

Liturgy of the Eucharist

The collection is taken (to support our church) and the altar is prepared. We place the Corporal (large square white cloth on which the gifts will sit during the Mass. The missal is put in place along with the gifts. In the offertory procession, the people bring forward the bread and wine. The priest invites us to stand to begin the great thank-you prayer to God. It is followed by the Prayer over the Gifts.

Now we come to a very special part of the Mass – the Eucharistic Prayer, a prayer of thanksgiving and praise that will change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord. It is the moment that we remember the Last Supper Jesus had with his disciples. At the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, we sing or say AMEN. Amen means YES. We are saying yes that we believe the bread and wine are now the Body and Blood of Jesus, and that yes we will be his followers.

We prepare to receive Jesus in the Eucharist by praying together the prayer that Jesus taught us, The Our Father. This is the only prayer that Jesus gave his friends. That is why we pray it very slowly and carefully.

Before we approach the altar of God, we need to be reconciled with our neighbors. This is called the Sign of Peace.

Lamb of God..To symbolize the “One Bread” broken and given, The Lamb of God developed as a song or litany the assembly would sing during this breaking of bread. Watch as the priest takes the host and breaks it over the paten. He places a small piece in the chalice and says a prayer.

The priest holds up the Eucharist and we call upon Jesus to prepare us so that we might be ready to receive Communion. We respond with the same words used by the soldier who approached Jesus to cure his friend. Jesus was so impressed with the man’s faith that he healed his friend without visiting his home. “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”

Communion

We come to the altar in procession as if on pilgrimage. We reverence the presence of Christ in His Body and Blood by bowing our head, then receive Jesus. The priest or Eucharistic minister will say “**The Body of Christ.**” Our response is, “**AMEN.**” Place the host in your mouth immediately. We are permitted to chew the Eucharist because it is a sacred meal. it is food for our soul.

When we return to our seats, we give thanks for all God has given us. This is a time of quiet prayer for everyone.

The Mass concludes with any necessary announcements and importantly the Final Blessing and Sending. We are sent into the world as followers of Jesus. We have been fed by the experience of those with us, the assembly, by the Word proclaimed and broken open and by the Eucharist. Now it is time to go and transform these words and actions into the actions of our lives.

As Mass concludes, we sing a song of joy as the priest and other ministers leave the altar.

A Guide to the Mass For Families with Children



Dear Parents,

This quick overview is designed to help guide your children to a deeper understanding of the words, gestures and symbols we experience in the Mass. A few things to think about and keep in mind:

- All are welcome! Some children are wiggly. Don’t worry about any distractions you think they might be causing. Everyone is part of our faith community.
- Be a good role model. Use the hymnal and sing the songs, say the prayers and responses, and actively participate. Children learn by copying you.
- You might want to read the readings with your child before Mass. This will help them think about them more deeply during Mass. You can find daily Mass readings at www.usccb.org
- Think about ways you can help your child understand the sacred space we gather in. Point out things they should be able to name (baptismal font, altar, etc.)
- Know that your efforts to help your child learn more about liturgy are blessed ways to live out your call to guide your child in faith. Our entire community supports you!

Preparation

Reading or listening to the readings before coming to Mass can help your child pay attention during Mass. You can find the readings at www.usccb.org. You can have the daily readings emailed to you, or you could listen to the audio files.

During the week, be sure to say simple prayers with your child. Bedtime is a wonderful time to pray with your child. This is a chance to teach our traditional Catholic prayers, and to pray together in your own words.

Gathering

As you walk from your car to the church, invite your child to try to notice one new thing while they are at Mass.

When you enter the church, point out the Baptismal Font and remind them that they became members of the Church through their baptism. When the baptismal font is filled, they can use the holy water to sign themselves as a remembrance of their baptism.

Before you enter your pew, teach your child to bow toward the altar. We do this because we recognize that the altar is where the bread and wine will become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

Introductory

The Mass begins with everyone singing a song of praise to God. The Opening Hymn is meant to draw the gathered community together. Help your child find the opening song in the hymnal and sing along. You might point out the procession and who is in the procession. What does each person do?

Point out what the priest is wearing. The color of the chasuble depends on the season of the Church. During Advent, the priest wears a deep blue or purple chasuble to recall the Blessed Mother and our time of waiting. White is worn for special feast days and represents joy. Green is worn during ordinary time and represents hope. Purple is worn during Lent and signifies penance. Red is worn when celebrating feasts of the Holy Spirit and martyrs; red is also worn to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Help your child to make the Sign of the Cross and listen to the opening prayers. We say "Amen" at the end of the prayer. Amen means "Yes, I believe."

The Gloria

You might want to explain to your children that the angels sang this song when they announced Jesus' birth to the shepherds.

Liturgy of the Word

The readings are read at the ambo which was a teaching desk in ancient times. In this part of the Mass, we sit and listen attentively to readings from the Bible. Listening is a challenge but at this moment it is God's Word that we listen to for these readings tell us about God's words, actions, and love for people. At the end of the readings, the lector says, "The Word of the Lord." We respond: "Thanks be to God."

The First Reading is usually taken from the Old Testament, except during Lent.

Next, we sing or pray a song from the Book of Psalms that reflects the readings. We repeat the response after each verse.

The Second Reading is taken from the **New Testament**.

The third reading is called the **Gospel**. The word gospel means "good news" and tells us about Jesus' life on earth. We prepare for his message with the alleluia verse, which expresses our joy in anticipation of the gospel. All the readings proclaimed at Mass are the Word of God, but the Gospels are most important because they tell of Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection. *(During Lent we do not sing the Alleluia.*

Before the priest begins reading the gospel, he says to all of us, "The Lord be with you." We answer, "And with your Spirit." He then says, "A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. We answer: "Glory to you, Lord" as we trace the Sign of the Cross on **our forehead, lips and heart and pray** May God's Word be always on my mind, on my lips and in my heart. We respond with words and action that we are ready to hear the Word of God. Following the Gospel, we sit to listen to a short reflection about the meaning of the Bible readings.

Creed: Together we proclaim all that we believe as Catholics and we renew our faith by reciting the "Creed". In the praying of the Profession of Faith, the community joins itself with centuries of ancestors who have spoken this prayer of what we believe.

We close the Liturgy of the Word by praying the General Intercessions or Prayers of the Faithful. We pray for the many members of God's family and for what we need.