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This book is called
the Lectionary.

When you go to Mass, also called the celebration of the Lord's Supper, or the celebration of the Eucharist, you look, you listen, you sing, and you make gestures. You watch what the priest does as he leads the people in prayer. But it is *all of us together* who celebrate the Eucharist. The two main parts of the Mass are the **Liturgy of the Word** and the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**.

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The Parts of the Mass

The Gathering

- The people arrive, greet one another, and gather in response to God's call
- The priest enters with servers and other ministers and everyone sings
- The priest greets all of us gathered to share the Lord's Supper
- We then pray for forgiveness and we praise God

The Liturgy of the Word

- We listen to the Word of God
- The priest speaks to us to help us better understand the Word of God
- We profess our faith
- We pray for the whole world

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

- We give thanks to God
- We remember the words of Jesus
- We share the Bread of Life and the Cup of his Blood

The Farewell

- The priest blesses us and asks us to love and serve one another
- The priest and others leave in procession and everyone sings

THEME: We Learn about the Mass

FOCUS: The Eucharistic liturgy is meant to enliven our faith and deepen our love.

Goal To introduce the children to the rites and rituals of the Mass

- Some of the "church" terms here will be difficult for the children, so don't worry if they don't fully understand. Words like *Mass*, the *Lord's Supper*, *Liturgy*, and *Eucharist* will be repeated often in this book. For now, be sure the children grasp the concept of gathering as believers in Jesus.
- Focus on the chart at the right and emphasize the four major points. At every Mass, we 1) gather together, 2) hear God's Word, 3) remember Jesus and share the Lord's Supper, and 4) say goodbye and take God's Law of Love with us into our lives.

- Review the points under these four headings and invite the children to comment or ask questions. Do they remember doing any of these actions at Mass? Make note of which actions they don't remember at all. (*Note: This chart is intended for you and for parents, as an overview of what topics will be covered with the children during the program.*)
- Invite the children to take turns role-playing the first point, under "The Gathering." Then have volunteers line up to role-play the second point: the entry procession (two servers, a reader, and the priest). Have them process to an "altar." The "priest" bows before the altar, the servers stand on either side, and the reader takes a seat (until it's time to read).

If you have time, have the children process out ("The Farewell"). The "priest" blesses the people and everyone sings as the procession exits.

For both processions, have the children sing "This Little Light of Mine" or another simple hymn that they know.

Things We See at Mass

The next time you go to Mass, look for the things Father Joseph is showing Sasha, Olivia, and Paulo. All these things are used for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Father Joseph also told them about the other things on the altar. Here's what he said:



The altar is the table for the Lord's Supper, so it's a very special table. The candles are a sign that Jesus, our light, is with us.



The large prayer book on the altar is called the **Missal**. It contains all the Mass prayers. The second book used at Mass is called the **Lectiary**. (See the Lectiary on page 12.) The Lectiary contains all the readings from the Bible. The priest uses a small gold plate, called the **paten** (PAT-en), and a cup with a lid, called the **ciborium** (sah-BORE-ee-um), to hold the hosts or communion bread. The other cup, the **chalice** (CHAL-ess), holds the wine.

Father Joseph told the children not to worry if they couldn't remember these "church" names. "The important thing to know," he said, "is that they are used for a very special meal: the Lord's Supper."

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THEME: Things Children See at Mass

FOCUS: The priest uses many objects (books and vessels) during the Eucharistic liturgy.

Goal To introduce the children to some of the many objects used for the Lord's Supper and increase their interest in them

- Focus on the illustration at the top right of page 13. What items do the children see? Do they remember seeing these at Mass? Read the first paragraph. Before proceeding, say the words that appear in bold print and have the children repeat them after you. (They do not have to memorize these.) Now read the final paragraph. As it indicates, the children are simply being introduced to some of the things they will see at Mass. Allow them to ask questions or make comments about any of these words/objects.
- Invite one of the children to read what Father Joseph says about the altar and the candles.

Notes for Catechists

Involve the Children

Here's how Psalm 47 says we should pray:

"Clap your hands, all you peoples;
shout to God with loud songs of joy."

Psalm 66 says something similar:

"Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth!"

Class activities and prayers should be an experience of spontaneous joy. Encourage the children to participate with their voices, their bodies, and all their might. Repetition is great for children at this age, and role-playing allows them to give expression to what they are learning. The more involved they are, the better!

We Share Greetings

Did You Know?

- ▶ You are invited to say the Mass prayers in a loud, clear voice.
- ▶ The Mass has been the special prayer of Christians for two thousand years.
- ▶ It is a custom in the Church for the priest to wear special garments called **vestments** at Mass.
- ▶ Several times during Mass the priest says, "The Lord be with you." What do you answer? (Check your answer at the bottom of the page.)



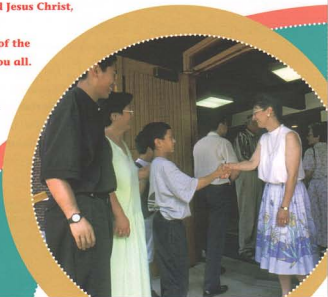
When you enter the church, the priest or other greeters say hello to you to make you feel welcome. People greet one another as they gather. You should also greet those around you before Mass begins.

At the beginning of Mass, the priest greets everyone from the altar, saying:

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the
Holy Spirit be with you all.**

Everyone answers:

And with your spirit.



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ANSWER: And with your spirit.

THEME: We Share Greetings

FOCUS: Before we begin the official prayer of the Church, we greet one another with love.

Goal To introduce the children to the gathering rite at Sunday Mass

- Draw attention to the illustration at the bottom right of page 14. Ask the children to interpret what they see. Does anyone greet them when they arrive for Mass? Who is it? What does the person say?
- Read the first paragraph. Ask the children if they say hello to people when they arrive in the church. Why or why not? Explain that the priest always greets the people at the beginning of Mass with these special words: "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Everyone answers, "And with your spirit." Invite the children to take turns being the priest and proclaiming this greeting. All give the response. When all have had a turn, say it once more yourself and invite the children to respond loudly and clearly.

- Go over the "Did You Know?" statements. Be sure the children understand by having them repeat the statements after you. Then ask a few questions:
 - How should you respond to the prayers at Mass?
 - For whom is the Mass a special prayer?
 - Who are Christians?
 - What special garments does the priest wear?
 - When the priest says, "The Lord be with you," how do you answer?

Notes for Catechists

Show a Little Life!

Don't be afraid to be a little "wild and crazy" when you teach. Be dramatic, exaggerate your facial expressions, speak in a loud, clear voice, and use bodily gestures. You want your message to reach eyes and ears, but also hearts! Encourage the children to role-play dramatically, to say prayer words enthusiastically, and to participate fully.

We Are a Family

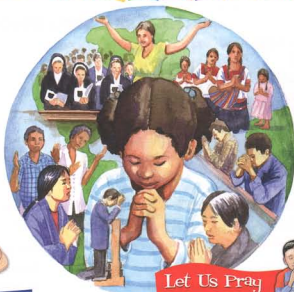
When we come to Mass, we join Catholics all over the world in worship. We sing, we make gestures, we stand and kneel. We pray the same prayers in many different languages. We ask God to take care of the poor and the suffering. We all gather in memory of Jesus. How lucky we are to be called to the Lord's Table!



The Church Teaches...

At Mass we share our faith in the real presence of Christ.

—adapted for children from CCC #1382



Let Us Pray



Praise God with shouts of joy, all people!
Sing to the glory of God's name.
—adapted from Psalm 42:4

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THEME: We Are a Family

FOCUS: When we gather at Mass, we join Christians all over the world.

Goal To help the children understand that they are part of one great global family

- Ask the children to describe what they see in the illustration. Do they know any of these people? What do they have in common? (Let them guess.) Now read the first paragraph. Talk about the five things we have in common with Catholics all over the world:
 - 1 we come to Mass for worship (respect and admiration for God expressed through the rites and prayers of the Mass);
 - 2 we participate by singing, standing, kneeling;
 - 3 we pray the same Mass prayers (every country in its own language);
 - 4 we remember the poor and the suffering;
 - 5 we gather in memory of Jesus.
- Explain to the children that we always pray one of the psalms at Mass. Psalms are sacred hymns that praise God, seek help, express sorrow, and more. They are found in the Bible. King David wrote some (but not all) of them. Ask the children to fold their hands and bow their heads for prayer. Pray the “Let Us Pray” words and encourage the children to think about their meaning. Then have them repeat the words after you.
- Focus on “The Church Teaches.” This statement offers yet another way to express what we share with believers all over the world at Mass. Proclaim this statement dramatically and have the children repeat it after you.

We Ask Forgiveness



Once upon a time, there was a little prince who came from a faraway planet. One day he met a very wise fox in the desert. The fox explained to the little prince that before you meet a friend, you must “dress up your heart.”

.....

This is just what you do at Mass before meeting the Lord. You quiet your heart and ask yourself, “Have I dressed up my heart by praying, doing good for others, and giving up my bad habits?”

The priest says: **Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, that we may prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.**

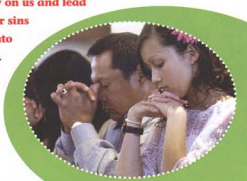
The people remain silent for a few moments and then praise God for the gift of forgiveness by chanting these words: **Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.**

In Greek, the words are *Kyrie Eleison* (keer-ee-AY a-LAY-ee-sahn) and *Christe Eleison* (kris-TAY a-LAY-ee-sahn).

Sometimes parishes use these words in the chant. When you say them you are speaking a little Greek!

Then the priest says: **May almighty God have mercy on us and lead us, with our sins forgiven, into eternal life.**

We answer:
Amen!



THEME: We Ask Forgiveness

FOCUS: When we go to meet a friend, it is good to “dress up our hearts.”

Goal To share with the children how the liturgy celebrates God's forgiveness

- Read the first paragraph. Ask the children if they have ever heard of a book called *The Little Prince*. (Read this little book beforehand; it's as much for adults as for children. Most libraries have it.) The fox in the story teaches the Little Prince how to form a special friendship. Ask the children if they ever get “dressed up.” For what occasions? What might it mean to dress up their heart? (answers could include: to be excited about meeting a friend; to look forward to it; to treat friends with great respect; to realize that friendship is a gift)
- Now share the second paragraph. Explain to the children that preparing for their First Communion is one way they are “dressing up their hearts” to meet Jesus in a new way.
- Explain that at Mass, we have time to stop and think about what is in our hearts. We ask God to forgive us if we have done wrong. Most of all, we celebrate God's love and forgiveness. Now read the dialogue between the priest and the people. Ask the children to take turns being the priest.

We Sing Our Praise

After God gives us the gift of forgiveness, we proclaim the greatness of God by singing "Glory to God." This is what the angels sang when Jesus was born.

After this song of praise, the priest prays the Opening Prayer. He asks God to be with us and open our hearts. At the end of the prayer we again answer: **Amen!**

The first part of the Mass is now over.

Did You Know?

- ▶ During Mass we "dress up our hearts" because we are meeting Jesus, our best friend.
- ▶ At home, you can make a prayer corner, a space where you can pray. You can keep a Bible, a rosary, and special pictures in your prayer corner.
- ▶ Jesus is always with you, morning, noon, and night.

Read this prayer slowly and then fill the space with happy colours. Make a colourful frame to go around the prayer.

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father,

you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer:
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,

you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

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THEME: We Sing Our Praise

FOCUS: We share a happy song of praise called the **Glory Be**.

- Share with the children that once we have asked God's forgiveness and dressed up our hearts, we all share a happy song of praise called the Glory Be. The first part of this song uses the words the angels sang on the night Jesus was born. Have children pray this now, in full voice, line by line after you (as on page 17). Invite them to hold open their hands as they pray.
- After this song of praise, the priest prays a formal prayer called the Opening Prayer. All respond "Amen." This prayer concludes the first part of the Mass. To illustrate how we use the word "amen" to say "Yes, I believe it" to something, ask children to loudly pray "Amen" to these statements:

At Mass we come together to praise and thank God!

God forgives us when we fail and helps us to do better!

When we pray, we are talking to God about our lives!

When they say "Amen" to the prayers at Mass, they are saying, "Yes, I believe it."

- Take time now to review the "Did You Know?" questions. Engage the children in conversation. Do they understand what it means to "dress up their hearts"? Have them share times when they have done this. Do any of them have prayer corners at home, or a space where they go to pray? Would they like such a space? Why or why not? What would they keep there? What helps them to pray? Do they believe that Jesus is always with them? (Be sure they understand that Jesus is present in spirit and not as a physical person or presence.)

Words

to Remember...

Liturgy ~ the "official" prayer of the Church that all Catholics share

Lectionary ~ the book that contains the readings for Mass

Have mercy ~ another way to say, "Please forgive me."

Amen ~ a word we say in prayer that means "Yes, I do believe it."



From the Liturgy

God, our loving Father, we are glad to give you thanks and praise because you love us. With Jesus we sing your praise.

—Eucharistic Prayer II for Children

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True or False?

1. At Mass we gather with other Catholics in our parish and all over the world. _____
2. The priest wears special garments called robes. _____
3. "Amen" means I do NOT believe. _____
4. To "dress up your heart" means to wear your best clothes. _____
5. The Mass begins with a special greeting. _____
6. At the beginning of Mass, we give praise and thanks for God's love and forgiveness. _____
7. The altar is the book the priest reads from at Mass. _____

Let Us Pray



Pray these words from the Mass often throughout the day:

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.



THEME: What Have You Learned?

FOCUS: We learn about the Mass.

Goal To help the children review and discuss what they have learned in Theme 2

- Read the "True or False?" statements aloud. Invite the children to call out the answers. Go over any statements they seem uncertain about.
- Now look at the "Words to Remember." The first three are difficult concepts, so have the children guess what the words mean and describe them in their own words. Read the definitions and give examples.
 - An example of a liturgy is the Mass.
 - The lectionary is the big book the reader carries in the procession at the start of Mass.
 - We say "Have mercy" at the beginning of Mass.

Point out the "Let Us Pray" words. Have the children fold their hands and repeat each line after you. Show them how the phrase "Have mercy" (from "Words to Remember") connects with this prayer. Finally, explain that "Amen" means "Yes!"

- Explain to the children that the words "From the Liturgy" are prayed during Mass. Ask: What does this prayer call God?
 - What are we "glad" to give God?
 - Who helps us to sing God's praises?

Now invite the children to share ways they might sing God's praises at home and at school.