

The Family Rosary Way of Grace

The Eucharist: Accepting our Invitation to the Banquet

Parish Session #2

Preparation Notes:

- **Order ASAP if needed.** Suggested “take-home gift” to enrich the home prayer space: A **Candle** for each family to represent the Sanctuary Lamp and the presence of Jesus at church. This can be as big as an 8-day candle or as small as a tea light - lit with fire or battery.
- This session is divided into three parts that we strongly suggest setting up as learning stations in three distinct areas of the worship space: **Station 1.** Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River (by Baptism Font, in the Sacristy, or by a relevant Stained Glass Window). **Station 2.** The Mass (in the Sanctuary in the church - near the altar). **Station 3.** Wedding Feast at Cana (in the Nave, by relevant Art in the church).
 - Each catechist can stay at 1 specific station to teach each of the 3 groups as they rotate through, or each catechist can travel with a group of families to teach at each station. This second option is especially helpful for bilingual events.
 - If the church is not available, we suggest you set up 3 learning stations in 3 rooms or 3 areas of a larger space. Try to include images from the church at each station - real items or photographs.
- **Supplies:**
 - **Take-Home Gift** for Home Prayer Space: A **candle** for each family.
 - **Print/Copy Station Guides** for catechists & helpers
 - **Print/Copy** any needed handouts or activity/coloring sheets.
 - 1 per family: [Agape Prayer Service](#). [Bread in a Bag Recipe](#). [Liturgical Objects & Terms](#).
 - *Other Possible Handouts:* coloring pages of the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, the Wedding Feast at Cana, a child receiving Eucharist, Last Supper <https://www.thecatholickid.com/luminous-mysteries-rosary-coloring-pages/>
 - **Crayons**, colored pencils, or markers, pens/pencils, and blank paper for notes.

Opening Session:

In a large Gathering Space (or in the Nave (Body of the Church)): (15 Minutes)

- Hospitality - greeters, name tags, water/coffee, refreshments (or small meal, if time.)
- Large-Group Opening Prayer (be sure to invite the pastor to help with the prayers.)
 - *Optional Music:* A Eucharist-themed song could be included to begin the session.
 - *Optional Video:* “The Veil Removed - Film”, a 7-minute movie, if it can be viewed in your space (Link here: <https://youtu.be/OOLZDaTglaM>).

- **Opening Prayer:**
(Make the Sign of the Cross)

“A reading from the Holy Gospel of Matthew”

“While they were eating, Jesus took a piece of bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. “Take and eat it,” he said; “this is my body.”

Then he took a cup, gave thanks to God, and gave it to them. “Drink it, all of you,” he said; “this is my blood, which seals God’s covenant, my blood poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” ~ Matthew 26:26-28 (St. Mary’s Press Children’s Bible)

(Make the Sign of the Cross)

- Introductions of the leadership team
- Explanations about this event - Introduce topics of the session and how this event will flow. Answer questions.
- Break into groups and dismiss each to go to their first station. If more than 3-5 families are present, break into 2 or 3 even groups of families (parents, sponsors, and children should stay together) to rotate small groups through the learning stations.

Station 1. Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River (by Baptismal Font or by a relevant

Stained Glass Window)

(15-20 Minutes + 1-3 Minutes to get to next station)

Key themes being introduced at this station:

- 1st Luminous Mystery of the Rosary - Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River
- [Matthew 3:13-17](#)
- Jesus didn't need to be Baptized - his doing so sanctified the Sacrament.
- The whole Trinity was present.
- The Eucharist is 1 of the 3 Sacraments of Initiation
- Relatives and Role Models: John the Baptist

A. The First Luminous Mystery of the Holy Rosary

- I am going to read to you a short story from the Bible about the time when Jesus was baptized, as an adult, by his cousin John in the Jordan River. I'm going to read it through 2 times. The first time through, simply listen.
- The second time, I'd like to ask that all of you, children and adults, please close your eyes and picture yourself **IN** this story. Maybe you are one of the people on the shore watching, or maybe you are John the Baptist. Try to be open to the Holy Spirit guiding you. What is God trying to teach you through this story? How does this story relate to **YOUR** story?

- **Matthew 3:13-17:**

At that time Jesus arrived from Galilee and came to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. But John tried to make him change his mind. "I ought to be baptized by you," John said, "and yet you come to me!"

But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so for now. For in this way we shall do all that God requires." So John agreed.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. Then heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and lighting on him. Then a voice said from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

- (Pause for a short moment before reading the story again.)
- As we read through this Bible passage, what image or words stuck out to you? How was the Lord speaking to you through this story? [*For the Leader - if no one shares right away, please be prepared to share a simple example of a part of this story that caught your attention*]
- [*Allow a few minutes for people to share their experience/insights.*]
- The next time you meditate on this mystery, especially while praying the rosary this coming week, try picturing this scene again. Maybe next time God will guide you to new insights about Jesus' baptism and how it connects to your life today.
- Here are a few of the amazing things that we heard in this story:
 1. This is one of the rare times we get to clearly experience all 3 persons of the Holy Trinity: We hear **God the Father's** voice speaking to His Son. We see the **Son, who is Jesus**, being baptized - setting the example and model for us, even though he did not need to be baptized since he is without sin. And finally, we see the **Holy Spirit** in the form of a dove.
 2. Remember, that although we see here the 3 persons of the Trinity separately, they are always one God. Similarly, let us remember that other times in the Bible and in our lives, even if we do not see or hear about the other two - where there is one, the other two divine persons of the Trinity are always there as well.
 - a. When we are baptized, we are baptized into the Body of **Christ**, we become daughters and sons of God the **Father**, and we are given the gift of the **Holy Spirit**, always alive and active within us!

- b. Similarly, when we receive **Jesus** in the Eucharist we are drawn even more deeply into the life of our Triune God! We become sharers of God's very divine life! We are so very blessed to be invited into the never-ending, all-powerful love the **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit** have for each other and for each of us.
3. The words we hear the Father speak to His Son are very important for us to hear and remember. These words are also spoken to **US** because we have been united to Jesus through our baptisms! We have become God's adopted daughters and sons! God, the Father and Creator of all that is, and was, and ever will be, through His Son, says about you and me, **"This is my beloved Son [and daughter], with whom I am well pleased."** If you and I live our lives constantly hearing our Heavenly Father speak these words to us, our lives will be completely transformed! When things do not go our way, when people are unkind, when we make mistakes, and when we are afraid, we remember that we are always **God's Beloved!** And this makes all the difference!

B. The Sacraments of Initiation

- Jesus gave us the gift of the 7 sacraments. Seven ways for us to experience God's grace, God's divine life poured out into our lives. The first 3 are referred to as the **Sacraments of Initiation** because they are the way we enter fully into the life of Christ through his Church.
- These are Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
- Once a person receives all of these Sacraments, he or she is considered a full member of the Church. A fully initiated person, once mature enough, can vote for or hold office on a parish council, be trained as an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, be trained to take Communion to the home-bound and sick, and can even be a baptism or confirmation sponsor.

C. John the Baptist; "More than a prophet." Lk 7:26-28 (CCC 719)

- When Jesus was speaking to the crowds about John the Baptist, he said, *"Tell me, what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes indeed, but you saw much more than a prophet. For John is the one of whom the scripture says: 'God said, I will send my messenger ahead of you to open the way for you.' I tell you," Jesus added, "John is greater than anyone who has ever lived. But the one who is least in the Kingdom of God" (me and you) "is greater than John." Luke 7:26-28*
- In John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit concludes speaking through the prophets. John completes the cycle of prophets begun by Elijah. John is the last prophet of the Old Testament and the first and only prophet in the New Testament! They were all paving the way for Jesus! (CCC 719)
- Today, although we are not necessarily called to do what John or Elijah did, we are baptized into Christ the priest, prophet, and king. This means that we too are called to make holy sacrifices for the Lord, care for others, and in our prophetic role, speak courageously to others the truth and gift of God's never-ending love!

Station 2. The Mass (Most of this station will be below the steps to the Sanctuary.)

(15-20 Minutes + 1-3 Minutes to get to next station)

Key themes being introduced at this station:

- Last Supper was the institution of the Eucharist
- Tour of sanctuary/altar
- Give Handouts - Mass Book/worksheets/color pages

A. The Last Supper

- The Last Supper is the last meal Jesus shared with his apostles before his arrest, crucifixion, death, and resurrection. It was also a memorial to remember the last meal the Israelites ate before the Angel of Death *passed over* (skipped) their houses, where they had put blood from a lamb on the frame around their front doors. This was their last meal before they escaped slavery in Egypt. Jewish peoples still celebrate this meal called the "Passover."
- At the Last Supper, Jesus *"took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.'"* (Luke 22:19)
- Similarly, after they had eaten, Jesus took the cup, *"saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.'"* (Luke 22:20)
- Have you ever heard the priest celebrating Mass say words very similar to this? We remember and celebrate the Last Supper at every Mass.

B. Tour of the Sanctuary - Remain below the steps of the Sanctuary until the group is prepared.

- The altar is a place of sacrifice used in the times of the Old Testament, it is also a sign of the Banquet Table of heaven (CCC 1323). We gather together each Sunday around this heavenly feast.
- (Set up: consider setting up a table near the steps to the Sanctuary and setting up books, vessels, and cloths used during the Mass.)
- Reverence:
 - The Sanctuary is the holiest area of our church. It deserves our greatest reverence and greatest respect. During the Mass, the altar becomes a visible sign of the presence of Jesus. Jesus is our King, and we want to behave with great respect and care in his presence. He is as real and present here as he is in heaven! So, let's think about how the priest and altar servers behave during Mass.
 - What do they do as they prepare to go into the Sanctuary? (bow or genuflect)
 - How do they behave in the sanctuary? (respectful, walking, prayerful)
 - What do the priest and altar servers do when they leave the sanctuary? (bow or genuflect)
 - We are going to genuflect or bow deeply before we go into the sanctuary, and again when we leave the sanctuary.
 - In the sanctuary, we are going to use our quiet voices, raise our hands to ask a question, or ask permission to share, and we are going to listen as we learn about this most holy and sacred place.
 - (Show the group how to genuflect and bow, then quietly enter the Sanctuary.)
- (Suggestion: offer a sheet with pictures of items the students and families may see that they can mark off as they find them - like a scavenger hunt. (Handout: "[Liturgical Objects & Terms](#)")
- Adapt the following for your parish and altar area. **Please feel free to edit and paraphrase:**
 - Gather behind the altar (or around the altar if there are a large number of participants.) Reverently, and slowly, pull back the altar cloth, and expose the altar stone. (If your church's altar does not have an altar stone, leave the altar cloth as you find it. You can still share the story.)

- The altar stone is made of marble. In the early Church, Christianity was illegal, and Christians were persecuted, which included being tortured and often killed because they believed in Jesus. A person who dies for their faith is called a martyr (which came from the word that meant, “witness”). In Rome, there is a place called the catacombs that are like an underground tunnel system. Many martyrs were buried in marble coffins in the catacombs. The Romans were very superstitious, and they were afraid to go into the catacombs, so the early Christians would offer Mass on top of the martyrs’ marble coffins. On the altar stone are five crosses that represent the five wounds of Christ (in his hands, his feet, and his side.) Within, or under, the altar stone is a holy relic from a recognized saint. (If the name of the saint is known, share it now. Note that the priest consecrates the bread and wine right over where the altar stone and the saint relic are.) Our Church and our faith are built on the blood of martyrs and the faith of those who have come before us - we don’t forget their continuing importance today. (Put the altar cloth back as you found it.) The Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated around the altar, the Table of the Lord.
- The Tabernacle is the holiest vessel in our church. It is very much like the holy of holies in the Temple in Jerusalem. And it is a place where Jesus is always present - except for one day of the year. Do you know which day that is? Good Friday, the memorial of Jesus’ crucifixion and death.
- The Sanctuary Lamp helps us remember that Jesus is present in the Tabernacle. The only day it is not lit is Good Friday.
- (Now is a good time to leave the Sanctuary and return to the floor below the Sanctuary steps, if time allows, complete the tour from here. If time doesn’t allow, end this station and move on to the next station.)
- Point to the Presider’s chair. During Mass, the priest takes the bodily form and representation of Jesus. Through the Priest, we celebrate every Mass with Jesus! The Presider’s chair is a chair of honor. (At the Cathedral: the Bishop’s Chair - *Cathedra* - is the See of the Diocese. The Bishop has, through his ordination as Bishop, inherited the rights and duties of the first Apostles. Every Catholic Bishop in the world has been appointed by the pope and ordained in the presence of three bishops, all the way back to Jesus’ Apostles! We call that Apostolic succession.)
- Point to the Ambo. The readings of the Liturgy of the Word are proclaimed from the Ambo. To prepare for the Gospel, we stand, and a special Book of the Gospels is carried to the ambo, where the deacon or priest proclaims the Gospel of Jesus. We stand, and we make a slight bow as the Book of Gospels is processed as a sign of respect and reverence for the presence of Jesus in the Gospel.
- If using a table with items used during the Mass: Liturgy of the Word: a Lectionary, Book of Gospels, pew missal (to assist us to participate in the prayers and follow the words proclaimed in the readings,) book or sheet of prayer intentions; Liturgy of the Eucharist: *cruets* - crystal vessels that hold the water (and wine,) purification cloths (to catch crumbs and drips, made of linen or a linen blend, rinsed in a special sink - the *sacrarium*, that drains straight to the soil, - we believe these crumbs and drips are the very precious body and blood of Jesus,) *chalice* - cup, *paten* - plate for the presider’s larger host, *ciborium* - a vessel for hosts that become Jesus’ body, (all these vessels are made from precious metals, or are covered with gold where Jesus body and blood will touch --- for he is our King of the Universe!)
- *If you have 1 per family, give out candles for their Home Prayer Space, inviting them to remember the importance of the Sanctuary Lamp and the gift of Jesus in the Tabernacle.*

Station 3. Wedding Feast at Cana (in the Nave, if possible by relevant Art in the church)

(15-20 Minutes + 1-3 Minutes to get to next station)

Key themes being introduced at this station:

- Wedding Feast at Cana (2nd Luminous Mystery of the Rosary) [John 2:1-12](#)
- The Mass: Liturgy of the Word & Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Holy Day's of Obligation
- Transubstantiation - Christ is really and fully present under both species
- Christ is the eternal high priest - Priests today act in the "person of Christ"

A. The Second Luminous Mystery of the Rosary (The Wedding Feast at Cana)

- Suggested narrative of John 2:1-12:

In the time of Jesus, Jewish weddings were feasts of celebration that could last for several days. The bride's family was expected to provide wine and food that symbolized the worth of the bride to the groom's family.

Jesus, his disciples, and his mother, Mary, were all invited to a wedding in Cana. Cana is close to Nazareth and the bride's family were probably relatives of Jesus and Mary, maybe even some of those who would travel with the Hov Family to Jerusalem for holy feasts.

Sometime after the feast began, we can imagine the bride's mother or father telling Mary there was no more wine. Mary then found Jesus and said to him, "They have no more wine." Jesus asked her why she was telling him this, adding that, "my time has not yet come." *Jesus had not yet begun his signs to show his glory.* Mary knew what needed to happen, and, saying no more to Jesus, she turned to the servants and said, "Do whatever he says." *Mary is a powerful intercessor!*

Nearby were 6 large stone jars used to hold water for ceremonial washing. Each jar held 20-30 gallons! (*Note: most bathtubs hold ~42 gallons!*) Jesus tells them to fill the jars with water. The servants did so. We don't know exactly what Jesus did next, however, we can imagine he said prayers over the jars. He asked a servant to draw some out to take to the headwaiter, who didn't know it was from the jars of water. When he tastes it, he is very, very surprised. He calls the bridegroom and says, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now."

The changing of the water into wine was Jesus' first public sign and the beginning of his public ministry.

B. The Holy Mass - Liturgy of the Word & Liturgy of the Eucharist

- There are so many amazing things happening during Mass it will take more than a lifetime to experience and appreciate them all. Today we hope to go a little deeper into the beauty and richness of this mystery.
- The celebration of the Mass can be thought of as a great banquet (like the wedding feast in Cana). We gather each week to celebrate this great feast which unites people from all over the world, from the past, the future, and today. As you heard (or will hear) at the station by the altar, Jesus asks us to do this in remembrance of him. When we come together every Sunday (or Saturday night) we are obeying the 3rd Commandment to keep holy the LORD's Day (Exodus 20:8, CCC 2168-2195). As Catholic Christians, we are obligated to attend Mass every Sunday (or Saturday night). The Mass is that important to us as followers of Jesus Christ.
 - At Mass, we are remembering events of our religious past. Even more than just remembering, God is making present again, during every Mass around the world, the Passover meal of our Jewish ancestors, the Last Supper of Jesus, as well as his suffering, death, and resurrection! We are also joining all the angels and saints who are celebrating face to face with God in heaven! And because of our baptism into the Body of Christ, when we attend Mass, we are united with Catholics celebrating Mass all around the world!

- Because the Mass is a participation in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, everything that is done is in order to bring glory to God and to make us holy - that is, to help us live in Christ's love more fully. Although we cannot see him, it is Christ who is proclaiming the Gospel (GIRM 29). At every Mass, Christ is present in the 1.) Eucharist, 2.) in the proclamation of scripture, 3.) in the priest, and 4.) in the members of the community (CCC 1088).
- Does anyone know why we stand, sit and kneel during Mass?
 - When we **stand**, we are showing reverence or praying to God the Father.
 - When we **sit**, we are listening and thinking about what we've heard.
 - When we **kneel**, we are showing great reverence (respect) to Jesus, present in the Eucharist.
- The Holy Mass is made up of 2 main parts. The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- One way to understand the flow of the Mass is to think of a simple word or phrase for each part. The Mass goes something like this: "Welcome! I'm Sorry. Thank you! I'm Listening. I'm Learning. Yes, I believe! Please, Lord! Take & Eat. Let's Go!"
- **Welcome!** - The Opening song/antiphon and prayer bring us all together. From many different homes and activities, we all come together for this, most important celebration.
- **I'm Sorry** - Throughout the week, most of us make bad choices, so in order to open ourselves to the gift of receiving God during Mass, united with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we should start by saying we are sorry. This is called the confiteor or *Kyrie* - Lord have mercy.
- **Thank you!** - Next, we want to say *thank you* and we give glory to God for all the good that he has done for us. This is called the *Gloria*. Next time we sing or recite this at Mass, see if you can catch all the things for which we are giving glory to God.
- **I'm Listening** - Next, we have the readings from the Bible. Usually, the first reading comes from the Old Testament (the time before Jesus). Then we pray a psalm, which is usually from the collection of songs King David wrote. The reader speaks then we speak. We go back and forth. Your response is very important! Then we hear a second reading from one of the letters written by the early Christians. Then we all stand to listen to the words of Jesus in the Gospel. Before the Gospel is read we usually make little crosses on our forehead, lips, and heart while quietly saying, "Lord, let these words be ever on my mind, my lips, and in my heart."
- **I'm Learning** - Next, we sit back down and listen to the priest share his thoughts on the readings and how they affect our lives here and now.
- **Yes, I believe!** - Then we stand up to proclaim the Creed. The list of all the important things we believe about God the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and God's people (the Church) on earth.
- **Please, Lord!** - Next, we take time to ask God for the things we need. The reader announces the prayer request then we all send it to heaven with our request, "Lord, hear our prayer."
- **Take & Eat** - Then we participate in the remembrance of what Jesus said and did at his last supper. The priest recalls our story of faith and invites us to join our prayers and hearts with his as he offers our Lord Jesus to the Father. Then through the words and prayers of the priest, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine change completely, right before our eyes! After the priest holds them up and says the words of Jesus, "do this in remembrance of me", that which used to be bread and wine are now the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ! They still look, taste, and smell like bread and wine but are now, really Jesus Christ, ready and waiting to come and be with us in the most intimate way we can imagine. Jesus doesn't just want to be near us, he wants to be inside of us, truly one with us!
- **Let's Go!** - Then, spiritually recharged, with new ideas and renewed strength, we are called to go forth to live and share the Good News!
- *Optional: Give families other handouts to help better understand the Mass*

Closing/Prayer In the Nave (Body of the Church) or Large Gathering Space (5-7 minutes):

- Recap the session. Add any notes needed for families to access the home sessions, and whatever other announcements are needed for the group (maybe the next parish session?)
- Be sure to recognize all catechists helping with the stations and the attendance of all present.
- Invite everyone to join in the closing prayer (using these or similar words:)

Tonight we learned our Church has a long history of martyrs and saints. In our own altar, we have a relic of (name of a saint, if known.) We also learned about how we remember and celebrate the Last Supper with Jesus at every Mass when the bread and wine become the true body and blood of Jesus. We learned this mystery has a super long name, transubstantiation! We learned a lot tonight to help us prepare for all of your First Communions, or your next Communion.

(Begin and end the prayer with the Sign of the Cross.)

Let's hold what we learned in our hearts, and ask God to bless us and help us grow closer to his Son, Jesus, as we pray the prayer Jesus gave us, The Our Father...

And, before we go, let's offer each other a sign of peace.

* GIRM: [General Instruction of the Roman Missal](#)

* CCC: [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#)



Luminous Mystery #1: The Baptism of Christ in the Jordan (Photo Credit: usccb.org/how-to-pray-the-rosary)



Luminous Mystery #2: The Wedding Feast at Cana (Photo Credit: usccb.org/how-to-pray-the-rosary)