

*faith
first*

Legacy Edition
PARISH

PREPARING
FOR **FIRST**
EUCCHARIST



Using
Faith First Legacy Edition / Parish
Grade 2

PREPARING FOR FIRST EUCCHARIST

Using
Faith First Legacy Edition / Parish
Grade 2

Susan Jones

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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June 20, 2006

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20515 **Preparing for First Eucharist**

20537 **Preparing for First Reconciliation**

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How to Use This Booklet

The immediate preparation for First Eucharist is a grace-filled time. *Preparing for First Eucharist* will guide you through the steps to use **Faith First® Legacy Edition / Parish** Grade 2 to prepare children for receiving First Eucharist.

This *Preparing for First Eucharist* booklet has been written to be used in conjunction with the **Faith First Legacy Edition / Parish** Grade 2 teacher and catechist guides. It will direct you to use the Grade 2 Catechist Guide (CG) used in a parish program.

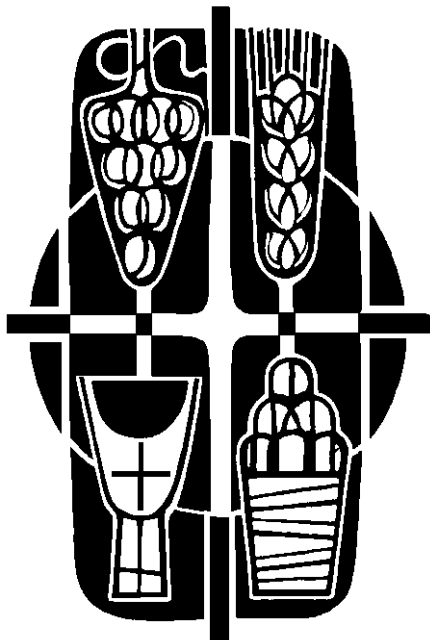
There are five chapters in the child's text that can be used for the children's immediate preparation for First Eucharist. These chapters review the essential concepts that are a part of a sound catechesis for sacramental preparation. It is suggested that you plan your teaching of these lessons with the date of First Eucharist in mind. The five chapters that are taught immediately prior to First Eucharist are Chapters 11, 15, 16, 17, and 8. When this order is followed, the Scripture story of Jesus breaking the bread with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus becomes the climax of First Eucharist preparation.

Preparing for First Eucharist is simple, clear, and easy to use. It consists of a two-page spread for presenting each of the five chapters that are used for the immediate preparation of the children for First Eucharist. There are also six parent letters that are designed to be photocopied and sent home with each child. The first letter introduces the program to the parents. The remaining letters correspond to each of the five chapters.

On the first page of each lesson plan, you will find a brief explanation that places the chapter in the context of immediate preparation for First Eucharist. Specific objectives are named. These objectives will help you focus on teaching the chapter to the children. There is also a list of additional resources, along with practical suggestions, that you might want to use to help the children prepare for First Eucharist. This opening page of each lesson plan also contains a blessing for the children, which we encourage you to pray as you close each of the lessons.

The second page of the lesson plan is a step-by-step process for teaching the lesson. This page clearly identifies the parts of the regular **Faith First Legacy Edition / Parish** Grade 2 Catechist Guide you should use and also contains additional information not found in the guides that will help you prepare the children for First Eucharist.

Using Chapter 11—We Worship God



Chapter 11 is the ideal setting in which to begin the final weeks of preparation for First Eucharist. Use this chapter to set the stage for how the Church gathers as God's family to celebrate their faith. Review with the children the way we celebrate the sacraments of Baptism and Reconciliation. Help the children recall the words and actions used in both of these sacraments. Then process the various components in this chapter to help the children understand the celebration of the Mass. You might use the family meal and the celebration of other important events in our lives to help the students understand the importance of the celebration of the Eucharist in the life of the Church.

Objectives for First Eucharist Preparation

- Know the words and actions used by the church community at Mass.
- Identify the meaning of the actions and words used at Mass.
- Describe the celebration of the Eucharist as one of the seven sacraments of the Church.

Additional Resources

- Grade 2, **Faith First** video, segments 1, 2, and 4
- **Faith First** Interactive Calendar for Eucharist
- Parent Letter, found on page 13 of this booklet
- Grade 2, **Faith First Legacy Edition Additional Activities** book, pages 11 and 11a
- Books to read:
 - The Sacraments* by Inos Biffi. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
 - A Walk Through Our Church* by Gertrud Mueller Nelson. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press. The symbols used for the sacraments.

Getting Ready for First Eucharist

- As the children's catechist and teacher, it is important that you check that the children have been baptized by verifying their baptismal certificates.
- Practice the songs that the assembly will sing at the celebration of First Eucharist with the children.
- Communicate to the children's parents the specific times for practice and for arrival at the church on First Communion day.

Blessing for the Children



*Jesus Christ, Bread of Life,
be with these children
as the day they will receive*

First Eucharist draws closer.

*May their excitement become an
eagerness to learn more about you
and your holy sacrament.*

Amen.

Begin the lesson . .

Guide Page 173

Student Page 97

- In CG, use **PRAY** and **DISCOVER**.
- Ask the children to name some of the people who take part in their family celebrations.
- Point out that when an event is very important, many people may take part in the celebration.
- Compare this to the Church gathered for liturgy on Sunday.

Guide Page 174

Student Page 98

- In CG, use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- Ask the children what we can learn about Jesus from his words and actions.
- Invite the children to demonstrate ways that Jesus might have acted toward Jairus and his daughter. Remind them that Jesus showed great respect for Jairus and his daughter.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **DISCUSS**.

Guide Page 175

Student Page 99

- In CG, use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- Ask the children to name things that the worshipping assembly does at Mass. Include genuflecting, bowing, standing, kneeling, sitting, processing, listening, responding, and singing. List these words and actions on the board.
- Discuss the meaning of each action.
- Invite volunteers to show the correct way to do each action.
- Allow time for the children to practice the actions with reverence and respect.
- Discuss what it means to really listen to God. Have the children give examples of how they can be more attentive listeners at Mass. Responses may include sitting quietly, looking at the priest or reader, and thinking about what is being read or said.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.

Guide Page 176

Student Page 100

- In CG, use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- Tell the children that through the sacrament of Baptism they became members of the Catholic Church. Explain that when our sins are forgiven in the sacrament of Reconciliation, we grow in our friendship with Jesus. Point out that both Baptism and Reconciliation prepare us for receiving Jesus in the Eucharist.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.

Guide Page 177

Student Page 101

- In CG use **HIGHLIGHT** and **DISCUSS**.
- Review with the children the actions used by the assembly during Mass.
- Continue with **INTEGRATE**.
- Give each child a paper candle with the words, “We Follow Jesus, the Light of the World” written on it. Tell them that the candle is a reminder of the candle that they received at Baptism.
- Invite the children to take their paper candle home and tell their parents about the sacraments and sacramentals. Encourage them to ask their parents to show them their baptismal candle if they have kept it as a reminder of their Baptism.

Guide Page 178

Student Page 102

- In CG use **REFLECT** and **CHOOSE**.
- Have the children identify both when each of the following gestures may be used during the celebration of the Mass and who might perform the gesture, namely, outstretched hands, bowed head, folded hands, and hands raised high. Discuss the meaning of each of the gestures with the children.

Guide Page 179

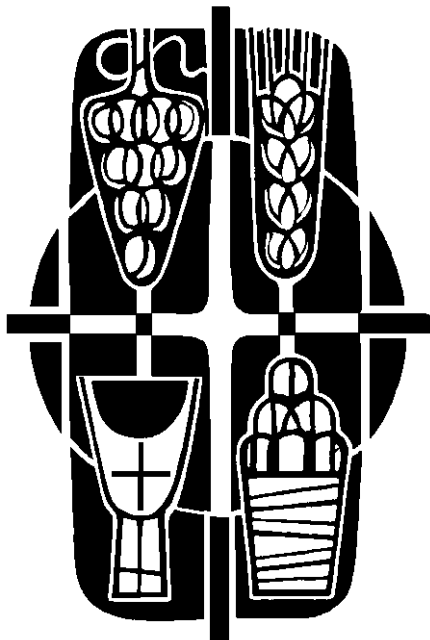
Student Page 103

- In CG use **WE PRAY** and **WE REMEMBER**.

Conclude the lesson . . .

- Point out the “With My Family Activities” on page 104.
- With your arms extended over the children, pray the “Blessing for the Children” found on page 2 of this supplement.
- Tell the children that you will be praying for them in a special way as they prepare to receive First Eucharist.

Using Chapter 15—We Gather for Mass



In Chapter 15 we begin to take a look at the rites of the Mass. In this lesson we will explain and demonstrate the Introductory Rites and the Liturgy of the Word. We will also invite and help the children learn to become more active participants in the celebration of the Mass.

Objectives for First Eucharist Preparation

- Explain the prayers, actions, and responses used during the Introductory Rites of the Mass.
- Explain and demonstrate the readings, actions, and responses that are part of the Liturgy of the Word and help the children understand that these words and actions teach us to live as followers of Jesus.
- Identify the different processions at Mass and explain their meanings.

Additional Resources

- Grade 2, **Faith First** video, segments 1 and 4
- **Faith First** Interactive Calendar for Eucharist
- Parent Letter, found on page 14 of this booklet
- Grade 2, **Faith First Legacy Edition Additional Activities** book, pages 15 and 15a
- Books to read:
 - Sacred Places* by Jane Yolen and David Shannon. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace and Company. Pray everywhere.
 - The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant. New York, NY: Aladdin Paperbacks. A family feast.
 - The Bee Tree* by Patricia Polacco. New York, NY: Philomal Books. God's word is sweeter than honey.

Blessing for the Children



*Jesus Christ, Word of God,
fill the children with
your love for them
and with ways they can express
their love for you.
Open their ears and their hearts
as they listen to your word.
Amen.*

Getting Ready for First Eucharist

- Use a lectionary and show the children the readings for the different Sundays of the year. Point out one of the gospel readings and then show the children where the same reading is found in the Bible.
- Review the good listening techniques that were discussed in Chapter 11. Read a Gospel story aloud to the children and have them practice listening attentively. After you have finished reading, have the children state in a brief sentence what the gospel story was about. Then have the children describe how the story might be asking them to live as followers of Jesus.

Begin the lesson . . .

Guide Page 221 Student Page 129

- In CG use **PRAY** and **DISCOVER**.
- Ask the children, What will soon be different about the way you are able to participate in the Mass? Help them to appreciate that they will soon be able to join the faithful in receiving Holy Communion.

Guide Page 222 Student Page 130

- In CG use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- Write the words *welcome*, *listen*, *remember*, *eat*, and *celebrate* on a poster. Explain that each word helps us understand the meaning of what the Church does at Mass. As you discuss the various parts of the Mass over the next few weeks, have the children identify when and how these five actions are being used.
- Ask the children to identify the members of the parish who they see helping at Mass. Readers or ushers are two possible responses. Explain that these people, as well as all those who gather for Mass, are part of the parish family to which they belong.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.
- Visit the parish church, including the sacristy, with the class. Point out the altar, the tabernacle, and the ambo. Show the children the sacred vessels used during Mass, the Lectionary, the Book of the Gospels, and the vestments worn by the priest. As you discuss the vestments, call attention to the different colors worn during the liturgical year. You will find information on the liturgical colors on page 236 of the text. You may want to enlist

a priest, deacon, or a member of the liturgy committee to help with the church visit.

Guide Page 223 Student Page 131

- In CG use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- On a poster titled “Liturgy of the Word,” have the children help you list the order of the three readings and Psalm response proclaimed at Mass. Ask the children to name where each reading is found in the Bible.
- Remind the children that the word *gospel* means “good news.” Emphasize that the four Gospels share the Good News about Jesus.
- As you discuss the people that gather to celebrate the Mass, use the word *assembly* often to help the children become familiar with its meaning.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.

Guide Page 224 Student Page 132

- In CG use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- Point out that the homily helps us to understand the Scripture readings and how to live as followers of Jesus.
- Emphasize that when we pray the Creed, we are saying what we believe as Catholics.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.

Guide Page 225 Student Page 133

- In CG use **HIGHLIGHT** and **DISCOVER**.
- Encourage the children to be observant at Mass. Ask them to be ready to tell you at your next session some of the things that are carried in the entrance

procession and the procession in which the gifts are brought to the altar.

- Continue with **INTEGRATE**. As the children act out their processions, invite them to sing a familiar hymn or an “Alleluia” acclamation.

Guide Page 226 Student Page 134

- In CG use **HIGHLIGHT** and **RESPOND**.
- Briefly review the responses the assembly says at Mass during the Liturgy of the Word.
- Continue with **CHOOSE**.

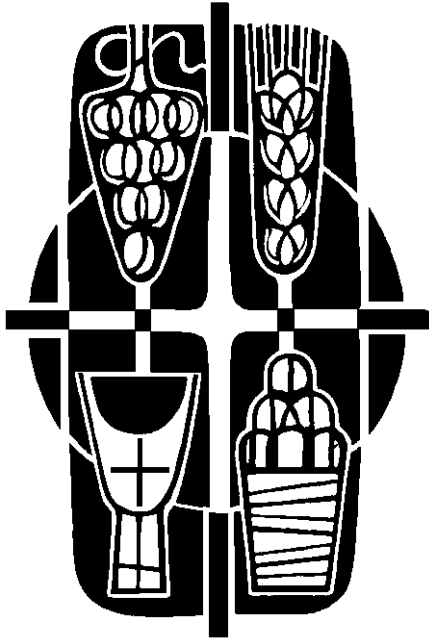
Guide Page 227 Student Page 135

- In CG use **WE PRAY**.
- Invite as many of the children who wish to do so to add their own petition to the Prayer of the Faithful.
- Continue with **WE REMEMBER**.

Conclude the lesson . . .

- Point out the “With My Family Activities” on page 136.
- With hands extended over the children, pray aloud the “Blessing for the Children” found on page 4 of this supplement.
- Invite the children to come forward individually to the prayer table and make a sign of the cross on the Bible as a sign that they want to listen to and learn from God’s word.
- Tell the children that you will be praying for them in a special way as they prepare to receive First Eucharist.

Using Chapter 16—The Last Supper: A Scripture Story



In Chapter 16 we hear the Gospel story of how Jesus gave us the Eucharist. The children need to listen to the story of the Last Supper as they prepare to receive First Eucharist. The more familiar the children are with this story, the more they will be able to connect the celebration of the Eucharist with what Jesus did at the Last Supper. This will help the children believe more deeply that the Eucharist is Jesus truly and really present with them.

Objectives for First Eucharist Preparation

- Explain the special meal, called the Last Supper, that Jesus and his friends celebrated on the night before he died.
- Become familiar with what Jesus said and did at the Last Supper.
- Understand that at the Eucharist we receive the very same gift of Jesus' Body and Blood that he gave his disciples at the Last Supper.

Additional Resources

- Grade 2, **Faith First** video, segment 7
- **Faith First** Interactive calendar for Eucharist
- Parent Letter, found on page 15 of this booklet
- Grade 2, **Faith First Legacy Edition Additional Activities** book, pages 16 and 16a
- Books to read:
 - Badger's Bring Something Party* by Hiawyn Oram. New York, NY: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books. Come to the banquet, and bring your best self.
 - The Table Where Rich People Sit* by Byrd Baylor. New York, NY: Aladdin Paperbacks. Come to the feast, come to the table of plenty.

Getting Ready for First Eucharist

Talk with the children about all the preparations they are making at home with their families for their First Communion day. Help the children understand that of all the things they will do on their special day, receiving Holy Communion for the first time is the most important event of that day and the reason for everything else their families will do to celebrate that day.

Blessing for the Children



*Jesus Christ, Bread of Life,
be with these children
as they learn of the great love
you have for all people.*

*Help the children truly believe
that the gift you offer
to them, the Eucharist,
is your Body and Blood.*

Amen.

Begin the lesson . . .

Guide Page 233

Student Page 137

- In CG use **PRAY** and **DISCOVER**.

Guide Page 234

Student Page 138

- In CG use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- Briefly tell the children the Old Testament story of the Passover using a children’s Bible. Help the children understand that Jesus and his disciples, as well as Jewish families today, thank and bless God at Passover for the safe deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt.
- Write the terms *Celebration of the Passover*, *Last Supper*, and *The night before Jesus died on the board*. Help the children see the connection between these terms.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.

Guide Page 235

Student Page 139

- In CG use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- Ask and discuss:
 - How do you think the disciples felt at the Last Supper?
 - What did Jesus give his followers? (his Body and Blood).
 - What did Jesus ask his disciples to do? (to celebrate this special meal in his memory).
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.
- Explain to the children that the disciples were given the gift of faith to believe that the bread and wine had become Jesus’ Body and Blood. Tell them that we, too, are given the gift of faith to believe that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus at Mass.

- Show the children a piece of unleavened bread and a piece of leavened (or regular) bread. Point out that Jesus and his friends used unleavened bread at the Last Supper because that is what the Israelites had used at the first Passover.
- Tell the children that we continue to use unleavened bread in the celebration of the Mass today. Explain that we do this because Jesus used unleavened bread at the Last Supper.
- Tell the children that we also use wine as Jesus did at the Last Supper.

Guide Page 236

Student Page 140

- In CG use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- Show the children an unconsecrated host as suggested in the “Liturgy Tip” at the bottom of CG page 236.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.
- Emphasize that receiving the Eucharist strengthens us to live as followers of Jesus.
- Have the children name ways they live as followers of Jesus.

Guide Page 237

Student Page 141

- In CG use **HIGHLIGHT** and **DISCOVER**.
- Call attention to the ways in which your parish serves others by naming and explaining the work of several different parish ministries.
- Continue with **DISCOVER** and **INTEGRATE**.
- Using props, have the children help you to act out the ritual of washing of the feet that is part of the Holy Thursday liturgy. Emphasize that this ritual reminds us to serve others as Jesus did.
- You may want to refer to the

“We Celebrate” lesson on Holy Thursday (see CG page 410 and student page 263) to better link the Holy Thursday celebration to the Last Supper.

Guide Page 238

Student Page 142

- In CG use **HIGHLIGHT** and **DISCOVER**.
- Invite volunteers to read aloud their prayers of thanks.
- In CG use **CHOOSE**.
- Explain that one of our greatest blessings is receiving the Eucharist. Ask the children to name ways that they can show reverence and respect for the Eucharist.

Guide Page 239

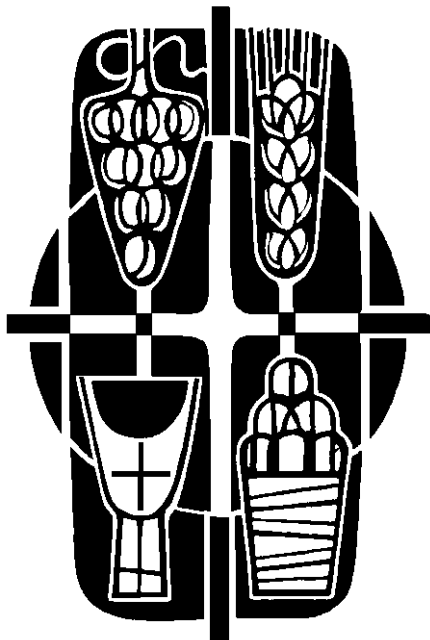
Student Page 143

- In CG use **WE PRAY**.
- Invite volunteers to express what they are thankful for during the “Blessed be God” prayer.
- Continue with **WE REMEMBER**.

Conclude the lesson . . .

- Point out the “With My Family Activities” on page 144.
- With hands extended over the children, pray the “Blessing for the Children” found on page 6 of this supplement.
- Tell the children that you will be praying for them in a special way as they prepare to receive First Eucharist.

Using Chapter 17—We Give Thanks to God



In the previous lesson we reviewed what Jesus did and said at the Last Supper. Now we look at the words and actions of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The more the children are able to recognize what is taking place during the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the better they will be able to participate, through their own words and actions, and take their place at the Table of the Lord.

Objectives for First Eucharist Preparation

- Explain that at the Eucharist the church community gathers to thank God for his many gifts and blessings.
- Describe that at the Liturgy of the Eucharist the Church remembers and does what Jesus did and said at the Last Supper.
- Explain that sharing the Eucharist changes us and gives us strength to live as followers of Jesus.

Additional Resources

- Grade 2, **Faith First** video, segment 7
- **Faith First** Interactive calendar for Eucharist
- Parent Letter, found on page 16 of this booklet
- Grade 2, **Faith First Legacy Edition Additional Activities** book, pages 17 and 17a
- Books to read:
 - Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox. Brooklyn, NY: Kane/Miller Book Publishers. “Do this in memory of me.”
 - Miss Rumphius* by Barbara Cooney. New York, NY: Penguin Books. Spread thanks and tell about the kingdom.

Getting Ready for First Eucharist

- Talk with the children about fasting from food and drink, except water, for one hour before receiving Holy Communion.
- Have the children go to the Faith First Activity “Where Do Hosts Come From?” on the **Faith First** web site. To locate this, go to www.FaithFirst.com and open the Kids Clubhouse section. Click on the Faith First Activities box, scroll down to the Grade 2 section, and click on the Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 book.

Blessing for the Children



*Jesus Christ,
Gift of the Father,
open the minds and hearts
of these children to your great love.*

*Strengthen their faith
in your Son, Jesus,
the Bread of life.*

Amen.

Begin the lesson . . .

Guide Page 245

Student Page 145

- In CG use **PRAY** and **DISCOVER**.

Guide Page 246

Student Page 146

- In CG use **FOCUS**.
- Review with the children what happens in the Liturgy of the Word, the first main part of the Mass.
- In CG use **DISCOVER**.
- Explain to the children that during the Liturgy of the Eucharist we also ask God to accept our lives as gifts. At Mass we give the gift of ourselves to God the Father, as Jesus did.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.
- Remind the children that all our blessings come from God.

Guide Page 247

Student Page 147

- In CG use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- Say the words of consecration for the bread and the wine aloud. Repeat the words, omitting one or two key words and ask the children to supply the missing words.
- Print the word *consecrate* on the board. Explain that *consecrate* means “to make holy” and that the words spoken by the priest are called the words of consecration. Tell the children that only a priest can consecrate the bread and wine at Mass.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.
- Explain that when we pray “Amen,” we are saying, “We truly believe.”

Guide Page 248

Student Page 148

- In CG use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- Explain to the children that another name for the cup the priest uses at Mass is *chalice*.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.
- Print the term *Holy Communion* on the board. Beneath it, print the words *priest*, *deacon*, and *extraordinary minister of Holy Communion*. Explain that these are the ministers from whom we receive Holy Communion.
- Discuss with the children whether they plan to receive the consecrated host when they make their First Communion in their hand or on their tongue. Tell them it is important to make this decision before approaching the altar.
- Help the children practice the proper reception of Holy Communion. Use unconsecrated hosts and a cup filled with white grape juice. Make sure that the children clearly understand the bread and juice are unconsecrated. As you practice the ritual, have them bow their heads and pray the correct response aloud as they receive the bread and juice.

Guide Page 249

Student Page 149

- In CG use **HIGHLIGHT** and **DISCOVER**.
- Using the pictures on page 149 have the children name things that are sometimes difficult to do, such as helping at home, doing chores, sharing our things, and telling the truth. Tell the children that when they choose to do the right thing out of their love for God and others when it is difficult to do so, they are making small but important sacrifices. Emphasize

that the sacrifices we make are signs that we are trying to live as Jesus taught.

- Continue with **INTEGRATE**.

Guide Page 250

Student Page 150

- In CG use **HIGHLIGHT** and **RESPOND**.
- Help the children brainstorm reasons why Catholics go to Mass. Possible responses might include to thank God for his love for us and to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus. Then have the children complete the activity.
- In CG, continue with **CHOOSE**.

Guide Page 251

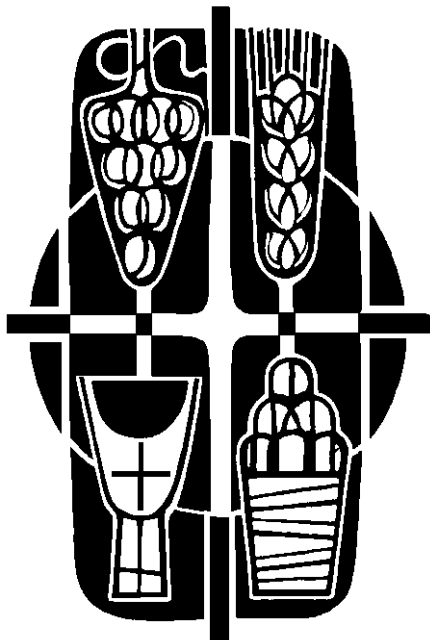
Student Page 151

- In CG use **WE PRAY** and **WE REMEMBER**.
- Show the children statues, pictures, medals, holy pictures, or other items that Catholics use to show that we are followers of Jesus. Tell the children that they may receive some of these items as gifts when they celebrate their First Communion. Discuss with the children some of the ways they might treat and use these gifts.

Conclude the lesson . . .

- Point out the “With My Family Activities” on page 152.
- Pray the “Blessing for the Children” found on page 8 of this supplement.
- Tell the children you are proud of the work that they are doing to prepare to receive First Holy Communion.

Using Chapter 8—The Traveler on the Road to Emmaus: A Scripture Story



In the previous lessons we have talked with the children about shared meals and celebrations, the Gospel story of the Last Supper, and we demonstrated and explained the rites of the Mass. In this lesson we will listen to and talk about the Gospel story of the Risen Jesus sharing a meal with two of his followers. We will discover that we are spiritually fed and nourished when we receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion and that at the end of Mass we are invited to tell everyone we meet about Jesus.

Objectives for First Eucharist Preparation

- Recognize Jesus in the blessing and breaking of the bread at Mass, just as the disciples who traveled with Jesus to Emmaus recognized him in the blessing and breaking of bread.
- Describe ways in which the celebration of the Eucharist helps us live as followers of Jesus.
- Summarize what we have learned about the Eucharist.

Additional Resources

- **Faith First** Interactive Calendar for Eucharist
- Parent Letter, found on page 17 of this booklet
- Grade 2, **Faith First Legacy Parish Edition** *Additional Activities* book, pages 8 and 8a
- Books to read:
 - Bread, Bread, Bread* by Ann Morris. New York, NY: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books. The breaking and sharing of bread—Eucharist.
 - Bread Is for Eating* by David Gershator. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, Inc. Bread—the work of human hands.

Getting Ready for First Eucharist

- Review the prayer that is said by the assembly before communion: “Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.” Talk about the meaning and importance of this prayer as a way to prepare for receiving the Eucharist.
- Talk with the children about what will happen on the day of First Eucharist.
- Provide reminders to the children and their families about any details for First Eucharist day, such as times for practice, arrival, where to gather, and so on.
- Spend some time in prayer this week. Thank God for the privilege to join with the parents in preparing their children for First Eucharist. Pray that everyone continues to be nourished at the Table of the Lord.

Blessing for the Children



*Jesus Christ, Bread of Life,
travel beside these children
as they take their final steps
in their journey to your table.*

*Help them recognize you
in the words of Holy Scripture,
in the Blessed Sacrament,
in your people, and in themselves.*

*Draw the children close to you so they
may radiate your love to others.*

Amen.

Begin the lesson . . .

Guide Page 133

Student Page 69

- In CG use **PRAY** and **DISCOVER**.

Guide Page 134

Student Page 70

- In CG use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- Tell the children that there were no printed books in Jesus' time and that people learned about Jesus from the Apostles and other followers of Jesus. Note that many years later, these teachings of the Apostles were written down and eventually became the New Testament that we have today.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.
- Poll the class to learn what favorite Bible stories they have in common.

Guide Page 135

Student Page 71

- In CG use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- Explain that the gift of faith helps us know that Jesus is always with us.
- Remind the children of the unique way that Jesus is present with us when we celebrate the Eucharist.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.

Guide Page 136

Student Page 72

- In CG use **FOCUS** and **DISCOVER**.
- Establish that bread was an important food for Jesus, his family, and his neighbors. Sharing bread with a stranger was a sign of hospitality and generosity.
- Continue with **REINFORCE** and **INTEGRATE**.
- If possible, help the children bake small loaves of bread to share with their families, or purchase miniature loaves for each child to take home. Emphasize that sharing bread together reminds us of the great gift of himself, the Bread of Life, Jesus gives us in the Eucharist.

Guide Page 137

Student Page 73

- In CG use **HIGHLIGHT** and **DISCOVER**.
- Ask the children to share their thoughts about their receiving Holy Communion for the first time.
- Allow the children to ask any questions that they may have about the Eucharist or the First Eucharist celebration.
- Continue with **INTEGRATE**.
- Give each child a red crayon and a white paper heart that has been divided into many (at least six) sections. Call on volunteers to name something that they have learned while preparing for First Eucharist.
- As the children share what they have learned, invite everyone to color one section of their hearts if they recall learning the same thing. Continue until all hearts are completely colored in red.
- Tell the children that they have prepared well to receive First Holy Communion. Point out that their red hearts are symbols of their love for Jesus and his love for them.

Guide Page 138

Student Page 74

- In CG use **HIGHLIGHT**.
- Encourage the children to name some of the talents that they have and will share with others.
- Affirm the children by calling attention to the talents you have seen in them.
- Continue with **RESPOND** and **CHOOSE**.

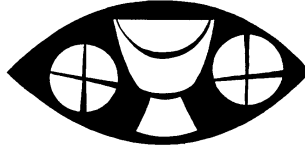
Guide Page 139

Student Page 75

- In CG use **WE PRAY**.
- After the meditation, ask the children to share what they want to tell others about Jesus.
- Continue with **WE REMEMBER**.

Conclude the lesson . . .

- Point out the “With My Family Activities” on page 76.
- Share a snack of crackers and juice with the children, giving them the opportunity to enjoy one another’s company.
- Remind the children that sharing a meal is something that friends do. Recall that the most special meal of all is the Eucharist, where Jesus is present in a unique way. Emphasize that the consecrated bread and the consecrated wine are really and truly Jesus.
- Pray the “Blessing for the Children” found on page 10 of this supplement.
- Ask the children to include in their prayers on their First Communion Day all the people who have helped them prepare for First Eucharist.



Dear Parents,

What an exciting time for your family! Beginning next week, the final preparations for your child's celebration of First Eucharist will be getting underway in class, just as they are at home. With your child's celebration of First Eucharist only a month and a half away, we want you and your child to be involved in five important lessons to help prepare for First Eucharist. It is our hope that by communicating with you each week we will be able to help one another appreciate this grace-filled time for your child, your family, and our parish community.

Each week your child will bring home a letter similar to this one. It will contain background information on the topic of the week's lesson and help you know what your child is learning in class. It will also include activities that you and your child can do together during the week. These activities will help your family set aside time to focus on this very important time in your child's and your family's life. During these final weeks of preparation, we will also be enlisting your help in some of the preparations that need one-on-one attention or extra practice.

Please know that you have done a wonderful job as the primary educator of your child. Your dedication has made this a time of wonder and awe for your child. We feel privileged to be a part of this special time in the life of your child and of your family. Remember that the parish is here to help and serve you. If you have any questions or concerns at all, feel free to call on us.

We are keeping you and your child in our prayers. We hope you will do the same for us. May the Lord guide us as we bring the children to a deeper friendship with Jesus, the Bread of Life.

Sincerely,



Dear Parents,

This week we are working on Chapter 11, “We Worship God,” pages 97–104 in your child’s text. The discussion of this chapter begins with a comparison of family celebrations with the celebration of the Mass. We invite you to continue this discussion by sharing with your child those things that are part of your family meal with those that are similar to the celebration of Mass. For example, point out that you share stories about your day during your meal much like we tell and listen to stories from the Scripture during the Mass; compare the serving dishes to the paten and other vessels used at Mass; remind your child that the cup used at Mass is called a chalice. Such comparisons will help your child see that the Eucharist is a celebration at which we gather as God’s family, the People of God.

One of our goals during these final weeks of your child’s preparation for First Eucharist is to help your child become more familiar with the meaning of the words and actions used at Mass. Children sometimes learn to do things while never really understanding why they do them. Talk with your child about sitting and attentively listening to the stories of God’s people—a sign that we believe the Bible is God’s own word to us. Point out that standing during the reading of the Gospel at Mass is a sign of respect for Jesus who is present with us.

This time of preparation for First Eucharist is an opportunity to strengthen your family’s custom of praying together at dinnertime or bedtime. Each evening have one family member say a blessing prayer for your child, asking God to watch over and guide him or her. A sample prayer could be: Jesus, true Bread come down from heaven, help my child always hunger for your love. Amen. Then invite your child to pray a blessing prayer for your family. Your child’s prayer could be: Jesus, my Friend, watch over my family and fill them with your love. Amen.

Have a wonderful week. Remember, we’re praying for one another.

Sincerely,



Dear Parents,

This week we are using Chapter 15, “We Gather for Mass,” on pages 129–136 of your child’s text. In this chapter your child will grow in his or her understanding that the parish community is our family within the Catholic Church. Together, we can help the children appreciate that just as all families need to spend time together and celebrate important events together, so too, their parish family comes together to celebrate God’s love and blessings. Your commitment to this weekly time of worship is perhaps one of the greatest gifts you can give to your child.

This week’s lesson will focus on the order of the Mass, beginning with the Introductory Rites. The children will become familiar with the prayers led by the presider during these rites and they will practice the responses to these prayers. We encourage you to review and practice these responses at home.

The children will also learn that the Liturgy of the Word follows the Introductory Rites. The first reading and psalm response usually come from the Old Testament. The second reading and the Gospel reading are from the New Testament. Our belief that the Scripture is God’s own word to us will be stressed. This week is a wonderful opportunity to spend time as a family reading from the Bible. As you read the Bible together, you might conclude the reading by practicing the assembly’s responses, Thanks be to God and Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ. The children will feel more a part of the worshiping assembly at church, the more they are familiar with the responses.

Sometimes it may be difficult for a young child to listen attentively to the homily. One way to help your child listen is to talk about the Scripture readings before going to church and then, after Mass, to discuss the readings and the homily as a family. You might also talk about the message of the homily on the drive home from church or during your next family meal. Such conversations are wonderful moments of faith sharing.

The five processions at Mass are explained on page 133 of your child’s text. Review these with your child and have a procession as a family. Your child will enjoy being the one honored to carry the Bible and lead the family to a place of prayer.

Enjoy your week. We can all feel the sense of excitement mounting as the celebration of the children’s First Eucharist draws near.

Sincerely,



Dear Parents,

This week's lesson, Chapter 16, "The Last Supper: A Scripture Story" on pages 137–144 of your child's text, centers around the account of the Last Supper in the Gospel. While we are all very familiar with the Gospel account of the Last Supper, we really never tire of hearing it retold. Each time we listen to it or read it, we rediscover the depth of God's love for us. Take the time this week to reread with your child the adaptation of the story of the Last Supper on page 139 of your child's text and share how you would have felt if you had been there. Invite your child to do the same.

When Jesus and his disciples gathered for the Last Supper during Passover, they were continuing and taking part in an important tradition of the Jewish people. Your child is beginning to understand the meaning of and to look forward to family traditions. Discuss your family traditions and the special events that these traditions celebrate. Ask your child what parts of those celebrations they most enjoy. Invite your child to help plan your family's celebration of his or her First Communion Day. Include some of your family's traditions.

Children preparing for First Eucharist are also still at an age when believing is uncluttered with multitudes of questions. Theirs is a simple, childlike faith. When we share with them that the consecrated Bread and Wine of the Eucharist is really and truly Jesus, they believe. What a wonderful gift is the simplicity of a child's faith.

When you take part in Mass as a family, sit where your child has a good view of what is taking place. Help your child to stay focused by gently whispering what the presider or other ministers are doing. Point out what part of the Mass is being celebrated. Encourage your child to say the responses and to sing the hymns with the assembly.

When it is time for the assembly to receive Holy Communion, invite your child to process alongside you and to observe how you reverently receive Communion. In many parishes children who have not yet received First Eucharist are invited to cross their arms over their chest, approach the priest or other minister, and receive a blessing. After Mass talk with your child about what your family has just celebrated and how the Mass is like the Last Supper.

Value the time as your child's First Eucharist grows closer, as a time for your family to grow closer to Jesus.

Sincerely,



Dear Parents,

This week your child is working on Chapter 17, "We Give Thanks and Praise to God," on pages 145–152 of the child's text. This lesson explains the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The word "eucharist" means "to give thanks." We begin the Liturgy of the Eucharist by blessing and thanking God for the gifts of bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Jesus. We also ask God to accept the gift of ourselves and pray that God will accept and be pleased with our gifts.

Your child is no stranger to giving and receiving gifts. One only needs to watch the face of a child to see what wonderful gift-givers children are and how much delight they take in making someone happy. This week talk with your child about giving and receiving gifts. Help your child compose a prayer thanking God for the gift of Jesus, the Bread of Life, whom they will be receiving in Holy Communion. Appreciate and value the loving thoughts your child will express in this prayer. Let your child decorate the prayer, and keep a copy of it in a special envelope. Open the envelope and pray the prayer together with your child on First Communion day.

Review the words of the Eucharistic Prayer that are found on page 147 of your child's text. Emphasize that during the Eucharistic Prayer the Church does and says what Jesus did at the Last Supper in memory of Jesus as he asked us to do.

It is important that your child understand that the Eucharist is truly spiritual food. Explain that just as we need to eat regular food for our physical health, we need to share the Eucharist on a regular basis to nourish our life in Christ. Point out that reading Scripture, praying, and receiving the Eucharist strengthen the new life in Jesus they have received in Baptism. Spend a little extra time with your child this week reading Scripture, praying, and talking about the importance of receiving the Eucharist regularly.

Feel the love and support of your parish family during these final weeks.

Sincerely,



Dear Parents,

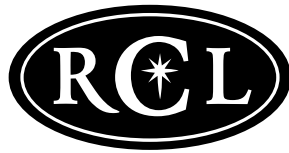
This is an exciting week. It is the final week of preparation for First Eucharist. This week your child is working on Chapter 8, "The Traveler on the Road to Emmaus: A Scripture Story." An adapted version of this story is found on page 71 in your child's text. You can find the complete story in Luke 24:13–31. An important point about this story is that the disciples at first did not recognize that the stranger on the road was Jesus. Often, we too do not recognize Jesus. Jesus meets us in everyday and unexpected places as he met his disciples, who were walking to Emmaus.

At the end of Mass the presider or deacon gives the command: "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." Help your child understand that when they help other people, they are serving the Lord. Jesus himself taught us this. Explain to your child that, as Christians, we all have the responsibility to help others come to know Jesus. Encourage your child to do this in simple ways each day. Share with your child the expression "Actions speak louder than words." Point out to your child his or her loving actions and how these actions will help others come to know Jesus.

This would be a wonderful time to have your own special family celebration in preparation for the day of your child's First Eucharist. If possible, bake bread together as a family. (Frozen bread dough can make this an easy activity.) Set your table with a candle or two, glasses of grape juice, and a Bible opened to the story of the disciples meeting Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Read the Scripture story, break and share the bread, and enjoy drinking the juice. Together say a prayer thanking God for all the blessings he has given to you. Decide one way your family can help other people come to know Jesus. End with a family hug.

This week say a prayer praising God for the gift of the Blessed Sacrament and for the gift of our children. What a privilege to bring these two great gifts together.

Sincerely,



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