

Bible Stories

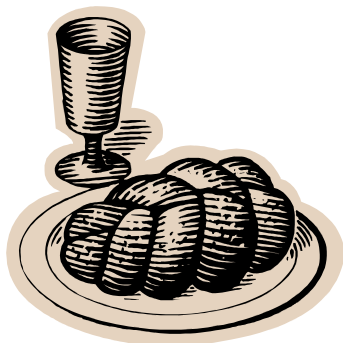
Sit down with your child and read or tell stories about Jesus sharing a meal, eating with His friends:

Jesus feeds the five thousand (John 6:1-15)

Jesus changes the water into wine (John 2:1-12)

The Last Supper (Matt. 26: 20 -30)

Jesus and His disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13)



Service: Interest your child in a needy person and point out the help your child might be able to provide.

Also: Remind your child of his/her First Reconciliation and how it is related to First Eucharist. Celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation with your child before his/her Communion day.

Another point is to stress the inner readiness for the day of First Eucharist rather than the outer dress of the child or the party. All are important, of course, but most emphasis would be on Mass itself.

Make Sunday a special day in your home. Establish a routine for Sunday that always begins with celebrating the Eucharist and includes special family activities and meals.

Arrive on time for Mass. Participate fully so your child will want to participate too. Children learn by doing and seeing.

Diocesan Guidelines

A child's first reception of the sacrament is to take place in their home parish unless special permission is granted by their pastor.

Adequate and meaningful catechesis and experience of the Sacrament of Reconciliation must precede the first reception of Eucharist.

Catechesis must include instruction on the Mass as well as on the various concepts implied in the celebration of the Eucharist.

The parish-based sacramental preparation program should involve liturgical celebrations, parent meetings, days of prayer, acts of service and other appropriate experiences.

(Professional Catechetical Leadership Handbook, Diocese of Buffalo, 2006, pp.80-83).



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A PREPARATION GUIDE FOR PARENTS: EUCHARIST



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Vatican Council II said that parents are “the first and foremost educators of their children.” * How a child turns out as an adult Catholic depends more on his or her parents than on the school attended.

What a real difference it makes when parents are aware of the decisive role they play in the faith life of their child. Even when children are attending special classes and a teacher is presenting all the information they will need to be ready to make their First Eucharist, parents are more important than the teacher. Children need to know what their parents’ values are. They should be able to identify them and recognize what they believe in and is important to them. They need to see parents acting upon their values with consistency and regularity. This is why parents’ example is most important. Ask yourself, “What kind of values am I instilling in my child? What kind of choices does my child see me make?”

To prepare primary-age children for First Eucharist is to *gather, remember, and eat* with them. To gather together is to be church. To remember is to make present and alive. We call our gatherings ‘Eucharist’ because at them we remember Jesus as He asked. To eat a meal with others is to share not only food but oneself. Our Eucharist began as a meal. At a meal Jesus made bread and wine the way to remember Him. Jesus shares Himself with us as nourishment in His Body and Blood.

A family experience of a meal or a family experience of making bread are actions which help a child understand the Eucharist. After all, a meal is what is enjoyed in Church when the family comes to Mass. Just as we enjoy a meal at home – we enjoy coming each week to a meal in Church. The Mass can help a child preparing for First Eucharist. They can learn the different parts of the Mass – seeing how things fit and becoming acquainted with what happens next. As a family sit up front where they can see every detail and participate by singing, listening, answering the priest, or even carrying up the gifts. The more a child becomes familiar with the Mass, the more the child is preparing for First Eucharist.

*Vatican II’s Declaration on Christian Education #3

N.B. An important emphasis in preparing your child for his/her First Communion is to connect the Eucharist with the child’s baptism (you became a member of God’s family at baptism so you attend Mass weekly to pray and worship with other members of God’s family who belong to our parish). Set an example for your child by the JOY you show in receiving Communion, by the evidence you give at Mass of your understanding that you and all others present are the body of Christ. Perhaps ask your child to remember one thing Father said at Mass and then talk about it on the way home.

Teaching Mass

A teaching Mass is an excellent preparation for the entire family. As the priest actually celebrates a Mass, he does so slowly – explaining his actions, his gestures, his words. The children and their parents gather around first the lectern, then the altar to see what’s happening and understand why. Ask your child’s teacher or a parish priest if your parish could schedule a teaching Mass for families whose children are preparing for First Eucharist.

The Blessing Cup

Blessing Cup

The blessing cup service, centered around a common cup and based on the use of Scripture and petitions is a home ritual richly expressive of praise, celebration, and unity. Any cup can be chosen as the blessing cup. The cup can be filled with any drink suitable for sharing among those present.

- At the beginning of the family meal, place the Blessing Cup on the table.
- All make the sign of the Cross.
- A short reading from the Bible is read by a member of the family.

- Intercessions (petitions) are prayed and all family members may add their own intentions.
- A closing prayer is said.
- The prayer is ended with Grace before meals.

Thoughts to ponder & discuss:

What did the table you sat around as a child look like? Who sat there –family members, others?

With whom did you usually eat Thanksgiving dinner as a child? Who was there? What always happened at this meal?

What did your grandparents’ table look like? What do you remember about eating with them? In what ways did they make a point of including you?

Where and with whom did you eat Christmas dinner? Did you eat with the adults? How did they include you?

How about picnics? With whom and where did you picnic?

What is the most awful meal you ever suffered through as a child? What made the meal difficult?

What food is special in your family? What food do you get hungry for? Is there a special occasion for eating the food?