









Contents

Chapter 1	We Belong	2
	Ritual Focus: Renewal of Baptismal Promises	
	 The Vine and the Branches (John 15:1–17)	
	Faith Focus: The Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist make us members of the Church.	
	Liturgical Focus: Sacraments of Initiation	
Chapter 2	We Gather	12
	Ritual Focus: Procession and Gloria	
	 The Early Christians (Acts 2:42–47)	
	Faith Focus: We gather as a united community.	
	Liturgical Focus: Introductory Rites, Gloria	
Chapter 3	We Are Forgiven	22
	Ritual Focus: Penitential Act	
	 The Call of Matthew (Matthew 9:9–13)	
	Faith Focus: Eucharist is a Sacrament of unity and forgiveness.	
	Liturgical Focus: Penitential Act	
Chapter 4	We Listen	32
	Ritual Focus: Signing	
	 The Sower (Matthew 13:1–23)	
	Faith Focus: God is present in Scripture.	
	Liturgical Focus: Liturgy of the Word	

Chapter 5	We Prepare	42
	Ritual Focus: Honoring the Cross	
	 The Washing of the Feet (John 13:1–16)	
	Faith Focus: The Mass is a sacrifice.	
	Liturgical Focus: Preparation of the Gifts	
Chapter 6	We Remember and Give Thanks	52
	Ritual Focus: Mystery of Faith	
	 The Last Supper (Matthew 26:26–28; Luke 22:14–20)	
	Faith Focus: We remember the many ways God has saved us.	
	Liturgical Focus: Eucharistic Prayer, Consecration, Mystery of Faith, Great Amen	
Chapter 7	We Share a Meal	62
	Ritual Focus: Sharing a Meal	
	 The Bread of Life (John 6:30–58)	
	Faith Focus: We receive the Body and Blood of Jesus, the Bread of Life.	
	Liturgical Focus: Communion Rite	
Chapter 8	We Go Forth	72
	Ritual Focus: Blessing for Mission	
	 Pentecost (Acts 2:1–41)	
	Faith Focus: The Holy Spirit helps us do Jesus' work.	
	Liturgical Focus: Dismissal	
	Catholic Source Book	82–105
	Words of Faith	82–87
	Order of the Mass	88–99
	Holy Communion	100–101
	Catholic Prayers	102–105
	Index	106

We Gather

Ritual Focus: Procession and Gloria

As you sing, walk forward slowly.
Follow the person carrying the Bible.



Sing together.

Glory to God. Glory to God.

Glory to God in the highest!

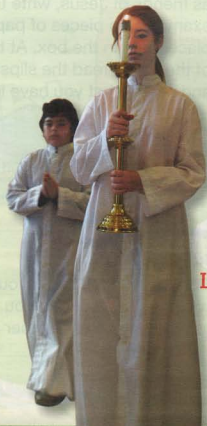
And on earth, peace on earth,
peace to people of good will.

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Leader: Let us pray.

Make the Sign of the Cross
together.

God, our Loving Father,
we praise you for your
goodness and thank you



for the gift of your Son,
Jesus. Send us your Holy
Spirit to help us live as
your children. We ask
this through Jesus Christ
our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: Every Sunday we come
together as God's people
to praise him and to give
him thanks for everything
he has done. Today we do
the same.

Come forward, and gather around
the holy water and candle.

Lord Jesus, you came to
gather all people into your
Father's Kingdom.

All: We give you glory and
thanks.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you came to
bring us new life.

All: We give you glory and thanks.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you came to save us.

All: We give you glory and thanks.

Leader: Let us give praise and thanks to God.

We Listen

Leader: God, our Father, you alone are holy. We ask you to help us be grateful children who always remember your glory. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Read Acts 2:42-47.

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sit silently.

We Go Forth

Leader: God, the Holy Spirit, we praise you and thank you for your gifts. May we act in ways that show your gifts to others. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.



Sing the opening song together.



Gathered Together

SIGNS OF FAITH



Assembly

Many different people come together at Mass. Each person comes to praise and give thanks to God and to ask for his blessings. When we gather together to give God thanks and praise, we are an **assembly** of people who believe in Jesus. When the assembly gathers, God is there.




Reflect

Procession and Gloria Draw a picture of what you want to thank and praise God for.

We Come Together

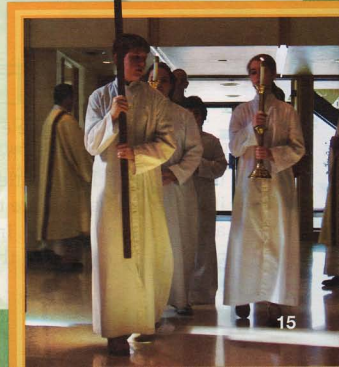
Every time we gather as a group, we come together to pray. When we begin to form the procession for our celebration, we are gathering for prayer. **Prayer** is talking and listening to God. The procession gathers us as a community ready for prayer.

During the Mass, we pray in many different ways. When we stand, we pray a prayer of reverence. Prayers can be said. We can say the Lord Have Mercy (*Kyrie, eleison*). We can ask for God's help. Prayers can be sung. We can sing the Glory to God in Mass. We pray in silence during the Mass, too. One time we pray in silence is after the Gospel reading.



Procession

A **procession** is a group of people moving forward as part of a celebration. Processions at Mass remind us that we are walking with God and that God is walking with us. At Mass the priest and other ministers come into the church in a procession. People bring the gifts to the altar in a procession. We walk in a procession to receive Jesus in Holy Communion.



We Gather as God's People

Faith Focus

What is a community of faith?

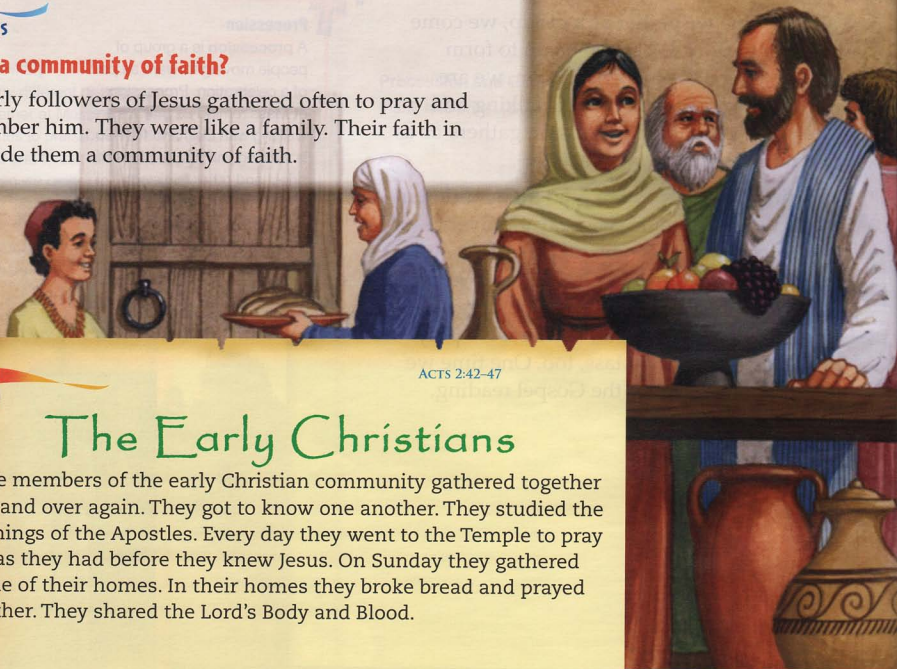
The early followers of Jesus gathered often to pray and to remember him. They were like a family. Their faith in Jesus made them a community of faith.


Scripture

ACTS 2:42-47

The Early Christians

The members of the early Christian community gathered together over and over again. They got to know one another. They studied the teachings of the Apostles. Every day they went to the Temple to pray just as they had before they knew Jesus. On Sunday they gathered at one of their homes. In their homes they broke bread and prayed together. They shared the Lord's Body and Blood.





The early followers of Jesus shared their belongings with one another. They sold their property and possessions and made sure everyone had what they needed. Every time they ate together, they gave praise and thanks to God. They were very joyful. When other people saw how happy the followers of Jesus were, they wanted to join their community. They wanted to believe in Jesus and follow him.

BASED ON ACTS 2:42-47

- 1 ? **How were the early Christians a community of faith?**
- 2 ? **How is your Church a community of faith?**



Faith at Home

Read the Scripture story with your child. Explain that many early Christians were Jewish and went to the Temple. Point out that the early Christians did not have church buildings. Talk about the ways your family and parish take care of the needs of other Christians.



Share

Write a play With a partner, prepare a play showing one thing you do because you belong to a community of faith. Act out the play for the class.

The People Gather



Prayer and Singing

Singing is a way to pray. When we sing during Mass, we lift our minds, hearts, and voices to praise God in a special way. The whole assembly sings songs and hymns. Sometimes the choir sings and the assembly listens. The priest sometimes sings parts of the Mass.

Faith Focus

What happens when we gather as a community of faith?

Like the first Christians, we celebrate the Eucharist with a community, too. Our faith community is our Church family. During Mass we come together as the Body of Christ. Every Saturday evening or Sunday, we gather with our parish community for the celebration of Mass.

Sunday is an important day for Christians. Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. It is so important that the Church requires us to participate in Sunday Mass every week. We come together as an assembly on Sunday to give God thanks and praise, to listen to God's word, and to ask for his blessing. We also remember Jesus' death, Resurrection, and Ascension and share the Lord's Body and Blood. Then we are sent forth to live as Jesus' followers.

When we gather for Mass, we greet one another. We share our joy as we sing and pray.



Introductory Rites

The prayers and actions that begin the Mass are called the Introductory Rites. The Introductory Rites help us turn our hearts and minds to the great celebration of the Eucharist. The priest leads the assembly in the celebration of the Mass. Mass begins when he walks in procession to the altar. All of us in the assembly stand and sing.

The priest greets us. He often says “The Lord be with you,” or similar words. We answer “And with your spirit.” We know that God the Father, his Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are with us. Together we thank God for his goodness.

? How do we show we are united as we gather for the Mass?

Faith at Home

Discuss responses to the question. Talk about which songs sung during Mass are your favorites. If you have the *Songs of Celebration* CD for this program, spend some time listening to the songs. Use this page to go over the Introductory Rites. Review the responses with your child.



Give Praise and Thanks



Respond

Make a list In the space below, make a list of reasons you want to give God praise and thanks.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Closing Blessing

Gather and begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Leader: God, our Father, we praise and thank you for gathering us as your children. Send us your Holy Spirit to increase our faith and make our community strong.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.



Sing together.

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

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Faith at Home

Faith Focus

- The Church is the People of God and the Body of Christ.
- The Eucharist, or Mass, is the Church's most important action of praise and thanks.
- The Introductory Rites gather us as a community of faith.

Ritual Focus Procession and Gloria

The celebration focused on the Procession and Gloria. The children sang the Gloria and prayed a litany of glory and praise to God. During the week, pray and talk about the meaning of the verses of the Gloria found on page 12.



Act

Share Together Read Acts 2:42–47. Talk about what it must have been like for the early Christians to live as a community of faith. Emphasize the sharing of their possessions and their prayer life. Decide one way your family can continue to live as a community of faith, such as going to Mass or sharing your time and talents with others.

Pray Together Together, make a list of all the things you want to thank God for. Read the list as a litany. One person prays, “For sun and rain,” and everyone responds, “We thank you, God.” During the weeks ahead, select appropriate times to pray a thanksgiving prayer with your child or family.



Litany

Family Prayer

Loving God, we are your people. Thank you for the gift of faith. Help us grow closer as a family. Strengthen our faith in you. Amen.



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