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Just for
You!

Let's Celebrate

Keep in mind that this lesson teaches that we give God thanks as a people of faith.

Take some time for yourself as you prepare for class. These two pages provide opportunities to read, reflect, explore, and pray. Select the items that best fit your own style of nurturing your spiritual life. These pages are also available as blackline masters in the *Program Director's Manual*.

One in the Lord

Catholics do not give God thanks and praise as individuals. Rather the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. She is one, yet formed of two integral parts: human and divine. The Holy Spirit unites us and transforms us into the People of God. The Lord Jesus does not call us to be fed at his table by ourselves.

Just as Jesus fed a large crowd in the story of the loaves and fishes, we are all gathered—young and old, leaders and faithful, women and men—and prepared by the Spirit to receive God's gift of Christ's presence. This spiritual and sacramental reality of oneness can be mirrored in our day-to-day experiences of parish life. Whether or not we experience closeness on an emotional level, the spiritual reality of our oneness in the Spirit has the power to change our everyday lives, if we let it.

Scripture of the Week

"Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted."

John 6:11

❖ Your Parish Community ❖

Name three things about your parish which you think of as special gifts.

Do you appreciate that your presence within your parish is intended by God to be a gift? Why or why not?

Church and Sacrament

At every moment of our lives, we have the opportunity to recognize the risen Christ who brings us God's love and grace. Through the sacraments in the life of the Church, Christ becomes present with us and acts in our lives even more deeply. In each sacrament, Christ makes use of our human words and faith-filled actions to extend to us God's grace and deepen our relationship with him, with others, and with all creation. But Christ's presence is not confined to the rituals of the seven sacraments. As the People of God, we are Christ's Body, and he continues to be present in and act through every aspect of his Body, the Church, bringing salvation to the world. How gifted we are with the presence of Christ!

Catechist Prayer Group

Before teaching the children in your class, spend a few minutes in quiet prayer. Recall times you feel especially connected to your parish community. Ask for the grace to bring the presence of the risen Christ to the children you teach today.

The Gift of Gratitude

Try to be more aware of the presence of the Lord in your life today. Name three ways in which God has showered you with loving care. This will help you teach the truth that God cares deeply for all his children.

❖ You and the Sacraments ❖

Using words or images, describe an example of your experience of sacrament. How can you be more aware of the presence of the risen Christ?

Lesson Planner

Goals

- To help the children
- learn that God fills all our needs.
 - appreciate God's unconditional love for them.
 - recognize God the Father's deep love for us by his gift of Jesus, his Son.

Materials Needed

- student texts
- pencils
- crayons or felt-tip markers
- chalkboard or chart paper
- drawing paper (optional)

Catechism References

777, 779, 780, 1110, 1111, 1131, 1279, 1407, 1410

Session Outline



Family Time

- Remind the children to complete the page with their families.



Learning Time

1 Discovering God in Our Lives (15 minutes)

- Engage the children.
- Talk about celebrations.
- Complete an activity.

2 Meeting God in the Word and Tradition (30 minutes)

- Enjoy a Scripture story.
- Open up the Scriptures.
- Read about faith.
- Learn about sacraments.

3 Living with God in Our Lives (15 minutes)

- Create an invitation.
- Build a word web.
- Use the We Believe statements.
- Use the Family Time box.



Prayer Time

- Pray with word and song to celebrate God's goodness.

Beginning with Family Time



Let's Celebrate



Every day has its holy moments, snippets of time when we stand in wonder at God's love in our lives. But to appreciate such moments, we have to notice them first. Sometimes they slip by too quickly. Talk with your child about such times. What does he or she notice about those instances when God seems near?



In the space, trace the outline of your child's hand. Then on and around the hand, write or draw about moments when family members can be aware of God touching their lives.

There is a Family Time page at the beginning of each lesson. The material on this page is for the children to complete at home with their parents or guardians prior to the classroom session. You may wish to refer to the Family Time activity during Step 1, on page 12. At the end of each classroom session, remind the children about the Family Time activity for the next lesson.

While the Family Time page is not essential to the session and is not meant to be taught in the classroom, completing the page at home prior to the session can greatly enrich the children's learning experience.



Let's Celebrate

"I will add the flour, Joel," Cora said. "This will be one super, terrific, amazing cake!"

Joel smiled. Cora was a neighbor, yet like family. She always said "super, terrific, amazing" about everything: cakes, sunsets, songs, and even Joel himself.

"Now the eggs!" she declared.



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1 Discovering God in Our Lives

Engaging the Children

Direct the children's attention to the photographs on pages 12 and 13. Invite volunteers to suggest what is happening. Ask: "Have you ever helped a family member make dessert or prepare a meal?" Allow volunteers to tell about their cooking and baking experiences. Then tell the class that you will read a story about a second-grade boy who is helping to make a special cake for an important family celebration.

Read the story on pages 12 and 13 aloud. Emphasize that the characters in the story are preparing to celebrate. Ask volunteers to tell which words in the story are celebration

words. (Accept all reasonable answers, such as "super, terrific, amazing," and "feast and sing.")



Teaching Tip

Be sensitive to those children in your class who live in families in which there is little celebration. Remind the children that families do not always have reason to celebrate but that most families do enjoy occasional celebrations. If the children have difficulty thinking of a family celebration they recently enjoyed, invite them to picture their idea of a perfect family celebration and write or draw about it.

Dad went to the airport to pick up Grandma. Mom ironed a dress for Joel's sister. Joel's cousin stirred a pot of soup. Karen put flowers in a vase.

"This will be one super, terrific, amazing cake," Cora said again. "And we will feast and sing!"



What do you think Joel and his family are celebrating? _____

What special times do you enjoy celebrating? _____

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Talking About Celebrations

Ask volunteers to name times when people celebrate together. (*Accept reasonable responses, including Christmas, birthdays, weddings, and so on.*) Tell the children that God is always with us in our celebrations. Then ask the children to name other times when they think God is with them. To help them do this, remind them about the activity they completed at home on page 11 of Family Time.

Completing an Activity

Read the activity questions aloud. Then invite the children to write their responses on the lines provided. Take time to review the children's answers.



Alternate Activity

Distribute drawing paper and crayons or felt-tip markers. Invite the children to draw a picture of a time when they recently enjoyed a special celebration, such as a birthday party or a holiday meal. Allow the children to share their drawings with a partner.

More Than Enough

"Where can we buy bread for these people?"

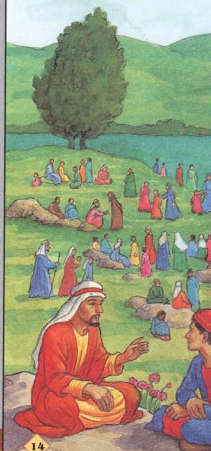
Jesus spoke to Philip as they looked out at the huge crowd of people. The people had come to be with Jesus. There were thousands!

"Two hundred days of wages would not buy enough food!" Philip answered.

"A boy has five loaves of bread and two fish," Andrew said. "But that is nothing in this crowd."

"Have the people sit on the ground," Jesus told them.

Jesus took the bread and the fish. Looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke them. He gave them to the disciples for the people.



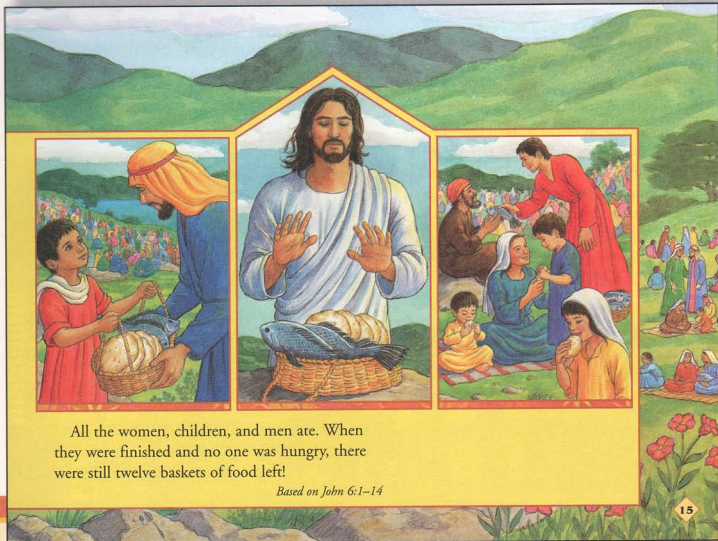
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2 Meeting God in the Word and Tradition

Enjoying a Scripture Story

Invite the children to listen carefully to the Scripture story. Tell them that the people in the story have a reason to celebrate. Ask them to listen closely to discover this reason.

Read the Scripture story aloud, showing the illustrations to the children as you read. Then ask the children to retell the story by using the illustrations.



All the women, children, and men ate. When they were finished and no one was hungry, there were still twelve baskets of food left!

Based on John 6:1-14

Opening Up the Scriptures

Use the following or similar questions to help the children discuss the Scripture story.

- ◆ What problem did the disciples bring to Jesus? *(There were many people, and there was no food to give them.)*
- ◆ How did Jesus use the gifts of bread and fish that the boy offered? *(Jesus performed a miracle. He made the five loaves of bread and the two fish enough food to feed the big crowd that was there.)*
- ◆ Do you think the disciples and the people in the crowd were amazed at what Jesus had done? *(Accept all reasonable answers, but point out to the children that God worked*

a miracle through Jesus by using the gifts offered by the boy. Without God's generosity, the people would have gone hungry.)



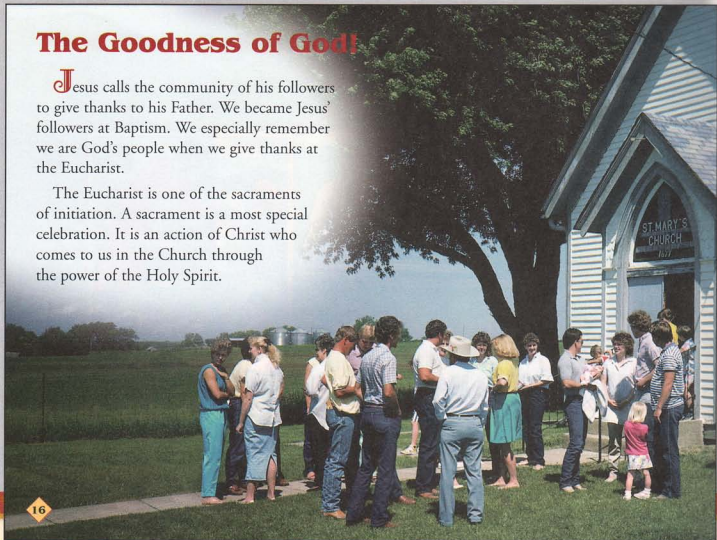
Alternate Activity

Invite the children to use their imaginations to add to the Scripture story. Have them imagine that Jesus talks to the boy who offered the bread and fish. What would Jesus say to the boy? What would the boy say to Jesus? What do you think the disciples did with the leftover baskets of food? If you were in the crowd that day, what would you think about Jesus? If you had had food with you, would you have offered to share it with the other people?

The Goodness of God!

Jesus calls the community of his followers to give thanks to his Father. We became Jesus' followers at Baptism. We especially remember we are God's people when we give thanks at the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is one of the sacraments of initiation. A sacrament is a most special celebration. It is an action of Christ who comes to us in the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit.



Reading About Faith

Remind the children that Jesus is with us when we gather to celebrate with our families and friends at Mass. At Mass we give God thanks and praise for all the gifts he gives us.

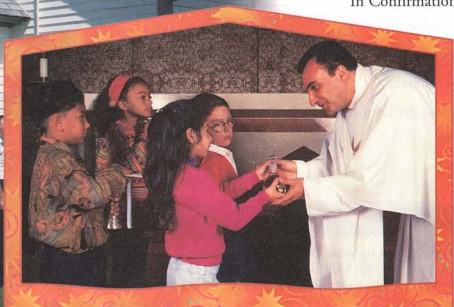
Ask the children to follow along quietly as you read the text on pages 16 and 17 aloud. Write the following terms on the chalkboard or chart paper as you encounter them in the text: *Catholic Church*, *People of God*, *celebration*, *Eucharist*, *Mass*, *sacrament*. Direct the children's attention to these words. Invite volunteers to explain the meaning of each term.

The word Eucharist means "giving thanks."
We also call our celebration the Mass.

Baptism and Confirmation are sacraments of initiation, too. In Baptism we are welcomed into the family of Jesus' followers, the Church.

In Confirmation the Holy Spirit helps us to follow Jesus even more closely. In the celebration of Eucharist we thank God for the gift of Jesus.

So we go to church to marvel at the blessings God gives to us. Before we receive the gift of Jesus for the first time, we receive forgiveness in the sacrament of Reconciliation.



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Learning About Sacraments

Emphasize that a sacrament is a wonderful celebration of God's love. Talk about why it is important for us to come to Mass to thank God for all his gifts, especially the gift of his Son, Jesus, who saves us so that we can be with God forever. (*We belong to the People of God, the Church. We celebrate together to give God thanks and praise.*) Clarify any words the children do not understand. Remind children to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving First Communion.

An Invitation for You



Jesus invites _____ (child's name) _____

to give thanks and praise.

Jesus invites you to join with us, the People of
God, the Church!

Come praise the Lord for all he has done for us!



Create an invitation to Mass. Decorate it, making it colorful and joyous. Make it special, for it is your very own invitation to take part in the celebration of the Eucharist often!

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3 Living with God in Our Lives

Creating an Invitation

Ask a volunteer to read the activity directions aloud. Point out to the children that being invited to participate at Mass regularly is both a privilege and a blessing. Have them point to the first line of the invitation. Read this line aloud, pausing to give the children sufficient time to write their names on the line provided. Then read aloud the rest of the invitation. Invite the children to complete the invitation by drawing symbols and writing words on the invitation to decorate it. Praise the children for their work.



Focus On

Baptism Remind the children that they are being invited to come to the celebration of the Eucharist because they are members of the Church community through the sacrament of Baptism. When they were baptized, they became friends and followers of Jesus and members of the Church. In the sacrament of Baptism, we are freed from both original sin and personal sin, and are reborn as a member of the Body of Christ, a child of God the Father, and a temple of the Holy Spirit.

In the spaces, write words you know that tell about the celebration of the Eucharist.

Answers will vary.

Celebration of the Eucharist

We Believe

- We are the People of God, the Church.
- We gather together to thank and praise God in the celebration of the Eucharist, also called the Mass.
- The word Eucharist means 'giving thanks.'
- The Eucharist is one of the sacraments.
- A sacrament is an action of Jesus Christ who comes to be with us in the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Family Time

Read together the Scripture story found on pages 14 and 15.

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Building a Word Web

Ask the children to point to the words "Celebration of the Eucharist" on page 19. Ask volunteers what kinds of words they might want to write in the empty spaces. Then read the activity directions aloud. Give the class sufficient time to complete the word web. You might wish to allow the children to work with a partner or in small groups. When the class has completed the web, ask volunteers to tell some of the words they used to tell about the celebration of the Eucharist. (Answers might include Mass, community, parish, Jesus, singing, prayers, Scripture, sacrament, celebration, priest, and so on.)

Using the We Believe Statements

Have volunteers name some of the things they learned in this lesson. Then have them look at the We Believe statements on page 19.

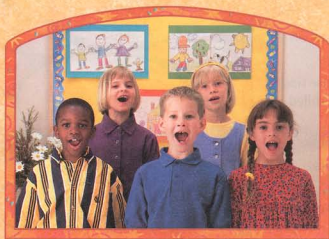
Using the Family Time Box

Recommend that the children do the suggested activity at home. Then remind the children to complete the Family Time page for Lesson 3 on page 21.

Ending with Prayer Time



We Remember and Celebrate



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With our Church community, we sing and delight in God's gifts. Gather into a circle to pray and sing together.

O come, let us sing to the Lord.

Let us make a joyful noise!

Rejoice in the Lord always,

again I say rejoice!

Let us come into the Lord's

presence giving thanks!

Rejoice in the Lord always,

again I say rejoice!

Let us make a joyful noise to

him with songs of praise!

Rejoice in the Lord always,

again I say rejoice!

Based on Psalm 95:1-2



What Are We Celebrating?

The aim of this celebration is to remind the children that God cares for our every need, and so it is natural for us to give him thanks and praise. We join with others as a community to offer him thanksgiving.

Where Do I Begin?

To share a simple prayer in the classroom (5 minutes), lead the children in praying the

prayer found on page 20. If you want to engage the children in a longer celebration (10-15 minutes), use the prayer on page 20 along with the recommendations below. You might wish to include additional classes or other invited guests for a more formal prayer celebration.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke

On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus went along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men with leprosy came toward him. They stood at a distance and shouted, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us." Jesus looked at them and said, "Go show yourselves to the priests."

On their way they were healed. When one of them discovered that he was healed, he came back, shouting praises to God. He bowed down at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. The man was from the country of Samaria. Jesus asked, "Weren't ten men healed? Where are the other nine? Why was this foreigner the only one who came back to thank God?" Then Jesus told the man, "You may get up and go. Your faith has made you well."

Based on Luke 17:11-19

It's As Simple As . . .

1. Gathering the children at the prayer table and inviting them to quiet themselves for prayer.
2. Beginning with the Sign of the Cross. Then remind the children what they are celebrating. (See Sharing Time on page 20a for ideas).
3. Having a volunteer read aloud the Scripture adaptation of Luke 17:11-19 on page 20a of this Catechist Guide.
4. Having the children pray with you the psalm prayer on page 20 of the student text. Have a volunteer read aloud the first two lines of the prayer. Invite everyone to respond by singing, "Rejoice in the Lord . . ." on page 20. Have the volunteer read the next two lines, followed by the sung response. Continue in this fashion until the end of the psalm prayer.

What Do I Need?

- student texts • small table to use as a prayer table • prayer table covering and candle • a cross or crucifix • a Bible (optional)

What About Music?

Sing "Rejoice in the Lord" or another song from the *Gifts for a Lifetime Music Program*.

Sharing Time

When we want to thank God for all his goodness, we don't say thank you by ourselves. We celebrate together with others because we want to share our joy. We give God thanks as part of the community we call the Church.