

Celebrate  
and  
Remember

# Eucharist

Catechist Guide



# **Eucharist**

## **Catechist Guide**

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# Eucharist

## Catechist Guide

Celebrate and Remember

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# In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

## Catechist Background: Gift of Love

First Holy Communion Day! These words are enough to send a quiet thrill into the heart of every Catholic, no matter how old. They say the memories of childhood are the last to leave us, and certainly the memories of First Communion Day are, or should be, among the most joyful of all.

This is because the day of First Communion is truly a day of initiation into a new life with Christ. The Sacraments of Christian Initiation are, of course, Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. Most children are baptized as infants and have no memory of the event. The Sacrament of the Eucharist, because it is received at a later age, can be solemnly celebrated with deep awareness on the part of the child, the family, and the parish community. First Communion Day gives all of us a chance to reflect on the great gift of the Eucharist, and to remember what this day of initiation, of a new beginning with Christ, was like for us.

Did you ever wonder what Pope Benedict XVI remembers about his First Communion? In a visit with recent First Communicants, he was asked that very question. This is his response:

At the heart of my joyful and beautiful memories is this one . . . I understood that Jesus had entered my heart, he had actually visited me. And with Jesus, God himself was with me. And I realized that this is a gift of love that is truly worth more than all the other things that life can give.

So on that day I was really filled with great joy, because Jesus came to me and I realized that a new stage in my life was beginning. I was 9 years old . . . I promised the Lord as best I could: “I always want to stay with you,” and I prayed to him, “but above all, stay with me.” So I went on living my life like that: thanks be to God, the Lord has always taken me by the hand and guided me, even in difficult situations. (“Catecheses of His Holiness Benedict XVI,” October 15, 2005)

How wonderful if our children could one day reflect on similar memories!

*Catechism* references: 1322–1327 (the Sacrament of the Eucharist)

## Chapter








# 1



### Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for all your gifts to me, especially the gift of yourself in the Eucharist. I always want to stay with you, but above all, stay with me. Take me by the hand and guide me, especially in difficult situations. Be with me in these special days as I help prepare your children for their First Holy Communion. Amen.



	 Objectives	 Teaching Steps	 Activities	 Materials
<b>Opening Prayer</b>	To pray the Sign of the Cross as a sign of our Baptism and to participate in a naming and signing ritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the illustrations.</li> <li>• Explain that the Sign of the Cross reminds us of our Baptism.</li> <li> Together pray the Sign of the Cross.</li> <li>• Follow the ritual directions for naming and signing.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prayer table</li> <li>• White cloth</li> <li>• Bible</li> <li>• Bowl of water</li> <li>• Cross or crucifix</li> <li>• White candle</li> <li>• Lighter or matches</li> <li>• CD player</li> <li>• Music CD or songbook</li> </ul>
<b>We Listen</b>	To learn the Scripture story about Jesus calling his first Apostles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the illustration.</li> <li> Proclaim the Scripture story about Jesus calling four fishermen to follow him, based on Matthew 4:18–22.</li> <li>• Discuss why Jesus wanted these people to follow him.</li> </ul>	<p>Writing a feeling word and drawing a picture about being called by Jesus</p> <p><b>Additional Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role-playing the Scripture story</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pencils and crayons or markers</li> </ul>
<b>We Learn</b>	To understand that as members of the Church, we belong to Christ  To name the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation that begin our life in the Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and discuss the text about the Church.</li> <li>• With the children looking at the photos, read aloud the text about the Sacraments.</li> <li>• Discuss the Sacraments of Christian Initiation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drawing a picture of one's Baptism</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making a Church family collage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pencils and crayons or markers</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drawing paper (quarter-sheet per child)</li> <li>• Crayons or colored pencils</li> </ul>
<b>We Learn</b>	To recall that Baptism welcomes us into the Church and takes away all sin  To learn that Confirmation strengthens our faith and that in the Eucharist we receive Jesus' Body and Blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and discuss the text about Baptism.</li> <li>• Read and discuss the text about Confirmation and the Eucharist.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking at photos and writing the names of the Sacraments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pencils</li> </ul>
<b>We Live</b>	To learn what is involved in preparing for First Eucharist  To realize that Jesus will be with them along the way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and discuss the text about preparing for First Holy Communion.</li> <li>• Discuss the photo and have the children look through their books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing the names of people who are helping them prepare for First Communion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pencils and crayons or markers</li> </ul>
<b>We Pray</b>	To pray a thank-you prayer to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Follow the directions for praying "A Thank-You Prayer."</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CD player</li> <li>• Music CD or songbook</li> </ul>

# In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

## The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.



What Are We Preparing For?

CHAPTER

1



## Opening Prayer

### Objective

To participate in a ritual reminiscent of Baptism

### Prepare

Become familiar with the directions for the ritual.

Create a prayer table for the students to gather round. The prayer table should be covered with a white cloth and have these items on it:

- a bowl of water
- a Bible
- a white candle

Select a song about Baptism from the *Eucharist* music or another appropriate song.

### Gather

Play the song you have chosen and invite the children to gather with their books around the prayer table.

Turn off the music and light the candle.

### Introduction

Focus the children's attention on the illustrations and ask them to describe what they see.

Tell the children that before Jesus returned to his Father in Heaven, he said to his Apostles, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

Tell them that at their Baptism the priest or deacon baptized them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

### Pray

Begin the prayer by leading the children in praying the Sign of the Cross, emphasizing the gestures. Explain that the Sign of the Cross reminds us of our Baptism.



## A Prayer Ritual

**Naming and Signing** Call each child by name to the prayer table one at a time. Ask each one to say "Amen" to the words you say.

Dip your fingers in the water and make the Sign of the Cross on the child's forehead. Using the child's name say, "(\_\_\_), God loves you very much. He calls you to share your love with others."

The child responds, "Amen."

Lead the children in singing the song you have chosen. If they do not know the words, invite them to listen.

End by saying, "May God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—bless our time together as we learn and grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen."





### Jesus Says, “Follow Me”

Ask the children to look at the illustration on pages 2 and 3.

**Say**, “After Jesus was baptized, he went to the Sea of Galilee. Many of the men who lived there were fishermen.”

**Ask**, “What did the fishermen use to catch fish?” (*fishing nets*)

Explain to the children that Jesus did not go to the Sea of Galilee to catch fish. Invite them to listen to the Scripture story to learn why Jesus was there.

You may wish to emphasize Jesus’ words, “Follow me!” as you read.

**Ask**, “What were the names of the fishermen at the Sea of Galilee?” (*Simon Peter and Andrew; James and John*)

**Ask**, “Why did Jesus call out to the four fisherman?” (*Jesus wanted them to be his followers and helpers.*)

Explain that Jesus called them to a new way of life that would lead them closer to God.

If time permits, you may wish to read aloud to the children this Scripture account from the Bible as they listen or follow along in their own Bibles.



### Jesus Says, “Follow Me”

**A**round the time when Jesus first began to preach, two brothers were fishing in the Sea of Galilee. Their names were Simon Peter and Andrew.

As Simon Peter and Andrew were casting their fishing nets into the sea, someone called to them:

“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

It was Jesus! They saw him walking on the shore. They dropped their nets right away and went to Jesus.

A little while later, two other brothers, named James and John, were fishing in a boat. They were with their father.

Jesus called to them too. “Follow me!” he said.

James and John left their boat and their father at once. They too followed Jesus.

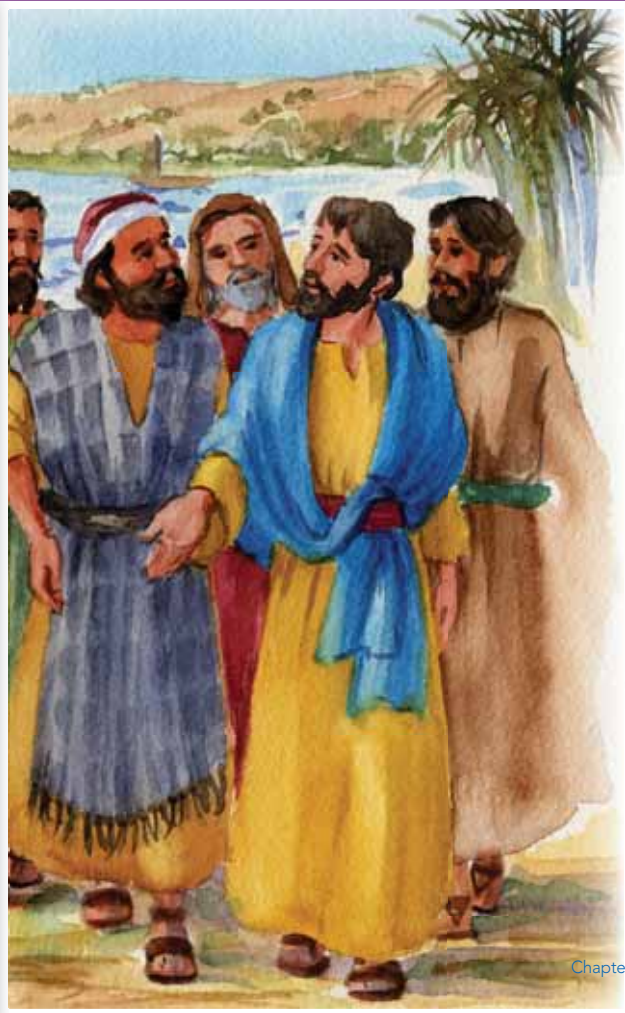
These four fishermen became Apostles of Jesus.

Based on Matthew 4:18–22



### Scripture Background

**Kinship Groups in Jesus’ Time** In the Middle Eastern culture of Jesus’ time, family bonds were very strong. People shared their days and nights with members of their extended family (sometimes called kinship groups) for their entire life. A person rarely left the family group except for short periods of time. Even marriage typically stayed within the family group as people most often married cousins. Outsiders to the family were looked on suspiciously. So when the disciples left their families to join Jesus’ new group, it was a big deal. They truly had to believe in Jesus and his mission to make such a major break with their cultural heritage.



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## Activity

**Imagine** that Jesus called you to follow him.  
**Write** one word describing how you would feel.  
**Draw** a picture of yourself following Jesus.

### With My Family

As a family, talk about a way you can show Jesus that you want to be his followers.

## Activity

**Say**, "Following Jesus means making changes in the way we live. Remember that the Apostles made changes in their lives so that they could follow Jesus."

Have the children close their eyes as you read aloud the following statement and question:

**Say**, "Jesus calls each one of us to follow him."

**Ask**, "What is one way you can follow Jesus today?"

- Read aloud the activity directions.
- Direct the children to write one word that would describe how they would feel if Jesus asked them to follow him.
- Then direct them to draw a picture in the space provided that shows how they could respond to Jesus' inviting them to follow him.

### With My Family

Remind the children to share the With My Family message at home.

## Additional Activity

**Role-Playing the Scripture Story** Invite four volunteers to come forward to role-play Jesus' call to the first disciples. Have one take the role of Jesus and the others the disciples.

Tell the children that they will act out the Scripture story. Explain that they do not need to repeat the words exactly, but to act out the scene to reflect the events, and to express Jesus' call and the disciples' response to him. Coach the actors as needed.

When the role-playing is complete, engage the group in a discussion about how the role-playing accurately portrayed the Scripture story.



## Jesus Calls Us in the Sacraments

Read aloud the first three paragraphs.

**Ask,** "Who began the Church?" (*Jesus*)

Emphasize that the Church is a community of people who believe in Jesus Christ.

**Say,** "We are followers of Jesus. He is the Son of God. He died and rose from the dead to save us."

**Ask,** "What do the Sacraments do?" (*bring us closer to God and help us answer his call to be his follower*)



## Jesus Calls Us in the Sacraments

**G**od sent Jesus Christ, his Son, to share God's love with all people. When Jesus came into the world he became man, but was also God. Jesus called everyone he met to follow him. He invited people to believe in him and to love others.

The community of believers that Jesus began is the **Church**. The Church is called the Body of Christ. As members of the Church, we belong to Christ.

Jesus gave the Church the **Sacraments**. The Sacraments are signs of **grace**, or God's divine life in us, that he freely gives to us. The Sacraments bring us closer to Christ. They help us answer his call to be his followers.



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## Liturgy Background

**Sacramentals** Over the centuries, the Church instituted and began using sacred signs called sacramentals. Sacramentals include things such as holy water, candles, and blessed ashes, as well as actions such as making the Sign of the Cross on another person, signing oneself with holy water, and having one's forehead marked with ashes on Ash Wednesday. Sacramentals prepare us to receive grace, help us show our respect for the Sacraments, and increase our devotion in receiving them. They make us ready to cooperate with the grace we receive. Sacramentals also ask God to bless the different events and stages of our lives.





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Jesus gave the Church seven Sacraments. These are the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance and Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, and Holy Orders. We celebrate the Sacraments at different times in our lives. The Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist begin our life in the Church. These three Sacraments are known as the **Sacraments of Christian Initiation**. The word *initiation* means “beginning.”

The Sacraments of Christian Initiation are signs that we belong to Jesus’ Church. They also show that we are followers of Jesus.

## Activity

**Imagine** what your Baptism might have been like. **Draw** a picture of yourself at your Baptism.



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Invite the children to look at the photo on page 5.

**Ask**, “What Sacrament is pictured on this page?”  
(Baptism)

**Say**, “Through the work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is present in the Sacraments.”

Explain that grace is God’s gift to us in the Sacraments, and that by giving us grace, he makes us his holy people.

**Ask**, “What are the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation?” (Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist)

## Activity

- Read the directions for the activity to the children.
- Direct the children to complete the drawing activity on the page.
- You may wish to have pictures of your Baptism or other people’s Baptisms available as a reference for the children.
- When they have finished the activity, invite a few volunteers to share their drawings with the group.



## Additional Activity

**Making a Church Family Collage** Have the children create a group collage titled “We Are the Church” to remind them that the Sacraments of Christian Initiation welcome us into the Church. To begin, place an image of Jesus in the middle of a poster board.

- Distribute quarter-sheets of drawing paper (one per child) and crayons or colored pencils.
- Show the children the poster board with the image of Jesus and say, “Jesus is the center of the Church.”
- Direct the children to draw pictures of themselves and their families, and to write their names below their illustrations.
- As the children complete their drawings, invite them to come forward and paste their pictures on the poster board around the picture of Christ.
- Display this collage in the prayer corner.



## We Become Jesus' Disciples

Read aloud the first three paragraphs on page 6.

**Say,** "Baptism is the first Sacrament we receive. It welcomes us into the Church. We are joined to Christ and to people all over the world who believe in Christ."

Explain that water is a sign of Baptism, and that the water of Baptism washes away our sins.



## We Become Jesus' Disciples

We Learn



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**T**o begin our lives as Jesus' disciples, we first receive the **Sacrament of Baptism**. We receive Baptism only one time.

In Baptism, the priest or deacon pours holy water over our heads, or places us into the water, three times. While he does this, he prays, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Baptism gives us new life and unites us with Jesus. It takes away all sin. This includes Original Sin, the sin of the first man and woman that is passed on to all people. In Baptism we also receive the Holy Spirit, who will help us love God, love others, and have faith in Jesus.

In the **Sacrament of Confirmation**, the bishop or priest anoints us with a holy oil, called Sacred Chrism. Chrism is a sign of the Holy Spirit, who comes to us and strengthens us in Confirmation.

6



## Why We Need Liturgy

Why do we need liturgy? We need liturgy because we are incarnate beings. We have bodies that need to see, hear, and touch in order to meet with others and even to meet with God. In Preface I of Christmas, the priest announces the reason for our gathering—the incarnation of the Word of God—and says of Christ,

For in the mystery of the Word made flesh  
a new light of your glory has shone upon the eyes of our mind,  
so that, as we recognize in him God made visible,  
we may be caught up through him in love of things invisible.

In every liturgy, we are drawn through what is visible to the God we cannot see.

Confirmation strengthens the grace we receive in Baptism. It makes our relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church even stronger. Baptism and Confirmation give us a special character that always stays with us. It makes us better able to show we are Jesus' disciples by what we say and do.

To live as Jesus' disciples every day, we are nourished by the **Sacrament of the Eucharist**, or Holy Communion. When we receive Holy Communion, we receive Jesus' Body and Blood. This is the Sacrament for which you are now preparing. The Eucharist is the Church's most important Sacrament.

### Activity



**Look** at the pictures on pages 6 and 7. **Write** the name of each Sacrament of Christian Initiation on the lines below.

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### Faith Highlights

**WHEN WE PRAY**, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," we are saying that we believe in one God who exists in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This mystery is called the Trinity. It is at the center of our faith.



### With My Family

Talk as a family about the Baptism of each family member. Topics may include identifying the godparents and telling why they were chosen, anything memorable about the event, and why it was important to be baptized.

### Music Connections

The following are some suggestions for liturgical music suitable for young children that you may wish to use during the lesson:

"Trinity Song," The Rennas (WLP)

"Two Fishermen," Suzanne Toolan, SM (GIA)

"Come, Follow Me," Barbara Bridge (OCP)

Go to [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org) for downloadable music selections.

Read aloud the last paragraph on page 6 and the first paragraph about the Sacrament of Confirmation on page 7.

**Say**, "In Confirmation, our faith grows even stronger. The Holy Spirit helps us to live as Jesus' followers."

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the last paragraph on page 7. Tell how special it is to be able to receive Jesus' Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

**Ask**, "Which Sacrament welcomes us into the Church?"  
(Baptism)

"In which Sacrament do we receive the Body and Blood of Christ?" (the Eucharist, or Holy Communion)

"Which Sacrament strengthens the grace we receive at Baptism?" (Confirmation)

### Activity

- Look at the photos on pages 6 and 7.
- Name the Sacrament of Christian Initiation in each picture.

### Faith Highlights

Read aloud the Faith Highlights text.

**Ask**, "Who are the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity?"  
(The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit)

Lead the children in praying the Sign of the Cross.



### With My Family

Remind the children to share the With My Family message at home.





## Heart to Heart

Explain that a heart-to-heart talk is a serious and truthful talk with someone. Explain that in this heart-to-heart talk, we will talk about preparing for First Holy Communion. Read the selection aloud. Then discuss the selection by asking the following questions:

**Ask,** “How do you feel about getting ready for receiving First Holy Communion?” (*Choose volunteers to share their responses.*)

“How does it feel to know that Jesus is with you and that he is calling you to receive him in Holy Communion?”

Discuss the photo on page 8.

**Ask,** “What is happening in this picture?” (*Two children are looking through their books and seeing pictures.*)

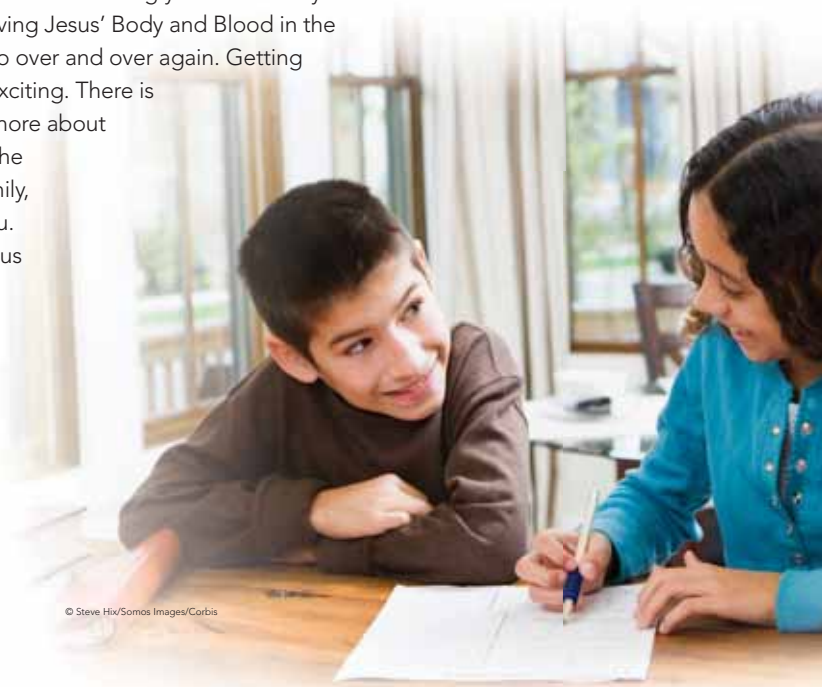
Suggest that the group might like to do the same thing—to look through the pages and pictures in their First Eucharist preparation book.



## Heart to Heart

### Preparing for First Eucharist

**P**reparing for your First Eucharist is something you will do only once in your whole life. But receiving Jesus’ Body and Blood in the Eucharist is something you will do over and over again. Getting ready for First Eucharist can be exciting. There is so much to learn! You will learn more about Jesus, about the Church, about the Mass, and about prayer. Your family, teachers, and priests will help you. And while you are preparing, Jesus is calling you to follow him—just like he called Peter and Andrew, James and John. And while you are preparing, Jesus will be with you!



## Cultural Connection

**Praying in Other Languages** Teach the children to pray, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” in another language, such as Spanish. Write the Spanish words on the board and ask the children to pronounce each line after you three times. When the group is comfortable with the words, ask the children to pray the Sign of the Cross together using the Spanish words.

En el nombre del Padre (en el **nome**-bray del **pah**-dray)

y del Hijo (ee del **ee**-hoh)

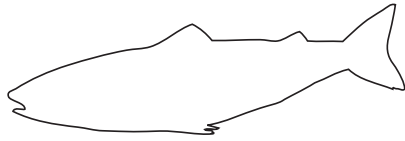
y del Espíritu Santo. (ee del **es-spee**-ree-too **sahn**-to)

Amén. (ah-**men**.)

## Activity

One day Jesus and the Apostles were out fishing. They brought in so many fish that their nets were tearing. Then Jesus said: "From now on you will stop fishing for fish. You will fish for people!" (based on Luke 5:10).

**Write** your name on the fish. Then **draw** more fish and write the names of people who are helping you prepare for your First Holy Communion. Some of the people might be a priest, your teacher or catechist, your parents, and family members.



## Saint Spotlight

### Saint Peter the Apostle

In the Scripture story on page 2, you read about a fisherman called Simon Peter. We now know Simon Peter as Saint Peter. He was one of the Twelve Apostles. The Apostles are the disciples that Jesus trusted to share his teachings and lead the Church. Jesus chose Saint Peter the Apostle to be the first Pope of the Church.



## With My Family

On a calendar in your home, mark days when you will spend time preparing for First Eucharist as a family, even if it involves something as simple as practicing a prayer.



## More Saints and Holy People

**Saint Paul (first century)** Paul lived during the time of the early Church. Paul, whose original name was Saul, was a devoted Jew who initially persecuted Christians. While traveling to Damascus, he had a dramatic experience in which he encountered the resurrected Christ, who asked him, "Why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4). This experience led to Saul's conversion, and he became a Christian and became known as Paul.

Paul became a tireless preacher of the Gospel. His missionary journeys took him to all parts of the Mediterranean. More than any other Apostle, Paul is credited with the spread of Christianity in the early Church. Thirteen New Testament epistles are attributed to him. Saint Paul's feast day is June 29 (the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul).

## Activity

- Read the directions for the activity on page 9.
- Clarify that the children are to write their name on the fish and then draw more fish and write the names of people who are helping them prepare for First Holy Communion on those fish.

## Saint Spotlight

Read aloud the paragraph about Saint Peter. Explain that Jesus chose Saint Peter to be the first Pope of the Church.

**Ask,** "Who is the Pope today?" (*Benedict XVI*)



## With My Family

Remind the children to share the With My Family message at home.

## A Thank-You Prayer

- Explain to the children that the closing prayer is a thank-you prayer to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- Tell the children that you will read the parts for the leader and that they will read the parts marked "All." You may wish to have the children practice reading the response.
- Begin with the Sign of the Cross.
- Lead the children in praying the prayer.
- End by singing together one of the songs you have chosen for this chapter.

## We Pray Together



### A Thank-You Prayer

**Leader:** God, our Father, you called us at Baptism to be your children.

**All:** We thank you, Lord.

**Leader:** You sent your Son, Jesus, to teach us how to live.

**All:** We thank you, Lord.

**Leader:** You send your Holy Spirit to help us follow Jesus.

**All:** We thank you, Lord.

**Leader:** Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord and one another.



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## Reviewing the Lesson

Help the children recall the key points they learned in this lesson.

**Ask,** "What important things about our faith did we learn in this lesson?"

After allowing volunteers to respond and affirming their responses, review the following points with the children. You might like to reformulate the points as questions.

- The Sacraments of Christian Initiation are Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist.
- Baptism washes away our sins and gives us new life, and Confirmation helps us to live as Jesus' followers.
- The Eucharist, the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, is the most important Sacrament of the Church.

# The Lord Be with You

## Catechist Background: Questions and Answers

In some ways, there is no one more trusting or more believing than a child. The trust and belief of a child are precious and must never be taken for granted. Yet, in other ways, there is no one more skeptical than a child. Children are still new to the earth, and are still figuring things out.

We explain to seven-year-olds the truth that ordinary bread becomes the Body of Christ and ordinary wine becomes the Blood of Christ. It still looks and tastes like bread, and it still looks and tastes like wine, but in reality it is Jesus Christ—Body, Blood, soul, and divinity. The children respond: “How? How do you know? Who told you?”

They have questions, we have answers. During the papal catechesis to recent First Communicants, Andrea asked a question of Pope Benedict XVI: “In preparing me for my First Communion day, my catechist told me that Jesus is present in the Eucharist. But how? I can’t see him!”

The Pope responded that there are many things in the world that we cannot see and yet are essential for our lives. He gave the example of our intelligence. We cannot see it, yet we have it. He gave another example of electricity. We cannot see it, yet we use it all the time. He finished his answer with this remark:

So it is with the Risen Lord: we do not see him with our eyes but we see that wherever Jesus is, people change, they improve. A greater capacity for peace, for reconciliation, is created. Therefore, we do not see the Lord himself but we see the effects of the Lord: so we can understand that Jesus is present. And as I said, it is precisely the invisible things that are the most profound, the most important. So let us go to meet this invisible but powerful Lord who helps us to live well. (“Catechesis of His Holiness Benedict XVI,” October 15, 2005)




How do you know? Who told you? Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition told you. The Church told you. The Pope told you!

*Catechism* references: 1345–1355 (the Liturgical Celebration of the Eucharist)



### Prayer

Lord Jesus, centuries ago, your Apostle Peter wrote to his people, “Although you have not seen him, you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy” (1 Peter 1:8). May that joy be mine, and may I share it with the candidates for First Holy Communion. Amen.

	Objectives	Teaching Steps	Activities	Materials
Opening Prayer	To pray a prayer that thanks and praises God, and to share some quiet time with Jesus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain that the prayer reminds us how much God loves us.</li> <li> Together pray "A Prayer of Thanks and Praise."</li> <li>Follow the ritual directions for sharing quiet time with Jesus.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prayer table</li> <li>White cloth</li> <li>Bible</li> <li>Symbols of the Eucharist</li> <li>White candle</li> <li>Lighter or matches</li> <li>CD player</li> <li>Music CD or songbook</li> </ul>
We Listen	To learn the Scripture story about Jesus feeding the hungry crowd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the illustration.</li> <li> Proclaim the Scripture story, based on Matthew 14:13–21, about Jesus feeding five thousand hungry people.</li> <li>Discuss how Jesus nourishes, or feeds, us today.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drawing one way Jesus cares for them and their families</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making Thanksgiving prayer cards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pencils and crayons and markers</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unlined index cards (one per child)</li> <li>Colored pencils or markers</li> </ul>
We Learn	<p>To realize that Jesus is with us when we gather at Mass</p> <p>To learn that when we receive Holy Communion, we receive Jesus Christ himself</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the photo.</li> <li>Read and discuss the text about the beginning of the Mass.</li> <li>Read and discuss the text about receiving Holy Communion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drawing a picture of oneself and one's family at church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pencils and crayons or markers</li> </ul>
We Learn	To learn about the four parts of the Mass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the photos.</li> <li>Read and discuss the text about the Introductory Rites and the Liturgy of the Word.</li> <li>Read and discuss the text about the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Concluding Rite.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coloring letters to reveal a hidden message</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crayons or markers</li> </ul>
We Live	To explore why Sunday is the most important day of the week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read and discuss the text about Sunday.</li> <li>Discuss the illustration.</li> <li>Remember the four parts of the Mass.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow the directions for the activity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making a Sunday meal centerpiece</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pencils</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drawing paper (one sheet per child)</li> <li>Colored pencils or markers</li> <li>Various decorating materials</li> </ul>
We Pray	To pray the "Act of Faith," "Act of Hope," and "Act of Love" as Communion prayers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the illustration.</li> <li> Follow the directions for praying the "Communion Prayers."</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CD player</li> <li>Music CD or songbook</li> </ul>



## The Lord Be with You



### A Prayer of Thanks and Praise

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

**All:** *Glory to God in the highest.*

**Leader:** Because you love us, you gave us this great and beautiful world. With Jesus we sing your praise:

**All:** *Glory to God in the highest.*

**Leader:** Because you love us, you sent Jesus your Son to bring us to you and to gather us around him as the children of one family. With Jesus we sing your praise:

**All:** *Glory to God in the highest.*

*(Roman Missal)*

What Is the Eucharist?

## CHAPTER

# 2



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## Opening Prayer

### Objective

To become more aware that Jesus Christ is with us, especially at celebrations of the Eucharist

### Prepare

Become familiar with the directions for the ritual.

Cover the prayer table with a white cloth. Place either a loaf of bread and a pitcher of grape juice or a sheaf of wheat and red grapes on the prayer table.

Select meditative instrumental music and a song about the Eucharist from the *Eucharist* music or another source.

### Gather

Play the instrumental music you have chosen and invite the children to gather with their books near the prayer table.

Turn off the music and light the candle.

### Introduction

Focus the children's attention on the photo on page 11 and ask them to describe what they see.

Explain to the children that we give thanks and praise to God in the Eucharist. Tell them that they will now pray a prayer that reminds us how much God loves us and that he sent his Son, Jesus, to be with us.

Tell the children that you will read the leader's parts and that they can respond by saying, "Glory to God in the highest."

### Pray

Invite the children to stand and begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Lead them in praying "A Prayer of Thanks and Praise."



## A Prayer Ritual

**Sharing Quiet Time with Jesus** Play again the meditative instrumental music and invite the children to sit quietly.

Ask the children to close their eyes and to picture themselves alone with Jesus. Invite them to spend a few quiet moments talking to Jesus in their hearts. When you are ready to stop the music, ask the children to take a deep breath and to open their eyes.

Encourage the children to share moments of quiet time with Jesus at home.

Lead the children in singing the song you have chosen.

End by saying, "May God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—bless our time together as we learn and grow as disciples of Jesus Christ." Invite the children to join together in saying "Amen."





### Jesus Feeds the Hungry

Introduce the Scripture story by reminding the children that Jesus is the Son of God.

**Say,** “Wherever Jesus went he always treated people with kindness and love. People often gathered around Jesus to hear him share stories about God.”

Today we will hear about a time when many people were gathered to listen to Jesus, and about a miracle in which Jesus multiplied loaves of bread and fish to feed many people.

Direct the children’s attention to the illustration on pages 12 and 13. Point out that the setting is a hillside.

**Ask,** “Who has gathered to hear Jesus speak?” (*men, women, and children*)

**Say,** “As I read from Scripture, imagine that you are part of the story, listening and watching Jesus.”

Read aloud the Scripture story.

**Ask,** “In the story of the five loaves and two fish, how did Jesus show his concern for others?” (*He made sure everyone had enough food to eat.*)

**Say,** “In the Scripture story, Jesus shows us the love of God who takes care of all our needs. Just as Jesus fed the people who gathered to listen to him, he gives us nourishment through the Eucharist.”

If time permits, you may wish to read aloud to the children this Scripture account from the Bible as they listen or follow along in their own Bibles.



### Jesus Feeds the Hungry

**O**ne day many thousands of people came to hear Jesus teach. They came from faraway places. They listened to Jesus all day, until it grew dark.

The disciples became worried because the crowd had no food. They knew the people were hungry. Jesus told the disciples to give them something to eat.

The disciples said, “All we have are five loaves of bread and two fish. That will never be enough.”

Jesus said, “Bring them here.”

Jesus told the crowd to sit down. He said a blessing over the bread and the fish. He broke the bread. Then he gave the bread and the fish to the disciples to distribute to the crowd.

All five thousand people ate. No one went hungry. There were even twelve baskets of leftovers!

Based on Matthew 14:13–21



### Scripture Background

**Jesus Is Motivated by Compassion** In the miraculous feeding of the multitudes, Jesus continues to act in ways that are in continuity with the great prophets of Israel. Through the power of God, Moses fed the people in the desert with manna and quail (see Exodus 16:4–15). Elisha miraculously fed one hundred men with twenty loaves of bread (see 2 Kings 4:42–44). An important difference in these accounts is that in the Old Testament feedings, God is responding to the people’s complaints (see Exodus 16:9), but Jesus is motivated by compassion (see Matthew 14:14). The miraculous feedings should remind us of the beatitude, “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst” (see Matthew 5:6).



## Activity

Jesus cared for the people in the crowd by making sure they had enough food to eat.

**Draw** one way Jesus cares for you and your family.

## With My Family

Do something as a family that will remind you of Jesus' actions in the Scripture story. For example, donate some bread and bottled water to a shelter or food pantry this week.

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## Activity

- Read aloud the directions to the activities.
- After the children have made their drawings, ask volunteers to share their pictures.



## With My Family

Remind the children to share the With My Family message at home.



## Additional Activity

**Making Thanksgiving Prayer Cards** Have the children make prayer cards thanking Jesus for his goodness.

- Distribute unlined index cards and colored pencils or crayons.
- Invite the children to write a short prayer thanking Jesus for the many gifts he gives us and for providing for our needs.
- Direct the children to decorate the front of the prayer card. You might suggest that they include illustrations of loaves and fish.
- Encourage the children to use their prayer cards to remember to say thank you to Jesus.
- If time permits have the children make a second prayer card to share with a relative or friend.



### Jesus Feeds Us in the Mass

Explain to the children that Jesus is with us when we celebrate the Mass.

Read aloud the first three paragraphs on page 14 as the children follow along silently.

Direct the children's attention to the photo on page 14.

**Ask,** "What do we call the people who are gathered for Mass?" (*the assembly*)

**Ask,** "How can you tell the Mass is beginning?" (*The priest, deacon, altar servers, and lector are entering the church.*)

Tell the children that when we gather for Mass, the priest welcomes us, the assembly. Share that a greeting they may hear from the priest is "The Lord be with you." Tell them that the assembly responds by saying, "And with your spirit." Invite the children to practice this response in unison.



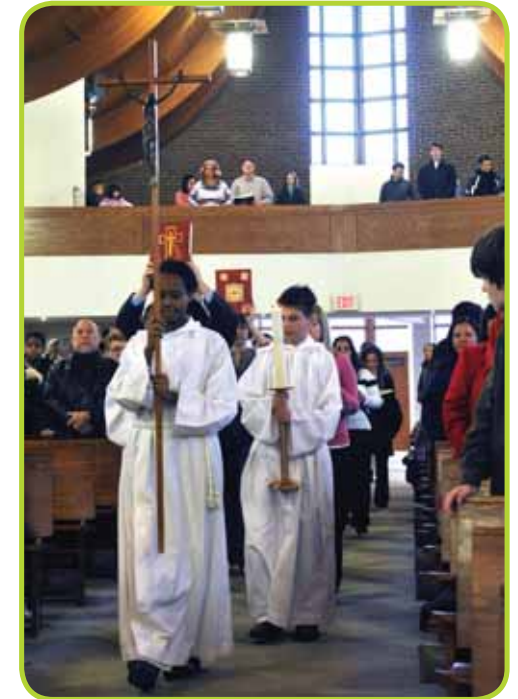
### Jesus Feeds Us in the Mass

**W**e are welcomed on Sundays to the Mass. During the Mass we gather in Church with our family and our parish. The people gathered in the Church for the Mass are called the **assembly**. As we gather, the Holy Spirit prepares us to encounter Jesus Christ.

At the beginning of the Mass, the assembly is welcomed. The priest says, "The Lord be with you," or something similar. We respond, "And with your spirit." The Holy Spirit helps us recognize that Christ is present.

The **Mass** is the celebration of the Eucharist. The word *Eucharist* means "thanksgiving." During the Mass, we pray, give thanks, and praise God. We thank him that Jesus Christ is with us. The priest leads the Mass.

At Mass, through the action of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. We call this **Holy Communion**, or the Eucharist.



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### Liturgy Background

**The Greeting** After making the Sign of the Cross at the beginning of Mass, the priest welcomes us, using one of the following greetings: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." "The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you," or "The Lord be with you." The priest's greeting announces that the Lord is present among us. The greeting and the assembly's response express the mystery of the gathered Church.





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Remember how Jesus fed the people in the Scripture story? Jesus feeds us when we receive his Body and Blood at Mass in Holy Communion. When we receive Holy Communion, we are receiving Jesus Christ himself. This is such a very special gift that the Mass is the most important celebration of the Church.

Jesus gives us the Eucharist to make us one with him and save us from sin. Because of this, the Eucharist is the center of the Church's life.

## Activity

When we gather in church with our family and parish, we are a part of the assembly. **Draw** a picture of your family at church.



Read aloud the last paragraph on page 14 and the two paragraphs on page 15. Remind the children that Jesus causes things to change.

**Say**, "In the Scripture story of the loaves and fish, Jesus multiplied five loaves and two fish to provide enough food for five thousand people."

**Ask**, "What change happens at Mass with the gifts of bread and wine?" (*through the action of the Holy Spirit the gifts of bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.*)

**Say**, "When we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we are receiving Jesus himself."

**Ask**, "Why does Jesus give us the special gift of the Eucharist?" (*to make us one with him and save us from sin*)

Explain that being one with Jesus helps us to be more like him.

## Activity

- Read the directions for the activity to the children.
- You may wish to ask them to include people with whom they go to Mass who are not members of their family.
- Direct the children to complete the drawing activity in the space provided.

## Teaching Tip

**Sights, Sounds, and Actions in the Mass** Help the children appreciate the sights, sounds, and reverent actions of Catholic worship by having them brainstorm what they see, hear, and do during Mass. Record their answers in three separate columns on the board. Call on a volunteer to describe each sight, sound, or action named. Remind the children to be attentive to these elements of the Mass on Sunday.



## The Mass Has Four Parts

Remind the children that when we celebrate Mass, we give praise to God. We thank God for all the gifts he has given us, especially the gift of the Eucharist.

Direct the children's attention to the photos on pages 16 and 17 showing the four parts of the Mass. Discuss what is happening in each photo.

Invite volunteers to read the text under the headings "Introductory Rites," "Liturgy of the Word," and "Liturgy of the Eucharist." Pause after each section to discuss the prayers and actions of each part of the Mass.



## The Mass Has Four Parts



**E**very Mass includes the following:

**Introductory Rites:** We sing a hymn. The priest and others process into the church. We make the Sign of the Cross. The priest welcomes us. We ask God to forgive us, and we praise him.



**Liturgy of the Word:** We listen to the Word of God. We stand and sing "Alleluia" before we listen to the Gospel. The priest or deacon talks to us about the Scripture stories we heard and what they mean for our lives. We pray the Creed, in which we express our Catholic beliefs. Then we pray for the needs of the Church and of people everywhere.



**Liturgy of the Eucharist:** We bring the gifts of bread and wine to the altar. We pray the Eucharistic Prayer. In this prayer we give the Father our thanks and praise for all of his gifts, especially Jesus Christ, and the priest prays over the bread and wine. The Holy Spirit changes them into the Body and Blood of Christ. We approach the altar and receive Christ's Body and Blood in Holy Communion.

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## FYI

**A Second-Century Eucharist** This is Saint Justin Martyr's second-century description of the Eucharist. Note similarities between this early Eucharist and the Eucharist we celebrate every week.

On the day called after the sun [Sunday], there is a meeting for which all those dwelling in the cities or in the countryside come together. The records of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read. When the reader has stopped, the one who is presiding admonishes and encourages us by a sermon.

Then we all stand up together and lift up our prayers and . . . when we have finished our prayer, bread is brought forth and wine and water. The one who is presiding offers up prayers and thanksgiving and the people acclaim their assent with "Amen." There is the distribution of and participation on the part of each one in the gifts for which thanks has been offered, and they are sent to those who are not present through the deacon.

### Concluding Rites:

We pray. The priest blesses and dismisses us, inviting us to serve God.

Even though it has several parts, the Mass is one act of worship. When we worship God, we honor him and show our love for him. We give him praise and thanksgiving.



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### Activity

Color all of the letters marked with an "X" to reveal a special message.

L O F J E S U S G H  
A R X T I S N O V  
Y V U W I T H Y A B  
N J P T U S X C I M



### Living Our Faith

Participating in the Mass, especially receiving the Eucharist, helps us to live a more Christian life. All Catholics must participate in the Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation. This is a precept, or law, of the Church.



### With My Family

With your family share and discuss a specific prayer or action that you recall from the Mass.

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### Music Connections

The following are some suggestions for liturgical music suitable for young children that you may wish to use during the lesson:

"Thank You, Jesus," The Rennas (WLP)

"Plenty of Bread," Marty Haugen (GIA)

"Glory, Glory to God," Christopher Walker and Paule Freeburg (OCP)

Go to [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org) for downloadable music selections.

Invite volunteers to read the text under the heading "Concluding Rites." Pause to discuss the prayers and actions of the Concluding Rite.

Review all four parts of the Mass by playing a game. List the four parts of the Mass on the board. Ask the children questions based on each of the four parts. For example, "In what part of the Mass does the priest bless and dismiss us?" (*the Concluding Rite*) Have the children point to the photo on page 16 that shows this part of the Mass.

Draw an outline of a church around the parts of the Mass listed on the board to emphasize that the Mass is a single act of worship.

### Activity

- Read aloud the activity directions.
- Direct the children to color the letters marked with an X.
- When all are finished, invite the children to say the hidden message together. Explain that Jesus is with us throughout the day.

### Living Our Faith

Read aloud the Living Our Faith text.

Ask the children why it is important to participate in the Mass on Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation.

Explain to the children that Holy Days of Obligation are special days, in addition to Sundays, when we are supposed to participate in the Mass.

Ask the children if they can name any of the Holy Days of Obligation and what we remember and celebrate on those days.



### With My Family

Remind the children to share the With My Family message at home.





## Heart to Heart

Remind the children that a heart-to-heart talk is a talk about something serious and important. Explain that this heart-to-heart talk is about the importance of Sunday. Read aloud the selection. Begin a discussion by asking the following questions:

**Ask,** “What is the most important day of the week?”  
(Sunday)

“Why is Sunday such an important day?” (Jesus was raised from the dead on Sunday.)

“When we go to Mass on Sunday (or Saturday evening), what does Jesus give us? (He gives us his own Body and Blood.)

Discuss the photo with the following questions:

**Ask,** “What is happening in the picture?” (A boy is getting ready to receive Holy Communion.)

“Who is just behind him?” (his mother)

“What day of the week do you think this is?” (Sunday)

Be sensitive to the fact that not all children are taken to Mass each and every Sunday or Saturday evening. Encourage the children, with respect and love, to ask their parents to arrange to take the whole family to mass.



## Heart to Heart

### Keeping Sunday Holy

**S**unday is the most important day of the week. Sunday is the day Jesus was raised from the dead. We remember this every Sunday (or Saturday evening) by going to Mass. At each celebration of the Eucharist, we remember that Jesus died and rose for us. Then, just like he did at the Last Supper, Jesus gives us his Body and Blood. Jesus becomes present in a very special way!



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### Additional Activity

**A Sunday Meal Centerpiece** Share with the children that Sunday is the Lord's Day. Invite them to make special decorations for their Sunday meal at home. Give them the following suggestions:

- Tell the children that they will design a centerpiece for their family's Sunday meal.
- Distribute drawing paper and colored pencils or markers, as well as decorating supplies.
- Direct the children to draw a large flower, sun, or seasonal picture that they can decorate, cut out, and place on the table at home.

## Activity

Sunday is a special day of the week. We are to keep Sunday holy. The most important way we do this is by going to Mass and receiving the Eucharist. Here is a list of other things we can do to keep Sunday holy.

**Circle** ones that your family does on Sunday or that you would like your family to do. If you have other ideas that are not on the list, **write** them on the lines provided.

Go to Mass

Read the Bible

Pray together

Share a special meal

Visit relatives

Go for a walk

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## Saint Spotlight

### Saint Peter Julian Eymard

Saint Peter Julian Eymard is called the "Apostle of the Eucharist." He was a priest who taught many people about the Eucharist. He lived in France from 1811 until 1839. He started a group of priests who focus their lives on the Eucharist. This group is called the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament.



## With My Family

Plan a family event, such as a special meal, to follow the next Sunday Mass.

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## Activity

- Read aloud the directions to the activity.
- When all have finished, invite a few children to share their responses.

## Saint Spotlight

### Saint Peter Julian Eymard

Read aloud the paragraph about Saint Peter Julian. Tell the children that this was a saint who loved the Sacrament of the Eucharist very much.

**Ask,** "How did Saint Julian show his love for the Eucharist?"  
(He taught many people about the Eucharist; he founded a religious order of priests dedicated to the Eucharist.)



## With My Family

Remind the children to share the With My Family message at home.



## More Saints and Holy People

**Saint Katharine Drexel (1858–1955)** Katharine Drexel was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the late nineteenth century. From her parents' example, she learned to care for those in need and use her wealth for the good of others. The Eucharist was the source of her love for others and led her to found the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, a religious community that founded schools to provide a quality education for Native Americans and African Americans. Many of these schools, such as Xavier University of Louisiana, continue her mission today. Saint Katharine Drexel's feast day is March 3.

## Communion Prayers

- Call the children's attention to the three prayers on the page. Tell the children that Saint Peter Julian Eymard wrote these prayers when he was twelve years old, while preparing for his First Holy Communion.
- Explain that the word *act* in the name of each prayer is another word for *prayer*. Point out that in a prayer of faith, we say what we believe; in a prayer of hope, we say that we trust in God; in a prayer of love, we tell God how much we love him.
- Invite the children to stand, then pray the prayers together. You may also wish to have the children echo the words as they hear you say them.
- End by singing together the Eucharist song you have chosen for this chapter. Close with the Sign of the Cross.

## We Pray Together



### Communion Prayers

#### Act of Faith

My dear Jesus, I firmly believe that your body and blood are truly present in Holy Communion, which I am going to receive, because you told me so.

#### Act of Hope

My dear Jesus, I hope that when I receive you in Holy Communion, you will increase your grace in me.

#### Act of Love

My dear Jesus, I love you with all my heart and above all things. I long to be with you.

(Based on Communion Prayers by Saint Peter Julian Eymard)



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## Reviewing the Lesson

Help the children recall the key points they learned in this lesson.

**Ask,** "What important things about our faith did we learn in this lesson?"

After allowing volunteers to respond and affirming their responses, review the following points with the children. You might like to reformulate the points as questions.

- In the Mass the gifts of bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.
- Jesus Christ gave us the Eucharist to make us one with him and save us from sin.
- The Mass has four parts: Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, and Concluding Rite. The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist are the two main parts of the Mass.