

How does participation in Liturgy help me increase my faith in Jesus?

CELEBRATION OF THANKSGIVING

An Edge Night on the Sacrament of the Eucharist
(Teaching Mass)

LEADER OVERVIEW

From the very beginning of the Church, the faithful met to break bread on the day of the Resurrection of Jesus - Sunday. Today, we do the same thing and follow the same fundamental structure that has been instituted from the beginning of the Church every time that we celebrate the Mass. The Mass is "the sacrificial memorial in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated and the sacred banquet of communion with the Lord's body and blood" (CCC 1382). Jesus urges us to partake of the Eucharist telling us: "Truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53).

When we receive the Eucharist, it strengthens our union with Christ and it is the foundation of life in Christ: "Now too are life and resurrection conferred on whoever receives Christ" (CCC 1391). Holy Communion is life giving. Just as food sustains and gives our bodies life, Holy Communion does the same for our souls. It increases and renews the life of grace given in Baptism and, in order to grow in our Christian life, we need the Eucharist. It separates and cleanses us from our sins as we are united more closely to Christ and keeps us from sinning in the future. It helps us to grow in love, "wipes away venial sins," and breaks us from our attachments to material things. Because we grow in union with Christ each time we receive the Eucharist it helps us to not commit mortal sins for the more we love Christ the more we will not want to break this union. (CCC 1391-1395)

The Eucharist also "commits us to the poor" and helps us to "recognize Christ in the poorest" (CCC 1397). It brings about union within the Church among the faithful and unites them as one body in Christ through the one body of Christ they receive.

Communion in other Christian churches is not the same as the Eucharist. The Catholic Church is the only church that proclaims the true presence of Christ, all other Christian churches profess that it is merely a symbol. Because of our great respect for the Eucharist and true belief that it is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, there cannot be intercommunion between Christian churches. When you receive communion you are professing and saying that you are in communion with that specific church and all their teachings. If you truly believe in the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and believe in the fullness of truth in the Catholic church, then you should not also receive communion in a different church because that would be proclaiming that you believe what they teach about communion as only a symbol. In the same way Christians who do not believe and have not been incorporated into the fullness of the Catholic Church, through the Sacraments of Initiation, should not receive Holy Communion at a Catholic Church because, again, that would be acting as they believe fully in all the teachings of the Church, which they may not or not even have full understanding of. (CCC 1397-1400)

The Eucharistic celebration contains and expresses all forms of prayer, it is the full and pure offering of the Body of Christ for the glory of God (CCC 2643). The Eucharist also anticipates the glory of heaven where the Passover meal will be fulfilled and Jesus will no longer be veiled. "Every time the mystery is celebrated the 'work of our redemption is carried on' and we 'break the one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the antidote for death, and the food that makes us live forever in Jesus Christ'" (CCC 1405).

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EDGE NIGHT OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is for the youth to come to a greater understanding of the Mass, what happens during the Mass and, specifically, the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and its effects in their lives.

SUMMARY

The Edge Night begins with a brief Gather where the youth are given a simple explanation of what happens during the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The rest of the night is a teaching Mass during which the priest walks the youth through the specific things he does during the Mass and why. The priest then discusses, during the homily, the significance of the Eucharist and the effects of the Eucharist in the youth's lives.



SUGGESTIONS

If there is already an evening mass taking place at your parish - consider asking your priest to do a special teaching Mass for the youth and all the congregation present. Consider inviting parents and family to join you for the teaching Mass. If you are not able to do a teaching Mass, use a video for the Gather and the information provided to craft a Proclaim. Create small group questions based off of the teaching and end the Edge Night with a Send in the Church praying in front of the Tabernacle.

MAIN IDEAS

- The Eucharist strengthens our union with Christ and gives life to our soul the same way that food and water gives life to our bodies.
- The Eucharist separates us from sin and helps us to not commit sin in the future.
- The Eucharist unites us all as one Body of Christ as we work out and anticipate our salvation and entrance to eternal glory.



SCRIPTURE

John 5:56; John 6:54



CATECHISM

1343-1384, 1391-1397, 1400-1405

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EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

GATHER

Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth and begin in prayer. Introduce anyone who is new, recognize any birthdays, and ask about any big events happening this week. Give a brief overview of the topic using the following as an example:

From the very beginning of the Church's existence, people met as a community on the day of Jesus' resurrection (Sunday) to listen to the words of Christ and his teachings and to break bread together. Today, we do the same thing and follow the same format in every single Mass. We celebrate the Mass as a memorial of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and, through the Sacrament of the Eucharist, we partake and participate in this sacrifice of Jesus. It is the "source and summit" of our faith and is our life source strengthening our union with Jesus. (CCC 1343-1391)

The Vestments (10 min)

Invite your parish priest to come to the main room to put on his vestments for Mass. As he puts on each vestment have him give the youth a brief explanation of the names of the vestments, the symbolism for each, and the prayers said while putting on each vestment.

Once the priest has finished his explanation, prepare the youth and move to the church for Mass.

PROCLAIM

Mass Introduction (5 min)

Go to the Church for the teaching Mass. Before Mass begins, have the music minister give a short explanation about the importance of music at Mass and for the congregation to participate. Have the music minister lead the youth through the psalm response and any new songs to encourage participation in the teaching Mass.

Play the video, "You Are What You Eat" for the congregation before the Mass begins.

The Mass (50 min)

The following are a few suggestions of teaching points for the priest to focus on for the youth to get a basic understanding of what is happening at Mass. Also, see the homily suggestions to help guide the priest in covering the main ideas of the content for your youth to learn about the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Encourage your priest to make these suggestions his own.

Teaching Suggestions:

- *The Sign of the Cross.* The Mass and all prayers we say begin with the sign of the cross. It reminds us that we have been marked for Christ and that Jesus saves us by his death and resurrection. It represents our freedom from sin and reminds us of the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- *Kneeling.* Anytime that we kneel during Mass it is to show reverence for Christ. It is supposed to reflect our inner state of heart. Kneeling is an act of humility and unites us with Christ.
- *Crossing our forehead, lips, and heart before Gospel.* This prayer and action asks God to root His Word in our mind so we can meditate on it, on our lips so we can proclaim it, and in our hearts so we can fall more deeply in love with it.
- *The Gloria and Sanctus.* These prayers that we sing come straight from scripture. The Gloria was what the angels sang at the birth of Jesus, and the Sanctus comes from an angelic vision of Isaiah and John. Both of these prayers reveal the reality that when we celebrate Mass we participate in heavenly worship, that we are worshipping alongside the angels!
- *The Liturgy of the Word.* During Sunday Mass there are four readings. The first reading usually comes from the Old Testament, the next reading is the Psalm response which is read or sung usually from the book of Psalms, the second reading comes from the New Testament, and the Gospel reading comes from one of the four Gospel books -Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. All of these are the Word of God and God speaking directly to us, it is important that we pay attention and listen to what He is saying.
- *The ambo or lectern.* All of the readings are read from the ambo or lectern which signifies a place of prominence for the Word of God.
- *The altar.* We participate in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross at every Mass. The altar becomes the place of the sacrifice, the cross, and the bread and wine become the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. To be clear Jesus is not re-sacrificed at every Mass but His sacrifice is made present for all eternity.
- *Go forth.* At the end of every Mass we are sent forth to bring Christ into the world in our everyday lives, living out the mission He has given to us.
- The "Eucharist contains and expresses all forms of prayer: it is 'the pure offering' of the whole Body of Christ to the glory of God's name." (CCC 2643)

Homily Suggestions:

- Every time we receive the Eucharist it strengthens our union with Christ. It is the foundation of life in Christ. (CCC 1391)
- "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him" (John 5:56).
- Ask the youth to share a few things that our bodies need for survival.

- Communion is life giving. Just like food sustains and nourishes our bodies and is necessary for our survival, the Eucharist sustains and nourishes our souls and is necessary for our salvation. It “preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received in Baptism” (CCC1392).
- The Eucharist separates us from sin by uniting us to Christ. Receiving Jesus’ Body and Blood cleanses us from our past sin and helps keep us from sinning in the future.
- The Eucharist does not replace the Sacrament of Reconciliation, but it does wipe away venial sins (or lesser sins that are not of grave matter, done intentionally, or with full consent). It also preserves us from committing mortal sins (which are sins of grave matter that we do intentionally and with full consent) because when we are in such union with Christ we will not want to commit a mortal sin which breaks this unity. (CCC 1393-1395)
- The Eucharist helps us to desire to help the poor and to see Jesus in the poorest of the poor. (CCC1397)
- The Eucharist also brings about unity of all people in the Catholic Church as the one Body of Christ. (CCC 1396)



GOING DEEPER

Discuss the difference between the communion of a Christian Church and the Eucharist. Christians believe that the bread and wine are mere symbols, while we believe that it is really is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus. Therefore, Christians should not receive the Eucharist and we should not receive communion at their churches because there is a difference in belief and when you receive communion you are uniting yourself to that church and their beliefs. (CCC 1400)

- The Eucharist anticipates the glory of heaven where we will see Jesus face to face. Every time the liturgy is celebrated our the work of our salvation is carried on and we “break the one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the antidote for death, and the food that makes us live forever in Jesus Christ” (CCC1405).
- “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:54).

Small Group Discussion:

- 6th Grade
 - The Jewish Sabbath was a day of recognition that no work should be done but rather the day was spent being with family, resting, and giving praise to God. For Catholics we believe the same about Sunday and Mass. What distractions make this difficult to live out? (Work, Cultural (sports), Social Media, etc.)
 - We need food to nourish our bodies. The Eucharist is our spiritual food. How does it nourish us? (Brings us closer to God, we become what we receive, strength/grace to avoid sin)
 - As Catholics our faith is communal. We all share the same words, songs, and responses. What is the difference between believing in God by yourself and sharing that belief with a community?
- 7th Grade
 - The Liturgy is the most important part of our faith – the source from which all things flow and the goal of where we want to be. It helps us to grow in holiness. How would you explain to a friend why going to Mass is so important?

- Catholics are called to full, active, conscious participation at Mass. How can we do this? What difference does it make? (Prayer, Responses, Songs, Actions, Silence, etc.)
- The words of consecration we say at Mass come directly from the words said by Jesus at the last supper. Read Matthew 26:26-29 and discuss if Jesus meant the bread was a symbol of His body or really His body. (We believe through the power of the Holy Spirit the priest acting as Jesus changes the substance of the bread and wine to become the body, blood, soul, and divinity [complete presence] of Jesus even though on the outside it still looks like bread and wine.)
- 8th Grade
 - Everyone is welcome to attend Mass. However, the Church asks for only those who have prepared for the sacraments to receive communion. Why do you think that is? (The grace from the sacraments works by those who are disposed to receive it; meaning it is a special gift that takes some understanding to know what is happening so that it is properly respected)
 - Full participation in Mass means being sent out into the world to bring Christ's love and presence to those we encounter. "The Mass is ended go now in peace to serve the Lord and one another." How can we accomplish this task?
 - How does the Church calendar and her liturgical seasons impact your understanding of worship to grow in faith?

SEND

Transformation Story (5 min)

After Mass, have the priest share a short testimony about how Jesus has transformed His life specifically through celebrating the Mass and receiving the Eucharist. Then have the priest end the night with a special blessing over the youth for a greater transformation in their lives.