

Call to Celebrate-Eucharist

Lesson 7-“We Share a Meal”

Theme: We share the Eucharist, a meal that we share as a community, an event that changed history, a demand that Jesus told to do to commemorate his Passion, Death and Resurrection, and a gift that sustains us in our every activity and a promise that if we share in this meal, we will have eternal life.

Doctrinal Content

When we receive the Eucharist we are united to Jesus, our relationship with him grows and deepens, God forgives our less serious sins if we are sorry and gives us the strength to avoid serious sin, we are united with the whole Church, the Body of Christ, and we share in God’s promise that we will live in Heaven with Jesus, Mary, and all the saints.

Parent Background

The Communion Rite has several deeply symbolic gestures and prayers that we may take for granted unless we consciously reflect on the meaning of each:

The Lord’s Prayer- Jesus gave us a fundamental way of prayer and it starts off with something that the Jewish tradition was not used to doing. While they certainly thought of God as the father of the people of Israel, it would NOT have been common for an individual to address God as “Father”. Jesus asks us to do this, and in a deeply intimate way, as we often hear him refer to God as “Abba” or daddy. We are establishing that loving relationship between parent and child when we call upon God as Daddy when we ask Him to reign in our hearts and in the world, to provide us with what we need, to keep us safe from the world’s evils, to keep us from straying from His loving presence, and to forgive and have mercy on us when we do.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those
who trespass against us
and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil, Amen.



The Rite of Peace-The Sign of peace reflects an ancient Christian practice and is found in scripture. (Rom 16:16, 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; and 1 Pet 5:14. As early as the year 155, Justin Martyr mentioned the exchange of the kiss in the Mass. Tertullian, in about A.D. 200 referred to the ritual as a seal on payer. Today, we exchange some sign that expresses peace, community, and charity. This sign, whatever it may be, depending on local customs, can be seen as connecting the Our Father with the reception of Holy Communion about to take place.

The Fraction-When you see the priest breaking the host, this is a gesture that goes back to biblical references. Jesus himself broke bread when feeding the crowds; Jesus took loaves of bread, blessed them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people that were there. This phrase is also used during the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Finally, after the resurrection and on the road to Emmaus, Jesus broke bread with the disciples, and until this point, the disciples did not recognize him. St. Paul refers to the “breaking of the bread” reference to a participation in the body of Christ. “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread”. Therefore, when the priest breaks the Eucharistic host in the Mass, the ritual brings to mind this grand tradition of breaking bread.



Commingling: After breaking host, the priest places a small piece into the chalice while quietly saying, “May this mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it. This is known as the commingling, and was used at one time to express the unity of the Church. In Rome, the pope had a small particle of the consecrated host sent to priests in the city, who placed it in their chalices as a sign of their union with the bishop of Rome. While the priest performs the rite of breaking the host and the commingling, the people sing or say the Lamb of God or in Latin, *Agnus Dei*. In the Jewish tradition of the Passover, the Lamb was sacrificed so the angel of death would Passover the Jews, freeing them from death. The New Testament reveals Jesus as the new Passover lamb who was sacrificed for our liberation and freedom from sin. The book of Revelation is filled with imagery of the Paschal Lamb. (Rev. 5:12) In John 1:29, John the Baptism refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God. Jesus is recognized as the Suffering Servant prophesied by Isaiah. We partake in this Sacrifice and are redeemed by it.



Communion: Right before we receive Communion, the priest says, “Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.” This comes from the book of Revelation (Rev. 19:9). In Revelation 19:6-9, the Lamb is revealed to be a bridegroom. This means that this Passover supper is a wedding feast. Jesus, the Lamb, is the Bridegroom and the Bride is us, the Church. We are invited to a wedding feast in which the Lamb unites Himself to his Bride, symbolizing the final union between Christ and his Church. It is in this heavenly marriage between Jesus and the Church that we participate through the Eucharistic liturgy here on earth as a foretaste of the communion we hope to have with our divine bridegroom for all eternity.

Activity

1. Start with a prayer of thanksgiving.

Jesus, thank you for the gift of each other and the time we have together.

Help us to grow in your love, so that we can serve you and others with a big heart.

Help us not to worry about what has to be done or finished before tomorrow.

Let us rest in you.

Amen.

2. Read pages 25-31 together in *The Mass for Children* booklet.

3. Look at the print that was handed out to your children. Have the children really look at and study the print, and ask them the following questions:

a. Tell me what you see, tell me everything that you notice.

b. What do you suppose the artist had in mind when he or she painted it?

c. The table setting is so fancy. It looks like it's fit for a prince or princess. I wonder who the table is set for?

d. How many chairs are there? (One cannot really tell, it goes on until they can't be seen.)

e. This painting is a way to help us imagine what the writers of the Bible wanted us to know. That Jesus is the Bridegroom and the Church, or us, is the Bride. Do you know what a bridegroom and bride are? (Explain if necessary.) When a man and woman get married, it is such a happy occasion that there is usually a big party or feast and the bride and bridegroom become known as one, they are so close. Jesus has invited us to a wedding feast when we receive the Eucharist. It is a "foretaste" or a preview of what heaven is like. The writers of the Bible want us to know, that heaven is like the biggest, best, fanciest, happiest, tastiest feast we can ever imagine. People from all over the world, from all time, and from our families will be there! Who will sit at the head of the table? Jesus wants to be as close to all of his church as a bride and bridegroom are on their wedding day! The best way we can do this is to go to the "Wedding Feast" that Jesus gave us, or the Eucharist.

f. Draw a picture of the special ways that the priest gets the banquet table ready for the Eucharistic feast on the back of the picture.

g. Have your child state ways that they can "get ready" for the feast that happens every week.

f. Close with a prayer of thanksgiving for your time together.

