

my Sacramental Journey

EUCHARIST

Parent Guide

Supporting parents as they
journey with their child
in preparing for the
Sacrament of Eucharist

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The Holy Eucharist is the meeting point in which Jesus Christ gives himself to you. In the Eucharist you receive his Body and Blood, by eating him we become the Body of Christ, that is to say, the Church.

WELCOME!

Welcome to this time of preparing your child for the Sacrament of Eucharist or First Holy Communion!

In the Archdiocese of Brisbane the approach to sacramental preparation is 'family-centred' and 'parish-based'. This means that, as parents, you have the most important job of all in preparing your child to celebrate the sacraments. Your children learn about living as part of God's family by living in your family – the chats you have in the car, the prayer you say at dinner time, the way you love and care for each other. The relationship you share is the most potent and powerful learning relationship there is! Does that mean you have to be an expert in everything? No! You are the first and best educators of your children because of who you are and the relationship you share with them. Throughout this sacramental preparation there will be many ways in which you as parents will be able to engage with, support and encourage your child. This will look different from family to family, so we encourage you to be creative and enjoy the opportunity to spend time together as you both discover more about how much God loves us all.

Of course, you are not alone in this! There is a team of people here in your parish or community who help by facilitating this time of preparation, providing information and ideas, running sessions and generally sharing this time with you and your child. Each member of this team is passionate about sharing the love of God with children and it's a joy to be a part of this time with your family.

A LITTLE ABOUT THE SACRAMENTS

It's easy to forget the extremely close link between what we read about Jesus in the bible and the sacraments. When Jesus walked on the earth, people could be in his presence, they could feel his nearness, see him, hear him, touch him and be touched by him. They could experience him through all their senses.

It's a little different now! Jesus died and rose to life again in a new way, but those of us who live today don't miss out on encountering Jesus because we have the sacraments.

What we read about in the Bible; Jesus feeding people, blessing them, healing them, forgiving people, talking to them and teaching them, we experience today through the rich signs and symbols of the sacraments. The sacraments are special moments in a life-long relationship we share with God and the Church community through which Jesus personally blesses us, feeds us, heals us, forgives us, talks to us and strengthens us.



The Catholic Church celebrates seven sacraments altogether: the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist; the Sacraments of Healing – Penance/Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick; and the Sacraments at the Service of Communion [at the service of others] – Matrimony and Holy Orders.

At this time in their life, the sacraments that are most important for your child are the Sacraments of Initiation.

At Baptism, your child first received the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, they became a child of God and a member of the Church.

Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, your child is strengthened by the Holy Spirit so that they can take their place in the mission of the Church and do the work of God in the world.

Through the Sacrament of Eucharist, your child will be fed and sustained by receiving Jesus himself in the bread and wine. Each time they receive the Eucharist, they will be united with the whole Church as we encounter the mystery of God's great love each time we celebrate the Mass together.



PREPARING FOR THE SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST

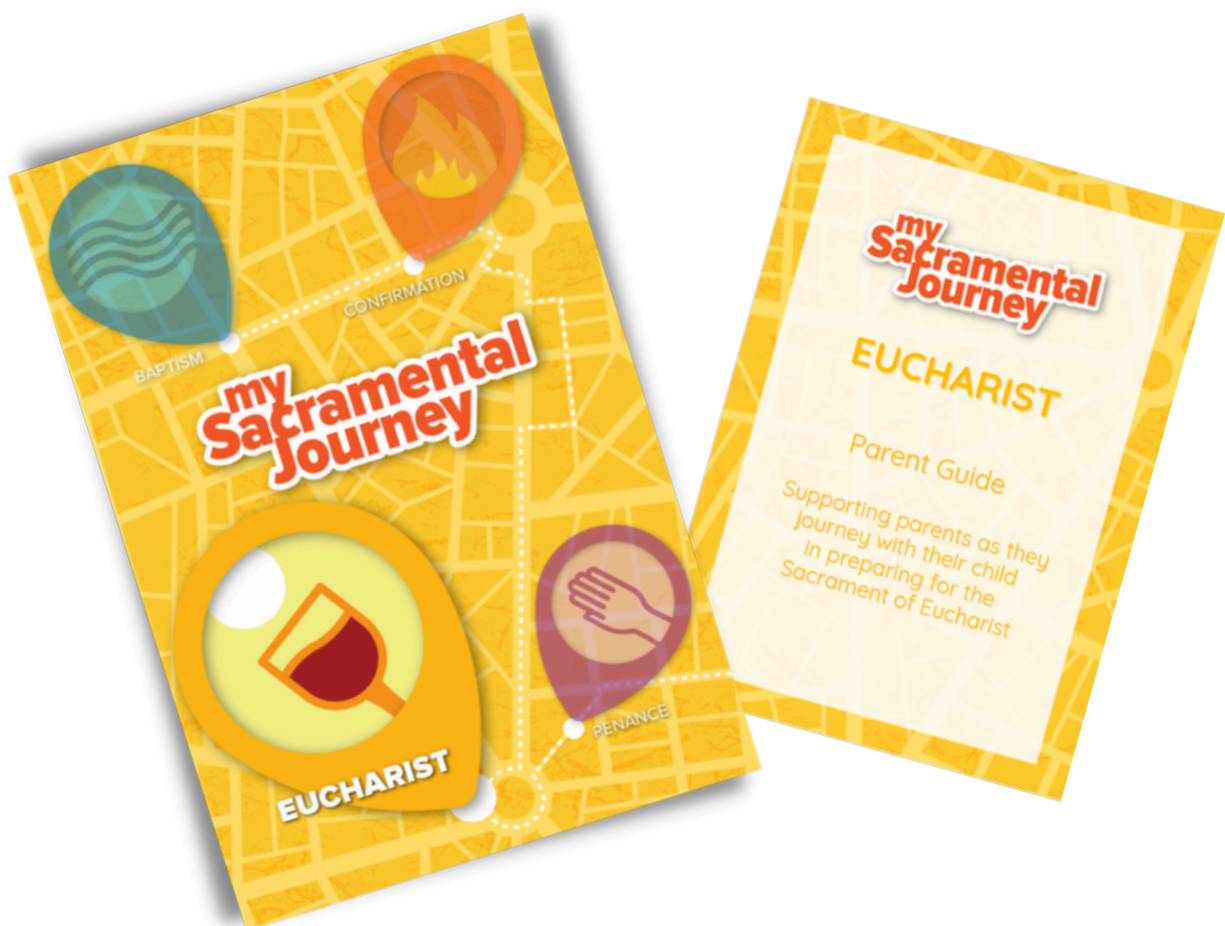
And for now, your child is preparing for the Sacrament of Eucharist.

To help with this, Evangelisation Brisbane has prepared the **My Sacramental Journey: Eucharist activity book**. The topics in this activity book include: Me and my Parish; Meals & Family; Feeding of the 5000; The Last Supper; When I go to Mass: The Liturgy of the Word and The Liturgy of the Eucharist; Receiving the Eucharist; Living the Eucharist; and Church Search.

The Eucharist activity book is accompanied by this Parent Guide which provides background information and further ideas for you to try at home.

Each topic in the Parent Guide includes: Background information and important scriptures from the Bible; as well as activities, family fun ideas and ways to pray together at home.

These resources are designed to be a springboard for conversations and engagement as you accompany your child through this time of preparation for Eucharist.



OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

The Bible is used on a number of occasions throughout the children's preparation. The Contemporary English Version is most commonly used in the Children's Lectionary (the book of scripture readings used in children's masses and children's Liturgy of the Word on Sundays). The New Revised Standard Version is used in the Eucharist activity book. Both of these are appropriate choices for use in the context of sacramental preparation. Bible gateway is a helpful resource for accessing the scriptures online biblegateway.com.

The Flame of Faith resource was produced by Archdiocesan Ministries to support families and sacramental teams, especially during this time of preparation. The site includes FAQs, and videos explaining each of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, and Penance flameoffaith.org.au

Our Family Prays is a resource produced by Liturgy Brisbane which outlines the Sacraments of Initiation and prayers you could use at home liturgybrisbane.net.au.

The **YOUCAT for Kids** is based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and reproduced for children. It is particularly helpful for adults as they find ways to articulate concepts of faith in child-friendly ways freedompublishingbooks.com.au



Lastly, often accompanying our children through sacramental preparation can stir up questions for us as adults about our own faith and relationship with God. That's a great thing! **More with Jesus**, a 30-day faith exploration booklet can help Catholics reflect on the significance of their baptism. For information about More with Jesus, other adult faith resources and events or to talk to someone about deepening your faith, just contact the Evangelisation Brisbane office on 3324 3440 or formation@bne.catholic.net.au

A FINAL WORD

We pray that this is a blessed time of preparation for your family. May the conversations, prayers and activities you share draw you closer to each other and may you both encounter God's love in a new and inspiring way!

Pope Francis says, the Church is a 'family of families', and it is more wonderful with you and your family as part of it! If you'd like to know more about how do get involved in your parish community or if you have any questions about Sacramental Preparation for your child please contact the team in your Parish. God bless!

From the Children and Families team, Archdiocesan Ministries

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TOPIC 1

Me & My Parish

Page 3 of the Eucharist activity book

Aim

In this topic, children use the spaces provided in the Eucharist activity book to share what they know about their parish community. They might include their parish priest and some of the people they know such as the sacramental coordinator, Children's Liturgy of the Word leader other parishioners.



Notes

Use this column to keep notes, ideas you may want to share with your child or things they say and reflect on that you don't want to forget.

Background Information

Through the Sacrament of the Eucharist, we are brought into full communion with the Catholic Church. So, as a Sacrament of Initiation, it's important to take some time to reflect on the community of faith your child is being initiated into.

Being initiated into the Catholic Church means to answer the invitation to be in relationship with God and with God's people that has been passed down to us from the time of Jesus.

In other words, the sacraments are never exclusively just about us and God. The sacraments connect us with every other person who has been baptised into the Catholic faith so that we become part of the Church and its mission.

This means that every time we come together to celebrate Eucharist, we are like a big family gathered across time and space who enter into the Pascal mystery, that is, the mystery of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. Remember, the angels, the saints and loved ones who have gone before us gather with us too!

Family Prayer Idea

Help your child set up a prayer space in your home. All you really need is a cloth, a candle (your child's baptismal candle if you have it) and a cross to start with, but your child could put other things in there that help them make their prayer space special. You could also place a picture of the patron saint of your parish or community in the space and ask that saint to pray for your child and your family during this time. You could also say 'thank you' prayers to God for each person who has shared their faith with you throughout your life.

TOPIC 2

Meals & Family

Page 4-5 of the Eucharist activity book

Aim

Through this topic you are invited to tap into that universal experience of sharing a meal and encouraged to think about special meals your family has shared with others.

These experiences give us a small insight into the celebration of the Eucharist as the most significant way we as Catholics come together to encounter Jesus Christ, real and present in the consecrated bread and wine (that is, the bread and wine upon which the priest has prayed the words of Jesus from the Last Supper).

Through the conversations you share together, you will have the opportunity to reflect on the 'table' we gather around when we celebrate the Eucharist.



Notes

Background Information

When we share a meal together, we are strengthened and sustained, not only by the food we receive but also by the community we experience with others. Of course, Eucharist is so much more than just a meal, but it is a helpful place to start because the 'meal' is so much a part of family life each day. The very human sustenance and community we experience in the daily meal is just a glimpse of the deep nourishment and communion we partake in through the Eucharist.

The Eucharist has many different names, all of which help us to understand something about its richness. Many of these are used throughout the Eucharist activity book, in this and other topics, so it's helpful to be aware of them. Here are some, as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

- **Eucharist** comes from the Greek words 'eucharistein' (to 'give thanks') and 'eulogein' ('blessing'), so it is an 'action of thanksgiving to God' for all that God has done (CCC, 1993, para. 1328).
- The **Lord's Supper** because of its deep connection with Jesus' Last Supper and because it looks forward to the great feast to come in heaven (CCC, 1993, para. 1329).
- The **Breaking of the Bread** because that was the solemn act that Jesus used at the Last Supper and the rite that Christians, from the earliest times, would use in their Eucharistic assemblies (CCC, 1993, para. 1329).
- The **Eucharistic Assembly**, because it is celebrated when all the faithful are gathered. Together we are a visible sign of the Church (CCC, 1993, para. 1329).
- **The Holy Sacrifice** because it makes the sacrifice of Jesus present and we respond with our 'sacrifice of praise' to God (CCC, 1993, para. 1330).
- **Holy Communion** because through this sacrament we become united with Christ, we become 'one body' with him (CCC, 1993, para. 1331).
- **Holy Mass** because the liturgy we participate in concludes with the 'sending forth' of the faithful gathered so that they can do God's will and work in their everyday life (CCC, 1993, para. 1332).

For Catholics, the Eucharist is the most powerful way to encounter the real presence of Jesus Christ.

Family Fun

Try making some damper together. Food is so much more special when it is shared so perhaps you might find some others to share it with others.

Family Prayer Idea

Did you know that gratitude is one of the most powerful building blocks for finding joy in life and saying grace before meals is an excellent way to build this into everyday life. You could use the prayer in your Eucharist activity book or just make up your own, saying 'thank you' to God for the food and anything else you're grateful for!

Activity

Encourage your child to complete the activity on page 5 and draw the items they see on the altar when you go to Mass.



TOPIC 3

Feeding of the 5000 & The Last Supper

Page 6-7 of the Eucharist activity book

Aim

The aim of this topic is to explore the scripture stories of the 'Feeding of the 5000' and 'The Last Supper' so that the your child can make connections between the two stories and what they teach us about the Eucharist.



Notes

Background information

The sixth chapter in the Gospel of John is all about the Eucharist! It begins with the miracle of the 'Feeding of the 5000', which creates a catalyst for Jesus to teach the truth of who he is. 'I am the bread of life', he says, 'whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty'. He even goes on to tell them:

'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.' John 6:53-58 (NRSVCE)

So, in the miracle of the 'Feeding of the 5000', Jesus is giving us a foretaste of what is to come. There are a couple of scripture clues that stand out in particular. Firstly, Jesus goes 'up the mountain' (John 6:3). This is a sign that something amazing is about to happen! Secondly, John 6:4 tells us that 'the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near'. This reminds us of the Jews great exodus from Egypt and connects the words and actions of Jesus to their experience of being saved from slavery. These clues tell us that this miracle is about more than feeding the people with ordinary bread, it prefigures Jesus' sacrifice on the cross when he gives himself as the living bread.

This leads us to the story of the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25 and Luke 22:14-23) in which Jesus institutes the Eucharist.



While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Matthew 26:26-29 (NRSVCE)

Then, in the first letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), St Paul writes about the Eucharist, as something he received from the Lord to be passed on to others.

Jesus said, 'Do this in remembrance of me' and that's exactly what the early church did! In the book of Acts we read: 'They spent their time learning from the apostles, and they were like family to each other. They also broke bread [the Lord's Supper] and prayed together.' (Act 2:42).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us: 'From that time on down to our own day the celebration of the Eucharist has been continued so that today we encounter it everywhere in the Church with the same fundamental structure. It remains the centre of the Church's life' (CCC, 1343).

Scripture

Practise looking up the scriptures in the Eucharist activity book together in your bible.



Family Fun

When was the last time you had a picnic? Perhaps you could pack some lunch and head to your local park or get some fish and chips to eat at the beach and imagine what it must have been like to be there on the day Jesus fed all those 5000 people!

Jesus said 'do this is remembrance of me'. There are many ways to remember people we love. The activity on page 7 of the Eucharist activity book presents an opportunity to talk about this together and reflect on how you do this in your family.

Family Prayer Idea

How are you going with making grace before meals a part of your family life? Remember, giving thanks is good for the soul!

Activity

Invite your child to imagine that they are the child in the story of the 'Feeding of the 5000'. The activity on page 6 of the Eucharist activity book gives will give them an opportunity to write about what they imagine it would be like.



TOPIC 4

When I go to Mass: Page 8-13 of the Eucharist activity book

Aim

In topic four there are two sections, through which children learn about the two main parts of Mass: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Sacramental Team Background Information

All that Jesus accomplished through his death and resurrection is being celebrated right now in eternity - in God's time. Drawing on scripture, the Catechism tells us that all the angels, Mary the Mother of God, all of creation, all the people of God who have gone before us, all the martyrs, the Church as well as 'a great multitude which no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes, and peoples and tongues' (Revelation 7:9) are all celebrating this 'eternal liturgy' (CCC, 1138). And, by the power of the Holy Spirit, every time we go to mass we join in this celebration too!

The [Mass] unfolds according to a fundamental structure which has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our own day. It displays two great parts that form a fundamental unity: the gathering, the liturgy of the Word, with readings, homily and general intercessions; the liturgy of the Eucharist, with the presentation of the bread and wine, the consecratory thanksgiving, and communion.

Together they form 'one single act of worship'; The Eucharistic table set for us is the table both of the Word of God and of the Body of the Lord (CCC, 1346).

All of us have a role to play in the celebration! The priest, who has received the sacrament of Holy Orders, stands in the 'person of Christ', he says the words and does the actions of Jesus in the liturgy.



And all of us, who have received the sacrament of Baptism, are servers, readers, singers, responders and so forth, who actively participate so that we are all united together with Christ in the eternal liturgy (see CCC, 1348)!

Notes

"Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people," have a right and an obligation by reason of their Baptism" (CCC, 1141).

Isn't that amazing? We get a taste of heaven each time we participate in the mass. That's why it's so good to know more about the mass, so that we can recognise Jesus' presence and join in with all that we are.



At mass, Jesus is present in four special ways: in the priest, the people gathered, the Word (sacred scripture) that is read and in the Eucharist (the bread and wine that is changed into his Body and Blood). In the previous paragraphs we've talked about the priest and the people so let's now have a look at the two, equally important, parts of the mass that relate to the Word and the Eucharist.

Liturgy of the Word

(pages 8 and 9)

Liturgy of the Word

Sacred scripture is called the 'Word of God' because those who wrote the texts did so under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So, through the Liturgy of the Word:



- we listen to the scriptures being proclaimed (including the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Gospels)
- we deepen our understanding of what God is saying in the scripture through the homily
- we respond to God's message by singing the Psalm and praying the General Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful).

It is the Holy Spirit who helps us to take God's Word to heart and put it into practice.

Family Fun

Prior to attending mass, chat with your child about the readings they will hear that day. This helps to know what to listen for in the celebration. Encourage them to then follow up the conversation after Mass and invite the children to write or draw what they heard on page 9 of their Eucharist activity book.

Activity

Invite your child to complete the crossword on page 8 of their Eucharist activity book which covers the elements in the Liturgy of the Word. All the answers can be found by reading the text on pages 8 and 9.

Crossword answers: 1 - public, 2 - faith, 3 - creed, 4 - church, 5 - world, 6 - psalm, 7 - homily, 8 - acclamation, 9 - Jesus



Liturgy of the Eucharist

(pages 10 and 13)

Liturgy of the Eucharist

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the bread and wine are changed, by the power of the Holy Spirit, into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Through the Liturgy of the Eucharist:

- we give praise to God for all God has done.
- the Church asks God the Father to send the Holy Spirit so that the bread and wine may become the Body and Blood of Christ.
- we receive the Body and Blood of Christ Jesus who loves us and has given himself to us.
- we consume the Body and Blood of Christ Jesus and become one with him and with the whole Church.



Activity

Invite child to draw what the priest is doing during particular parts of the Eucharistic prayer (pages 10 to 12), there are prompts in the their Eucharist activity book but these images are here to help also:

Page 10



"Father,
we ask you to bless these gifts of bread
and wine
by the power of the Holy Spirit
and make them holy.
Change them for us into the Body and
Blood
of Jesus Christ, your Son."

Page 11



"He took bread
and gave you thanks.
He broke the bread
and gave it to his friends, saying:
TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF
IT;
FOR THIS IS MY BODY
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU."



"In the same way,
he took a cup of wine.
He gave you thanks
and handed the cup to his disciples,
saying:
TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK
FROM IT;
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY
BLOOD,
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND
ETERNAL COVENANT,
WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR
YOU AND FOR MANY
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Page 12



"Through him, and with him, and in him,
O God, almighty Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honour is yours,
for ever and ever. Amen."

TOPIC 5 Receiving the Eucharist

Page 14 of the Eucharist activity book

Aim

In this topic, your child will learn how to receive the Body and Blood of Christ when they go forward for communion at mass.

Background Information

Catholics believe that Jesus is wholly and truly present in the Eucharist. The bread and the wine are not just a representation of Christ. "In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist 'the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained'" (CCC, 1374). That's why, we approach the Eucharist with such great reverence - because it IS Jesus.

So, when we are invited to process together to receive the Body and Blood of Christ in communion:

- we process forward, mindful of the amazing gift we are about to receive - Jesus.
- as we approach the priest or communion minister, we make a simple bow of the head to express our reverence for Christ Jesus.
- we create a 'throne' by placing one hand under the other.
- the priest or communion minister holds the host up and says 'The Body of Christ'. We respond with 'Amen'. The word 'Amen' comes from the Hebrew *āmēn*, meaning 'certainty', 'truly', or 'so be it'. When we say 'amen' we are saying 'yes' in faith to what the priest or communion minister has declared when they held the host before us - the is the Body of Christ.
- the priest or communion minister then places the host in the 'throne' we've created and we consume it straight away.
- we then move to the priest or communion minister who is holding the chalice.
- as we approach, the priest or communion minister holds the chalice up and says 'The Blood of Christ'. We respond with 'Amen'.
- we reverently take the chalice into our hands and take a small sip of the Blood of Christ.
- we return to our seat and take some time to pray and thank Jesus for loving us and giving himself to us (there's an example on page 14 of the Eucharist activity book).

Notes

Family Fun

Watch the Flame of Faith Eucharist video <https://flameoffaith.org.au/>

Activity

Practise the words and actions used when receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus with your child.



TOPIC 6

Living the Eucharist

Page 15 of the Eucharist activity book

Aim

In this topic, your child will explore what it means to 'live' the Eucharist by following Jesus' example.

Background Information

When we receive the Eucharist, we become one with Christ Jesus and with the whole Body of Christ - the Church. Jesus is 'in' us and we are 'in' Jesus. At the end of Mass we are dismissed and sent forth with a blessing, so that just as Jesus has shared himself with us in the Eucharist, we are sent live the Eucharist and share Jesus' love with others.

Jesus gave us many examples of how to do this but one in particular happened during the Last Supper:

So during the meal Jesus got up, removed his outer garment, and wrapped a towel around his waist. He put some water into a large bowl. Then he began washing his disciples' feet and drying them with the towel he was wearing.

But when he came to Simon Peter, this disciple asked, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus answered, "You don't really know what I am doing, but later you will understand."

"You will never wash my feet!" Peter replied.

"If I don't wash you," Jesus told him, "you don't really belong to me."

Peter said, "Lord, don't wash just my feet. Wash my hands and my head."

Jesus answered, "People who have bathed and are clean all over need to wash just their feet. And you, my disciples, are clean, except for one of you." Jesus knew who would betray him. That is why he said, "except for one of you."

After Jesus had washed his disciples' feet and had put his outer garment back on, he sat down again. Then he said:

"Do you understand what I have done? You call me your teacher and Lord, and you should, because that is who I am. And if your Lord and teacher has washed your feet, you should do the same for each other. I have set the example, and you should do for each other exactly what I have done for you."

John 13:4-15

Notes

Scripture

Look up the story of Jesus' washing his disciples' feet in the Bible. You will find it in the Gospel of John 13:4-5.

Family Fun

Have a conversation with your child about how they can follow Jesus' example and share his love with others through service. Perhaps you could put it into practice by making a meal together and giving it to someone who is sick or by visiting someone who lives alone. There are so many options!



Activity

Invite your child to write or draw about what you did together to serve others in the space provided on page 15.

Family Prayer

Invite the family to pray the prayer on page 15 of the Eucharist activity book together.

TOPIC 7

Church search

Page 16-17 of the Eucharist activity book

Aim

In this topic, your child will become more familiar with the items found in their parish church.

Background Information

While it is not necessary to know all the names of the items found in the church, this opportunity for your child to explore them outside of the liturgical context, and provides a great chance to talk about them and become even more familiar with the things Catholics believe and how we worship.

Activity

Have your child, either on their own, or as part of a sacramental preparation session, explore the items listed on page 17 of the Eucharist activity book. Discuss what they are and what they are used for.

Notes



A PRAYER FOR MY CHILD

Loving God,
I thank you for the gift of my child.
I thank you that you created them
precious and unique.
I thank you that you love them and
call them into relationship with you.
Lord, look tenderly on all of the children
who are preparing for the
Sacrament of Eucharist.
Open their ears to hear your voice.
Open their eyes to see your good works.
Open their hearts to receive
your love and grace.
Lord, as I journey with my child
towards their First Holy Communion,
deepen my faith and help me to live what I
believe so that they will encounter
your love in me.
Amen.