

Leader's Guide for
THE MASS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
The Mass for Older Children

From earliest times, Christians gathered at least once a week to remind themselves of Jesus' life, death and resurrection and to celebrate his presence still with them in the meal of the Eucharist. Like the early followers of Jesus,

We gather,

We tell stories,

We remember and break bread,

We go forth to those in need.

This leader's guide offers discussion questions and activities to help students deepen their understanding and appreciation of the Mass, and challenges them to live it in their daily lives.

1. What is one thing you recall seeing or hearing in this video? What of your own beliefs were confirmed in you? What new insights did you gain? Name your feeling response to what you have seen and heard.
2. Have students read Acts 20: 7-12 and imagine they are part of the early Christian families celebrating the Eucharist in their homes. What preparation is needed? Who will be invited? What dress worn? What food prepared? Compare this to our modern worship.
3. What is liturgy? Why do we use gestures and actions in worship? Engage students in body prayers (e.g., Sign of the Cross, bowing, kneeling). Acquaint them with the different names that we call Mass (Eucharist, eucharistic celebration).
4. Have students make their own Mass Book by designing pages for each part of the Mass.
5. Talk about Mass as gift and privilege. Ask: Why do you celebrate the Eucharist?
6. The celebration of the Eucharist today continues the early Church's gathering to tell stories, remember and break bread, and being sent forth to serve others. Read Acts 4:32-35. What is the meaning of these actions in our lives? In the life of your parish?

THE PARTS OF THE MASS

1. WE GATHER: *Jesus is present in the people gathered.*
 - A. We *come together* to worship and extend a sincere welcome to one another. Recall the words of

greeting, posture and gestures of welcome offered by presider and our responses.

Ask: How do we welcome friends and strangers in our homes, church, everyday life? How do we provide an environment where others can feel they belong? How do we take time to find space inside to be present to God and one another? Describe the entrance procession in your parish. Who is in it and what is carried?

- B. We *ask forgiveness* (Confiteor or Lord, Have Mercy). Why do you think forgiveness is an important part of preparing for worship?
 - C. We *praise and give thanks* for God's goodness (Gloria). Have students paraphrase some of the parts of this hymn (canticle) of praise.
 - D. We *hear* our Opening Prayer.
2. WE TELL OUR STORY: *Jesus is present in the Word.*
- A. Have students name and explain the first part of the eucharistic celebration: the Liturgy of the Word.
 - B. We hear from Scripture in the First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading and Gospel. Show and ask the significance of the Lectionary (contains the stories we read and proclaim in the Liturgy of the Word). Who are some of the lectors in your parish? Offer a way to reflect on readings of a Sunday Eucharist. Read the Gospel. Ask: What does this story say and do to you? Has anything like that ever happened to you? Tell your story of how you identify with what has happened. Decide what you are going to say or do about what you have heard for your life. The video recalls the events of Emmaus, Feeding of 5,000 and Breakfast at the Lake. What stories do you remember about Jesus' actions of compassion and self-giving? In your own life and home, name similar actions.
 - C. In the Creed, we tell our faith.
 - D. In the General Intercessions, we ask for help for those in need. As a group, write petitions for people in your life who need hope and help.
3. WE REMEMBER AND BREAK BREAD: *Jesus is present in the bread and wine.*
- A. Have students name and explain the second part of the eucharistic celebration: the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
 - B. Show and ask them the significance of the Sacramentary (contains the prayers and actions of the presider, priest or bishop) for this part of the Mass.
 - C. The familiar actions of giving thanks, blessing, breaking, eating and drinking, that is Consecration and Communion, take place during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

- D. The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with Preparation of the Table and Presentation of the Gifts. Speak of the meaning of the offering of bread, wine, self. Offer a loaf of bread and a cup of juice to share with the class. Read I Corinthians 10:16-17. Ask: Do you remember a special meal you ate with your family? What happened (past)? How do you feel when you remember this event (present)? Do you look forward to doing something like this again (future)?
 - E. The presider leads us in the Eucharistic Prayer which tells of our thankfulness, remembers, continues and makes present the action of Jesus at the Last Supper. Read and note the three stories in the Gospels and the differences in each (Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-20, Matthew 26:26-29). Compare the actions that are common to the story of the Last Supper and the Eucharistic Prayer. You may want to explain that there are several different Eucharistic Prayers—four that we generally use on Sundays—and in all of them the narration of the Last Supper is the same. This is called the “institution narrative” which means the story of the Last Supper and the first Eucharist. Using missalettes, have the group read Eucharistic Prayer III.
 - F. It is in the act of remembering that we keep people and events alive and present to us now and take them into the future. Have students identify Memorial Acclamations most used in their parish.
 - G. We pray the Our Father and offer a Greeting of Peace, a gesture of welcome and forgiveness.
 - H. When we receive the Bread and the Wine, we say “Amen.” As we respond, “Amen” (comes from a Hebrew word which means “Yes, this is certain”), we profess our belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist and in the people gathered. Discuss: We receive the Body of Christ and we are the Body of Christ. Listen to and reflect on “Song of the Body of Christ,” David Haas in *Creating God*, 1989 GIA.
4. WE SEND: *Jesus is present in serving the Body of Christ.*
- A. Ask: How do the words of the Dismissal Rite, “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord” connect to your life? What are some ways we become peacemakers in our world today? How do we develop peacemaking skills?
 - B. Ask: How are you able to see Jesus in the people who seem unimportant and insignificant? “I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least important, you did it for me” (Matthew 25:31-40).
 - C. Consider choosing individually or as a group a service project. Involve students in the social justice ministries of your parish.
 - D. Activity: Have students fold a piece of paper into four parts. In the first section, write “Family; in the second: “School”; in the third: “Friends” and in the fourth: “World.” Under each heading,

have them write a need and the name of someone they could help. Invite them to consider what Jesus would do in each situation. Now have them choose one need or person and write a plan for service.

PRAYER SERVICE

Leader: Gracious God, we know you in the meal of the Eucharist, in listening to you Word and in the people gathered. You send us forth to know you in the people we meet every day, in our families, in our friends and in the world. In serving them, we serve you.

In the silence of our hearts, we listen and reflect on these words, “Whenever you did this for one of the least important, you did it for me.” (Pause)

And now, Gracious God of Bread and Wine and People, we give you our hands. With these hands we want to do your work in making this old world into a new one.

(Make the Sign of the Cross in the palm of each person’s hand as you say:

“ _____, go forth to love and serve God in others.”

Let us now bow our heads for a blessing:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader’s Guide written by: Gaynell Cronin

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Leader's Guide for
THE MASS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Mass for Young Children
Parts 1 and 2

The Mass is the prayer of the People of God. It helps children connect everyday events and the life of Jesus. By linking home Church and parish Church, these videos invite children to thank God for the gift of Jesus and the gifts of all creation.

Rather than present all the actions and prayers of the Mass, we chose to spotlight the parts of the Mass which a young child can most easily recognize. Children will deepen their appreciation of the eucharistic celebration as they grow older. For now, it is good to keep the explanation simple and focus on the gestures and prayers which are within their attention span and comprehension.

The *Eucharistic Prayer for Children II* is used.

After viewing each video, ask the children how they can identify with the short vignettes from the home. Children can begin to understand the Mass through these experiences. You may want to point out and help them imitate the gestures and expressions of the people and celebrant.

Part I

Actions of: Gathering and Greeting
Forgiving and Praising
Listening and Caring

Suggested Activity: Write home actions and related Mass actions on slips of paper for group members to choose. Have individuals or pairs choose and pantomime an action from a home situation and the action as it happens at Mass. When both actions are completed, the group guesses the action. Invite discussion and reflection.

Part II

Actions of: Giving and Sharing
Remembering and Belonging
Receiving and Serving

Suggested Activity: Tour the church and have children identify and touch what is used for the celebration of the Mass. Involve them in an Opening Procession and the procession of the Presentation of the Gifts, setting the table, writing prayers of General Intercession and a “thank you” prayer. Invite the children to sing different responses.

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Leader's Guide for
THE MASS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Why Do We Go to Mass on Sunday?

Throughout the ages, people have set aside one day of each week to rest from the work they do, to remember all that God has done for them, and to praise, honor and thank God. Each week, we do what Christians have done for 2,000 years.

1. Why do people gather together? (To learn, work, play, worship, etc.) Why do Christians gather at Church on Sunday? (God is everywhere, but the People of God need a place to gather and celebrate. Church means “belonging to God.” We come to church to listen to the story of God’s love and to break bread at the table of the Lord.) What makes church a holy place? Ask your students to draw a picture that shows what the Sunday gathering looks like in the church where they go to Mass.
2. Ask your students why they go to Mass on Sunday and have them write their responses before sharing orally. Because some people go to Mass only because their parents bring them, ask your students to look into their feelings about going to Mass to find their own personal motivation. You might also ask them: If you were unable to attend Mass, what would you miss the most? If you could attend only occasionally, what would you begin to lose sight of? Let the conversation go on even if young people get into a heated discussion about how boring Mass is or how there is nothing to do.
3. One of the ways to keep the faith alive is to go to church to remember we are the Body of Christ and to be with our fellow believers in faith and friendship. Read Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47. How do you share and live in community?
4. The grandmother in the video says, “Whenever we go too long without being family, I miss it. I need to tell you that I love you and hear you tell me the same thing.” Like Moses and the people in the desert being reminded of God’s love and protection, ask your students when and where they take time to experience God’s love for them at home and at church.
5. One reason for celebrating the Eucharist is gratitude. We are grateful people, thankful for all the good things God has done for us and is still doing each day. The word “gratitude” means filled to overflowing. For what are we grateful?
6. Retell the story of creation. Ask students what its message is. (God is creator; everything created is good; humans are made in God’s image; we are caretakers; etc.) Ask students why they think the story says, “God rested” after creation? Is rest important? What does it do for them?

7. God told Moses and the people in the Third Commandment: “Keep holy the Sabbath.” What does this mean? How do we *slow down* and remember God is with us on the journey of life? What did God do for the people in the desert? What is God doing for us today?
8. The word *Sabbath* means holy rest. How do we thank God through worship and rest? Read about Jesus and the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-28).
9. The Jewish people celebrate Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. They enter Sabbath time in their homes with prayers and the gestures of lighting two candles, offering the cup of blessing, sharing *challah* bread. The passing of spices concludes Sabbath time as a reminder of the goodness of God’s love they want to live throughout their week. Ask students to make up short “Sabbath prayers” of thanks to God. Decorate them and share them with their families. Plan also to use them for the closing prayer service.
10. As the Israelites chose the seventh day of the week as a way of remembering the seventh day of creation when God rested, the Christian Sabbath or Lord’s Day is Sunday, the day on which Jesus was raised from the dead. Read Hebrews 4:9-11. Sunday is a day of rest, a time to connect with one another again. How do we as a family celebrate and observe Sunday (visit relatives, have a meal together, play a game or sport)? Divide a drawing paper into three parts. In each part, draw one of the ways we celebrate Sunday *with God, with our families, with ourselves*.
11. Rose’s mother told her that she needed to “stop every week, not only to honor God and be with the community but for my own spiritual health.” Have students attend to the spiritual side of their lives by taking an inventory of their own spiritual health.
12. Consider the statements of different people in the video. With whom do you identify? Rose’s mother: “When someone in our family is absent, it is just not the same.” Mr. Miranda: “And don’t you think we need to celebrate what we believe with others?” Fr. Charles: “Everyone is needed. When you are not here, something is missing; our believing Church community is not the same.” Add your own.
13. Emily speaks of God as a father, friend, companion and advisor with whom we need to talk and share regularly, just like we do with our family. Ask students: Who is God for you?
14. What has Rose learned through missing her brother Danny at basketball camp, having the play canceled, talking with Fr. Charles? (Everyone is needed to make a family, a play, a Church. We need each other in life. That’s how God designed it.)
15. Prayer Celebration
Materials needed: two candles, bread, cup, small container of spices, gratitude prayers from #5 and Sabbath prayers from #9
 - A. Light two candles.
 - B. Students share their Sabbath prayers.

- C. Read Hebrews 4:9-11.
- D. Hold up bread. Pass cup. As students hold the cup, they each mention one thing for which they are grateful.
- E. Pass spices for each student to inhale.

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