

Living the Liturgy in the Christian Initiation Process: Fostering Intimacy with Christ and the Church

Communion with Jesus Christ leads to the celebration of his salvific presence in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist...Catechesis...must...educate the disciples of Jesus Christ for prayer, for thanksgiving, for repentance, for praying with confidence, for community spirit, for understanding correctly the meaning of the creeds..., as all of this is necessary for a true liturgical life. (GDC 85)

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. ~ 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16

During the Christian initiation process, catechumens and candidates should be introduced to different ways of praying: liturgical and non-liturgical, suited to the particular period.

The whole initiation must bear a markedly paschal character, since the initiation of Christians is the first sacramental sharing in Christ's dying and rising... (RCIA 4)

Insertion into the mystery of Christ is centered on helping catechumens and candidates 'become' liturgical people. The normal adult Christian life is to be liturgical. In general, there could be three reactions to this concept among participants:

- ✧ Some may be wary and resistant (especially Evangelicals and non-liturgical Protestant traditions)
- ✧ Some may be intrigued (especially the unbaptized and some Protestants)
- ✧ Some may be "naturals" (especially Jews, Anglicans, and Episcopalians)

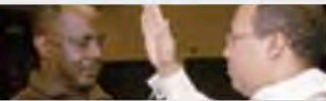
Sacramental life is impoverished and very soon turns into hollow ritualism if it is not based on serious knowledge of the meaning of the sacraments, and catechesis becomes intellectualized if it fails to come alive in the sacramental practice. (CT 23)

The source of grace and the power of liturgy flows from the Paschal mystery. The instruction, experiences, and pastoral attention offered to participants regarding living the liturgical life should stress in particular the following:

- ⊕ The change that occurs in the very being of the human person in the sacraments (see CCC 1084, 1121, 1129)
- ⊕ The power and effectiveness of the liturgy. No other action of the Church can equal it. In the liturgy Christ himself is present and at work as nowhere else (see CCC 1070)
- ⊕ God's steadfast love expressed in the sacraments and liturgical actions (see CCC 1077-1083)
- ⊕ The Scriptural foundations of liturgy (see Luke 24:13-32; Romans 6:2b-11 among many passages)

The fruit of sacramental life is both personal and ecclesial. For every one of the faithful on the one hand, this fruit is life for God in Christ Jesus; for the Church on the other, it is an increase in charity and in her mission of witness. (CCC 1134)

In the liturgy we do what we are created to do: love God and give him honor and glory. What happens in liturgy is meant to spill over into all aspects of Christian living. Priests, deacons, catechists, godparents, sponsors, musicians, hospitality people, and other members of the RCIA team, must understand the central importance of the Paschal mystery in the catechumenate. Through the liturgical Rites the catechumens and candidates are progressively inserted into the Body of Christ and configured to him.



THE PERIOD OF THE PRECATECHUMENATE

During the precatechumenate period, pastors should help those taking part in it with prayers suited to them, for example, by celebrating for their spiritual well being the prayers of exorcism and the blessings given in the ritual. (RCIA 40)

Inquirers should be helped to:

✠ *Believe* ✠ *Be freely converted to the Lord* ✠ *Commit themselves to him*

Inquirers should be introduced to some basic liturgical actions and prayers such as the sign of the cross and communal praying of the psalms. As they approach the Rites of Acceptance or Welcoming, they should be introduced to the responses in the Liturgy of the Word, in preparation for their first invitation to the table of God's Word.

The prerequisite for making this first step is that the beginnings of the spiritual life and the fundamentals of Christian teaching have taken root in the candidates. Thus there must be...evidence of...a start to the practice of calling upon God in prayer. (RCIA 42) The role of clergy, catechists, team and sponsors is to:

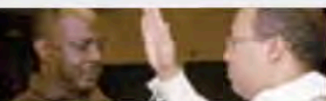
✠ *Model*

✠ *Explain*

✠ *Invite*

Ideas for this period:

- ✧ Explain and use the sign of the cross
- ✧ Explain and use grace before and after meals
- ✧ Introduce the proclamation of Scripture
- ✧ Pray the psalms and other Scriptural prayers
- ✧ Offer a booklet of "Basic Catholic Prayers" and explain them
- ✧ Sing hymns that help put words to the journey they are on
- ✧ Explain the Liturgical Year, Sundays and feast days, as they occur
- ✧ Begin simple, reflective, meditative prayer



THE PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMENATE

Prayers should be taught and used that would reinforce the formation in the Catholic life which catechumens are receiving. The goal of this effort should be that:

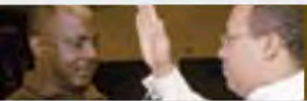
- ⊗ The catechumens learn to turn more readily to God in prayer (RCIA 75.2)
- ⊗ Catechumens should be eager, then, to take part in celebrations of the Word of God and to receive blessings and other sacramentals (RCIA 47)

Beginning with this period, participants (depending on their baptismal status) are sustained by the graces dispensed by the Church through the means of:

- ✧ Celebrations of the Word (RCIA 81-89, 406)
- ✧ Blessings and Minor Exorcisms (RCIA 90-97)
- ✧ Anointings (RCIA 98-102)
- ✧ Presentations (under certain circumstances) (RCIA 104-105, 407)
- ✧ Sacramentals (CCC 1667-1680)

Ideas for this period:

- ✧ Reading and meditating on Scripture
- ✧ Explain and use sacramentals (blessed crucifix, holy water, candles, the Advent wreath, etc.)
- ✧ The Liturgy of the Hours (the simpler Hours, like Night Prayer, could be prayed at first)
- ✧ Spontaneous prayer, prayers of thanksgiving, or intercessions for needs
- ✧ Parish prayer gatherings, missions, vespers, etc.
- ✧ Exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Hours
- ✧ Attend and observe sacramental celebrations when possible: Baptisms, weddings, ordinations, etc.
- ✧ Devotions to the Sacred Heart, Mary and the saints, the rosary, litanies, novenas
- ✧ Spiritual reading, the lives of the saints
- ✧ Special retreat days for catechumens and candidates



THE PERIOD OF PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

At this stage, liturgical prayer should deepen in proximate preparation for the sacraments of initiation. The entire period should be characterized by an atmosphere of prayer and retreat. “For both the elect and the local community, the Lenten season is a time for spiritual recollection in preparation for the celebration of the Paschal mystery.” (RCIA 138)

This is a period of more intense spiritual preparation, consisting more in interior reflection than in catechetical instruction, and is intended to purify the minds and hearts of the elect as they search their own consciences and do penance. (RCIA 139)

In this period, the elect and candidates should reflect on:

- ✙ The Creed
- ✙ The Our Father
- ✙ Any of the Liturgy of the Hours
- ✙ Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament
- ✙ Devotional prayer, especially to Our Lady

Ideas for this period:

- ⊗ Prayer book for the Lenten Season
- ⊗ Stations of the Cross
- ⊗ Liturgy of the Hours
- ⊗ Explain meditation
- ⊗ Explain fasting and redemptive suffering
- ⊗ Retreat opportunities
- ⊗ Pray with the Scripture and prayers of the Scrutinies
- ⊗ Spiritual reading, the lives of the saints
- ⊗ Examination of conscience in preparation for Baptism
- ⊗ Examination of conscience and formal preparation (for those already baptized) for the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the sacraments of initiation (see RCIA 482 and RCIA, National Statutes 36)
- ⊗ Incorporate other ideas from the Catechumenate section

Proximate Preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation:

The elect are to be advised that on Holy Saturday they should refrain from their usual activities, spend their time in prayer and reflection, and, as far as they can, observe a fast. (RCIA 185.1)

When it is possible, ‘bring the elect together on Holy Saturday for reflection and prayer...’ (RCIA 185.2)

Through modeling, catechesis, and joining with the community in liturgical prayer, by the end of the period of purification and enlightenment, the elect will feel “at home” in the liturgy and will be disposed to participate fully and actively in the sacramental life of the Church.



THE PERIOD OF MYSTAGOGY AND THE NEOPHYTE YEAR

In this final period of the catechumenal process, the neophytes “grow in deepening their grasp of the Paschal mystery and in making it part of their lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the Eucharist, and doing the works of charity.” (RCIA 244)

Their godparents, sponsors, catechists, and clergy should assist the neophytes to:

- ✦ Mature in Christian prayer and meditation
- ✦ Participate fully and actively in the liturgical life of the Church
- ✦ Become models of liturgical prayer to others
- ✦ Seek to live out the liturgy’s theme of loving sacrifice, through doing works of charity for others

On the anniversary of their Baptism the neophytes should be brought together in order to give thanks to God, to share with one another their spiritual experiences, and to renew their commitment. (RCIA 250)

To show his pastoral concern for these new members of the Church, the bishop, particularly if he was unable to preside at the sacraments of initiation himself, should arrange, if possible, to meet the recently baptized at least once in the year and to preside at a celebration of the Eucharist with them.

Ideas for this period:

- ⊕ Instruction on how they can draw on their Baptism and Confirmation graces; how to consciously live this new life of grace daily
- ⊕ Attend Mass at other parishes or shrines, and participate in pilgrimages
- ⊕ Attend the Mass for neophytes with the bishop, if the diocese celebrates one
- ⊕ Celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation frequently

Living a truly Catholic life cannot really be parceled out into bits and pieces: the rosary here, Mass there, a novena now and again, CCD, a retreat and so forth. There is only one agenda for the Christian, and that is to be configured to Christ. The Church is the place where this occurs — and by “the Church” we mean our private prayers as well as public occasions like the liturgy, since it is as members of one another as well as of Christ that we live.

~ FROM AN ARTICLE TITLED “FAMILY WORSHIP” BY THOMAS HOWARD, IN *LAT WITNESS*, JUNE 1998.





ONLINE

FRANCISCAN UNIVERSITY

CATECHETICAL INSTITUTE

Eucharistic Renewal Track

But only say the word and my soul shall be healed...

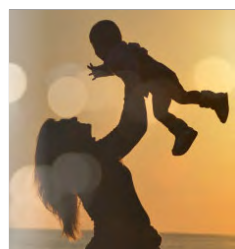
Called to Him. Kept in Him. Made new in Him. God's generosity and His Fatherly love is most fully manifest in His Son's incarnation in ancient Israel and His continuing presence in the Blessed Sacrament upon every altar. Our lives flow from the Eucharist and lead back to the Eucharist, so that we may be filled with God's life, sent into the world to proclaim the Good News, and be strengthened and invigorated for a life lived for others.

This pragmatic and deeply inspiring set of workshops addresses three critical aspects of the Eucharistic renewal so needed today:

- How to *see* God's gift of the Eucharist, rooted in knowing Jesus personally and loving the sacred liturgy.
- How to be *formed* for a Eucharistic life of intimate devotion and radical trust.
- How to *give* the saving truths of the Eucharist to others effectively in the home, the classroom, and in any relationship.

It is our privilege to pass on this magnificent inheritance of faith to the next generation, echoing the action of faithful disciples from the centuries before us. This track is designed to help you, whether you are a priest, parent, parish catechetical leader, catechist, teacher, youth minister, or parishioner, to better understand the Eucharist and its matchless importance in God's plan for humanity.

*F*orming those who form others.



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Eucharistic Renewal (ER) Track



Seeing God's Greatest Gift

1. The Sacramental Economy
2. Christ: His Person and Works
3. Following Jesus: The Challenge of Discipleship
4. Understanding the Liturgy

Forming People for a Eucharistic Life

1. The Principle of Sacramentality
2. Introduction to the Sacraments
3. The Sacrament of the Eucharist
4. Eucharistic Discipleship

Helping Adults, Teenagers, and Children Discover the Eucharist

1. Essential Link Between Liturgy and Catechesis
2. The Liturgical Nature and Sacramental Life of the Church
3. Introducing the Liturgy to Children
4. First Penance and First Eucharist Preparation

Happy is the soul that knows how to
find Jesus in the Eucharist,
and the Eucharist in all things!
~ St. Peter Julian Eymard

Hail, true Body,
truly born
of the Virgin
Mary mild,
Truly offered,
racked and torn,
On the Cross
for me
defiled,
From whose
love-pierced,
sacred side
Flowed Thy
true Blood's
saving tide,
Be a foretaste
sweet to me,
In my death's
great agony,
O Thou loving,
gentle One,
Sweetest Jesus,
Mary's Son.
Amen.
~ Ave Verum
Corpus

The Eucharist is the secret of my day.
It gives strength and
meaning to all my activities
of service to the Church
and to the whole world.
Let Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament
speak to your heart.



It is He who is the true answer
of life that you seek.
He stays here with us – He is God with us.
Seek Him without tiring,
welcome Him without reserve,
love Him without interruption –
today, tomorrow, forever!
~ Pope St. John Paul II

The Incarnation

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT

God has truly become one of us. Jesus came to save us, reveal to us the depth of the Father's love, and to show us how to be holy. He enables us to partake in God's own nature.

Keeping the above statement in mind, read and meditate on the following passages:

SCRIPTURE (IN ORDER BY BOOK)

Gn 3:15	God promises a savior, born of "the woman," who will conquer Satan
Ex 3:1-15	At the burning bush, God tells Moses his name: "I AM"
Is 7:10-14	God will give a sign to the king: the virgin birth of a child called Immanuel
Mi 5:2	Israel's future ruler, the Ancient of Days, will be born in Bethlehem
Mt 1:18-25	Jesus is conceived of Mary by the Holy Spirit and will save all from their sins
Mt 2:1-12	Jesus is born in Bethlehem and is worshipped by the wise men
Lk 1:26-38	Jesus is conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit within a virgin, Mary
Lk 9:23-24	Following Jesus means being transformed in him, bearing suffering, and giving him our lives
Jn 1:1-14	God the Son, the Word of God from the beginning, became man
Jn 3:16-17	Out of love, God sent his Son to save the world and give us eternal life
Jn 8:12-59	Jesus proclaims his mission from his Father and claims the name of God: "I AM"
Jn 10:30	Jesus states his identity with the Father
Jn 14:6	Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and is our only path to the Father
Jn 20:26-29	The risen Jesus confronts Thomas, and Thomas worships him as God
Rom 5:8	God's love for us was so great that his Son died for us while we were still sinners
2 Cor 5:18-19, 21	Christ reconciled us to God and took on our sin so that we might become holy
Gal 4:4-5	The Son, born of a woman, was sent that we might be God's adopted children
Phil 2:5-11	Jesus, although God, humbly took our human form and is to be worshipped
Col 2:9	In Jesus is the fullness of divinity
Heb 4:14-15	Jesus, our high priest, is like us in every way but sin
2 Pt 1:3-4	God has called us to everlasting life and to partake of his own nature

CATECHISM (IN ORDER BY PARAGRAPH NUMBER)

422-424	The Son of God has come to us, has taken our nature, and died for us
430-450	Jesus is savior, Christ, the Son of God, and Lord of all
456-460	The four reasons for the Incarnation
461-477	The Son of God took on our human nature; he is truly God and truly man
478	The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the chief sign of his love for us
512	All Jesus did and taught is seen in light of the Incarnation and Paschal mystery
606-607	Jesus came to die for us; the Paschal mystery is the reason for the Incarnation

KEY TERMS

<i>Incarnation:</i>	The Son of God assumed a human nature by his conception in a virgin, Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit; as Jesus Christ, he is truly and completely both God and man
<i>Mystery:</i>	1) A truth of faith that we could not know unless God revealed it; once it is known, it is understandable and reasonable, but is never fully comprehensible; 2) truths that surpass reason's powers and can only be shown to be non-contradictory
<i>Nature:</i>	The essence of a being considered as the source of activities
<i>Person:</i>	Who a being is (divine, angelic, or human); a rational nature that is responsible for actions
<i>Sacred Heart:</i>	The human heart of Jesus, the primary symbol of the love of Jesus for us

SUGGESTED HYMNS AND SONGS FOR CATECHETICAL SESSION

The Angel Gabriel
 Creator of the Stars of Night
 Holy Virgin, By God's Decree
 How Lovely on the Mountains Are the Feet of Him
 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence
 Of the Father's Love Begotten
 Once in Royal David's City
 The God Whom Earth and Sea and Sky
 Worthy Is the Lamb (Who Was Slain)

The Incarnation

PREPARATION – LITURGY OF THE WORD

If beginning with a hymn or song, see previous page for suggestions

First Reading: Gal 4:4-7

Response: Phil 2:5-11 (Philippians 2 in *Participant's Book*)

Gospel: Jn 1:1-18

PROCLAMATION

God has truly become one of us. Jesus came to save us, reveal to us the depth of the Father's love, and to show us how to be holy. He enables us to partake in God's own nature.

EXPLANATION

God the Father's plan (see Gn 3:15)

- ✠ Following the sin of our first parents, God promises a savior who will be born of a woman
- ✠ God prepared his Chosen People for the coming of a savior, his Anointed One, the Messiah
- ✠ Prophets foretold how the savior would be recognized
- ✠ Many expected a political savior; no one expected that God himself would come as savior in the way that he did

The Incarnation of the Son (see Lk 1:26-38)

- ✠ God the Father brings his plan to fruition by sending an angel to ask a virgin, Mary, to become the Mother of God
- ✠ The Holy Spirit overshadows Mary and the Son of God takes on human flesh as Jesus
- ✠ The Son of God, the Word of God, has been sent to keep the Father's promise

The four reasons for the Incarnation

- ✠ The Son of God became man to reconcile us to God by dying for our sins (see Jn 3:16-17)
 - We, as finite creatures, could not make sufficient reparation to God for our sins
 - Jesus, the God-man, became the perfect offering for our sins
 - Only Jesus could restore us to friendship with God
 - Jesus remains present to us in his Church, especially in the Eucharist, to heal each willing soul of sin
- ✠ The Son of God became man to show us the depth of God's love for us (see Rom 5:8)
- ✠ The Son of God became man to show us how to be holy (see Mt 11:29-30 and Jn 14:6)
- ✠ The Son of God became man so that we might become God's adopted children and participate in his own divine nature (see Gal 4:4-5 and 2 Pt 1:3-4)

Theology of the Incarnation (see Phil 2:5-7 and Heb 2:14-18)

- ✠ Jesus is one divine Person with two natures, divine and human, and is fully God and fully Man
- ✠ The Son of God assumed a human nature, including a human body, a human soul with intellect and will, true human knowledge; he was completely human in every way but sinless
- ✠ All Jesus' actions were done by his divine Person; everything he did was done by God and so it is correct to say that God, in his humanity, died on the cross

The Incarnation and the Sacred Heart of Jesus (see Jn 19:34 and Jn 20:27)

- ✠ At his Death, Jesus' human heart was pierced for our sins
- ✠ The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the primary symbol of Jesus' love for the Father and for all of us
- ✠ Devotion to the Sacred Heart is a work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, molding us in the image of the pierced one

APPLICATION – SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How is the Incarnation one of the two basic mysteries of Christianity?
2. How does the Incarnation make it possible for us to be perfect like the Father is perfect?
3. What does it mean when we say that our faith is incarnational? How can we live the Incarnation in our own lives?
4. When people ask us what we believe, what do we mean when we say that we believe in a Person, not merely a set of tenets?
5. How does the fact that Jesus is human and divine help us in our difficulties and suffering?
6. Jesus loved us with a human heart. How should we respond to this great love?

CELEBRATION – SUGGESTIONS FOR CLOSING PRAYER

1. Ask Jesus to draw us nearer to him in love and gratitude for all that he has done for love of us.
2. Hymn or song (see previous page for suggestions)
3. Pray together Litany of the Most Holy Name of Jesus or Litany of the Sacred Heart (see *Participant's Book*)

The Eucharist (Lesson 1 of 2)

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT

The Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of Jesus, the Father's ultimate gift of love. We must eat his flesh and drink his blood if we are to live forever.

Keeping the above statement in mind, read and meditate on the following passages:

SCRIPTURE (IN ORDER BY BOOK)

Gn 1:1-31	God in his almighty power creates everything that exists by his command
Gn 14:18-20	Melchizedek, priest-king of Salem, offers bread and wine as thanksgiving
Ex 12:1-20	God prescribes the Passover ritual, centered on killing and eating a perfect lamb
Ex 16:2-16	God miraculously feeds the Israelites in the desert with manna and quail
Ex 25:23-30	The Bread of the Presence is to be always in the sanctuary area as a sacrificial offering
Mt 28:20	Jesus will remain with the Church always
Lk 22:14-20	Jesus changes bread and wine into his Body and Blood as the New Covenant between God and his people, and commands that his apostles celebrate the Eucharist in remembrance of him
Jn 2:1-11	Jesus changes water to wine at the wedding feast at Cana
Jn 6:1-14	Jesus feeds the multitude
Jn 6:16-21	Jesus walks on water
Jn 6:25-58	Jesus' Bread of Life discourse
Jn 6:66-69	Many of Jesus' disciples leave, unable to accept what he has said about eating his flesh and drinking his blood; Peter speaks for the apostles in declaring his faith
1 Cor 10:16-17	The consecrated wine and bread are our participation in Jesus' Blood and Body
Heb 9:1-15	Christ's bloody sacrifice fulfills all the liturgies of the Old Testament

CATECHISM (IN ORDER BY PARAGRAPH NUMBER)

1323	Jesus instituted the Eucharist as a perpetual gift to his Church
1333-1334	Bread and wine are Old Testament prefigurements of the Eucharist
1335	Jesus' feeding of the multitude and changing water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana are prefigurements of the superabundance of the Eucharist
1336	The Eucharist either scandalizes us or demands our faith
1337-1341	Jesus institutes the Eucharist, gives the Passover its true meaning, and commands that the apostles celebrate the Eucharist until he comes again
1373-1377	Jesus becomes truly and substantially present in the Eucharist through the power of the Holy Spirit when the priest consecrates the bread and wine

KEY TERMS

<i>Accidents:</i>	The appearance or physical properties of a given substance such as its color, texture, odor, taste, quantity, or quality, whose nature it is to exist in another; some accidents may not be essential to the very being of the substance, nor would some accidents ordinarily have existence independent of the substance; the possibility of such separation depends solely on the supernatural intervention of God, as in the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ
<i>Consecrate:</i>	1) To make holy or set apart for God; 2) through a priest praying the words Jesus said at the Last Supper and the power of the Holy Spirit, to change bread and wine into Jesus' Body and Blood
<i>In persona Christi:</i>	A priest acts only by the power of Christ acting through him when the priest is celebrating the sacraments
<i>Mystery:</i>	1) A truth of faith that we could not know unless God revealed it; once it is known, it is understandable and reasonable, but is never fully comprehensible; 2) truths that surpass reason's powers and can only be shown to be non-contradictory
<i>Sacrament:</i>	An efficacious sign of grace instituted by Christ and administered by the Church that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, imparts divine life
<i>Substance:</i>	The nature of a given thing, whose essence requires existence in itself, which is not reducible to physical appearance or properties, and without which no second acts or accidental acts can ordinarily have any reality at all; the possibility of such separation between substance and accidents depends solely on the supernatural intervention of God, as in the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ
<i>Transubstantiation:</i>	A change in the underlying nature of a thing, without a change in its accidents

SUGGESTED HYMNS AND SONGS FOR CATECHETICAL SESSION

God with Hidden Majesty (<i>Adore Te Devote</i>)	I Am the Bread of Life	The Supper of the Lord
Humbly, Lord, We Worship You (<i>Adore Te Devote</i>)	One Bread, One Body	We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise
Humbly We Adore You (<i>Adore Te Devote</i>)	Pan de Vida	You Satisfy the Hungry Heart

The Eucharist (Lesson 1 of 2)

PREPARATION – LITURGY OF THE WORD

If beginning with a hymn or song, see previous page for suggestions

First Reading: Ex 16:2-16

Response: Ps 78:1-2b, 3, 5, 7a,b, 13-20, 23-25, 27-29 (Ps 78A in *Participant's Book*)

Gospel: Jn 6:48-58

PROCLAMATION

The Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of Jesus, the Father's ultimate gift of love. We must eat his flesh and drink his blood if we are to live forever.

EXPLANATION

The Father's plan (see Gn 3:15)

- ✠ In his never-ending love, God the Father always intended to save us through Jesus Christ
- ✠ The Old Testament prefigures and prepares the way for the Eucharist, the fullest gift of God's life to us
 - ⦿ The Passover lamb (see Ex 12:1-20)
 - ⦿ Feeding the Israelites with manna from Heaven in the desert (see Ex 16:2-16)

The institution of the Eucharist, the true Flesh and Blood of Jesus (see Jn 6:25-58)

- ✠ Jesus taught that we must eat his flesh and drink his blood if we are to have everlasting life
- ✠ Jesus' hearers clearly understood that he was speaking literally, not figuratively (see Jn 6:60-69)
- ✠ Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper
 - ⦿ Jesus, who as God is not subject to time and space, did this in advance of his Death
 - ⦿ He commanded that his apostles celebrate the Eucharist as a memorial to him
- ✠ Scripture records the early community's belief in Jesus' true presence in the Eucharist (see 1 Cor 11:23-27)

How it is possible (see 1 Cor 10:16-17)

- ✠ Nothing is impossible to God (see Ps 115:3; Lk 1:37)
- ✠ A thing can remain the same substance even though the accidents change completely, for example, water remains water even if it becomes steam or ice, so accidents do not define a substance's nature
- ✠ In the Eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine changes, but the accidents do not change
 - ⦿ The consecrated bread and wine look, smell, and taste the same as before
 - ⦿ "Transubstantiation" is the name the Church gives to this change in substance
- ✠ The eyes see bread and wine; the eyes of faith see the reality: Jesus' Body and Blood

How it happens (see Lk 22:14-20)

- ✠ The priest calls upon the power of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic Prayer
- ✠ The priest is not acting from his own power, but *in persona Christi*
- ✠ The priest says the words of consecration: "This is my body" and "This is my blood"
- ✠ Jesus is entirely present —
 - ⦿ In both the consecrated bread and consecrated wine
 - ⦿ In each fragment of the consecrated bread and in each drop of the consecrated wine
- ✠ The Eucharist remains so long as the consecrated bread and wine are intact
- ✠ Receiving the Eucharist provides to each believer the greatest means of grace for growth in holiness

APPLICATION – SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How is Jesus present in the Eucharist? By what power is Jesus' Real Presence made possible?
2. How is the Eucharist essential to the Father's plan to give us the gift of hope?
3. How does the Eucharist show the love of the Father and of Christ?
4. Why is the Eucharist more than a mental recollection of Christ's Passover? How does this bear on the way we attend Mass?
5. How can we prepare to receive so great a gift?

CELEBRATION – SUGGESTIONS FOR CLOSING PRAYER

1. Pray for the faith to believe in the Real Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.
2. Hymn or song (see previous page for suggestions)
3. Pray together *Adoro Te Devote* (see handout on Well-Known Catholic Prayers in the *Participant's Book*)

The Eucharist (Lesson 2 of 2)

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life and our faith.
It is our true spiritual food and drink. The risen Jesus is adored in the Eucharist.

Keeping the above statement in mind, read and meditate on the following passages:

SCRIPTURE (IN ORDER BY BOOK)

Mt 22:2-24	The parable of the marriage feast for the king's son
Lk 22:14-20	Jesus institutes the Eucharist and commands his apostles to celebrate it in remembrance of him
Lk 24:13-35	Two disciples recognize the resurrected Jesus in the breaking of the bread
Jn 1:29	John the Baptist points to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes the world's sin away
Jn 6:56	Those who eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood live in him and he lives in them
Jn 15:4-5	Jesus is the true vine and we are the branches; we must abide in him to bear fruit
Acts 2:42	The growing body of Christians celebrated the Eucharist together
Acts 20:7	Paul and his companions celebrate the Eucharist on the first day of the week
1 Cor 10:16-17	The consecrated wine and bread are our participation in Jesus' Blood and Body
1 Cor 11: 23-29	The institution and meaning of the Eucharist; the gravity of unworthy reception
Heb 10:10	We have been made holy by the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus
1 Jn 2:2	Jesus Christ is the expiation for the sins of everyone
Rv 5:1-14	Jesus, the true and final sacrifice, is ever present as a slain lamb before the throne of the Father
Rv 19:9	In Heaven, we are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb

CATECHISM (IN ORDER BY PARAGRAPH NUMBER)

1322	The Eucharist is the completion of our initiation as Christians
1324-1327	The Eucharist contains Christ, is the sign and cause of the Church's union with him, and is our foretaste of the Heavenly liturgy and life there with God
1328-1332	The various names of the Eucharist that identify its various aspects
1342-1355	The Church has always celebrated the Eucharist in the liturgy of the Mass
1356-1372	The Eucharist as sacrificial memorial, thanksgiving, and praise
1378-1381	The Eucharist is to be worshipped as truly Jesus
1382-1390	As the Paschal Banquet, the Eucharist is to be received worthily by the faithful
1391-1405	The fruits of the Eucharist and its expression of Christian unity

KEY TERMS

<i>Ex opere operato:</i>	A sacrament's effects depend on the valid administration of the sacrament itself, not on who administers it
<i>Form:</i>	The essential words and actions of a sacrament (this use of the term is analogous only, since the primary meaning of the term is as a constituent of material substance, together with matter)
<i>Matter:</i>	1) one of the intrinsic elements of creation, which, together with form make material substances; 2) in an analogous use of the term, regarding the essential material substances used in administering a sacrament (such as water or oil) or, in the broad sense of the concept of matter, it also is an action, such as the manifestation of contrition in the sacrament of Reconciliation
<i>Sacrifice of the Mass:</i>	The re-presentation of the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus
<i>Sacrilege:</i>	The profaning or irreverence toward God or a sacred person or thing

SUGGESTED HYMNS AND SONGS FOR CATECHETICAL SESSION

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus	Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All
At the Lamb's High Feast	O Lord, I Am Not Worthy
Be Still and Know That I Am God	O Sacrament Most Holy
Come Adore (<i>Tantum Ergo</i>)	O Saving Victim (<i>O Salutaris Hostia</i>)
Down in Adoration Falling (<i>Tantum Ergo</i>)	One in Body, Heart and Mind
Draw Near and Take the Body of Your Lord	Panis Angelicus (Holy and Living Bread)
Father, We Adore You	Shepherd of Our Hearts
Fill My House Unto the Fullest	Sing, My Tongue, the Savior's Glory (<i>Pange Lingua Gloriosi</i>)
Hail Our Savior's Glorious Body (<i>Pange Lingua Gloriosi</i>)	(tune: Chant, Mode III)
(tune: Chant, Mode III)	Soul of My Savior (<i>Anima Christi</i>)
Holy and Living Bread (<i>Panis Angelicus</i>)	This Is Jesus
I Received the Living God	

The Eucharist (Lesson 2 of 2)

PREPARATION – LITURGY OF THE WORD

If beginning with a hymn or song, see previous page for suggestions

First Reading: 1 Cor 11:23-29

Response: Ps 34:1-5, 8-9, 11-18, 21-22

Gospel: Jn 6:26-35

PROCLAMATION

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life and our faith. It is our true spiritual food and drink. The risen Lord Jesus is adored in the Eucharist.

EXPLANATION

The meaning of the Eucharist (see 1 Cor 11:23-29)

- ✱ The Scriptural sense of “remembrance” is a re-presentation, not just a memorial
- ✱ The Eucharist is the same Jesus who gave his Body and Blood on the cross, ever present to the Father as the perfect lamb of sacrifice slain for our sins, made present at each Mass (see Rv 5:1-14)
- ✱ Christ is not sacrificed again at the Mass; we participate in the one single sacrifice of Calvary, ever-present in eternity, made present to us in time through the priesthood by the power of the Holy Spirit
- ✱ The Eucharist is God’s sacrament of love: what was bread and wine becomes the living Christ
- ✱ The Eucharist is the highest form of sacrifice, praise, and thanksgiving to the Father
- ✱ The Eucharist is our Paschal Banquet and a foretaste of the Heavenly Banquet (see Rv 19:9)
- ✱ The Eucharist is to be worshipped

The Eucharist as the source and summit of Christian life

- ✱ It is both a sign and a cause of our communion in God’s divine life and of our Christian unity
- ✱ It is the climax of God’s plan to make the world holy through his Son
- ✱ It is the center and highest point in Christian life and worship
- ✱ It is the reality of Jesus’ continual life on earth and remaining with us always (see Jn 14:18-19)
- ✱ The Eucharist is Christ abiding in us and we in him in the fullest sense (see Jn 15:4-5)
- ✱ The Eucharist is a sign of hope, and a pledge of his love and our future life with him in Heaven

Holy Communion: united to God on earth

- ✱ Holy Communion is the sacramental eating of Jesus’ flesh and drinking his blood (see Jn 6:53)
- ✱ To avoid sacrilege, we must be in a state of grace (free from serious sin) and repent of any venial sins (see 1 Cor 11:27-29)
- ✱ Reception must be preceded by a one-hour fast from food and drink
- ✱ Before receiving, prepare with humility and a desire for a pure heart
- ✱ When receiving, make an act of reverence and respond to the minister with “Amen” — an act of faith in the Real Presence
- ✱ After receiving, make a thanksgiving to your Savior who now abides intimately in you

Sanctifying effects of the Eucharist (see Jn 6:56-57)

- ✱ We become more closely united to Jesus and his Church, and are being transformed in him by receiving him
- ✱ Grace within us is increased, that is, the Eucharist is our spiritual nourishment
- ✱ Our venial sins are forgiven and we are helped to avoid future sin
- ✱ Our love of God and others is strengthened, and we are more strongly committed to those in need

APPLICATION – SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why does the Church teach that the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life and our faith?
2. How is the Eucharist the “sacrificial memorial” of Christ? How is the Eucharist a foretaste of the Heavenly Banquet?
3. What does it mean to say that the Eucharist should be received worthily by the faithful?
4. How can we participate fully in the Mass?
5. The word “Mass” is derived from the closing words “Ite, missa est” (“go, you are sent”). What are we sent to do?

CELEBRATION – SUGGESTIONS FOR CLOSING PRAYER

1. Pray for a fervent desire to receive the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.
2. Hymn or song (see previous page for suggestions)
3. Pray together *Anima Christi* (Soul of Christ) (see handout on Well-Known Catholic Prayers in the *Participant’s Book*)

The Mass

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT

The Mass is our central act of worship, a foretaste of Heaven. In the Mass, Jesus' Paschal mystery is again made present. With Christ, we offer ourselves as a gift of love to the Father.

Keeping the above statement in mind, read and meditate on the following passages:

SCRIPTURE (IN ORDER BY BOOK)

Gn 14:18-20	Melchizedek, priest-king of Salem, offers bread and wine as thanksgiving
Lv 2:1-16, 6:14-18	God makes prescriptions for making a cereal offering of unleavened bread and for its consumption by the Aaronic priests
Dt 8:3	The word of God is necessary as our spiritual food, just as bread is necessary as physical food
Lk 22:14-20	Jesus institutes the Eucharist and commands his apostles to do the same in remembrance of him
Lk 24:13-35	The first Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist
Jn 6:25-58	Jesus' Bread of Life discourse: he is bread from Heaven, and whoever eats his flesh and drinks his blood will live forever
Acts 2:42	The growing body of Christians celebrated the Eucharist together
Acts 20:7	Paul and his companions celebrate the Eucharist on the first day of the week
1 Cor 10:16-17	The consecrated wine and bread are our participation in Jesus' Blood and Body
1 Cor 11:23-29	Holy Communion is an everlasting proclamation of Jesus' Death, and receiving the Body and Blood of Christ unworthily is profaning him
Rom 6:10	Jesus' Death occurred once for all time
Heb 10:19-29	Through Jesus' Paschal mystery, we enter the sanctuary, and must not avoid worship for this is spurning and profaning Jesus and outraging the Holy Spirit
Rv 19:9	In Heaven, we are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb

CATECHISM (IN ORDER BY PARAGRAPH NUMBER)

1085	Christ's Paschal mystery is made present in the Church's liturgy
1104	The once-for-all Paschal mystery is made present again at each celebration
1140-1144	The entire assembly as the Body of Christ participates in the liturgy although not all have the same functions
1322-1405	The Eucharist: its centrality, its names, its role in the economy of salvation, how it is celebrated, its meanings, Holy Communion, its anticipation of the Heavenly Banquet

KEY TERMS

<i>Consecrate:</i>	1) To make holy or set apart for God; 2) through a priest praying the words Jesus said at the Last Supper and the power of the Holy Spirit, to change bread and wine into Jesus' Body and Blood
<i>Liturgy:</i>	1) The public participation of the members of the Church in the work of God, most specifically in the Paschal mystery of Christ; 2) Christ's continuation of his redemptive work through his Church
<i>Mystery:</i>	1) A truth of faith that we could not know unless God revealed it; once it is known, it is understandable and reasonable, but is never fully comprehensible; 2) truths that surpass reason's powers and can only be shown to be non-contradictory
<i>Paschal mystery:</i>	The central events of Christ's redemptive work, specifically his Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension

SUGGESTED HYMNS AND SONGS FOR CATECHETICAL SESSION

Be Still for the Presence of the Lord	O Bread of Heaven, Beneath This Veil
Church of God	O Sacrament Most Holy
Fill My House Unto the Fullest	O, the Word of My Lord
God Is Here! As We His People	On This Day, the First of Days
Holy Ground	Receive Our Praise
Jesus Shall Reign	See Us Lord, About Thine Altar
I Come with Joy to Meet My Lord	Sent Forth by God's Blessing
Into Thy Presence	Standing on Holy Ground
Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence	This Is My Body
Love Is His Word, Love Is His Way	

The Mass

PREPARATION – LITURGY OF THE WORD

If beginning with a hymn or song, see previous page for suggestions

First Reading: Gn 14:17-20

Response: Ps 5:3-4, 7-8, 11-12

Gospel: Lk 22:14-20

PROCLAMATION

The Mass is our central act of worship, a foretaste of Heaven. In the Mass, Jesus' Paschal mystery is again made present. With Christ, we offer ourselves as a gift of love to the Father.

EXPLANATION

The Mass is the central act of Catholic worship and summit of the whole Christian life (see 1 Cor 11:23-29)

- ✠ It is a sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise offered to the Father for all creation and his gifts to us, especially for our redemption and sanctification
- ✠ It is a sacrificial memorial, for it re-presents the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ and makes it truly present as one and the same sacrifice of Calvary, where Jesus is both priest and victim
- ✠ Jesus is present in four major ways in the Mass: 1) the Holy Eucharist; 2) the people gathered; 3) the priest acting in the Person of Christ; 4) the proclaimed Word
- ✠ It is prayed in the Holy Spirit, through whose power Jesus becomes present in the Eucharist

The parts of the Mass

- ✠ The Liturgy of the Word
 - ⊗ God speaks to us, and we respond to him in faith (see Lk 24:32)
 - ⊗ Sign of the Cross, introductory rite, penitential rite, Gloria, reading from Old Testament, psalm with response, reading from New Testament, Alleluia, reading from Gospels, homily, Creed, prayers of the faithful
- ✠ The Liturgy of the Eucharist
 - ⊗ Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is offered to the Father in an unbloody re-presentation of his sacrifice on Calvary, and we receive him in Holy Communion (see 1 Cor 10:16-17)
 - ⊗ Offertory, Eucharistic Prayer during which the bread and wine are consecrated as the Body and Blood of Jesus, Lord's Prayer, sign of peace, communion rite, concluding rite, dismissal

Vestments, offerings, altar, and sacred vessels for Holy Mass

 (see Ex 25:1-28:42)

- ✠ To reflect their role, celebrant(s) wear special vestments, with colors varying by liturgical season
- ✠ Unleavened bread and grape wine mixed with water are consecrated as Jesus' Body and Blood
- ✠ The altar is a true place of sacrifice

Attendance at and participation in Holy Mass

 (see Heb 10:25-29)

- ✠ We are obliged to participate in Mass on the Lord's Day (Sunday or the Saturday vigil Mass)
- ✠ We are obliged to actively participate through our responses, our singing, our postures, and our conscious attentiveness to the divine actions; we are not at Mass merely to watch
- ✠ It is desirable to attend Mass often during the week, even daily, for the good of our soul

The Mass is the source of our holiness

 (see Heb 10:19-24)

- ✠ It brings us into actual union with Christ; we are bonded to him and transformed by him
- ✠ Heaven begins on earth — through the Holy Spirit we are one with Jesus and, united with him, we offer ourselves to the Father
- ✠ The reception of Holy Communion makes us members of Christ's Body (see 1 Cor 10:17)

APPLICATION – SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How is the Mass a celebration of the Paschal mystery of Christ?
2. How is the Mass a sacrifice that re-presents the one single sacrifice of Jesus on the cross?
3. Jesus is present in many ways in the Mass. What does it mean to say that Jesus is uniquely present in the Eucharist?
4. How is the Mass a foretaste of Heaven?
5. How should we prepare for Holy Communion?
6. Why is the Mass different from other ways of offering praise to God?
7. What are specific ways to participate fully, consciously, and actively in the Holy Mass?

CELEBRATION – SUGGESTIONS FOR CLOSING PRAYER

1. Pray for a love for the Mass and a deep desire to be present at its celebration as often as possible.
2. Hymn or song (see previous page for suggestions)
3. Pray together Psalm 27 or Psalm 116

The Real Presence Of Jesus In The Eucharist

As taught in John, Chapter 6

A commentary by Fr. Victor Galeone (now the recently-retired Bishop of St. Augustine, Florida)

GOD SETS A TABLE FOR 5,000

Can a clockmaker make his clock run backwards? Of course. He simply adjusts a few wheels to reverse its direction. What we moderns grant to a simple clockmaker we sometimes deny to God. For we say that miracles are impossible. What we're really saying is that the Divine Lawmaker can't suspend the laws of nature that he himself established. For instance, some deny that Jesus multiplied the five loaves to feed the 5,000 people.

They reason thus:

"Everyone had brought along their own lunch, but not wishing to share it with anyone else, they were keeping it undercover until they could eat it alone. The example of the boy sharing his lunch with the disciples prompted all the people to share their food also. The miracle was that Jesus inspired them to be generous."

Such an explanation makes a colossal liar out of St. John, since he reported the following items as factual:

- Philip's problem with financing such a huge meal.
- Andrew's remark about the futility of five loaves for 5,000 people.
- Jesus solemn blessing of the five loaves.
- The twelve baskets of leftovers that were collected.
- The crowd's attempt to force Jesus to be their king.

But more at issue, denying this miracle disrupts the three-part unity of John's sixth chapter:

Part 1: By feeding the 5,000 with just five loaves of bread Jesus suspended the process that begins with spring planting and ends in an oven – a process that requires many months and much effort. With a simple blessing he was proving:

"I can suspend the laws of nature for BREAD."

Part 2: That night while the disciples were struggling to steer their boat on the storm-swept sea, Jesus came walking to them on the surface of the water. At first glance this miracle seems pointless. What was he trying to prove? According to the law of gravity heavier bodies must seek their rest on the earth's surface. By preventing his body from sinking, Jesus was declaring:

"I can suspend the laws of nature for my BODY."

Part 3: That afternoon, some of the crowd that had been fed, came to Jesus on the other side of the lake to make him king. Jesus used the occasion to promise that one day he would give a special BREAD that would be his BODY. In making this extraordinary promise, he was merely drawing the logical conclusion from the first two parts:

- 1) I can do what I want with BREAD.
- 2) I can do what I want with my BODY.
- 3) I promise a special BREAD that is my BODY. (John 6:51)

When did Jesus fulfill the promise he made at Capernaum? At the Last Supper, when he blessed the bread and wine: "*Take, eat. This is my body.*" "*Take, drink. This is my blood.*" For 2,000 years the Church has taught: At Mass when the priest does what Jesus did at the Last Supper, the bread and wine become the Lord's body and blood even though they still look the same.

Does that seem unbelievable?

This analogy might help to clarify it somewhat: You grasp an iron bar. How do you know that it's iron? From its weight, color, and hardness. But in outer space the bar loses its weight and in a blast furnace it becomes a red-hot liquid. Is it still iron? Yes, for its *substance* remains the same. Only the *accidentals* (weight, color, hardness) have changed. In the blast furnace of God's love at Mass the direct opposite takes place:

The *accidentals* of the bread and wine stay the same. The *substance* changes into the Lord's own body and blood.

This marvelous change is called *transubstantiation*.

Ever since that afternoon of the promise at Capernaum many have refused to take Jesus at his word. Some have said that the Eucharist only *represents* him, just as the stars and stripes represent our country. However, someone who bums our country's flag is charged with desecrating the *flag*, not our country. But in 1 Corinthians 11:27, St. Paul says emphatically: "Whoever eats this bread or drinks the Lord's cup unworthily, will be guilty of the *body* and *blood* of the Lord."

Besides, if Jesus meant a mere symbolic eating of his flesh, why did he permit his listeners to take him so literally? Elsewhere in St. John's Gospel, when Jesus' listeners misunderstood him, the misunderstanding was corrected at once:

- ✧ *John 2:21* – The ruined temple to be raised up in three days was Jesus' *body*, not the Jewish temple of stone.
- ✧ *John 3:5* – When Nicodemus had understood a physical rebirth, Jesus pointed out that he had meant a *spiritual* one.
- ✧ *John 11: 13* – The disciples thought Jesus meant natural sleep, so he had to specify that he meant the sleep of *death*.

But when his listeners at Capernaum objected, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (John 6:52), far from correcting any misunderstanding, he went on to reinforce his statement by adding that they must drink his blood as well! (John 6:53) When they refused to accept this "intolerable teaching", Jesus allowed them to walk off and leave him. He then asked the twelve if they wanted to leave too. If he had intended only a symbolic eating of his flesh, then why didn't he correct the misunderstanding? (John 6:52) Why did he allow so many disciples to desert him? (John 6:66) Why did he ask the twelve if they wished to leave? (John 6:67) The only possible answer is: He was speaking of a *real* not a *symbolic* presence.

Back in the 11th century, a monk by the name of Berengarius was the first to deny that Jesus' presence in the host was real. In his opinion the bread and wine remained unchanged; they were merely symbols of the Lord's body and blood. Ultimately, Berengarius recanted his error. Before Pope Gregory VII he made the following profession of faith:

"I, Berengarius, believe in my heart and profess with my lips that the bread and wine on the altar, through the mystery of the holy prayer and the words of our Redeemer, are substantially transformed into the true, life-giving Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ. After the Consecration, they are the true BODY of Christ, which was born of the Virgin, nailed to the cross for the salvation of the world, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father; and the true BLOOD of Christ, which flowed from his side. They are present, not merely symbolically or by reason of their effects, but in their true and proper nature and substance... This is my faith, and thus shall I ever teach hereafter..."

LIFE-GIVING BREAD

All living things – plants, animals, and human beings – need food to survive. Furthermore, each species needs its own appropriate food. For example, cows can't eat meat; man will starve on hay. So too, the divine life that we received at Baptism needs its own proper nourishment to survive – the Eucharist.

"Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will have no life in you." (John 6:53)

