



BACKGROUND

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we gather to take part in the great gift Jesus gave His disciples at the Last Supper, His Body and Blood, shared for the life of the world. Through the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest prays over the bread and wine and calls upon the Holy Spirit to consecrate them, so that they become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This sacred moment connects us to all that Jesus accomplished through his death and resurrection. When we receive the Eucharist in Holy Communion we are united with Christ Jesus and with one another as members of the Body of Christ.

INTRODUCTION

This activity helps children and families deepen their understanding of what happens around the altar, learn about the different articles and vessels used and why the Eucharist is central to our Catholic faith.

There are three ways to use this activity. Check with your parish priest regarding what is appropriate for your community's context.

- Exploring the altar - Cut, place and paste
- Exploring the altar - Matching cards
- Exploring the altar - Around the altar



EXPLORING THE ALTAR - CUT, PLACE AND PASTE

INSTRUCTIONS

YOU WILL NEED:

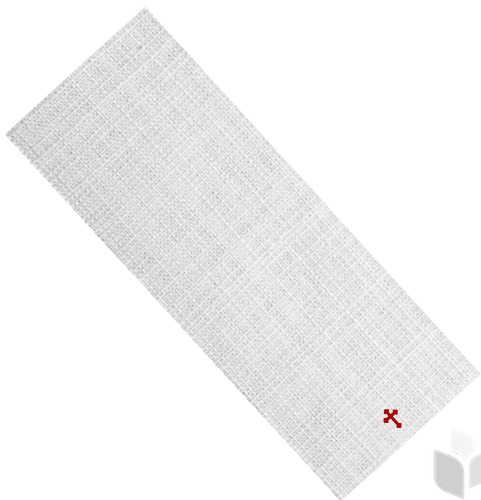
Materials:

- A white A3 paper for each child (as the surface of their 'altar')
- A white A4 paper for each child (as the surface of their 'credence table')
- A print out of the vessels and cloths for each child
- scissors
- glue

SET UP:

- Make the materials available at tables for the children to work at.
- As you discuss what each vessel or cloth is, and what it is used for, invite the children to place it on their paper 'altar' or on their paper 'credence table'. Begin with the Corporal as other items will be placed on top of it.
- Once you have discussed all the vessels and cloths, invite the children to cut the items out and glue them into place.









EXPLORING THE ALTAR - MATCHING CARDS

INSTRUCTIONS

YOU WILL NEED:

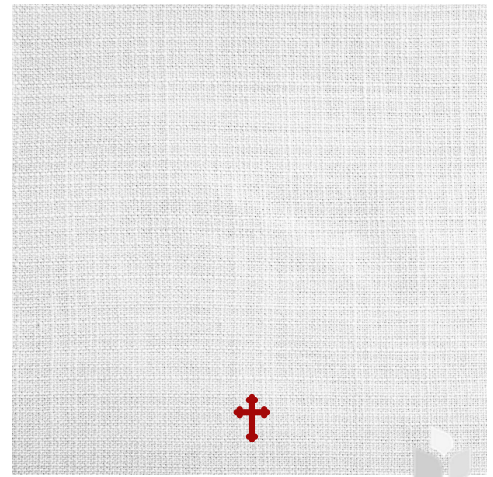
Materials:

- A print out of the vessels and cloths cards and the description cards for each child (these can be printed on card or laminated for repeated use).

SET UP:

- Make the materials available at tables for the children to work at.
- Invite the children to read the descriptions of the vessels and clothes etc. As you discuss what each vessel or cloth is, and what it is used for, invite the children to match it with the correlating image.





Tabernacle

The tabernacle is the special box where the consecrated hosts are kept. It is like a 'home for Jesus'.



Altar cloth

The altar always has a special cloth to cover it (this is placed on first before anything else).



Missal

This is the book that the priest reads the prayers from. There are different prayers for different feasts and seasons of the Church.



Candles

Candles are always placed on the altar to remind us of the light of Jesus Christ.



Crucifix

A crucifix is always placed in the centre of the altar as a reminder of Jesus sacrifice on the cross.



Corporal

The corporal is a square linen cloth that is placed on the altar. The chalice, paten and ciborium are placed on this special cloth.



Chalice and purifier

The chalice is the special cup that contains the wine which becomes the Blood of Christ Jesus. The purifier is the special cloth used to clean the chalice.



Paten and host

The paten is the special plate that contains the bread or host which becomes the Body of Christ Jesus.



Ciborium

The ciborium is the special container with a cover that holds the host that is given out during communion. It is also where the consecrated hosts are kept in the tabernacle.



Cruets

The cruets are the small jugs that hold the water and the wine before it is blessed by the priest.



Lavabo

The lavabo is the water jugs, towel and bowl that the priest uses to wash his hands during the Eucharistic prayer.



Sanctum bells

The sanctum bells are the bells that are rung when the priest holds up the Body, and then the Blood of Jesus. The bells signify that this is a really special moment!





EXPLORING THE ALTAR - AROUND THE ALTAR

INSTRUCTIONS

This activity is best done in collaboration with your parish priest and with groups of no more than about 15 children.

YOU WILL NEED:

Materials:

- A print out of the description cards of the vessels and cloths and cut into cards.
- The vessels, cloths, missal etc that are commonly used at your parish mass prepare on the nearby credence table.

SET UP:

- Invite the children to read the descriptions of the vessels and clothes in turn.
- Together with your parish priest, discuss with the children what each item is and what it is used for. This is also a rich opportunity for your parish priest to talk about the words and gestures he uses throughout the Eucharistic prayer and what we as Catholics believe God is doing in these moments.
- As you discuss what each vessel or cloth is, and what it is used for, invite the children to bring the item to the altar.
- This may be a wonderful opportunity to encourage the children to consider becoming altar servers in the future, if that is something your parish has provision for.



Corporal

The corporal is a square linen cloth that is placed on the altar. The chalice, paten and ciborium are placed on this special cloth.

Candles

Candles are always placed on the altar to remind us of the light of Jesus Christ.

Cruets

The cruets are the small jugs that hold the water and the wine before it is blessed by the priest.

Paten

The paten is a gold or silver plate that holds the large host to be blessed.

Chalice

The chalice is the special cup that contains the wine which becomes the Blood of Christ Jesus.

Ciborium

The ciborium is the special container with a cover that holds the host that is given out during communion. It is also where the consecrated hosts are kept in the tabernacle.

Crucifix

A crucifix is always placed in the centre of the altar as a reminder of Jesus sacrifice on the cross.

Host

The special bread that is prepared especially to be blessed.

Altar cloth

The altar always has a special cloth to cover it (this is placed on first before anything else).

Lavabo

The lavabo is the water jugs, towel and bowl that the priest uses to wash his hands during the Eucharistic prayer.

Sanctum bells

The sanctum bells are the bells that are rung when the priests holds up the Body, and then the Blood of Jesus. The bells signify that this is a really special moment!

Sanctuary light

The cruets are the small jugs that hold the water and the wine before it is blessed by the priest.

Purifier

A special cloth to wipe the chalice as the Blood of Christ is being distributed.

Tabernacle

The tabernacle is the special box where the consecrated hosts are kept. It is like a 'home for Jesus'.

Altar

The altar is the special table where the Liturgy of the Eucharist happens.