

Session 5

Receiving Holy Communion



Let's Pray

O Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of the living God,
by dying on the Cross,
you won for us the forgiveness of sins
and the hope of living in Heaven
with you one day.

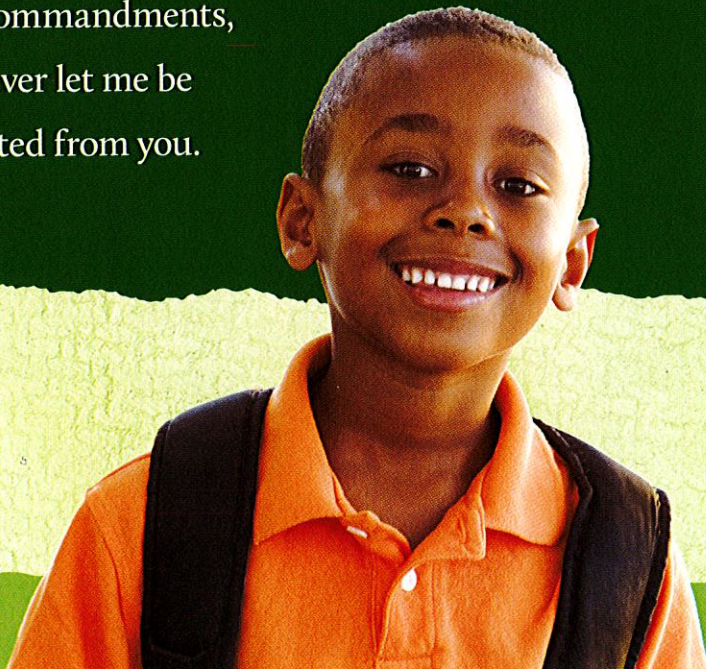
May your Body and Blood,
which I am about to receive
in Holy Communion,

keep me from sin and every evil.

Give me the strength to always follow
your commandments,

and never let me be
separated from you.

Amen.



Introduction

What do you do in the morning to get ready for your day? You probably have some things that you do every day, like get dressed, eat breakfast, and brush your teeth. If it is a very special and important day, maybe you have extra things you need to do to make sure you are prepared. When something is really special, we make sure we are ready for it. The Eucharist is God's most special gift to us, so we do some special things to get ready to receive this gift.

Let's Read God's Word

Saint Paul Writes about the Eucharist

From 1 Corinthians 10:14–17

Saint Paul wrote many letters to churches in different cities. In his letters, he reminded the people what he taught them when he visited their cities. In Saint Paul's first letter to the Christians in the city of Corinth, he asked them to remember what he taught them about the Eucharist. This is a summary of what Saint Paul told the Corinthians:

My beloved, you were made for the one true God, so don't worship any false gods. You know what I am talking about, and you can tell that what I say is true. When we worship God, we draw closer to God, and we also draw closer to one another.

When the priest blesses the cup of the Eucharist in the Mass, then we share in the Blood of Christ. The bread that the priest breaks in the Mass lets us share in the Body of Christ.

Jesus is the one bread. We are many different people, but when we share the one bread of the Eucharist, we become one body. In the Eucharist we are united to Jesus, and we are also united to each other.



Let's Talk About It

According to Saint Paul, how does Holy Communion affect our relationship with God? With other Christians?

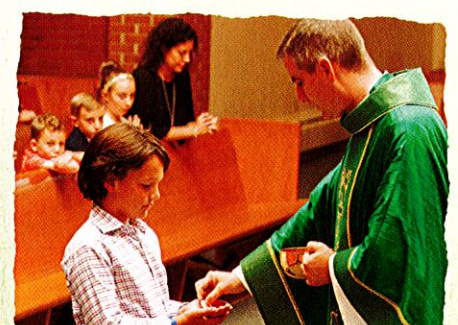
☩ Let's Learn About Our Faith

Preparing for Holy Communion

The Eucharist is so important because it is the Body and the Blood of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Because it is so important, we need to do some special things to get ready to receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

When we receive Holy Communion, we are united to Jesus, and so we need to be in a **state of grace**. When we are in a state of grace, we have God's divine life of grace within us, and we can be united to Jesus.

Committing a **mortal sin** takes us out of a state of grace, so we must be truly sorry and receive forgiveness for any mortal sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation before we



receive the Eucharist. Being in a state of grace when we receive the Eucharist is a way that we recognize and show **reverence** and respect for Jesus's Body and Blood and prepares us to be united with him in the sacrament.

Another way we prepare ourselves for Holy Communion is by keeping the **Eucharistic fast**. In the Eucharistic fast, we do not eat or drink anything (except for water or medicine) for at least one hour before we receive Holy Communion. This helps us learn to be hungry for Jesus. It also reminds us that the Eucharist is our most important food, more important than any other food we eat. The Eucharist feeds us spiritually so that we participate in the life of Christ.

We also show our reverence by the way that we receive Holy Communion. You can receive the Host on your tongue or in your hands.

When you receive the Host on the tongue, you must open your mouth and stick out your tongue a little so that the priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister can place the Host on your tongue.

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, the bishop of Jerusalem about 300 years after Jesus founded the Church, wrote about how to receive Holy Communion in our hands. He told us to place one hand under the other hand to make a throne because we are receiving the King.

Key Words

State of Grace

The state of having God's divine life within us.

Mortal Sin

A serious sin that separates us from God and results in the loss of sanctifying grace.

Reverence

To show respect, especially for things that are holy.

Eucharistic Fast

The rule that we must not eat or drink anything (except for water or medicine) for at least one hour before receiving Holy Communion.

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Then, when the Host is placed on your palm, carefully pick it up with your other hand and place it in your mouth, being careful not to drop the Host.

And when you receive the Precious Blood in the chalice, you must hold the chalice very carefully with both hands and take a small sip.

In the Eucharist, Jesus comes to us under the appearance of both bread and wine. The bread becomes the Body of Christ, which is united to his whole self; and the wine becomes his Blood, which is united to his whole self. This means that if you only receive the Host, or if you only receive from the chalice, you are still receiving the entire Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ.



Let's Talk About It

Why is it important to be in a state of grace when receiving Holy Communion?

God gives us many graces when we receive Holy Communion

- The Eucharist increases our union with Christ.
- It protects, increases, and renews the life of grace we received at Baptism.
- It separates us from sin.
- The Eucharist washes away past venial sins and helps us avoid sin in the future.
- It helps us grow in love, and the more we love God, the less we will sin.
- When we come closer to Christ, we come closer to everyone who is part of the Body of Christ, the Church.



Did You Know?

What Is a Host?

The small round wafer of bread that is **consecrated** in the Eucharist is known as a host. The word “host” comes from the Latin word *hostia*, which means a victim of a sacrifice. We call the bread for the Eucharist a “Host” because Jesus is the true Host, the Victim of the true and perfect Sacrifice.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Jesus remains present in the Eucharist even after Mass. The Hosts that are consecrated but not consumed during Communion are kept in the Tabernacle. Sometimes, a Host is brought out and displayed in a **Monstrance**, a special vessel used to display the Blessed Sacrament for **Adoration**. To adore means to love and respect someone, and when we talk about adoring God, it also means to worship him.

During Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, we pray in front of Jesus, who is present in the Eucharist displayed in the Monstrance. We can say our own prayers, just sit in silence with Jesus, or say some of the special prayers that the Church recommends for Adoration.

Key Words

Consecrated

The bread and wine that has been changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus; also to set aside for sacred use.

Monstrance

The special vessel, usually made of gold, that is used to display the Blessed Sacrament for Adoration.

Adoration

The special act of worshipping Jesus, who is present in the Blessed Sacrament.





Let's Do Activities

God's Special Gift

Your First Holy Communion is the most important way to grow close to Jesus!

Follow the path and choose the steps you should follow when you are getting ready to receive the Eucharist at Mass. Fill in the circle next to each step with a smiley face if it is a good choice that brings you closer to the Eucharist or a sad face if the choice does not prepare you for this special time with Jesus.

Then draw a line following the correct path to receive the Eucharist.

START I examine my conscience...

- I have a mortal sin – I go to Confession as soon as I can ☹️
- I only have venial sins 😊

Then I...

- Go to Mass every Sunday 😊
- Only go to Mass if I feel like it ☹️
- Eat a snack right before Mass 😊
- Fast for one hour before Holy Communion 😊

Today is Sunday, so I...

At Mass I...

- Take a nap ☹️
- Say a prayer before Communion 😊

Next I...

- Chew gum and look around as I walk to Communion ☹️
- Walk to Communion reverently 😊

Then I...

- Receive Communion on my tongue or make my hands like a throne for Jesus 😊
- Grab the Eucharist out of the hands of the priest ☹️

I go back to my seat and I...

- Sit and think about TV or video games ☹️
- Kneel and say a prayer of thanksgiving after Communion 😊

When Mass is over I...

- Go in peace to love and serve the Lord 😊
- Forget all about Jesus ☹️

SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

Graces Tic-Tac-Toe

When we receive our First Holy Communion, we also receive many graces from Jesus! Mark the graces that we receive from the Eucharist below with an O. Put an X on the pictures of things that do not come from the Eucharist. When you mark all the pictures with either an X or an O, you will get Tic-Tac-Toe in two directions. Discover the special shape it makes!



I become famous!



I grow in love of God and others!



I get lots of money!



I have union with Jesus!



My venial sins are forgiven!



My Baptismal grace grows!



I get super powers!



I am in union with others in the Church!



I become a genius!

Jesus said,

“He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

—John 15:5

Let's Recall and Reflect

Why is the Eucharist our most important food?

Why do we do special things to prepare to receive Holy Communion? What are some things you can do to prepare your heart to receive Jesus?

What is the Eucharistic fast? The Eucharistic fast means not eating or drinking anything except for water or medicine for at least one hour before receiving Holy Communion.

Why must we be in a state of grace to receive Holy Communion? We must be in a state of grace to receive Holy Communion in order to show reverence to Jesus and to be prepared to be united with him in the sacrament.

What is the Host? The small wafer or piece of bread that is consecrated in the Eucharist.

What does it mean to show reverence? To show respect, especially for things that are holy.

What is Adoration? The special act of worshipping Jesus, present in the Blessed Sacrament.

Story of a Saint



Saint Anthony of Padua (1195–1231)

Saint Anthony was once challenged by a man who didn't believe that Jesus was really present in the Eucharist. The man said that if a donkey didn't eat for three days, he would choose a pile of hay over the Eucharist. He wanted to prove that the Eucharist was not the Precious Body of Our Lord. Anthony accepted the challenge. After three days, the donkey was released. On one side of the donkey, they set a pile of hay. On the other side, Saint Anthony held the Blessed Sacrament above his head and demanded the donkey to worship his Creator. The donkey bowed before the Eucharist at once, while everyone watched in amazement.

Let's Pray

Blessed be God.

Blessed be his Holy
Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ,
true God and true Man.

Blessed be the Name of
Jesus.

Blessed be his Most
Sacred Heart.

Blessed be his Most
Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the
Most Holy Sacrament of
the Altar.

Amen.

Memory Verse

*"For my flesh is food
indeed, and my blood is
drink indeed."*

—John 6:55

Let's Read a Story

Ducks

The Perry family arrived at Saint Clare of Assisi Catholic Church for Mass. Nick saw Mr. Norm, the church handyman, on the other side of the parking lot. Mr. Norm threw bread to a flock of ducks near the small pond on the church property.

"He's feeding the ducks!" Samantha said.

Nick and Sam ran over to Mr. Norm.

"They won't make so much noise during Mass if I feed them," Mr. Norm explained when Nick and Sam walked up. He gave the twins bread to help with the feeding.

The ducks waddled around and quacked with excitement.

"I've been thinking," Mr. Norm said. "What makes a duck a duck?"

Nick looked at Sam. He had told her about the strange question Mr. Norm asked the day before about God being small.

Sam smiled. "It quacks. And has a bill. And feathers."

Mr. Norm nodded. "So if a duck couldn't quack anymore, is it still a duck?"

"Yes," Sam said.

"And if we plucked all its feathers, would it still be a duck?" Mr. Norm asked.

"Yes," said Sam.

"And if its bill fell off?" he asked.

"It would still be a duck," Sam said with a giggle.

Mr. Norm turned to her. "Why?" he asked.

Sam stopped giggling. She didn't know what to say.

"Because a duck is a duck," Nick said.

Mr. Norm thought for a minute. "So if I took a duck and made it look like a dog . . . it would still be a duck?"

"Yes," the twins said together. Sam thought they were playing a part in some kind of joke.

“So, even though the outside looks like one thing, it can still be something else?”
Mr. Norm asked.

“Yes!” Sam said.

“Is this like the question you asked me yesterday?” Nick asked.



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Mr. Norm smiled at him. “If you ever feel confused, remember that God has an explanation for everything. But he doesn’t always explain everything to us. That’s part of the mystery.”

Mr. Perry stepped up to them. “Time for Mass,” he said and nodded to Mr. Norm.

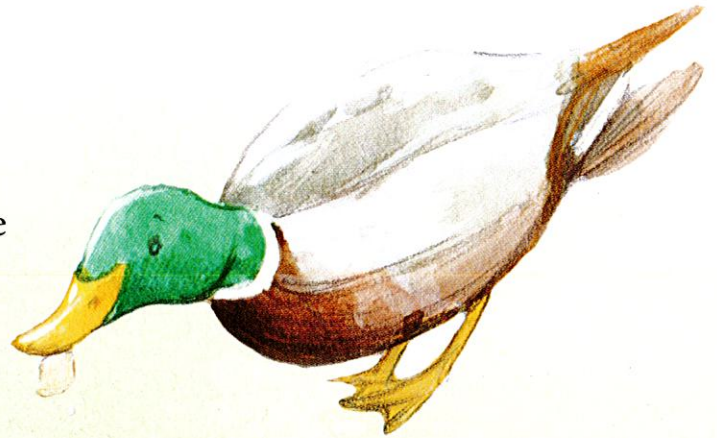
Mr. Norm threw the rest of the bread down for the ducks. “I better wash my hands,” he said and ambled away.

As they walked back to the church, Nick told his dad, “Mr. Norm keeps talking about things looking one way on the outside when it’s really something else.”

Mr. Perry gazed at his son and daughter. “Maybe he means that Jesus looked like a man, but he was also God. And when you go into Mass, people see the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus. On the outside, it still looks like bread and wine. But God has miraculously changed it into something else.”

“Is this about our First Communion class?” Sam asked.

Nick smiled. “God is in disguise,” he said.



Let's Talk About It

Which is more important: what something looks like on the outside, or what it really is on the inside? Why?

In the Mass, what do the bread and wine become?

Why would Jesus come to us looking like food and drink?