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We Gather and Give Thanks

Getting Started

The focus of Chapter 2 is on the gathering of the parish community for Mass each Sunday and on the Introductory Rites of the Mass.

Faith Background

On the night before Jesus died, he and his disciples were gathered together for a celebration. That night Jesus shared a special meal with his disciples. During the meal he offered the bread and wine at the table as his Body and Blood. Then he told his disciples, “Do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19).

After Jesus’ death and Resurrection, the Church began to gather and do as Jesus asked. The followers of Jesus would share a meal, and in the middle of that meal they would offer thanks and praise to God and share the Eucharist, the bread and wine that had become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. These ritual actions, combined with the reading of Scripture in the community, became the celebration of the Eucharist.

Now we gather weekly, on the Lord’s Day, for Mass, the celebration of the Eucharist. The Lord’s Day begins on Saturday evening and ends on Sunday night. When we gather to celebrate the Eucharist during this time, we do as Jesus asked when he said, “Do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19). In many parishes we can also gather for Mass each day.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For further reading and reflection, see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 1341, 1346, 1348, and 2177.

For the prayers of the Introductory Rites of the Mass, see William H. Sadlier’s *With Jesus Always: My Mass Book*, pages 6–8.

For additional activities, visit Sadlier’s www.webelieveandcelebrate.com.

We Gather and Give Thanks

2



"Glory to God in
the highest."

Roman Missal



19

Introduce the Chapter

Gather for prayer. If possible, gather at a window and look up at the sky. Express wonder and thanks to God for the gifts of the daytime and nighttime sky. Proclaim together the verse on page 19. You may also want to proclaim the next part of the prayer: "and on earth peace to people of good will."

Point out that these words are the same words the angels sang at the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem (see Luke 2:14). Explain that we pray these same words often at the beginning of Mass. The words express our praise and thanks to God.

Read aloud the title of the chapter. Explain that when we gather with our parish community for Mass on Sunday, we are united with the whole

Church. Together we give God thanks and praise for all he has done for us.

Direct attention to the photograph on page 19. Together make up a story about the family and about the ways they are enjoying their time together in God's world.

To find a story to introduce this chapter, visit Sadlier's www.webelieveandcelebrate.com.

We Gather

My favorite family celebrations are ...



20

We Gather

Direct attention to the artwork on pages 20 and 21. Ask: *Where would you see the things that are pictured? Which things would you see at family celebrations?*

Continue by discussing times when families gather to celebrate and the reasons they gather to celebrate. List the times and the reasons on a large sheet of paper. Read the list aloud.

Explain the activity directions: *Complete the sentence on page 20 by drawing pictures of your favorite family celebrations. You can also paste photos here or write the names of the celebrations in the space provided.*

Scrapbooking Option

Set out the materials you have prepared for pages 20 and 21. Help your/each child mount one of the photos or drawn pictures (but not the one of the child's favorite event) on colored paper or card stock (see *Next Time*, guide page 18A). Trim the paper, allowing for a one-inch border. Invite your/each child to write on the border words or phrases about the event. Then affix the mounted photo or picture inside the frame on page 20. Give guidance in adding additional decorations to the page: glitter, confetti, stickers.

The celebration that is most special is . . .



It is most special because . . .



21

Begin the activity on page 21 by giving the following directions: *Close your eyes. Picture a family celebration that is most special for you. What are you celebrating? Who is there? What are you doing? Now open your eyes. Draw a picture of this celebration, or paste a photo of the celebration in the space on page 21.*

Continue by asking that the second sentence be completed by writing about or telling aloud the reasons why this celebration is the most special.

Scrapbooking Option

Invite your/each child to show the photo or picture of the most special family celebration, and share the sentences written about why the celebration is the favorite (see *Next Time*, guide page 18A). Mount the picture and the description on pieces of colored paper. Trim around each, allowing for narrow borders. Affix the picture to the inside of the frame on page 21. Affix the description to the space provided below the frame.

Help your/each child add clip art, stickers, and other decorations that match the celebration (for example, presents and a cake for a birthday party or ornaments, stars and holly for Christmas).

We Share God's Word

Jesus and his disciples often gathered to celebrate Jewish feasts and holy days. Together they thanked God the Father for his blessings.

For some feasts they went to the Temple in Jerusalem to celebrate with other Jewish families. The Temple was the holy place in Jerusalem where Jewish people prayed and worshiped God.

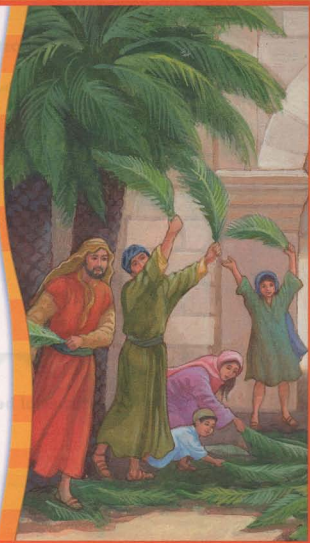
 Mark 11:8-9

The week before Jesus died and rose again, he and his disciples went up to Jerusalem. Many people were there to celebrate the important Jewish feast of Passover. People heard that Jesus and his disciples were coming to celebrate, too.

Many people went to meet Jesus. Some spread out their coats on the road. Others spread tree branches or waved them as Jesus passed. People began to praise Jesus. They called out, "Hosanna!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mark 11:9)

22



We Share God's Word

Direct attention to the illustration on pages 22 and 23. Explain that the people in the picture are welcoming Jesus to Jerusalem. Say: *Jerusalem was a very important city to the Jewish people because the Temple was there. Many Jewish people traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate some of their feasts. They celebrated these feasts by gathering in the Temple to worship God together.*

Read aloud the first two paragraphs on page 22. You may want to explain that Passover is an eight-day feast. During this feast the Jewish people celebrate their escape from the ruler of Egypt who had kept them in slavery. In Jesus' time many people traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Passover. They gathered in the Temple to worship God.

Note: Age-appropriate information about Passover and about the Temple in Jerusalem can be found on various Web sites.

Read aloud the Scripture story. When you have finished reading, explain that the people also called out, "Hosanna in the highest!" (Mark 11:10). They were saying, "May God save."

Stand and proclaim together the words of praise of Mark 11:9.



Discuss the words and actions of the people who welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem. Ask: *What did the people do? (They spread out their coats on the road. They spread tree branches on the road, or they waved the branches in the air as Jesus passed by them.)*

Explain that the Church remembers this welcome celebration every year at the beginning of Holy Week on the Sunday before Easter. On that Sunday, before Mass begins, we listen to this Scripture story. We also have a special procession, a prayer walk, during which we carry palm branches and sing songs of praise.

Invite a retelling of the story by your child/the children, giving an eyewitness account.

Point out that we pray the words of Scripture in Mark 11:9 every Sunday at Mass. We do this before the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. Once again, stand and proclaim these words together.

We Believe and Celebrate

We gather with our parish community to celebrate God's love. We worship God together. To **worship** God means "to praise and thank" him.

Every Sunday we gather with our parish to worship God. We celebrate the Eucharist. This celebration of the Eucharist is called the **Mass**. By our special words and actions, we show that we believe that God is with us.

The community of people who join together for the celebration of the Mass is called the gathered **assembly**. A priest leads the gathered assembly in this celebration. He is called the celebrant. He is often assisted by a deacon. At Mass the priest and the deacon wear special clothing called vestments.

Our Sunday Celebration

It was on a Sunday that Jesus Christ rose to new life. So Sunday is a special day for the Church. We rest and worship God.

The Church tells us to worship God by taking part in the Mass every Sunday of the year. We are also to attend Mass on special days called **holy days of obligation**. When we do this we follow the third commandment and one of the laws of the Church.

Sunday is called the Lord's Day. The celebration of the Lord's Day is from Saturday evening through Sunday until midnight. During this time, as Catholics, we gather with our parish to celebrate the Mass. This celebration of the Eucharist is the center of Catholic life.



24

We Believe and Celebrate

Call attention to the illustration at the bottom of the page. Ask: *Where do you think these families are going?* Direct the responses to the conclusion that these people are gathering for Mass on Sunday.

Read aloud the first and second paragraphs on page 24. Ask: *What does it mean to worship God? (To worship God means to praise and thank him.)* Stress that the celebration of the Eucharist is the Mass.

Draw attention to the *Our Sunday Celebration* feature. Read the text aloud. Talk about ways you can prepare to participate in the celebration of Mass and ways you can relax and enjoy time with your family on these days.

For the catechist: Catholics in the United States celebrate six holy days of obligation: Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, January 1; Ascension of Our Lord, when celebrated on Thursday during the Easter season; Assumption of Mary, August 15; All Saints' Day, November 1; Immaculate Conception, December 8; Christmas, December 25.

Present the third paragraph. Stress: *Each time you participate in Mass you are part of the gathered assembly.* Direct attention to the photograph on page 25. Explain that the priest will be the celebrant of the Mass.

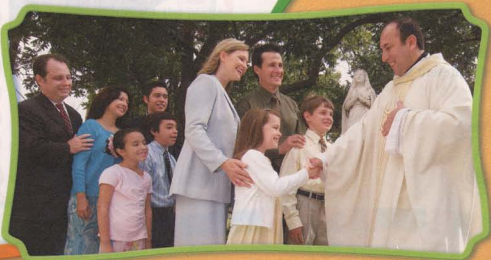
Read the *Our Parish Priests* feature on page 25. Stress that the priest acts in the Person of Christ in celebrating Mass and the other sacraments.

Throughout the Mass we show God our love by singing, praying, and listening to God's word. Together with the priest, we

- ♦ praise and thank God
- ♦ listen to God's word
- ♦ remember Jesus' life, death, Resurrection, and Ascension
- ♦ celebrate that Jesus gives himself to us in the Eucharist.

Our Parish Priests

Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, a man becomes a priest. Many priests serve in local parishes. They spend their lives sharing God's love with people. They act in the Person of Christ in celebrating Mass and the other sacraments.



25

Explain that sometimes a parish has a deacon. A deacon is a man who is not a priest but who has received the Sacrament of Holy Orders. A deacon serves the Church by preaching, baptizing, and helping the bishop and priests. Deacons also serve those who are in need in many ways. You may want to direct attention to the photograph on page 26. Explain that the man walking in front of the priest is a deacon.

Present the four important things we do at Mass. Explain that we show our love for God by participating in Mass with our whole heart.

Emphasize that during Mass we remember Jesus' life, death, Resurrection, and Ascension. Explain Jesus' Ascension by saying that Jesus stayed with his

disciples for forty days after he rose from the dead. When it was time for him to return to his Father, he ascended to heaven. We call this event in Jesus' life the Ascension.

Faith Words

worship Worship means to give God thanks and praise.

Mass The Mass is the celebration of the Eucharist.

assembly The assembly is the community of people who join together for the celebration of the Mass.

We Believe and Celebrate

The celebration of Mass begins with the **Introductory Rites**. These prayers and actions at the beginning of the Mass help us to remember that we are a worshipping community. They prepare us to listen to God's word and to celebrate the Eucharist.

Here is what we do during the Introductory Rites:

- ♦ We stand and sing to praise God. As we sing, the priest, deacon, and others helping at Mass walk to the altar. The priest and deacon kiss the altar as a sign of respect.
- ♦ We make the sign of the cross. Then the priest greets us. His words and our response remind us that Jesus is present with us.



26

We Believe and Celebrate

Call attention to the photograph on page 26. Explain that at the beginning of Mass altar servers and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist process (walk prayerfully) with the deacon and priest to the altar. If there is no deacon, a lector (reader) may also process. Then together turn to the diagram of the church on pages 4 and 5 of the child's book. Explain that when the altar servers reach the sanctuary, they place the candles on or beside the altar. (See numerals 1 and 2.) The altar server places the crucifix in a stand behind or near the altar. (See numeral 11.)

Explain that there are four parts of the Mass: the Introductory Rites, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Concluding Rites. Read aloud the first paragraph on page 26. Then

ask: *What do the Introductory Rites help us to do?*

(The Introductory Rites help us to remember that we are a worshipping community. They help us to get ready to listen to God's word and to celebrate the Eucharist.)

For the catechist: The two main parts of the Mass are the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The prayers of the Introductory Rites prepare us for the two main parts of the celebration.

Read aloud the remaining text on page 26. You may want to act out the words and actions of the priest and the assembly as described in these paragraphs. The prayers can be found in a parish missalette or in Sadlier's *With Jesus Always* (see page 19A).

- ♦ The priest asks us to think about times we have not loved God and others. Then we ask God and one another for forgiveness.
- ♦ Together with the priest we praise God for his love and forgiveness. We may pray:
 - “Lord, have mercy.”
 - “Christ, have mercy.”
 - “Lord, have mercy.”
- ♦ We often sing or say a prayer of praise to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This prayer begins with the words:
 - “Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people
of good will.”
- ♦ The priest prays an opening prayer. We respond, “Amen.”

“Glory to God
in the highest”



27



Continue presenting the Introductory Rites by reading the text on page 27. Explain that when we ask God for mercy, we are asking for his forgiveness. Read the “Lord, have mercy” prayer together. Explain that sometimes at Mass we sing this prayer.

Read aloud about our prayer of praise. If time allows, stand and pray these words now. You may want to explain that this prayer is not prayed during the seasons of Advent or Lent.

Direct attention to the photograph on page 27. Explain that the priest is praying the opening prayer to which we respond, “Amen.” Review the Introductory Rites by asking for a description of what is shown in each photograph on pages 26 and 27.

Emphasize the importance of each person’s participation during the Introductory Rites. Explain that we stand during this part of the Mass. We show God our love by joining others in song and prayer.

Faith Word

Introductory Rites The Introductory Rites are the prayers and actions at the beginning of Mass. They help us to remember that we are a worshipping community. They prepare us to listen to God’s word and to celebrate the Eucharist.

We Respond

When we gather with our parish for Mass, we often use these words to worship God ...



We use these prayerful actions ...



28



We Respond

Introduce the activity on page 28 by reading aloud the first sentence starter. Explain that the sentence can be completed by writing and then decorating words that we use to worship God at Mass. Brainstorm and list these words on a large sheet of paper. (Possible responses include *Amen, Alleluia, Glory, and Thanks be to God.*)

Read aloud the second sentence starter on page 28. Explain that this sentence may be completed by drawing pictures of someone doing the prayerful actions and/or by writing descriptions of these actions. (Possible responses include *standing, kneeling, bowing, singing, sitting, and listening.*) Together, prayerfully do the actions pictured.

✂ Scrapbooking Option

Brainstorm a list of words that we use to worship God at Mass. Help your/each child use letter stencils to trace one or two of these words onto colored card stock, or use clip-art letters to spell out each word. Mount the words on the card stock. Decorate them with glitter, ribbon, stickers.

Talk about prayerful actions used during Mass. Then give your/each child drawing paper on which to draw people doing one or two of these actions. Help cut out the pictures; then affix the pictures and the word cards in the spaces provided on page 28.

**My family can pray to Jesus at home.
We can make a special place of
prayer where we can gather.**



My Family's Prayer Space



Talk about the special place for prayer that a family can set up at home. Invite sharing about things that might be placed in a home prayer space as helps to prayer. (See an example at the bottom of page 29.) Explain that on the table you can place a cloth of the color of the current liturgical season: purple for Advent and Lent, white for Christmas and Easter, green for Ordinary Time, red for Good Friday and Pentecost Sunday.

Read aloud the text on page 29. Explain that the activity may be completed by drawing a picture or pictures or by pasting one or more photos in the space provided. The activity may also be completed by writing sentences that describe the family prayer space.

Scrapbooking Option

On a four-inch by six-inch piece of drawing paper, make a picture of a special place that your family can set up at home. From magazines cut out pictures of furniture and other objects that can be part of the prayer space. Mount the finished picture on a piece of colored card stock and then trim around the edges, allowing for a narrow border. Affix the picture to page 29. Then add clip art, glitter, and other decorations to the page.

We Respond in Prayer

We Celebrate with Joy

We celebrate with joy and gladness!
We celebrate God's love for us!
We celebrate with joy and gladness:
God with us today! God with us today!

✦ Leader: We place a bowl of holy water in the prayer space.

Reader 1: God, may this holy water remind us of our Baptism. At Baptism we became your children and members of the Church.

All: God our Father, we praise and thank you.

Leader: We place a cross here.

Reader 2: Jesus, may this cross remind us that you became one of us and died and rose again to save us from sin.

All: Jesus, Son of God, we praise and thank you.

Leader: We place a candle here.

Reader 3: Holy Spirit, may the candle flame remind us that you are with us to guide us.

All: God the Holy Spirit, we praise and thank you.

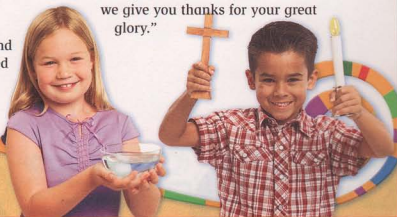
Leader: Let us join in praying words we often pray at Mass:

All: "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."



30



We Respond in Prayer

Prepare to pray. Gather the items needed for this prayer celebration: a bowl of holy water, a cross, and a lighted battery-operated candle. Have available a small table or set aside a corner of a larger table as a space on which to place these items. Cover the table with a cloth of the current liturgical season.

Play "We Celebrate with Joy," #12 on the *We Believe & Celebrate* CD. Sing together.

Assign the roles of Readers 1, 2, and 3. Have the readers practice their parts before beginning the prayer celebration.

Sing or say the words of "We Celebrate with Joy."

Pray the Sign of the Cross. Then, as each item is mentioned in the prayer, place that item on the prayer-space table.

Encourage family participation in completing the *Sharing Faith with My Family* activities for Chapter 2, child's text pages 83–84.

Family Time, page 30A, includes enrichment activities for the family and materials that may be needed for children's work on the next chapter. (To the catechist: Duplicate this page for the families who are not using this guide.)

FAMILY TIME



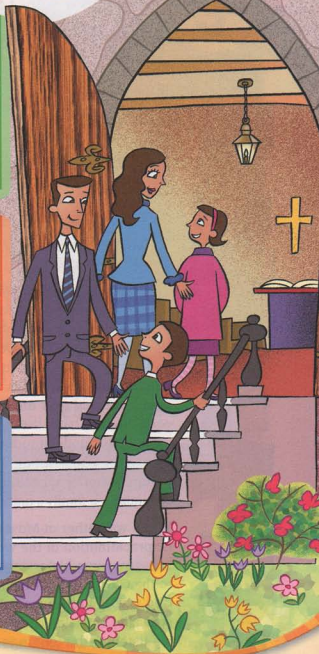
Clocks and Calendars Our most important activity each weekend is our participation in our parish's celebration of the Mass. Discuss the following questions with your family to emphasize the importance of this celebration: *How can we plan our weekend activities so that the celebration of Mass remains at the center of our lives? After Mass how do we keep Sunday as the Lord's Day? If Sunday is a working day, how do we find time for worship and for family leisure?*



Media Matters This week discuss the way music helps us to praise God during Mass. Talk together about your favorite hymns or songs and about the importance of everyone's participation in the singing. Make a song prayer poster. On the poster write the name of a song that your parish community sings at the beginning of Mass. Decorate the poster with illustrations that reflect the words of the song. Display the poster in a prominent place.



Conversation Starters Reread the Scripture story on page 22. Then, together, retell the story as if it were taking place in a present-day setting. Use the following points as prompts: words that we might call out to Jesus, things that we might put on or along the road on which Jesus would travel, things that we might hold in our hands to wave as we welcome Jesus.



Next Time for Chapter 3

Materials

Prayer

- Bible
- packet of seeds, potting soil, large flower pot (optional)

Activities

- colored markers or pens
- large sheets of paper
- potting soil (optional)
- material to make cards (optional)
- magazines (optional)

Scrapbooking Preparations

We Gather (pages 32–33)

- Take a photo of your child reading his or her favorite book, or help him or her draw a picture of the same activity.
- Help your child write a sentence about what he or she likes about the book. Use a favorite font to enter and print out the sentence on a computer. Affix the sentence to colored paper or card stock.

We Respond (pages 40–41)

- Cut out magazine pictures of people and things for which to thank God.
- Have colored paper or card stock and writing paper available.

For additional scrapbooking materials and directions, refer to the First Communion project cards 3A and 3B at www.webelieveandcelebrate.com