

saint mary's press

Celebrate
and
Remember

Eucharist

Home Guide



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Introduction

Welcome!

When your child was just a baby, you brought him or her to church and the priest or deacon asked a very important question: “What do you ask of the Church for your child?” Your reply was, “Baptism.” You expressed the desire for your child to belong to Christ and the Christian community, to live in God’s grace, and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, Mary, the saints, and all the faithful.

This was the beginning of your child’s sacramental journey. Through the waters of Baptism, your child was immersed in the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Your child was joined forever to all the baptized who make up the Body of Christ. You promised to raise your child to know and follow Jesus in the Catholic Church.

But Baptism was just the beginning. As you prepare for First Eucharist together, your child is taking another big step on his or her sacramental journey, and you are there to teach, encourage, support, and rejoice with your child. This is a time for spiritual growth and development for your whole family.

The Church recognizes you as the first and most influential teachers of your child in the ways of faith. In fact, you are teachers precisely because you are parents. It could be argued that you began teaching about faith as soon as your child was born. How you care for your child teaches important, foundational lessons about love and faith. In everyday ways, you teach your child to choose virtue and to live in the way Jesus teaches us to live. You teach primarily by the witness of your own actions and attitudes.

It is easy to imagine Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as the Holy Family, but perhaps a bit harder to picture one’s own family as a holy family. Yet that is exactly what families are called to be. It is within the family that children first come to faith, and it is within the family that they learn to live their faith. Every family is different and none are perfect. But all families can grow in goodness and holiness if they accept God’s grace and blessings and make the decisions and sacrifices that come with being faithful followers of Jesus.

The celebration of a Sacrament is always communal. As you prepare your child for First Eucharist and as you celebrate the Sacrament within your parish community, you have the support of the entire faith community. The faith and teachings you are sharing with your child are shared with the entire Church.

May the Lord be with you as you journey together toward the celebration of First Eucharist.

Before You Begin: Some Things to Consider

Preparing your child for First Eucharist is a wonderful opportunity. You already know that how you present an activity to your child can make the difference in how they respond to it. You, and your entire family, can help set the tone of your child's response to Sacrament preparation. If you create this as a fun, meaningful, quality time with your child, he or she will likely come to look forward to this time together with you and will cherish the memory of it later in life.

Choose the place and time for your First Eucharist lessons carefully. Find a place that is relatively quiet, and minimize distractions by turning off the radio, television, and phones. Select a time when your child is not typically tired or hungry, or include a snack as part of the experience. By being attentive to such scheduling issues, you will make this a time together that everyone looks forward to.

Many families will complete each lesson in one sitting. However, if your child has a shorter attention span, or if it is a better fit with your family time, divide the lesson into several shorter meetings, or complete the lesson on Sunday and the family activities on other days of the week.

When you are working with your child, take the time to listen. Don't give in to the temptation to rush your child to respond or to supply the answers yourself. Your interest and patience show your child that what he or she thinks is important to you.

In general, complete the activities alongside your child. For example, if your child is drawing a picture of your family at Mass, draw your own picture to share with your child. Be sure to keep extra paper handy for yourself.

As you become familiar with the home guide and the structure of the child's book, you will be more comfortable tailoring a lesson to be most effective for your individual child.

The Learning Process

The *Celebrate and Remember: Eucharist Child's Book* is designed to lead young children to an understanding of the Eucharist and an active participation in the Mass. The child's book consists of ten chapters that are ten pages each. Each chapter consists of an opening prayer and the following four sections:

We Listen is a two-page section that features a Scripture story that is tied to the focus of the lesson.

We Learn is a four-page section that presents the doctrinal and liturgical points of the lesson.

We Live is a two-page section that applies the lesson to your child's life.

We Pray is a one-page concluding prayer related to the content within the chapter. Your family can pray together for growth in faith and for strength to live as disciples of Christ.

The chart below illustrates how each chapter is constructed.

Page 1	Opening Prayer
Pages 2 and 3	We Listen (Scripture)
Pages 4 through 7	We Learn (Doctrine)
Pages 8 and 9	We Live (Application)
Page 10	We Pray (Closing Prayer)

Each lesson offers additional learning features in the child’s book, which may include the following:

With My Family This feature appears three times in each chapter and provides quick and simple activities that you can do together as a family.

Faith Highlights This feature highlights points of Catholic doctrine your child should be familiar with as part of their preparation for the Sacrament.

Saint Spotlight This feature offers short biographies of saints. It familiarizes your child with other people of faith who can be examples for us.

Living Our Faith This feature provides specific teachings of the Church that have an impact on our daily lives.

In addition to the core chapters, the child’s book also includes a resource section with the following special features:

Inside My Catholic Church This section presents an illustrated interior of a Catholic Church and identifies places and items that are important in the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy.

The Order of the Mass This is an instructional outline of the Eucharistic celebration. It describes the different parts of the Mass and explains the actions of the assembly.

How to Receive Communion This resource identifies the steps and guidelines involved in receiving the Body and Blood of Christ.

Catholic Prayers This section contains some key prayers, including the Sign of the Cross, the Lord’s Prayer, the Glory Be, the Hail Mary, the Apostles’ Creed, and grace before and after meals.

Glossary This is a compiled list of terms and definitions that are helpful for those who are preparing for the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Certificate Each child’s book contains a frame-ready certificate that can be signed and used to mark the date of First Communion.

Child's Book Contents

Chapter Title	Scripture	Key Church Teaching
1. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit	Jesus says, "Follow me." (Matthew 4:18-22)	Baptism washes away sin and gives us new life. The Eucharist is the Church's most important Sacrament.
2. The Lord Be with You	Jesus feeds the hungry. (Matthew 14:13-21)	In the Mass the gifts of bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.
3. Lord, Have Mercy	Jesus welcomes everyone to his table. (Matthew 9:10-13)	Jesus came to save us all from sin. In the Mass Jesus' sacrifice is made present again.
4. Glory to God	All our gifts come from God. (Genesis 1:1-31, 2:1-3)	Sunday is the Lord's Day, a day to honor and worship God for all of his blessings.
5. The Word of the Lord	Jesus accomplishes the words of the prophets. (Luke 4:16-22)	God speaks to us in the Liturgy of the Word. The Gospels are special because Christ is their center.
6. I Believe	Jesus heals a blind man. (Mark 10:46-52)	We believe in the Blessed Trinity, one God in three Divine Persons.
7. Do This in Memory of Me	Jesus shares the Last Supper with his Apostles. (Matthew 26:18-20,26-28; Luke 22:19)	Jesus gave us the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus, who is truly present in the Eucharist.
8. Thy Kingdom Come	Jesus teaches his followers how to pray. (Matthew 5:1-2, 6:9-13)	The Kingdom of God is the power of God's love ruling over the world.
9. The Body of Christ	The Risen Jesus comes to his followers. (Luke 24:13-32)	In Holy Communion we receive the Body and Blood of Christ. We are united to Jesus and the Church.
10. Go in Peace	The early Church lives as the Body of Christ. (Acts 2:41-47)	The Eucharist nourishes and strengthens us to live as God calls us to live.

Liturgy	Prayer	Living the Eucharist
Sacraments of Christian Initiation: Baptism, the Eucharist, Confirmation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sign of the Cross • A Thank-You Prayer 	We are called to be followers of Jesus.
Introductory Rites: The priest welcomes and greets the assembly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Prayer of Thanks and Praise • Prayers of Faith, Hope, and Love 	Participating in Sunday Mass keeps us close to Jesus.
Penitential Act: We pray for God's forgiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Prayer for God's Mercy • A Forgiveness Prayer 	We prepare to receive Jesus by saying we are sorry for our sins.
The Gloria: We give God praise and thanks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Creation Praises God • Glory to God 	It is important to remember everything God has done for us.
The Liturgy of the Word: We listen to readings from the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Gospels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Prayer to Open Our Minds and Hearts to God's Word • We Pray as Disciples of Jesus 	Reading the Bible teaches us how to be faithful to God.
The Creed: Our profession of faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Profession of Faith • A Prayer of Faith 	We show our faith by what we say and do.
The Liturgy of the Eucharist: Jesus is truly present on the altar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Prayer to Jesus • Our Eucharistic Prayer 	Receiving the Eucharist gives us strength to be who God wants us to be.
The Lord's Prayer: A summary of the whole Gospel message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lord's Prayer • Our Father 	We honor God and we ask for his Kingdom of love and peace to come.
The Communion Rite: We receive the Body and Blood of Christ; we are united to Jesus and one another.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I Walk with Jesus • We Pray to the Risen Jesus 	When we participate in Mass and receive Communion, we meet Jesus in a special way.
The Concluding Rite: The priest blesses us and sends us to be Christ for the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Litany of the Holy Spirit • We Pray after Mass 	We can bring the love of Jesus to others by what we say and what we do.

Understanding the *Celebrate and Remember:* Eucharist Home Guide

This home guide is designed to help you prepare your child for First Eucharist. Take time to get comfortable with it before you begin the lessons. Browse through it and look through the first lesson outline along with the child's book. This guide was designed with an easy-to-use format that will make the learning process simple yet effective.

Parent Background

The first page of every chapter begins with some basic background information for you. This information offers you deeper insight into the content of the chapter and provides you with reflection material that can help you prepare to teach your child.

GET READY!

The Get Ready! section points out any specific points of consideration or reflection that might enrich your teaching experience of a particular chapter. In addition to the specific directions of the Get Ready! section, it is helpful at this point to remember to read over the lesson and look at the pictures and illustrations presented throughout the child's book. Make notes about anything that strikes you at this time.

You will also want to read through the family activities and the additional activities that are suggested. Based on your time frame, decide which activities to incorporate into the immediate lesson and which to use throughout the week.

A prereading of the Heart to Heart section will also be helpful at this preparation stage. If you take this message and shape it into a real heart-to-heart talk with your child, it will become a rich, meaningful part of the lesson. The heart-to-heart talk is the part of the lesson when you can close the book and have a heartfelt talk with your child. Great learning can come from a real, honest sharing between you and your child.

GET SET!

The Get Set! section alerts you to any specific materials that you will need for the lesson. In addition to any items that might be mentioned, it is a good idea to create a container of materials that you will use regularly—pencils, erasers, crayons or markers, paper, highlighters, sticky notes, index cards, tape, scissors, a glue stick, stickers, a lighter or matches, and a family Bible or child's Bible. Keep these supplies, your child's book, and your home guide in a place that is convenient to where you will be teaching the lessons.

You will also want to set up a prayer space at this time. If you are working at your dining room table, make a centerpiece with a cloth, a candle, a cross or crucifix, and a Bible. If you are gathering in your family room, set up your prayer space on a coffee table or bookshelf. Keep this space simple and uncluttered. It will be a special part of your prayer together.