

We Prepare for a Meal and a Sacrifice

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST, PART ONE

Catechism of the Catholic Church Passages Taught in this Lesson

1348, 1350–51, 1387, 1407–11

Lesson Objectives

Help the children and their families:

- Understand the Mass as both meal and sacrifice.
- Know that the Mass makes present Jesus Christ's sacrifice for our salvation.
- Realize that the offertory is an opportunity to offer oneself to God.

Catechist Preparation

The goal of this lesson is to help the children understand the Mass as both meal and sacrifice. You will help the children see that the priest, who is acting in the person of Christ, makes present (offers up) to the Father for you and for all believers—those on earth and in heaven—the sacrifice Jesus made by dying on the cross. Together with the whole Church and in union with Christ, you are participating in the eucharistic meal that proclaims Jesus' sacrifice for our salvation. Together we give thanks to God that Jesus Christ is the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation. As you teach this lesson, remember that you are showing the children how deeply God cares that they participate in the offering of the bread and wine. He wants them to offer their very selves as well and join in Jesus' sacrifice. This practice will open them to lifelong spiritual growth and help them to fulfill God's hopes and plans for them, as they grow closer to Christ.

For this Lesson, You Will Need:

- A prepared prayer table, with a cloth reflecting the liturgical season, a crucifix, a candle, and a Bible.
- The DVD *A Child's First Communion and So Much More!* set to play segment five, "The Best Food of All."
- Copies for each student of the Loaves and Fish artwork found in the appendix of this guide. Copy the loaves on tan paper, and the fishes on blue or green paper. The children can cut them out or you can precut them to save time. Each child should have a loaf and some fish.
- Baskets for loaves and fish.

CATECHIST'S ♥ PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help me to remember that preparing for the Eucharist is more than preparing for an ordinary meal shared with friends.

Inspire me to offer myself to you so I may be more like Jesus and more worthy of the privilege of teaching your little ones.

I ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

As you teach this lesson, remember that you are showing the children how deeply God cares that they participate in the offering of the bread and wine.

Introduction

Gather the children around the prayer table, light the candle, hold up the Bible, and for reinforcement, say:
"The Lord be with you."

Then the children say:
"And with your spirit."

You say, "Let us pray." Then lead them in the **Opening Prayer** (see adjacent page) and ask them to return to their seats. Leave the Bible open on your desk during the lesson.

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.


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?

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.

A Community Offering to God

Use the text to introduce the video *A Child's First Communion and So Much More!* set to show segment five, "The Best Food of All."

Growing in Faith

After the video, ask the questions posed at the end of this section:

- 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?

Make sure the children feel comfortable about the second question, knowing that no one should be afraid about not being perfect on the day of first Communion. Also encourage students to understand that the Eucharist can transform us to be and act more like Jesus, if we cooperate with the graces we receive, even though we won't feel different.

Also discuss and explain why we are asked to fast an hour before we receive the Eucharist.

Bible Story:
Jesus Feeds More than
Five Thousand People
with a Miracle

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

This might be a good one to act out. You read the lines for Jesus, but perhaps some children can be the narrator and the disciples. One child can pantomime bringing a basket of loaves and fish to the disciples, using the copies of the reproducible art in the appendix, *Loaves and Fishes*. Invite the “disciples” to pass out the loaves and fish on cue while the story is read, and at the end, collect leftovers into several baskets.

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

Jesus Feeds More than Five Thousand
with a Miracle

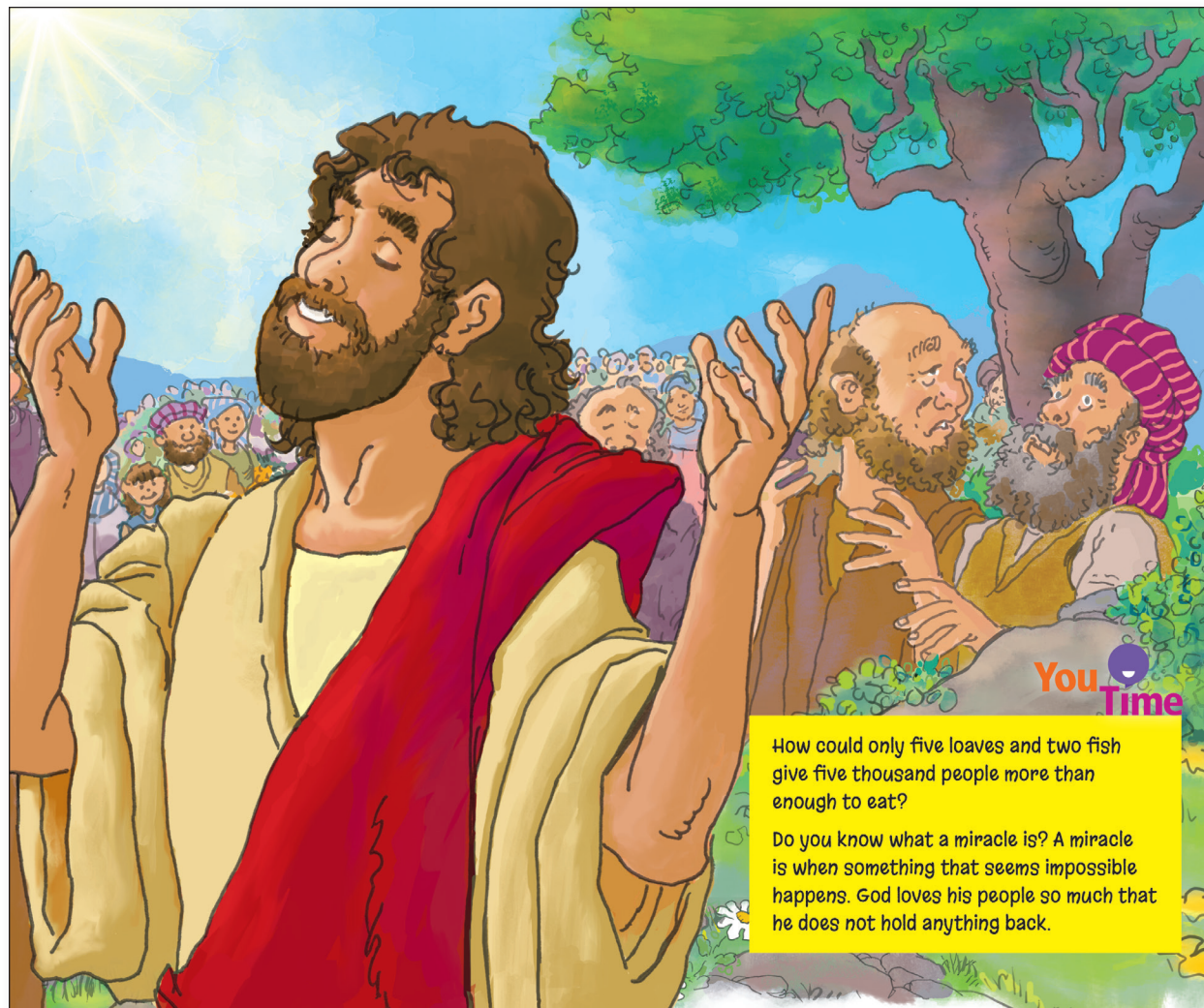
Adapted from Matthew 14:13–21, Mark 6:31–44, Luke 9:12–17, John 6:1–14

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.





LESSON 5

Ask the **You Time** questions and review the summary paragraph at the end of You Time.

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

Do you know what a miracle is?

Answer: A miracle is when something that seems impossible happens. God loves his people so much that he does not hold anything back, even the impossible.

LESSON 5

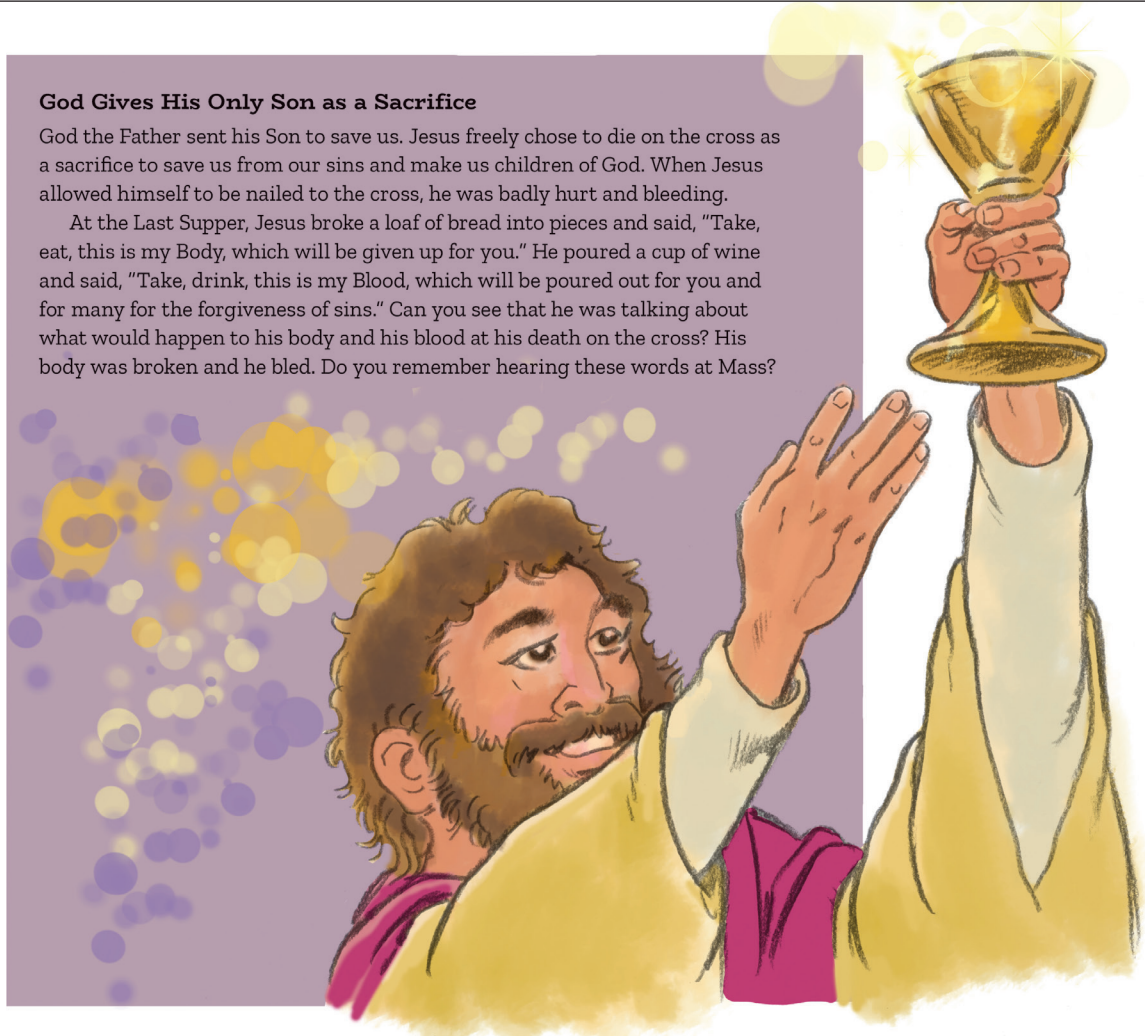
God Gives His Only Son as a Sacrifice

This is a key concept. At the Last Supper, Jesus told the disciples that the bread was his body and the wine his blood that would be sacrificed for our salvation. What we celebrate and receive at Mass is both a sacred meal and a re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice. Be sure the children understand the section in Lesson One about original sin and Jesus' death on the cross to save us from sin as well as how baptism "is birth into the new life of Christ" (CCC 1277). Through baptism, all sin is washed away and we are reborn as children of God who can live forever in heaven. Review this section with them, if necessary.

God Gives His Only Son as a Sacrifice

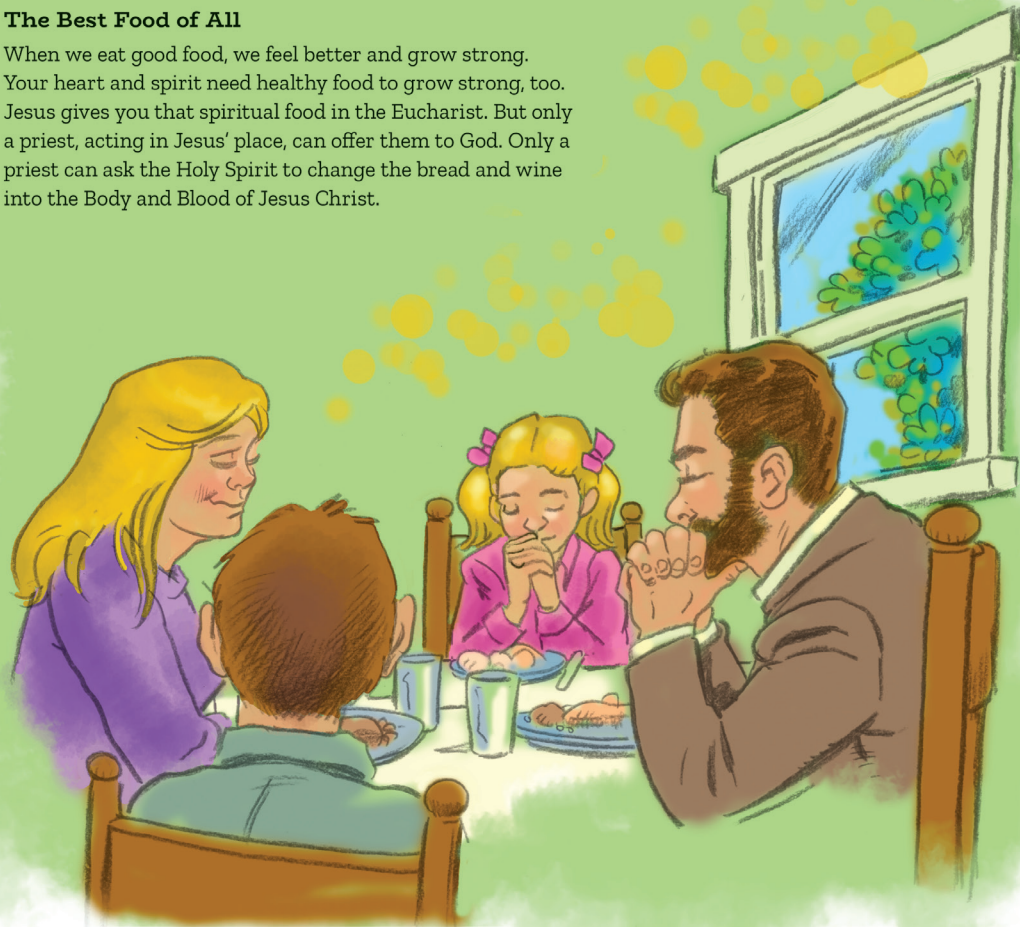
God the Father sent his Son to save us. Jesus freely chose to die on the cross as a sacrifice to save us from our sins and make us children of God. When Jesus allowed himself to be nailed to the cross, he was badly hurt and bleeding.

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.



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The Best Food of All

Explain that the Eucharist is the center of the Church's life and the memorial of Christ's Passover. Christ acting through the ministry of priests offers the eucharistic sacrifice. It brings together the people of God into the body of Christ. Since it strengthens the bonds of charity between the communicant and Christ, it also reinforces the unity of the Church. We all share, as a community, in the same meal that transforms us to be more like Jesus Christ.

LESSON 5

Bible Story:
Abraham's Willingness
to Sacrifice Isaac, His Only Son

Adapted from Genesis 22:1-19

This may be a difficult story to deliver, as it looks like Isaac is going to be killed. Present it calmly, assuring the children at the beginning that there is a happy ending, and that it ultimately points to what God did for us in sending his Son to save us through his sacrifice on the cross. Use your best storytelling voice as you read this one. Be sure to refer to the pictures in the children's text.

Here is a story, *adapted from the Bible*, about another father who was willing to give up his only son, just as God did for us with his son, Jesus.

Abraham's Willingness
to Sacrifice Isaac,
His Only Son

Adapted from Genesis 22:1-19

Abraham was an old man who lived a long time before Jesus was born. God made a promise to Abraham that if he loved God, he would be the father of many people.

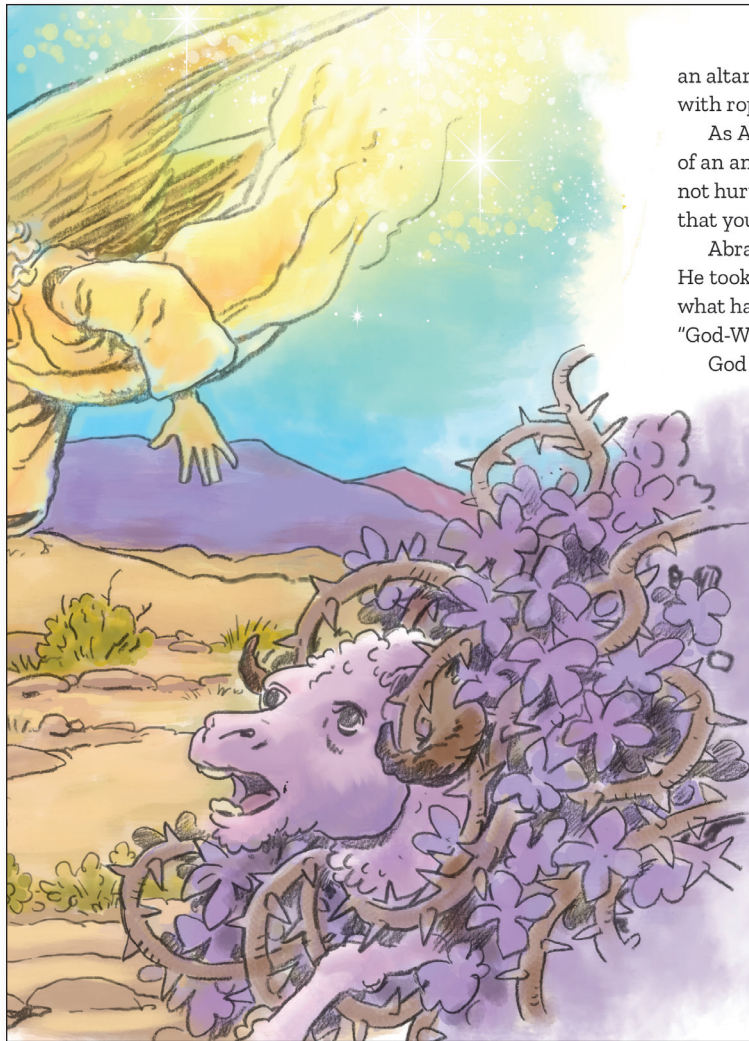
One day, God said to Abraham: "Take your only son, Isaac, whom you love, to Moriah and offer him on one of the hills as a burnt offering. I will show you where."

Abraham put a saddle on his donkey and took his son, Isaac, and two servants to cut wood for the fire for the offering. When they got near the place God showed him, he told the servants to wait with the donkey. Abraham had Isaac carry the wood up the hill, and he himself carried the stick with the fire and the knife.

As they walked, Isaac looked around and said, "Father, I see the wood for the fire and I see the knife, but where is the sheep for the offering?"

Abraham answered, "Don't worry. God will give the sheep for the sacrifice." They walked on to the top of the hill. When they got there, Abraham built





an altar and put wood on it for the fire. He tied up Isaac with rope and put him on top.

As Abraham reached for his knife, he heard the voice of an angel. "Abraham, Abraham!" the angel called. "Do not hurt the boy. I know now that you love God so much that you did not hold back your only son."

Abraham saw a sheep caught by his horns on a bush. He took the sheep and put him on the altar. Because of what had happened there, Abraham named that place "God-Will-Give-What-Is-Needed."

God saw how much Abraham loved him. He repeated his promise that Abraham's descendants would be blessed. Then, Abraham, Isaac, and the servants went home.

You Time

Have you ever given up something so that someone else might have something good?

Can you see how Abraham's love for God is like the Father's love for you—so great a love that he could let his only Son die for you?

What do you think God wants you to give him in return?

LESSON 5

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Ask the **You Time** questions. Make sure the children understand that they, too, are sometimes asked to make sacrifices: to give up something they like out of love for God or others.

Have you ever given up something so that someone else might have something good?

Can you see how Abraham's love for God is like the Father's love for you—so great a love that he could let his only Son die for you?

What do you think God wants you to give him in return?

Answer: May vary, but possible answers include "everything," "our lives," "the things we love most," etc.

LESSON 5

The Table of God

Point out the picture of the altar and explain that it looks like a dinner table. Ask if anyone has a butcher block or an island for cooking with a chopping block in his or her kitchen at home. Explain that the altar is where the priest, acting in Jesus' place, offers the gifts of bread and wine to God for us and asks the Holy Spirit to change them into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Talk about the special "dishes" we use at Mass, showing the pictures from the text as needed.

We Offer Ourselves in Sacrifice

This is an important concept: we can offer ourselves with the gifts at the offertory, asking God that we can be transformed into Jesus like them. Ask the children to read the text, then ask them to use their imaginations to place their hearts on the altar with the bread and wine. Urge them to remember to do this at Mass.

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.



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.

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.

Christ Is Present in the Mass

Review the four ways that Christ is truly present among us when we gather together for Mass:

- Christ is present in the word, which you learned in the last lesson.
- Christ is present in the priest.
- Christ is present in the people.
- Christ is present in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

When families come to pick up their children, invite them to quietly join you and include them in the **Sending Out Prayer**. Remind everyone before they leave to review the **Your Faith at Home** activity and complete the **Activity** pages before the next lesson.

Growing in Faith

Help the children imagine they are offering all that they do in life to God. Say, "As you do that, you're learning to be part of the body of Christ."

Your Faith at Home

Explain how students can make sacrifices at home. Introduce the bread-baking activity.

Community Time

Go over the prayer "May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands..." and ask the parents to practice it with their children at home. Optional: lead everyone in a procession to the prayer table, while playing the song "All that We Have and All that We Offer" (Gary Ault). Parents can join in.

Sending Out Prayer

When you pray the prayer together, add the names of people the children want to pray for in the blank.

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 _____

I can share my _____

Now think about how you can turn your thoughts to act

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Here are the instructions for this lesson's take-home activities:

- Ask the children to consider how they can emulate Jesus' kindness and generosity by sharing with others.
- The other activity reinforces the Church teaching of how Christ is truly present (in four important ways) when we join with others to celebrate Mass.

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

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