

We Prepare for a Meal and a Sacrifice

The Liturgy of the Eucharist, Part One



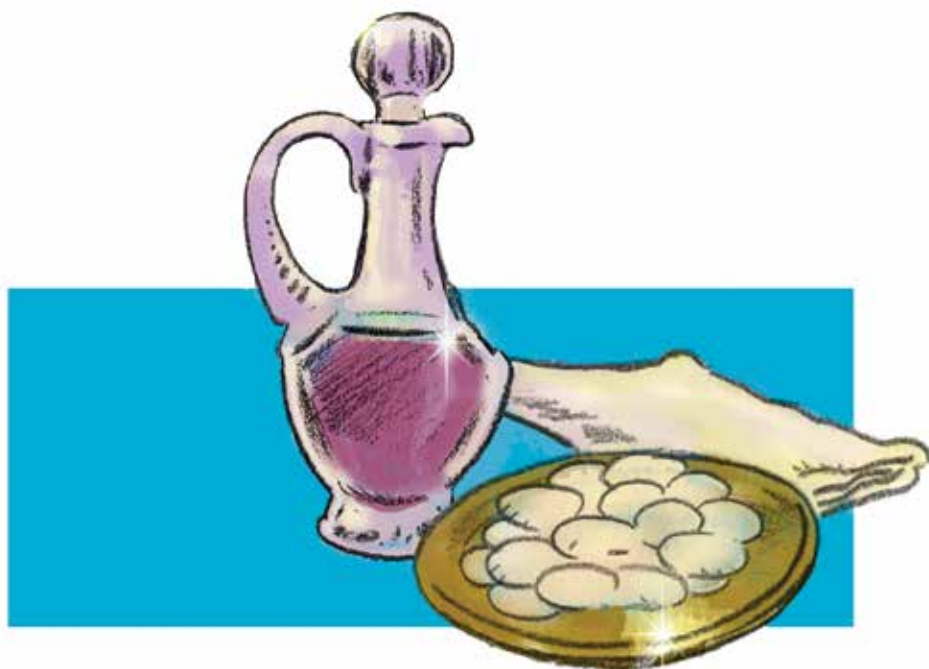
OPENING ♥ PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father,

*Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to show us your love
by dying on the cross to save us.*

*Help me to be ready to join in the offering of the Eucharist,
so that I may be changed by Jesus Christ,
and may grow to be more like him.*

I ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.



A Community Offering to God

At Mass, the altar servers bring a special blessed plate and cup—the **paten** (plate) for the bread and the **chalice** (cup) for the wine—to the altar, along with special cloths. People bring bread hosts, made from wheat and wine made from grapes, to the altar. People also bring up money that is collected for the needs of the Church. The bread and wine are signs of our work, and the money is part of what we give up for others. All these things are part of our offering to God at Mass.

GROWING
in FAITH

Do you know why as a Catholic you are asked to fast (not eat or drink anything but water) an hour before receiving holy Communion? You do this so that the hunger you feel in your body will remind you that your spirit hungers also. It is easier to remember to feed your body than your spirit, but you need to remember to feed both. Why do you want to receive holy Communion? You usually don't *feel* different after you receive holy Communion. What is one way that you hope to be different?

This story, *adapted from the Bible*, shows how God lovingly provides for his people.

Jesus Feeds More than Five Thousand with a Miracle

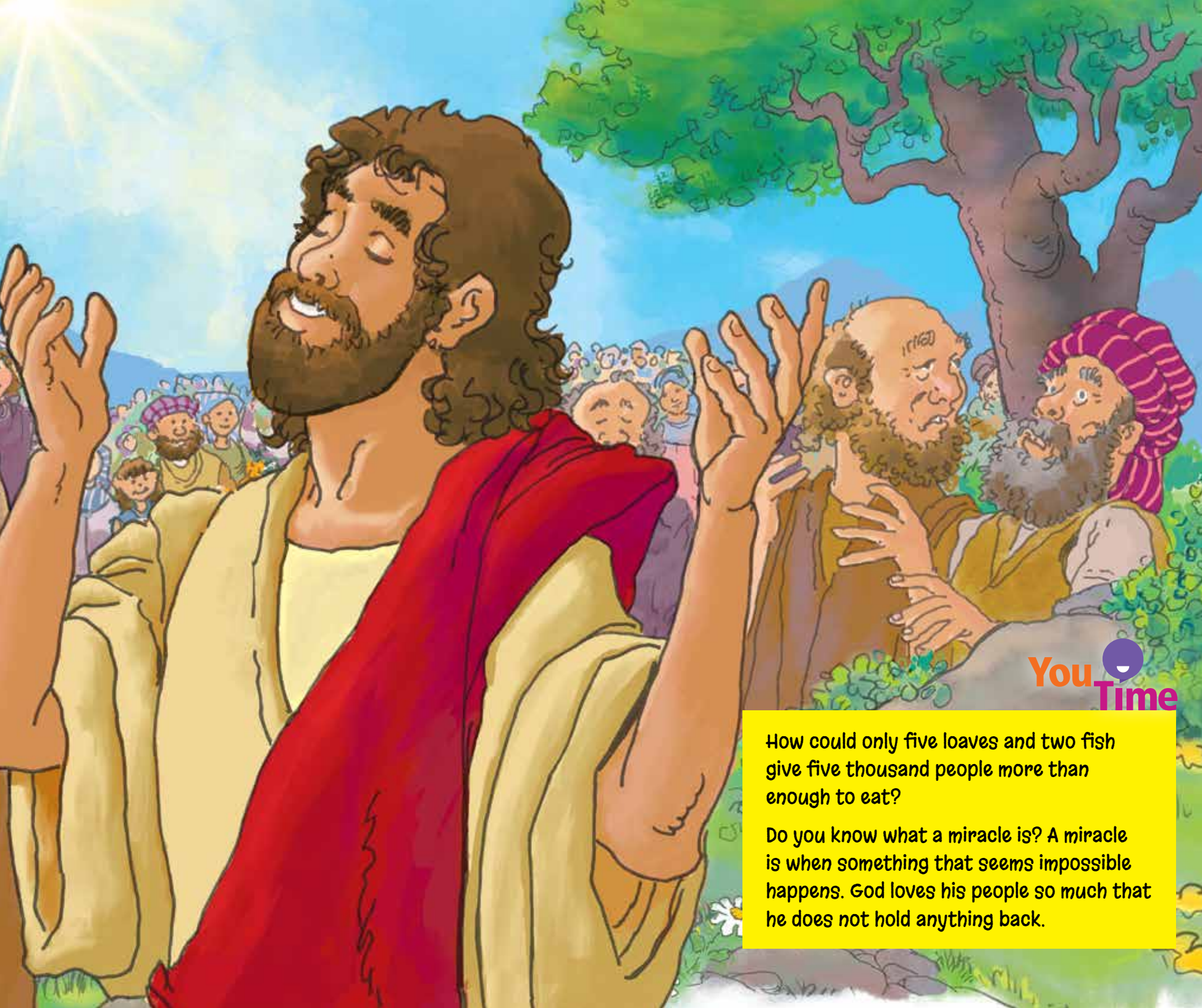
Adapted from Matthew 14:13–21, Mark 6:31–44, Luke 9:12–17, John 6:1–14

One day, Jesus wanted to be by himself. He took a boat to an empty place. But when the people in the towns heard he was nearby, a big crowd came out to find him. He felt sorry for them and healed their sick friends and family members.

Then, the disciples told Jesus: "There is no food here and it is getting very late. Send the people away so they can find something to eat." Jesus said, "Don't send them away. Give them some food yourselves."

But they said to him, "There is a boy here with five loaves and two fish. That is all we have." Then Jesus said, "Bring them here to me," and he told the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and two fish, he looked up to heaven. He blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the people. They all ate until they were full, and they put what was left over into twelve baskets. More than five thousand people were fed.





YouTime

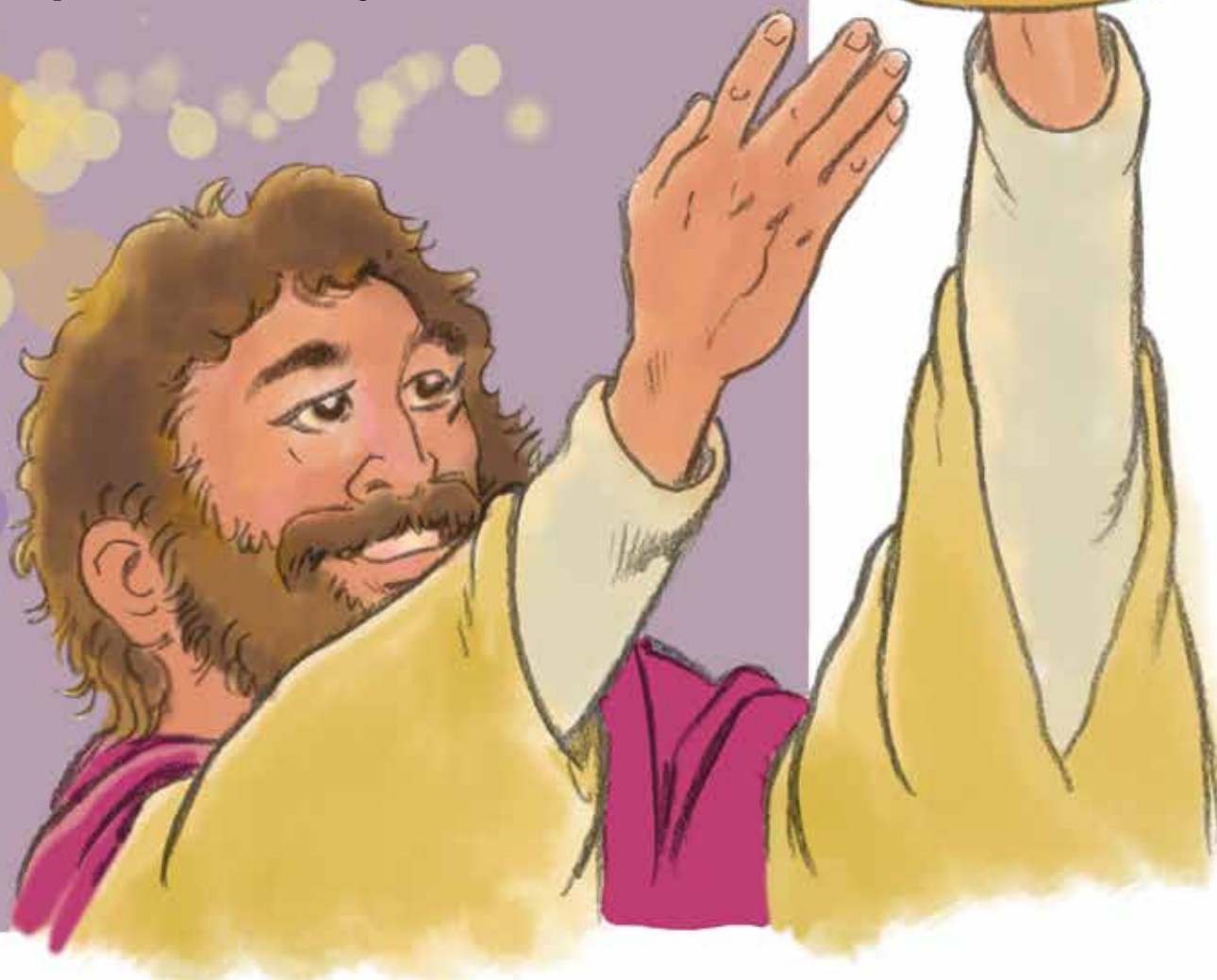
How could only five loaves and two fish give five thousand people more than enough to eat?

Do you know what a miracle is? A miracle is when something that seems impossible happens. God loves his people so much that he does not hold anything back.

God Gives His Only Son as a Sacrifice

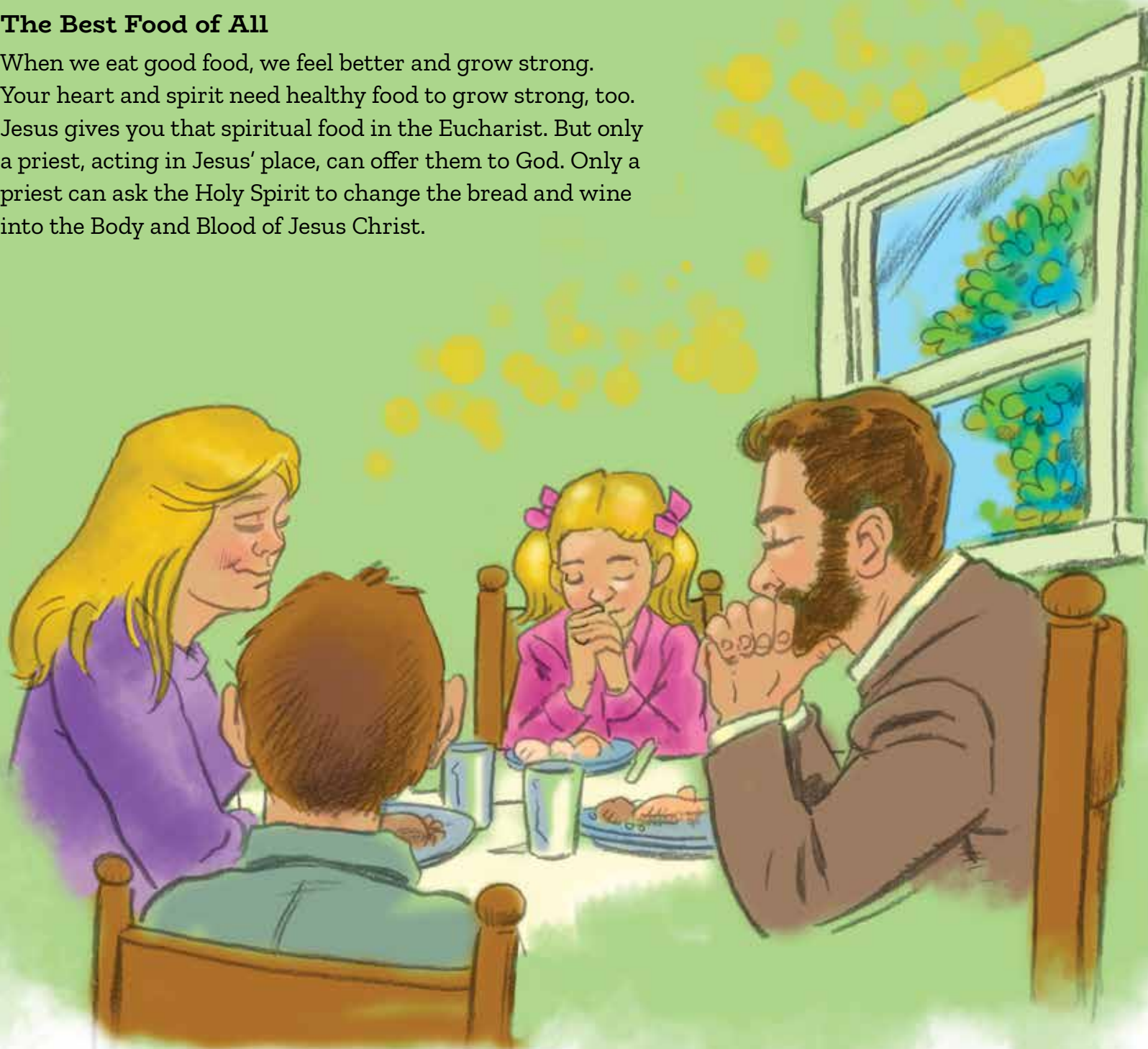
God the Father sent his Son to save us. Jesus freely chose to die on the cross as a sacrifice to save us from our sins and make us children of God. When Jesus allowed himself to be nailed to the cross, he was badly hurt and bleeding.

At the Last Supper, Jesus broke a loaf of bread into pieces and said, "Take, eat, this is my Body, which will be given up for you." He poured a cup of wine and said, "Take, drink, this is my Blood, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins." Can you see that he was talking about what would happen to his body and his blood at his death on the cross? His body was broken and he bled. Do you remember hearing these words at Mass?



The Best Food of All

When we eat good food, we feel better and grow strong. Your heart and spirit need healthy food to grow strong, too. Jesus gives you that spiritual food in the Eucharist. But only a priest, acting in Jesus' place, can offer them to God. Only a priest can ask the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.



The Table of God

Look at an altar. It looks like a dinner table, doesn't it? It also looks like altars of long ago on which animals were killed and offered to God as a sacrifice, like Abraham did with the sheep. The altar in church is both a dinner table and a place of sacrifice. Jesus sacrificed himself long ago, on the cross. You should remember his death and rising again at every Mass, where it is made present to you through the Eucharist. Like the sheep that died in Isaac's place, Jesus is the Lamb of God who died in your place to save you from sin.

We Offer Ourselves in Sacrifice

While the bread and wine are carried to the altar, you should also "send" a gift to the altar: your life. Offer God all the things that make you special, that make you happy, sad, and challenge you in your life.

After everything is ready on the altar, the priest says:

Pray, brothers and sisters,
that my sacrifice and yours
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

We then say:

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good and the good of all his holy Church.



GROWING in FAITH

When you are at Mass, imagine that you are offering your life and all your actions to God on the altar with the bread and wine. The Holy Spirit will change you, too! The priest, who represents Jesus, leads all the people.

Together they act as the body of Christ in the sacrifice of the Mass. You should take an active part in what is happening. You do this when you say or sing your words together with the rest of the congregation. You are learning to be part of the body of Christ at Mass.

YOUR FAITH at Home

With your family, talk about what it means to say no to sin and to choose to follow God's way of love instead.

Together, as a family, do the bread-baking activity in Lesson Five of the Family Guide.

Help your family set the table for dinner; make sure that the people who will eat have everything they need.

Christ Is Present in the Mass

The Church teaches us that Christ is truly present among us when we gather together for Mass:

1. Christ is present in the word, which you learned in the last lesson.
2. Christ is present in the priest.
3. Christ is present in the people.
4. Christ is present in the sacrament of the Eucharist.



COMMUNITY ⌚ TIME

- ⌚ Practice at home saying the prayer: "May the Lord accept the sacrifice...." (See the wording in the preceding pages.)
- ⌚ When you are at Mass: Say that same prayer with everyone else, and think about what God wants you to do for others.

SENDING OUT ♥ PRAYER

Dear God,

Thank you for bringing us together to learn about your love.

We are glad to have heard what Jesus teaches us.

As we leave today, we pray for _____.

**Help us to bring the light and love of Jesus
to everyone we meet this week.**

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Activity

When Jesus asked the disciples to gather the bread and fish that was left over, they filled twelve baskets! You may not be able to perform such amazing miracles, like Jesus. But when you share with others, not only do you spread happiness to the person with whom you share, you also feel better inside.

Try to think of three things you can share with others, and write them on the lines below.

I can share my _____ with _____.

I can share my _____ with _____.

I can share my _____ with _____.

Now think about how you can turn your thoughts to actions—actually do this!

Activity

The Church teaches that when you gather with others for Mass, Christ is truly present in four important ways. In the boxes below, draw a picture of the places where you meet Jesus in your celebration.

Christ is present in the word

And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. JOHN 1:14

Christ is present in the priest

You are a priest forever.... HEBREWS 7:17

Christ is present in the sacrament

[Jesus said,] "This is my body, which will be given for you."
LUKE 22:19

Christ is present in the people

[Jesus said,] "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."
MATTHEW 18:20