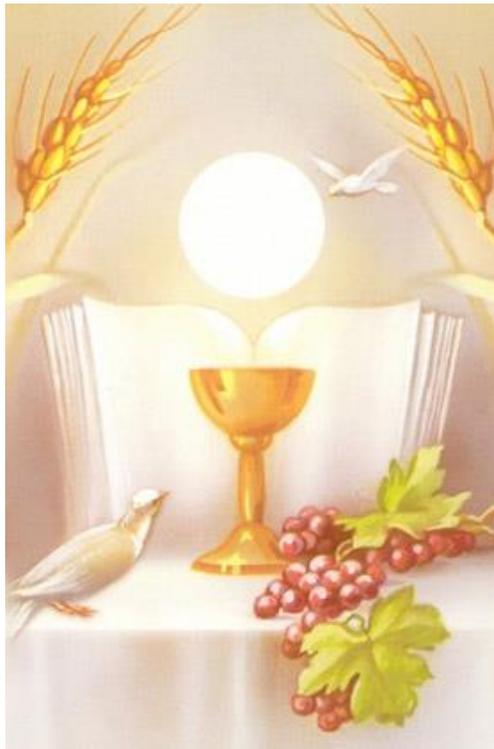


# Family Sessions

For use with God's Gift: Eucharist workbook

St. Thomas More Church



## Luke 22:19

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “**This is my body**, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

**Completed Workbook Due @ Retreat – 4/7/19**

## Session 1: Belonging

**Goal:** Baptism celebrates that we are part of God's family, and the Eucharist is a meal that reminds us of whom we are and where we belong.

### Step 1: 3 Minute Family Retreat

1. Gather in a comfortable place
2. Ask your child to close their eyes and imagine a time when they were new kid at school, or on a team or in a camp. How did it feel?
3. Now ask them to imagine when they stopped feeling like a new kid. Ask them what helped them feel how they belonged. Discuss.
4. Tell your child just like we belong to a team or school, we belong to God's family. Complete the bullet points on page 1 of your child's *God's Gift: Eucharist* workbook together.

### Step 2: Let's Imagine

1. Tell your child that we are like plants in God's garden. We are all different types of plants, but we all belong. God needs us all.
2. Read pages 2-3 with your child.
3. Discuss what happened at Pentecost and ask your child to picture him/herself in the room. How would you feel when the wind blew and flames appeared? Then do the sticker activity. (The stickers can be found in the back of the workbook.)

### Step 3: Let's Dig In

1. Read pages 4-6 together.
2. Ask: Which 3 sacraments celebrate that we belong to God's family?
3. Spend some time sharing memories of your child's baptism. Have them draw a picture on page 5.

### Step 4: Prayer

1. Tell your child belonging to God's family is something to celebrate.
2. Turn to page 8-9 and say the prayer together, or say your own prayer.

**Optional:** For extra reinforcement and fun, your child may complete the "Follow Jesus" maze on page 7.

## **Session 2: Gathering**

**Goal:** Your child will learn that God is always with us, especially when we gather as a parish family to celebrate the Eucharist.

### **Step 1: 3 Minute Family Retreat**

1. Gather in a comfortable place.
2. Ask your child to think of their favorite family tradition. How does that tradition make him/her feel? Why is it so special to him/her? Discuss.
3. Have your child circle the times your whole family gathers on page 11.
4. Tell him/her that Jesus loved traditions too, and one of his traditions was gathering friends for a meal. At the Last supper, he told them they continue to share a meal, even when he was gone. Jesus' friends still celebrate this tradition. It's called Mass.

### **Step 2: Let's Imagine**

1. Ask your child to imagine being at a party with Jesus. What do they say to Jesus? Who is at this party? What do they do? Discuss.
2. Tell them the people of Israel also celebrated God, a long, long time ago, even before Jesus was born.
3. Read pages 12-13 together with your child.
4. Ask your child what the Ark of the Covenant was and how did the people of Israel celebrate when they saw the Ark? Then do the sticker activity.

### **Step 3: Let's Dig In**

1. Tell your child we celebrate like the people of Israel every time we go to Mass.
2. Read pages 14-17 together about Gathering for Mass.
3. Tell your child that just like we welcome family when they come to our house for a party, we are welcomed at Mass. Our time together is a time to celebrate how much God loves us.
4. Have your child complete the activity on page 15.

### **Step 4: Prayer**

1. Tell your child every time we want to celebrate God's presence, we can pray to him.
2. Say the prayer on pages 18-19 or say one in your own words.

## **Session 3: Reflecting**

**Goal: Your child will learn the ways we can encounter God in daily life and in the Mass.**

### **Step 1: 3 Minute Family Retreat**

1. Gather in a comfortable place.
2. Invite family members to have a seat and close their eyes. Ask your child to concentrate on the sounds they hear around him/her when he/she is silent.
3. Ask your child what sounds they heard. Then ask them to listen again and identify new sounds he/she didn't hear before.
4. Tell your child there are often sounds around us that we don't even hear. If we can practice we can hear new and different things around us.
5. We can learn how when we silence all the sounds in life we can hear God speaking to us.

### **Step 2: Let's Imagine**

1. Ask your child to imagine a mute button that hides all sounds.
2. We can use the mute button to mute out distractions at school so we can hear the teacher better.
3. Imagine using the mute button to mute the noises in our minds, so we can be ready to spend time with God.
4. God speaks to us in many ways. Sometimes through a friend, a thought, feeling, or beautiful sunset. If we can use our mute button to quiet ourselves, we can hear God better.
5. Read pages 22-23 with your child and discuss how God caught Moses' attention. Then do the sticker activity.

### **Step 3: Let's Dig In**

1. Tell your child going to Mass is a chance to celebrate time with God. But we also need a little quiet to get our hearts ready to talk to Him.
2. Mass begins with a time to think quietly to get our heart ready for him.
3. Read pages 24-26 with your child.
4. Tell your child quiet times are important in life to help us mute out distractions and focus. We can have this quiet time with God any time we want.
5. Complete the activity on page 27 about how we can praise God at home.

### **Step 4: Prayer**

1. Ask your child to quiet themselves to prepare for prayer.
2. Say the prayer on pages 28-29 or say one in your own words.

## **Session 4: Listening**

**Goal: Your child will learn how God wants to speak directly to each one of us through His Word.**

### **Step 1: 3 Minute Family Retreat**

1. Gather in a comfortable place.
2. Ask your child and imagine that he/she is a tree. Ask him to imagine his feet are the roots of a tree.
3. The roots stretch deep into the ground and help the tree to gather water to stay alive.
4. Just like God gave trees roots to gather everything they need to live and grow, He gave us His Word so that it lands in our hearts and we can live and grow.
5. Tell your child to open her eyes and that we will be learning how God's Word can be planted in our hearts.
6. Say the prayer together found at the bottom of page 31.

### **Step 2: Let's Imagine**

1. Ask your child to imagine that he has won a drawing in the Church raffle and he can go anywhere in the world. All we have to do is answer the letter by the deadline.
2. But we are too busy, and don't notice we have to answer the letter so we miss out on our trip.
3. Jesus gives us an example of how good things can go to waste if they don't sink in.
4. Read pages 32-33 with your child and discuss what happened to the seeds that fell on different kinds of soil. Then do the sticker activity.

### **Step 3: Let's Dig In**

1. Tell your child God speaks to us in many ways, and one way is through the weekly readings at Mass.
2. Read pages 34-35 with your child about "Hearing God's Word."
3. Tell your child we can hear the readings without listening to them. If we want to learn and grow, we need to listen to the readings with our heart.
4. Read page 36 with your child about listening to God's word with our hearts.
5. Ask your child what kind of "seed" they would like to be at Mass. How can he do that?

### **Step 4: Prayer**

1. Tell your child when we've learned something we really listen with our hearts.
2. Say the prayer on pages 38-39 or make one of your own.

**Optional:** The "Story Time" activity on page 31 and "God's Word Grows in You" on page 37.

## **Session 5: Preparing**

**Goal:** Your child will learn how the Eucharist helps us bring the love of Christ to the world.

### **Step 1: 3 Minute Family Retreat**

1. Gather in a comfortable place.
2. Ask your child to close his eyes imagine the best gift she ever gave someone. What made it the best gift she ever gave?
3. Tell them when they do something nice for someone that is a gift too.
4. God welcomes our gifts no matter what they are. They are never the wrong color or size for Him.
5. Pray the prayer together found at the bottom of page 41.

### **Step 2: Let's Imagine**

1. Ask your child to imagine that he is going to be in a talent show where they hand out prizes for a talent no one has ever shared before.
2. If your child could make up any talent for the show, what would it be? Discuss this.
3. Ask your child to list some talents they have (good handwriting, sunny smile, great passing game in soccer...)
4. Read pages 42-43 about the boy who shared the loaves and fishes with a large crowd.
5. Discuss what happened in the story and how Jesus used the boy's gift. Then do the sticker activity.

### **Step 3: Let's Dig In**

1. Tell your child our talents and gifts are from God and he is always really happy when we use them.
2. We have an opportunity to give gifts to God at Mass too.
3. Read pages 44-45 with your child.
4. Tell your child we not only give gifts at Mass, we get the best gift ever, Jesus himself!
5. Read page 46 with your child
6. Tell your child every time we take the Eucharist Jesus is offering his time, his help, and all his love. WOW!

### **Step 4: Prayer**

1. Tell your child we all have gifts to offer God and others when we share them, God make them bigger and better than they were before.
2. Say the prayer on pages 48-49 together, or make up your own.

**Optional:** The "My Gift" activity on page 47.

## **Session 6: Remembering**

**Goal:** Your child will learn how Jesus becomes truly present to us in the Eucharist.

### **Step 1: 3 Minute Family Retreat**

1. Gather in a comfortable place.
2. Ask your child to close his eyes and imagine standing in front of the fridge. Has he ever known you were hungry but didn't know what you wanted to eat?
3. Tell your child that God knows what we want and need even when we don't.
4. Ask your child to quiet his mind and tell God what he is feeling and wanting. God will hear your child and give them what they really need want because he can look deep into our heart.

### **Step 2: Let's Imagine**

1. Ask your child to imagine there is a magic pill that would give them all the nutrition we need. We would never be hungry again! The pill would be free and would taste like whatever we wanted. Discuss what that would be like.
2. Tell them this is only imaginary, but there REALLY is a way to get the right nourishment for our hearts and souls. Jesus gave us this gift in the Eucharist.
3. We can have the Eucharist anytime we need to. Read pages 52-53 with you child. Discuss the passage with your child and how he said the bread IS his body. Then do the sticker activity.

### **Step 3: Let's Dig In**

1. Jesus gave us a very special gift, so we thank him for this gift at Mass.
2. Read page 54 with your child.
3. Tell your child even though it looks like bread and wine, they really are Jesus' body and blood. This can be tricky! Read pages 55-56 together.
4. Tell them when we take Eucharist Jesus sees into our hearts, loves us, and answers our hungers.
5. Ask your child to complete the comprehension activity on page 57.

### **Step 4: Prayer**

1. Tell your child Jesus kept his promise to give us the food we need to be his followers.
2. Read the prayer on pages 58-59 or make up your own.

## **Session 7: Receiving**

**Goal:** Your child will learn how God longs to provide our daily bread in the Eucharist.

### **Step 1:** 3 Minute Family Retreat

1. Gather in a comfortable place.
2. Tell your child to cross their arms tightly and clench their fists. Then ask them to shut their eyes as tight as they can.
3. Ask your child if you wanted to give them a gift, could you? Why not?
4. Now ask your child to open their eyes and let his/her body relax. How does that feel?
5. Say God wants to give us gifts, but we need to be open to those gifts. God wants to give us himself.

### **Step 2:** Let's Imagine.

1. Ask your child to imagine being able to have Christmas any time they want, and that we get the most perfect gift every time. What would that gift be? Discuss.
2. When we celebrate Christmas we are celebrating the gift of Jesus. When we celebrate the Eucharist, we are also celebrating the gift of Jesus. Isn't that wonderful!
3. Read pages 62-63 together. Discuss the pages and do the sticker activity.

### **Step 3:** Let's Dig In

1. Tell your child the reason Eucharist is also called communion is that our community comes together to worship Jesus.
2. Read pages 64-65 together. Stress it is important to receive Eucharist as part of a community.
3. Have your child fill in the blanks to the Our Father prayer on page 64.
4. Read pages 66-67 together and discuss.

### **Step 4:** Prayer

1. Tell your child Jesus summed up everything when he gave us the Our Father. Our whole Church community has shared this prayer for centuries.
2. Read the prayer on pages 68-69 together.

**Optional:** Your child may complete a letter to Jesus on page 67.

## Session 8: Journeying

**Goal:** After we receive the Eucharist we are sent forth on the journey of life and holiness.

### Step 1: 3 Minute Family Retreat

1. Gather in a comfortable place.
2. Ask your child to think about a fairy tale. How does it usually end? (Happily Ever After.) Ask her if she ever wonders what happens after the story ends. What is happily ever after?
3. Say happily ever after doesn't work in real life. There is always something that comes next.
4. The end of Mass is the same. We don't just walk out of Church like nothing happened. Something comes next.
5. Pray the prayer at the bottom of page 71 together.

### Step 2: Let's Imagine.

1. Ask your child to imagine being a missionary for one month. Explain what a missionary is. Then ask: What type of work would they do helping people? What would they need to take with them?
2. Say: God sends us on a mission every time we leave Mass. What are some ways we might be missionaries where we live?
3. God gives us everything we need for spiritual food every week in the Eucharist. It helps us feel brave and love others.
4. The first disciples needed the Eucharist to feel brave too. Read pages 72-73 with your child. Discuss the story and do the sticker activity.

### Step 3: Let's Dig In

1. Say: We have a chance to break bread with Jesus too. Turn to page 74 and read it with your child.
2. Say at the end of Mass we are given a job to do. Read pages 75-76 with your child.
3. Tell your child there are lots of ways to be a missionary for Jesus. Discuss some ways they may help in their community. (*Praying for people in need, picking up trash, treating others kindly at school are just some ideas.*)

### Step 4: Prayer

1. Say: We are nearly there. Soon you will receive Jesus in the Eucharist.
2. Say the prayer on pages 78-79 or use your own words to ask the blessing of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Optional:** Complete the "God's Message" activity on page 77.

## **Session 9: I Live My Faith**

(Review & Church Tour)

**Goals: Your child will understand the parts of the mass and how to receive Communion. Your child should be able to identify common items found in a church.**

### **Step 1: 3 Minute Family Retreat**

1. Find a comfortable space in your home to discuss the mass. Begin with the Our Father or an opening prayer of your choice.
2. Read "I celebrate the Lord's Day" section on page 81 together. Talk about how it is important to set aside time for God during our week in order to put God first in our lives.

### **Step 2: Let's Dig In**

1. See what your child remembers about the mass and ask if your child has any questions about what is to come with his/her First Communion Mass.
  - a. Please refer to the "Important Details" section of your Family Information Packet for information on how your child should receive the Eucharist and what kind of attire is recommended. Discuss these items with your child.
  - b. Page 92-93 in the workbook also explains how to receive Holy Communion with reverence.
  - c. Note: We will discuss how your child should receive the Eucharist at our rehearsal. We will also have an opportunity to taste the bread and wine at the retreat.
2. Explain that throughout the family sessions with their workbook, we have learned about the different parts of the mass. This is the time to review any content that may need a little refresher.
  - a. Refer to your child's workbook in the "I Live My Faith" section at the back of the book for more information about the mass (pg. 82-93) as needed..

### **Step 3: Let's Explore**

1. ***Visit St. Thomas More before or after mass to find and identify the items listed.***
2. Complete the church tour activity found on pages 98-99 with the stickers from the back of the workbook.

### **Step 4: Prayer**

1. Close with a short prayer of your choice. For ideas, a list of common prayers can be found on pages 96-97.
2. Ask God to watch over and bless your child as he/she prepares to make his/her First Communion in a few weeks.