

# LESSON 5

## We Prepare for a Meal and a Sacrifice

### The Liturgy of the Eucharist, Part One

#### FAMILY ♥ PRAYER

**Heavenly Father,**

***I thank you for the presence of this child, \_\_\_\_\_, in my life. Strengthen my faith at this important time. Make me willing to offer myself to you with the bread and wine at Mass and help me to encourage this child to do the same, so that we may become a holy family, rooted in your will, not ours. I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Amen.***



#### Lesson Summary

In this lesson, your child has been learning about God's sacrifices, miracles, and abundant love and generosity in giving us the gift of the Eucharist, and in giving us his only Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. Christ satisfies our spiritual hunger with the gifts of his Body and Blood in the Eucharist. Receiving holy Communion transforms us into new reflections of the body of Christ.

The children also have talked about "being different" after receiving Communion. The Mass is both a meal and a mutual sacrifice during which we offer ourselves, as Jesus did. When we do that, our life becomes a part of the Eucharist, and we can be changed to be more like Jesus.



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## The Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, that is, of the work of salvation accomplished by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, a work made present by the liturgical action (1409).

Only validly ordained priests can preside at the Eucharist and consecrate the bread and the wine so that they become the Body and Blood of the Lord (1411).

The essential signs of the Eucharistic sacrament are wheat bread and grape wine, on which the blessing of the Holy Spirit is invoked and the priest pronounces the words of consecration spoken by Jesus during the Last Supper: "This is my body which will be given up for you...This is the cup of my blood..." (1412).

By the consecration the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is brought about. Under the consecrated species of bread and wine Christ himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real, and substantial manner: his Body and his Blood, with his soul and his divinity (1413).

## A Note on Wheat

The eucharistic host must contain wheat to be valid matter for the sacrament. However, the Church recognizes that some people may be sensitive to wheat, so special concessions can be made for those with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity. If your child has an issue with wheat, please talk to your parish leader.



## Preparing the Table

During this week's lesson, your child watched a video segment from *A Child's First Communion and So Much More!* called "The Best Food of All." Afterward, they talked about how they are getting ready to receive Communion. You can help your child by reinforcing how special this moment will be—and by assuring your young one that he or she does not have to be afraid about doing everything "perfectly" that day.

# LESSON 5

The children heard the Bible story of the miracle of feeding the 5,000 (Matthew 14:13–21, Mark 6:31–44, Luke 9:12–17, and John 6:1–14). The candidates learned that God is generous and can do anything. Your child also learned that God does not want his people to be hungry. God gives us the Eucharist to feed our spiritual hunger. It is the only food that will satisfy us spiritually.

## A Holy and Living Sacrifice

The Eucharist, truly Christ's Body and Blood, is connected to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, when his body was broken, and his blood poured to save us from sin and death. To help the children understand the concept of the Father's sacrifice of his Son, they heard the Bible story about God asking Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac (Genesis 22:1–19). They learned that Jesus was sacrificed—unlike Isaac, who was saved at the last minute and replaced on the altar by a ram. God did not withhold his only Son. At Mass we re-enact that sacrifice on the altar and, in thanksgiving, offer God a holy and living sacrifice.

We join in the sacrifice during Mass. Your child learned we should actively watch the procession with the bread and wine and the preparation of the altar. When the priest says, "Lift up your hearts," we offer our hearts to God, allowing the Holy Spirit to change us, along with the bread and wine, to become more like Jesus and become people of self-giving love, more willing to sacrifice for others.

The reinforcement we experience in joining the body of Christ for repeated celebrations of the Mass can change who we are and how we behave. Mass can help make us focus more on others. This shift in thinking is what your child learned about as being "different" after receiving Communion. As St. Augustine said, "We become what we receive," but that only happens if we open ourselves to God's will.

## The Priesthood of the People

At baptism, we are anointed to share Jesus' roles as "priest, prophet, and king." The priestly duty of the people is to offer the sacrifice of the Mass. Though the vocation of life differs between the ordained and laity, people in both groups offer their lives—all their good things and their trials—to God the Father, as Jesus Christ offered his life to God's will.



### The Catechism of the Catholic Church

"Hence the laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit—indeed even the hardships of life if patiently born—all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshiping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God, everywhere offering worship by the holiness of their lives" (CCC 901, from *Lumen Gentium* 34; see *LG* 10, 1 Peter 2:5).

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- ◎ This week at home, talk with your child about what it means to make a sacrifice.
- ◎ Focus the discussion on what your child already does or could do for others.
- ◎ Plan to have a special meal on Sunday—one that involves baking bread. See the recipe below. Ask your child to help set the table for dinner. Direct the child to provide each place setting with everything one would need to enjoy the meal.

## Bread Baking: A Recipe

In the time of Jesus (and in many places today) people baked their own bread. Jesus may have even helped his own mother knead the bread when he was a small boy. Is someone in your family a good cook? Ask this person to help you make some homemade bread, and share it with your family. Here is a recipe you can use if you do not have a family favorite:

### Ingredients

2 1/4 cups of milk  
 2 packages of yeast  
 1/2 cup warm water  
 2 tablespoons shortening  
 1 tablespoon salt  
 2 3/4 cups white flour  
 1/3 cup honey  
 2 3/4 cups whole wheat flour

### Directions

1. Dissolve the yeast in the warm water.
2. Scald the milk and let it cool.
3. Mix the milk with the other ingredients.
4. Knead the dough.
5. Let it rise in a warm place until double its size.
6. Shape the bread into loaves.
7. Let it rise again.
8. Bake at 400 degrees for twenty minutes.



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Make Some Time . . .



Over the following week, set aside time to help your child complete the activities for Lesson Five in *Meet the Gentle Jesus: First Communion for Children*.