

# Contents

## Especially for Families

A Note to Families begins on page v. There is a Getting Started page at the beginning of each unit. At the end of each unit you will find a Family Feature that explores ways to nurture faith at home.



Note to Families ..... v

## UNIT 1

We Worship God as Catholic Christians ..... 1

Getting Started ..... 2

1 We Are a Worshipping People ..... 3

2 Jesus Calls Us to Worship ..... 9

3 Baptism Unites Us with the Christian Community ..... 15

4 Confirmation Is the Sacrament of the Holy Spirit ..... 21

5 The Eucharist Is the Center of Christian Life ..... 27

6 Unit 1 Review ..... 35

Family Feature ..... 40a



## UNIT 2

We Celebrate the Eucharist ..... 41

Getting Started ..... 42

7 We Come Together to Celebrate ..... 43

8 We Listen to God's Word ..... 49

9 We Praise and Thank God ..... 55

10 We Receive Holy Communion ..... 61

11 We Are Sent to Glorify the Lord ..... 67

12 Unit 2 Review ..... 73

Family Feature ..... 78a

## UNIT 3

We Celebrate God's Healing Love ..... 79

Getting Started ..... 80

13 God's Healing Love ..... 81

14 Jesus Heals Us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation ..... 87

15 A Gift of Strength ..... 95

16 Unit 3 Review ..... 101

Family Feature ..... 106a

(continued next page)



(continued from previous page)

## UNIT 4

### We Follow Special Ways to Holiness 107

Getting Started ..... 108

17 God Calls Us to Be Holy ..... 109

18 Christian Marriage Leads to Family Holiness ..... 115

19 Holy Orders Is a Sacrament of Service ..... 121

20 Unit 4 Review ..... 127

Family Feature ..... 132a



## UNIT 5

### We Worship God by Living in Love 133

Getting Started ..... 134

21 Life Is Precious ..... 135

22 Christians Are Faithful in Love ..... 141

23 Christians Respect What Belongs to Others ..... 147

24 Christians Speak the Truth with Love ..... 153

25 Unit 5 Review ..... 159

Family Feature ..... 164a



## Special Seasons and Lessons 165

The Year in Our Church ..... 166

1 Feast of All Saints ..... 167

2 Advent ..... 169

3 Christmas ..... 171

4 Lent ..... 173

5 Holy Week ..... 175

6 Easter ..... 177

7 Pentecost ..... 179

8 Our Lady of Fatima ..... 181

## What Catholics Should Know 183

Prayer and How We Pray ..... 185

Prayers We Pray as Catholics ..... 186

The Rosary ..... 188

Mysteries of the Rosary ..... 190

Stations of the Cross ..... 191

Celebrating and Living

Our Catholic Faith ..... 192

Living Our Faith ..... 195

The Bible and You ..... 200

Showing Our Love for the World ..... 201

Glossary ..... 203

Index ..... 215

Scripture Index ..... 219

Lesson Pullouts ..... 223



UNIT

2

# We Celebrate the Eucharist

*This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in  
memory of me.*

Luke 22:19

# Getting Started

## Devotion to Our Faith

**NEAR THE END OF THE MASS**, you might see one or two people come to the front of the church to receive a small container from the priest. The container holds a host that was consecrated at Mass. These people are called extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. They bring the Blessed Sacrament to people who are not able to come to Mass because of serious illness or some other reason. Together they share the Body of Christ in the Eucharist.

Early Christians began this practice. In the third century (A.D. 200–300), Christians in the Roman Empire were disliked. They were often put into prison and were forced to practice their faith in secret. Christians did not forget the imprisoned members of the Church. At each Mass, they chose a deacon to bring Holy Communion to those in prison.

One day there were no deacons to send. A 12-year-old boy named Tarcisus was chosen instead. On the way to the Roman jails, he was stopped by a group of boys who were not Christians. They wanted to see what he was carrying. They told him to hand it over. Tarcisus refused. He did not want

them to dishonor the Blessed Sacrament. More people joined in, and the growing crowd became angry. Tarcisus stood firm. Finally, the crowd attacked him and killed him.

Tarcisus is a martyr. He gave his life rather than deny Jesus. Because of his great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the Church has named him the patron saint of First Communion.

The extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion in your parish will probably never face that kind of decision. But in some parts of the world, Catholics are still persecuted for practicing their faith. Some risk their lives to celebrate Mass on Sunday. In these places, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion face danger every time they carry the Blessed Sacrament to those in need.

In this unit, we will learn more about celebrating the Mass. As we do, we can thank God for the freedom we have to worship him as Christians. We can also remember the sacrifice of Tarcisus and pray for those who celebrate the Mass in dangerous places.





# We Come Together to Celebrate

## The Eucharist Is a Thanksgiving Celebration



We love celebrations! They allow us to remember important events. They bring people together joyfully. Many of our celebrations include traditions. Cake is a tradition we enjoy at

birthdays. Many people enjoy celebrating each new year with fireworks.

The Eucharist is a celebration too. For almost two thousand years, Catholics have gathered on the Lord's Day to celebrate Mass. We celebrate the Paschal Mystery of Jesus that saved us from sin and death and obtained eternal life for us. Through bishops and priests, the living Christ becomes present under the form of bread and wine. In every Mass, Jesus offers himself to the Father. The word *Eucharist* means "thanksgiving." At the Eucharist, we worship God and give him thanks. We already participate in the worship given God in heaven.

The actions of the Mass show our faith and love as a community. Together we ask God to free us from sin, which separates us from him and from one another. We ask for all we need to grow closer to God and to his people. We praise and thank him for his great goodness. We offer ourselves with Jesus to the Father for the coming of God's kingdom. We unite ourselves with Jesus, with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In the banquet of Holy Communion, we are united as a community. Then we go forth from the celebration to serve God and one another.

### Keep It Holy

The Third Commandment says to keep the Sabbath holy. The Church tells us to do this by celebrating the Eucharist every Sunday. Why do you think God gave us the Third Commandment?

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## We Celebrate All Year Long

At every Mass, we celebrate the Eucharist. Eucharistic celebrations have different themes throughout the **liturgical year**. Over the year, the story of the mystery of Christ unfolds. We celebrate the coming of Jesus in Advent and Christmas. Then we celebrate his death and Resurrection in Lent and Easter. These periods of time are called seasons of the Church year. Between the two seasons are weeks known as Ordinary Time.

During the year, we also celebrate special feasts. These feasts include the Ascension and Pentecost. In addition, certain days are feast days of Mary and other saints. Special prayers in the Mass honor the saints on their feast days and unite us to the liturgy of heaven.

Some Masses are for a special purpose. For instance, there are Masses for weddings and funerals. There are Masses for needs, such as religious vocations or peace and justice. Some Masses honor the Trinity or the Sacred Heart, and some are for those who are dead.

Over the year, some elements change according to the theme of the Mass. These include the readings of the Mass, the prayers, the songs, and the color of the priest's vestments.

### A Moment with Jesus

The Eucharist is a thanksgiving celebration. Christ becomes present to us in the form of bread and wine. Take a moment to imagine yourself at Mass preparing to receive Holy Communion. In your own words, thank Jesus for his loving presence with us.

### Check Your Calendar

What season of the Church year is it now?

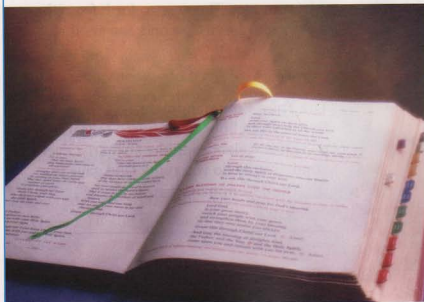
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If you were born on a feast day, what is it?

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What is your patron saint's feast day?

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### ▶ We Follow the Rites of the Eucharist

All the prayers for Mass are found in a book called the **Roman Missal**. It is usually on the altar during the celebration.

You will learn the rites of the **Eucharistic Liturgy** throughout this unit. Father Thomas will explain to you the parts of the Mass.

◀ The Roman Missal

## The Introductory Rites Prepare Us for Worship

Prepare the way of the Lord . . .

Matthew 3:3

### ► Introductory Rites

Liturgy of the Word  
Liturgy of the Eucharist  
Communion Rite  
Concluding Rites

I am Father Thomas. I am here to explain all the parts of the Mass. The Mass is the most important prayer for Catholics. We must get ourselves ready for it. Sometimes we may come to church distracted. We may feel happy about something or feel sad. We may be tired, or we might be excited about what is going to happen later that day. The Introductory Rites help us clear these things away and focus on why we have come together.

The Introductory Rites of the Mass are the prayers and actions at the beginning of the Mass. They prepare us to hear the Word of God, to offer ourselves with Jesus, and to receive him in Holy Communion.

To prepare ourselves, we remember why we have come. We have come to

- praise and thank God, who is so great and good.
- pray and sing of God's great love with the Christian community.
- hear God's Word and respond to it with love.
- offer ourselves as a gift with Jesus to God our Father.
- receive Jesus in Holy Communion and grow in his love.



When we arrive at church, we take holy water and bless ourselves. As we come into the presence of Christ, we genuflect. We greet him, and we adore him.

### Entrance Chant

While everyone praises God in joyful song, members of the community who have a special role in the Mass join me in a procession to the altar. As a people who belong to God and who are on a journey to him, we come to worship God with faith and love.

## Greeting

We begin the Mass by making the Sign of the Cross. This reminds us that God loved us so much that he sent his Son to die for us. It reminds us that at our Baptism, we were called to worship God our Father with Jesus.

I greet everyone gathered to worship, the assembly, recalling that God is present. Then I pray that God's grace and peace will be with everyone.

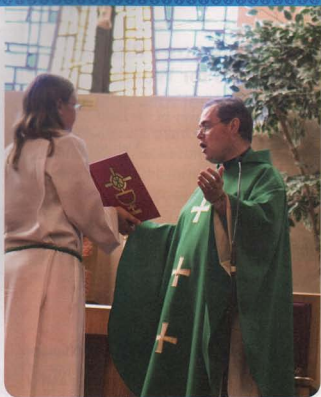
## Penitential Act

Our sins separate us from God and his people. In the **Penitential Act**, we call upon the Lord to forgive our sins and to heal us.

When we pray the *Kyrie* ("Lord, have mercy"), we show our trust in God's great mercy. We trust that God forgives us and gives us strength to live as his people.

## Gloria

This prayer is a powerful hymn praising almighty God. We pray it on most Sundays and on special feast days. The *Gloria* is meant to be sung. If you recite it, pray it aloud with life and joy! We should pray it with our whole hearts. It speaks of the greatness of the all-holy God.



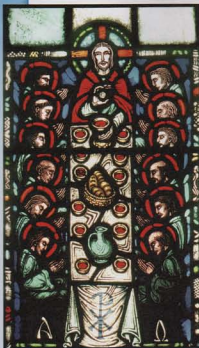
## Collect

Then I invite everyone to pray. In silence, we pray for our personal intentions and for those of the Church. Then I pray a prayer that asks for a special grace for all of us. By responding "Amen," you say yes to this prayer. Now we are ready to hear God speak his holy Word.





## Summary

**We Remember**

Why do we have Introductory Rites at Mass?

The Introductory Rites remind us that Jesus calls us together as a community of faith and love to worship the Father. They prepare us to listen to God's Word and to celebrate the Eucharist.

**We Respond**

Lord, help me to prepare for the eucharistic celebration by being a more loving member of the Christian community.

**Words to Know**

Eucharistic Liturgy  
liturgical year

Penitential Act  
The Roman Missal

## Things to Do at Home

1. What is the last celebration you had at home? Start a conversation about it with family members who attended. What were some ways you celebrated? What were you celebrating? Write a paragraph about the event. Then write a paragraph telling why we call Mass a celebration. What are we celebrating? How do we celebrate?
2. The Introductory Rites prepare us to hear the Word of God. What are some things you could do to prepare yourself before the Mass even begins? Talk with a family member about ways you can prepare at home before going to church. Make a list and follow it before the next Mass.
3. Mark a calendar with the major seasons of the liturgical year. Hang the calendar in your home.
4. Often we dress in special ways for celebrations. Discuss with your family how you can dress in a special way for next Sunday's eucharistic celebration. Remind one another as the day gets closer.

Visit [www.christourlife.org/family](http://www.christourlife.org/family) for more family resources.



**Five Facts** Answer these questions about the Eucharist.

1. What do we celebrate?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. When do we celebrate?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who is present under the form of the consecrated bread and wine?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What does the word *Eucharist* mean?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What do we call the part of the Mass that prepares us to listen to God's Word?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Word Scramble** Unscramble the words.

1. a season of the Church year \_\_\_\_\_  
TEERSA
2. saint who has Masses in her honor \_\_\_\_\_  
RMYA
3. a feast day celebrated by a special Mass \_\_\_\_\_  
INSAONCSE
4. word that means "yes" \_\_\_\_\_  
NEAM
5. what we ask the Lord for in the Penitential Act \_\_\_\_\_  
REYMC
6. book containing the prayers for Mass \_\_\_\_\_  
HTE NAROM SSIMLA

## Name the Right Rite

List the Introductory Rites of the Mass in the correct order on the lines below.

After each one, write the letter of the phrase that best describes it.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. _____</li> <li>2. _____</li> <li>3. _____</li> <li>4. _____</li> <li>5. _____</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. our prayer asking for healing and forgiveness</li> <li>B. the Church's prayer for a special grace</li> <li>C. action reminding us that we are a people on the way to our Father</li> <li>D. the prayer that God's grace and peace be with us</li> <li>E. a joyful hymn of praise</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

**Gloria**

**Penitential Act**

**Collect**

**Entrance Chant**

**Greeting**



# We Listen to God's Word

## God's Word Has a Message for Us

A letter from a friend is a wonderful thing. It reminds us that our friend loves us and is thinking of us. It means that our friend wants to share a message with us. We read the letter over and over again. We want to respond.



God sends us messages too. The Bible is the written Word of God. In the Mass, we listen to readings from the Bible so that we can receive our message from God. God speaks to us in Scripture. He reminds us how much he loves us, and he invites us to love him. God gives us the grace to follow his Word by listening to and obeying him.

Jesus is called the Word of God. He brought the Father's message to life in all he said and did. He always did his Father's will. He reminded people of the Father's love and showed them how to live. Through his death and Resurrection, Jesus brought new life to everyone. He told us that God has wonderful things prepared for those who hear his Word and keep it. When we hear

and keep God's Word, it becomes alive and active in us.

In order to listen to God's Word, we pay close attention. We think of God's loving presence. We listen with faith, believing what we hear with all our minds and hearts. We are still, and we try to let nothing disturb us. We let God speak to our hearts.

We should respond to God's Word every time we hear it. We should think about it and pray about it. We can pray a psalm, or we can pray in our own words. We can ask God to help us understand his Word and keep it with love.





## God Speaks Through the Readings at Mass

Introductory Rites

### ► **Liturgy of the Word**

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Communion Rite

Concluding Rites

After the Introductory Rites come the two main parts of the Mass. The first is the Liturgy of the Word. During this time we listen as God speaks to us and teaches us through the readings. The readings for the day are found in a book called the *Lectionary for Mass*. Father Thomas has returned to explain what happens during this part of the Mass.

### First Reading

We begin the Liturgy of the Word with the First Reading. The First Reading of a Sunday liturgy is usually taken from the

Old Testament. Through these writings, God reveals his love and faithfulness in dealing with his people. We know in faith that God shows the same loving care for us today.

After the reading, the reader announces “The Word of the Lord.” Grateful for God’s Word, we respond “Thanks be to God.”

### Responsorial Psalm

After listening to God’s Word, we respond by praying a psalm. The psalms are song-prayers from the Old Testament. Jesus prayed the psalms. When we pray the psalms, we join our prayers to his. Together we praise the Father. Some psalms praise and thank God. Others express sorrow for sin or ask God’s help.

### Second Reading

The Second Reading at a Sunday Mass is usually taken from a letter of Saint Paul or another apostle. These letters are found in the New Testament. They are called epistles. Paul and the apostles wrote these letters to early Christian communities to help them follow Jesus more closely. The letters still instruct us today. They tell us to put aside our sins and follow Jesus.



Saint Paul

After the Second Reading, the reader again announces “The Word of the Lord.” We respond “Thanks be to God.”

Gregorian Chant





## Gospel Acclamation

The Gospel Acclamation is a welcome to Christ, who will speak to us in the Gospel Reading. We stand, ready to do what he will tell us. During every season except Lent, we sing a joyful "alleluia" before a verse from the Bible. Then we sing it again after the verse. During Lent we sing a response of praise.

## Gospel Reading

The Gospel tells of Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection. It is Good News. It speaks of God's love and fills us with the hope of eternal happiness with God.

Jesus taught the people of his time about the Father's goodness and love. He taught them how to live as true children of his Father. He taught in the synagogue, on the hillside, from a boat, and in homes. He teaches the same lessons to us today every time the Gospel is read.

After the Gospel Acclamation, I or a deacon will announce the Gospel Reading by saying "A reading from the holy Gospel according to \_\_\_\_\_," naming the Gospel. You then proclaim "Glory to you, O Lord." We make the Sign of the Cross, touching our thumbs to our foreheads, our lips, and our hearts. We invite Christ to place his living Word in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts. We are ready to welcome his Word.

At the end of the Gospel Reading, I or a deacon will proclaim, "The Gospel of the Lord." You respond "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ." This way you praise Christ himself, who is truly present in his Word.

## The Gospel Helps Us Choose

Read these stories and the Gospel Readings. How could the Scripture readings help with each decision?

Abel and Ike were playing a video game. Abel was winning, but Ike knocked the plug from the wall. Abel thought Ike did it on purpose. Ike said it was an accident. They argued, and Abel punched Ike. The next day Abel went to Ike's house and said, "I'm sorry." Ike was still mad. He wasn't sure what to do.

Reading: Luke 17:4

Tony had been ill. He missed two weeks of school. When he got back, he couldn't answer the teacher's questions or do his homework. Everything was so hard. He was afraid he would never catch up.

Reading: Mark 4:37–40

Ariel was walking with her friends. A girl named Helen used spray paint to write her initials on a brick wall. Her other friends did it too. They gave Ariel the spray paint. Ariel wanted to be part of the group. But she also wanted to be a follower of Jesus.

Reading: Mark 8:34–36





## A Moment with Jesus

The Liturgy of the Word gives us a chance to listen to the Good News and to respond. Take a moment now and reflect on how God speaks to us through the readings at Mass. What are some messages of love or encouragement that you have heard? Pause and ask Jesus to help you hear the Good News. Ask him to help you be attentive to how you can live it. Thank Jesus for being the living Word of God.

## Homily

After the readings at Mass, I give a talk called a Homily. Sometimes a deacon gives the Homily. We speak to you in the name of Jesus. We try to help you understand God's message and encourage you to live it.

## Profession of Faith

After the readings and the Homily, we stand to respond in prayer. On Sundays and special feasts, we pray the **Nicene Creed** together as Jesus teaches us through the Church. We proclaim the truths of the faith we share as Catholic Christians. We begin by praying "I believe in one God . . ." You can find the Nicene Creed on page 187.

## Prayer of the Faithful

As people who believe in the loving care of our Father, we now respond to his Word by asking him to provide for our needs. Through the Prayer of the Faithful, sometimes called the Universal Prayer, we pray for the needs of all people. We pray for the Church, the Holy Father, and our bishop. We pray for the needs of the world, our own country, and our diocese and parish. We pray for people suffering from injustice and pain and for those who have died. We pray for people we know and love.

## Your Petitions

Write three petitions you would like to pray for during Mass.

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## Summary

**We Remember**

**What is the first main part of the Mass?**

The first main part of the Mass is the Liturgy of the Word.

**What is the *Lectionary for Mass*?**

The *Lectionary for Mass* is the book containing the Bible readings for Mass.

**What happens during the Liturgy of the Word?**

In the Liturgy of the Word, God speaks to us and teaches us.

**We Respond**

Jesus be in my mind.

Jesus be on my lips.

Jesus be in my heart.

**Word to Know**

Nicene Creed



## Things to Do at Home



*Jesus be in my mind.  
Jesus be on my lips.  
Jesus be in my heart.*

1. Copy on a card the psalm response or the Gospel verse for Sunday. Decorate the card and post it where your family can refer to it.
2. In your family meal prayer, include a verse from the Sunday reading that gives a message to remember.
3. Think about the Homily at last Sunday's Mass. Discuss what the Homily was about with someone else who was there. Think of ways the Homily can inspire or help you this week.
4. Memorize the Nicene Creed if you do not already know it by heart. Have a family member help you practice reciting it.

Visit [www.christourlife.org/family](http://www.christourlife.org/family) for more family resources.

**Responses** How do we respond to the following statements in the Mass? Write your answers below.

"The Word of the Lord."

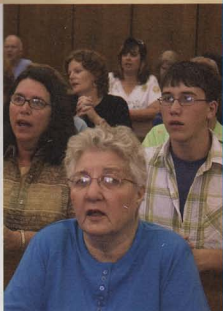
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"A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark."

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"The Gospel of the Lord."

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**Missing Words** Fill in the blanks to make true statements.

When the Bible is read at Mass, \_\_\_\_\_ speaks to us.

The First Reading of the Sunday liturgy comes from the \_\_\_\_\_.

The readings for the Mass are found in a book called the \_\_\_\_\_.



**Riddles** Can you name me?

1. You pray me after hearing the First Reading at Mass.  
I am a song-prayer from the Old Testament. \_\_\_\_\_

2. I am a reading at Mass. I tell you about the life, death,  
and Resurrection of Jesus. \_\_\_\_\_

3. When you recite me, you tell everyone that you  
believe in Jesus and all he teaches. \_\_\_\_\_

4. I am the joyful word that announces the  
Gospel Reading. \_\_\_\_\_

5. I am the prayers you pray to ask our loving Father  
for blessings for all the people of the world. \_\_\_\_\_

6. I am the part of the Mass in which the priest or deacon  
helps you understand God's message in the readings. \_\_\_\_\_



## Looking Back at Unit 2

In this unit, you read about the greatest act of worship, the Sacrifice of the Mass. When Jesus offered his Father the perfect gift, he invited us to join him in offering this gift. In the Mass, we celebrate this gift and gladly offer ourselves with Jesus.

The Introductory Rites remind us that Jesus calls us together as a community of faith and love. Through the Liturgy of the Word, God speaks to us and teaches us.

We respond to God's love in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We present the gifts of bread and wine, and we thank and praise God in the Eucharistic Prayer. The priest reminds us of the words spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper, and God consecrates the bread and wine. Jesus becomes present under the form of bread and wine. God accepts our sacrifice and, in return, gives us Jesus in Holy Communion. We take him with us as we go out to glorify the Lord by our lives. The works of mercy can guide us in our service.

## Living the Message

Read the statements below. Place a check (✓) next to the ones you already do. Circle those you want to begin doing.

- ☐ I prepare for Mass by being quiet and by thinking about what will take place.
- ☐ I listen to the readings at Mass to hear a message from God.
- ☐ I offer myself with Jesus to the Father at the Eucharist.
- ☐ I try to receive Holy Communion each time I go to Mass.
- ☐ I praise, love, and thank Jesus after Holy Communion.



## A Moment with Jesus

Read the words of Mother Teresa.

"When you look at the Crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then. When you look at the sacred Host, you understand how much Jesus loves you now."

Think about her words for a moment. Then look at the photos on this page. Reflect on how much Jesus loves you. Thank him for being always present with us.



## Skywriting Puzzle



Use the words in the sky to work the puzzle.

## Across

- The Good News is the \_\_\_\_\_.
- We offer a sign of \_\_\_\_\_ to one another, such as "Peace be with you."
- The priest takes \_\_\_\_\_ and prays Jesus' words, "For this is my Body."
- In the \_\_\_\_\_, the priest or deacon explains the readings.
- The sacrament in which we receive Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_.

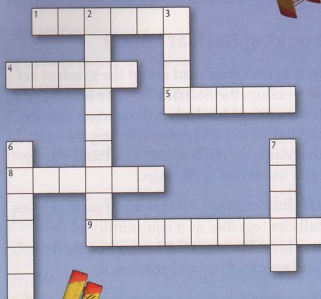
## Down

- In the Mass, we offer ourselves with Jesus' perfect \_\_\_\_\_.
- Jesus is called the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, who takes away our sins.
- At the Last Supper, Jesus gave \_\_\_\_\_ and praise.
- Christ gave himself for us on the \_\_\_\_\_.

peace  
sacrifice  
bread

Gospel  
Eucharist  
Homily

thanks  
cross  
Lamb



**Works of Mercy** Draw a line from each work of mercy to either Corporal Works of Mercy or Spiritual Works of Mercy.

*Corporal Works  
of Mercy*

- Feed the hungry.
- Instruct.
- Console.
- Shelter the homeless.
- Bury the dead.
- Bear wrongs with patience.
- Advise.
- Visit the sick and the imprisoned.
- Comfort.
- Forgive.
- Clothe the naked.
- Give alms to the poor.

*Spiritual  
Works of  
Mercy*

**Praising the Lord** Unscramble the letters and write the missing word on the line.

1. When the Scripture is proclaimed at Mass, we (SINETL) \_\_\_\_\_ to learn what God is asking of us.
2. In the (OIYHLM) \_\_\_\_\_, the priest or deacon tells us how we can live God's teaching.
3. When we recite the Profession of (THAFI) \_\_\_\_\_, we proclaim that we believe in Jesus and all he teaches through the Catholic Church.
4. Jesus' gift of himself gives God perfect (HSNTAK) \_\_\_\_\_ and (ASIREP) \_\_\_\_\_.
5. We give thanks by (FIORFGNE) \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves to the Father with Jesus.
6. (MOINCMONU) \_\_\_\_\_ unites us with Jesus and with one another.
7. After Mass we go out to (LYIGROF) \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord by our lives.

**Prayers and Actions of the Mass** Under each heading, number the parts of the Mass in proper order.**Introductory Rites**

- \_\_\_ Collect
- \_\_\_ Entrance Chant
- \_\_\_ Penitential Act
- \_\_\_ Gloria

**Liturgy of the Word**

- \_\_\_ Homily
- \_\_\_ Profession of Faith
- \_\_\_ First Reading
- \_\_\_ Gospel Acclamation
- \_\_\_ Responsorial Psalm
- \_\_\_ Prayer of the Faithful
- \_\_\_ Gospel Reading
- \_\_\_ Second Reading

**Liturgy of the Eucharist**

- \_\_\_ Preface
- \_\_\_ Eucharistic Prayer
- \_\_\_ Mystery of Faith
- \_\_\_ Presentation and Preparation of the Gifts
- \_\_\_ Holy, Holy, Holy

**Communion Rite**

- \_\_\_ Communion
- \_\_\_ Sign of Peace
- \_\_\_ The Lord's Prayer
- \_\_\_ Lamb of God

**Concluding Rites**

- \_\_\_ Dismissal
- \_\_\_ Final Blessing

## We Celebrate

# Jesus, the Center of Our Faith

**Leader:** As we make the Sign of the Cross together, let us remember our Baptism and our call to worship God our Father with Jesus.

**All:** In the name of the Father . . .

**Leader:** Loving God, we thank you for the gift of Jesus and for his presence with us in the Eucharist. We give praise and glory to you in our acts of prayer and worship. Open our ears to listen to your Word and help us to respond with love. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

**All:** Amen.



Alexander Bening, *The Feeding of the Five Thousand*, 1479.

**Reader 1:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

One day Jesus went up on a mountain with his disciples. A large crowd gathered to hear what Jesus had to say.

The time for a meal was near. Jesus knew the crowd would soon be hungry. He asked his disciple Philip, "Where can we buy enough food for the people to eat?" Philip answered, "Two hundred days' wages would not buy enough food for a crowd this great." The disciple Andrew said, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what good are those for so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." About five thousand people sat down on the grass as they were told.

Jesus took the loaves from the boy, gave thanks, and gave them to the crowd; he did the same

with the fish. Those present ate as much as they wanted. When the people were full, Jesus said to his disciples, "Gather the food that is left. Nothing should be wasted." So the disciples collected the remaining food, which filled 12 wicker baskets.

When the people saw what Jesus had done, they said, "This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world." They wanted to make him king. Jesus did not want this. The people said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

*adapted from John 6:1–15:34–35*

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



**Leader:** Let us pause for a moment and reflect silently on what we just heard. *(Pause.)*

Think about what Jesus told the people. What do you think he meant when he said "I am the bread of life?" In your own words, talk this over with Jesus. Then listen quietly to what Jesus wants to tell you. *(Pause.)*

Jesus fulfilled the needs of people two thousand years ago. He continues to respond to our needs today. Let us take a moment to share some of our needs with Jesus. Our response to each petition will be "Lord, hear our prayer."

**Reader 2:** Lord Jesus, you gave the people bread to eat when they were hungry. Thank you for giving us your Body and Blood in the Eucharist to satisfy our hunger for you. Let us pray to the LORD.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Reader 3:** Lord Jesus, when you blessed the loaves and fishes, there was enough for everyone to share. Teach us to be generous with what we have. Let us pray to the Lord.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Reader 4:** Lord Jesus, you are the Bread of Life. Keep us always close to you. Let us pray to the Lord.

**All:** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** Let us pray together in the words that Jesus taught us.

**All:** Our Father . . .

**Leader:** May the Lord bless us and keep us close to him all the days of our lives.

**All:** Amen.



# Family Feature

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Are you feeling rushed and stressed with all you have to do before Christmas? It doesn't have to be that way. In fact, for Christians, it shouldn't be that way. The four weeks before Christmas—Advent—are supposed to be a time of waiting and preparing, just as a pregnant woman waits and prepares for her baby to be born. It is meant to be a season of peace, not a season of rushing, hurrying, and buying. So how can you reclaim this season? See the following pages for some ideas.



## Make Time

**First, your family needs to make time** for the unfolding of the seasons by giving both Advent customs and Christmas celebrations their due. Consider these options.

- Before your December calendar fills up, plan and reserve one quiet evening each week during Advent for your family to spend time together. You might read Christmas stories, share family memories, play games, or bake Christmas cookies. Choose activities that will help your family connect and get closer.
- Plan celebrations and parties for the 12 days of Christmas (December 25–January 6) rather than before Christmas.
- Decorate gradually as you get closer to December 25. Take time to enjoy your tree and lights as someone reads from a classic Christmas story.
- Minimize shopping by reducing the number of gifts you buy. Trim your list of gifts given solely out of obligation. Large families often draw names rather than buy for everyone.



# Family Feature

## Mark Time

**Advent is a time** to wait and prepare for Jesus. Choose some of the following customs to help you and your family mark time as you approach the coming of Jesus. Waiting is hard, but seeing lights multiply, chains grow, doors open, and kings move can keep the attention of children focused on the main event.

### 1. Advent Wreath

Perhaps you already have an Advent wreath. If not, consider making one. Light one candle each night of the first week, two candles each night of the second week, and so forth. This daily practice can help the whole family slow down and focus.



### 2. Advent Chain

Remember those construction-paper chains you made as a child to decorate the Christmas tree? Each day ask every family member to write the name of a person they want to pray for on a 1-by-6-inch slip of construction paper. Tape or staple the rings together and watch the chain grow as you get closer to Christmas.

### 3. Advent Calendar

Buy an Advent calendar and let your child open one door each day.



### 4. Movable Kings and Baby Jesus

If you have a Nativity set, hide the baby Jesus until Christmas Eve. That evening have your youngest child ceremoniously put the baby in the crib. You might also start the three kings in a remote corner of your home (preferably east). Every day or so after Christmas, move them closer to the crib. They have a long journey and don't actually arrive till January 6, so pace them accordingly.

### 5. Start with Mass

Children are often excited and restless on Christmas Eve. Many parishes have a late afternoon Mass especially geared to young people. Let worship together be the start of Christmas, not an afterthought.

Visit [www.christourlife.org/family](http://www.christourlife.org/family) for more family resources.



## Explore the Mass

Sometime during the Advent or Christmas season (or whenever your child shows signs of being bored or tired of Mass), explore the Mass with your family. Have everyone answer the following questions. Have each person elaborate on his or her answer.

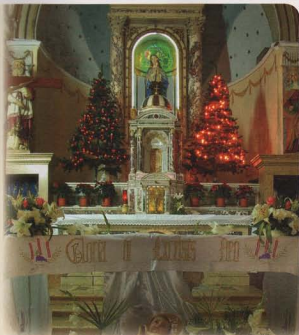
1. What is your favorite part of Mass?

Love

2. What is the liveliest part of Mass?

3. What is the most educational part of Mass?

4. What is the quietest part of Mass?



5. What is the most social part of Mass?

6. What is a good Homily that you remember?

7. Have you ever considered being a lector, an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, a server, an usher, or a choir member?