give examples of God’s goodness to them. Then invite them to draw a picture in the frame below.
- When the children are finished, ask them to set their books aside for awhile.

5. The Gloria is not sung during Advent or Lent.

4. Jesus Speaks to Us in the Readings

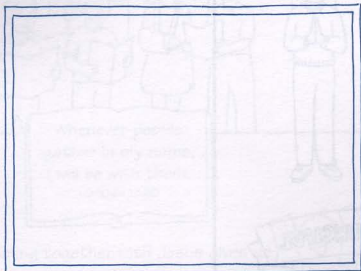
- Gather the children around you and talk with them about how the people long ago loved to be with Jesus and to listen to him. Tell them that one time, there were so many people crowding around Jesus that he had to get into a boat to talk to them. Tell them that the people liked to listen to Jesus because he taught them about God and how to love one another.
- Ask the children if they think Jesus speaks to us today and how they think he does it.
- Lead them to understand that Jesus speaks to us in many different ways, for example, through our parents, our teachers, our friends, our priests, the people we know, the wonders of nature and when we pray.

PAGE 10

With joyful hearts we praise and thank God for his goodness by singing



Draw a picture of one of the wonderful gifts that God has created.

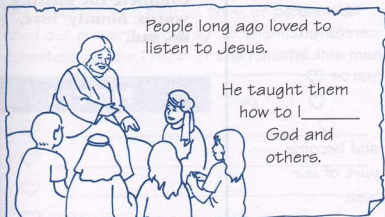


Ask the children to trace the letters: GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST. Invite them to draw a picture of one of God’s gifts of creation.

NOTES

- Explain to the children that one of the special ways that Jesus speaks to us is through the readings at Mass. Explain that the readings we hear at Mass come from the Holy Bible.
- Take the Bible from the display and show it to the children. Tell them that Christians believe that the Bible is the Word of God and that we always treat it with reverence and respect.
- Using the Bible, show the children the Old and New Testaments and the four Gospels. Explain that the Gospels are especially important for us because they tell us about Jesus and what he said and did.
- Tell them that every Sunday at Mass, the priest reads a small part from one of the Gospels. Explain that the word “Gospel” means “Good News.”
- Find the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-9) and read it to the children from the Bible.
- Introduce it with the words, “A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew” and conclude with “The Gospel of the Lord.” When you finish, ask the children to be quiet for a few seconds and think about what they heard.
- Explain to the children that a parable is a story with a hidden meaning and talk with them about what the Parable of the Sower means (see Matthew 13:18-23). Help them

PAGE 11



At Mass, we hear Jesus speaking to us in readings from the holy Bible.

He teaches us how to love God and others.

**JESUS' WORDS ARE
GOD'S WORDS**



Ask the children to complete the missing words: love, Bible, us, love.

NOTES

understand that Jesus wants our hearts to be like the good soil, so that his words can take root in them and grow to be an important part of our lives.

- If you have time, help the children learn “We Hear God’s Word” by Christopher Walker or sing the Gospel “Alleluia” that is used in your parish.

5. Jesus’ Words Are Important for Us

- Move to the work area to read and complete pages 11 and 12 with the children.
- After you read the sentences about the homily, invite the children to remember something they heard the priest say in the homily. Tell them that the homily is another

way that Jesus speaks to us at Mass and that we need to listen to the words of the priest very carefully.

- Help the children fill in the missing words at the bottom of the page.

6. We Pray for Our Needs

- Turn to page 13 and explain that the readings we hear at Mass often lead us to think of other people, especially those who need God’s help. Ask them who they think need God’s help. Tell them that at the Prayer of the Faithful we pray for many different people — including ourselves and the people of our parish — and give them some examples.

PAGE 12

Jesus’ words are important for us. We need to listen to them carefully, to let them sink into our hearts



and become part of our lives.

The priest helps us understand what Jesus is saying to us in the readings. This is called the h_____.

The readings tell us many things. They tell us how much God l_____ us, they help us know what to d____, they comfort us when we are s_____ or worried and much more!



Have the children complete the missing words: homily, love, do, sad.

NOTES

- Explain to the children that you would like them to write their own Prayer of the Faithful at home. Suggest that they begin by thinking about people they know or have heard about who need God's help. Then, they can write the names of these people or say who they are on the lines on page 13.
- Tell them that the prayers that they write at home will be used for the prayer at the beginning of the next session.

7. Dismissal

- Gather the children in a circle around the open Bible and invite them to quiet themselves for prayer.

- Say a short prayer thanking God for giving us Jesus to teach us as he taught the people long ago and asking him to help us listen carefully to his words at Mass.
- Conclude the prayer by placing your hand on the head of each child and saying, "Happy are you, (child's name), when you hear the Word of God and keep it."

TO DO AT HOME

- Think about the people you know or people you have heard about who need God's help. Write your prayers for them on the lines on page 13 in **Called to His Supper**. For example, "For Aunt

PAGE 13

The readings also help us think of people who need our prayers. We pray for them, and for ourselves, at the Prayer of the Faithful.

Who would you like to pray for?











Lord, hear our prayer.

Happy are you
who hear the Word
and keep it!



Ask the children to write the names of people they would like to pray for.

NOTES

Mary who is sick." (You might like to say your prayers with your family before meals or at bedtime.)

- Color one of the pages in this lesson (pages 8-13).

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

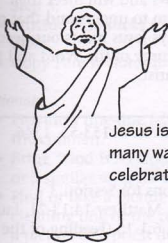
- The Penitential Act — Ask the children to turn to page 57. Explain to them that the two prayers on this page are prayers that we say at the beginning of Mass. Tell them that sometimes we say the "I Confess" and sometimes the "Lord, have mercy." Read the prayers with the children and explain any words that they may not understand. Invite the children to color the page.
- Sing the Gloria — Teach the children to sing the Gloria that is used in your parish.
- Practice the Responses — Choose a child to be the lector and another to be the presider. Give each of them a few sentences to read from the readings of the following Sunday. Include the words used to introduce and conclude the readings.
- Invite the other children to respond as they would at Mass.
- Invite a Guest — Invite one of the lectors from your parish to come to class. Have him or her explain what a lector is, how he or she became a lector, what he or she does to prepare to proclaim God's Word and what being a lector means to him or her. At the end, pray together for the lectors of the parish.
- Draw a Picture — Reread the Parable of the Sower and ask the children to draw their favorite part.
- Read the Parable Again — Read the Parable of the Sower from the Arch book, *The Seeds That Grew and Grew* (Concordia Publishing House).
- Heart Project — Have each child cut out a large heart and print the words "May my heart be like good ground" around the edges of it. Spread a little glue in the center of the heart and sprinkle some seeds on it. (Poppy or sesame seeds are easy to find in the supermarket.) Attach a loop of yarn to the heart so it can be hung.

PARENT NOTES FOR SESSION 2

(Called to His Supper, pages 8-13)

Helping children gain a basic understanding of what we do when we come together to celebrate Mass is an essential part of helping them prepare for first Holy Communion. Today's session introduced the children to the first part of the Mass — the Liturgy of the Word.

When we think of Jesus' presence at Mass, our thoughts usually turn to his unique and real presence in the Eucharist. While firmly upholding this belief, the Second Vatican Council made us aware of other ways in which Jesus is present at Mass. One of these is in the very people who gather.



Jesus is present in many ways when we celebrate Mass.

The Second Vatican Council also pointed out that Jesus is present in the priest who leads us in the celebration of Eucharist and in the Word of God that is proclaimed. When the readings are read by a person of faith, it is really Jesus who is speaking to us. Jesus also speaks to us through the words of the priest in the homily.

The Liturgy of the Word is one of the two major parts of the Mass. As your child listens to the readings week after week, he or she can develop reverence for the Word of God. Most important, your child can come to know, love,

and follow Jesus.

FAMILY PRAYER:

For your family mealtime prayer, say the prayer that we say silently as the Gospel is announced:

Christ, be in my mind; Christ, be on my lips; Christ, be in my heart.

Trace a small cross on your forehead, your lips and your heart as you say the words.

FAMILY DISCUSSION:

At a family meal talk about some of the family stories that are told and retold at your family gatherings. Compare the stories your family tells with the stories that people long ago told about God and Jesus. These stories were told and retold and finally written down in the Bible. Talk about the importance of the Bible to people in the past. Remind your family that long ago the Bible may have been the only book that a family had. Tell them that the family Bible was often the place where marriages, births, and deaths were recorded.

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

Set aside time to read one of your family's favorite Bible stories together — or read the Gospel for the next Sunday or the Parable of the Sower that was read in class (Matthew 13:18-23). When you are finished, invite each person to say what part of the story or reading they liked best and what it means to him or her. End your time together by placing your Bible in a special place of honor in your home.

Note: If you do not have a family Bible, this would be a good time to purchase one. The New American Bible is recommended, since the readings used at Mass come from it. Many good children's Bibles are also available.