6 – The Eucharist

Aim: To help your child HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF REAL PRESENCE

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| WELCOME & Opening prayer [10 minutes] 8.10 pm |
| * *Welcome the group with an affirming message.* * *Prayer* * *Remind them to look up the logistics of the Mass:* [*https://www.cpg.church/fhc-masses.html*](https://www.cpg.church/fhc-masses.html) |
| SMALL GROUP – ICE BREAKER [10 minutes] 8.20 pm |
| Q: How are you coming to the session today?  Q: How did your family find the Reconciliation family day?  Q: Which stations or activities did the children enjoy exploring with you?  Q: How did their child experience receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time? How did they find the experience if they also received the sacrament? |
| INTRODUCTION [5 MINUTES] |
| 8.30 PM  So far, we have spent time with our children exploring who God is through Jesus and how his Death and Resurrection allow us to have a relationship with God. We talked about how much God loves us and how we have become children of God through Baptism. We also reflected on how we sometimes choose to turn away from God’s love through sin, but how this is not the end of us. Jesus has made a way for us to come back to God. Through the gift of the sacrament of reconciliation, we can return to God and be restored and made whole again and again.  These truths we have explored and shared with our children form a foundation for our faith for the rest of their lives. Our relationship with God is the most important relationship we will ever have.  **A personal relationship with God does not necessarily mean it is private.**  Page 56  On the last page of handout 6, we ask you to reflect on the Feeding of the 5000 with your children, linking it to the offertory at Mass and how the gifts that we offer God, he turns into something extraordinary.  One thing that we would like to add to this reflection for you is this. **Jesus is in the business of communion.** The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – one God, three persons who live in perpetual communion. God is communion, and he wants to gather us into communion. When they saw the crowd, the disciples told Jesus to send everyone away to get food for themselves. Jesus said no. Give me something, and I’ll feed them all**. He is in the business of gathering, not dispersing.**  **We have a personal relationship with God but can only flourish in communion with others**. We are built for relationship with others. We know that. We’ve come from a family and have created our own family. We do not live solitary lives. The same is true for our faith.  Receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation can feel like a very private thing, just between you and God, mediated through a priest. When preparing for the sacrament of the Eucharist or Holy Communion, we can also think of that as very private; It just so happens that there are 200 other people in the room doing the same thing.  We can feel the same in preparing for the sacrament of Holy Communion. This is just about me and my child ticking the boxes so that we can receive this thing and go and get on with our lives. If we are honest with ourselves, is that how we feel sometimes?  **The church has been meeting on Sundays for Mass since the early church**. Jesus promised to be there with them when two or more come together to pray. Christ is with us when we come together and celebrate God’s love for us at Mass. Christ is present.  We come together to Mass to Hear God’s Word and to receive him in Communion. There is no more of an amazing or privileged way to build our relationship with God than at Mass and through its community. In this session, we are going to be unpacking why. |
| Small group 2 – MASS AS A FAMILY [15 minutes] 8.35 PM |
| Q: What do you think your child thinks of when hearing “Mass”?  Q: What does Mass mean to you?  Q: Have you been able to go to Mass regularly in person? When was the last time you went to Mass as a family?  Q: Did the Taught Mass give you a better understanding of the Mass? How? Q: How can we keep the regular practice of attending Mass weekly going? |
| THE PASSOVER AND THE LAST SUPPER [3 MINUTES] 8.50 PM  **The origin of the Mass comes from the Last Supper**, a Passover meal. What is the Passover? In Jesus’ time, all Jewish families who could afford to do so would travel to Jerusalem for the Passover feast to commemorate, in a special festival, the night of the EXODUS, where Israel was freed from Egyptian slavery.  Page 58B  The prophet Moses, in the book of Exodus (12), was asked by God to go to Pharoah and warn him about what God would do to him if he didn’t free the Israelites from slavery. After sending a plague, locusts and disease, the final thing was that all the Egyptians' firstborn sons would be killed. The Israelites were asked to sacrifice a one-year-old lamb and smear its blood on their doors and lintels so that when the angel of death came, it would “pass over” their houses.  The Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples, which Jews had celebrated since the Exodus from Egypt, involved the sacrifice of an unblemished lamb whose blood protected the Israelites. At the same time, the firstborn of the Egyptians were killed (Exodus 12:5-7, 12- 14).  The New Testament makes clear that this lamb represented Jesus Christ. As John the Baptist had announced about Jesus, “BEHOLD! THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!” (JOHN 1:29).  This last Passover was special, and Jesus taught His disciples new elements that would become the basis of the Mass.  26 WHILE THEY WERE EATING, JESUS TOOK A LOAF OF BREAD, AND AFTER BLESSING IT HE BROKE IT,  GAVE IT TO THE DISCIPLES, AND SAID, ‘TAKE, EAT; THIS IS MY BODY’ 27 THEN HE TOOK A CUP, AND  AFTER GIVING THANKS, HE GAVE IT TO THEM, SAYING, ‘DRINK FROM IT, ALL OF YOU; 28 FOR THIS IS MY  BLOOD OF THE COVENANT, WHICH IS POURED OUT FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.  Jesus celebrated a Passover, but His own, new Passover. By His sacrifice, a new Exodus takes place. So, instead of freedom from the slavery inflicted by the Ancient Egyptians, it is now freedom from the slavery of sin and the hope of entry into the promised land of heaven. And, while the Passover of the old covenant focused on the flesh and blood of the lamb and the Exodus event, the new Passover is a sharing of the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Himself, and He commanded us, “Do this in remembrance of me.”  **So, you can see that all the Mass has a connection with The Last Supper. That was the origin of the Mass. On page 58, we ask you to look at the Last Supper.**  Page 58B |
| A SACRIFICE PERPETUATED [1 MINUTE] 8.53 PM  The Mass is a representation of the Last Supper. **We participate in the one great sacrifice when we attend Mass and receive the Eucharist.**  In Scripture, a memorial is a retelling of past events and the mystical proclamation of those events, where they become, in a certain way, present and real.  It is how Israel understands its liberation from Egypt: every time Passover is celebrated, even today, the Exodus events are made present to the memory of believers so that they may conform their lives to them. If you attend a Passover feast today, the youngest person will ask the oldest or head of the household, “Why are we here?” And the head of the household would say, “On this night…” Not “we remember something in the past”. The events are made present.  “When the church celebrates the passion of Christ in the Eucharist, the sacrifice of Christ is remembered and made present. It is a true sacrifice because it re-presents the sacrifice of Christ and applies its fruits.” (CCC 1366)  Jews celebrate the Passover once a year. Why do we have to celebrate Mass every week?  "At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again…" CCC 1323  **Christ was sacrificed once in time upon the cross in Jerusalem. But in the Eucharist that one sacrifice and its fruits is perpetuated (made to continue indefinitely) throughout time.** And what is so amazing is that we participate every time we go to Mass.  Let’s take this bible. Every leaf of this book is the number of times Mass has been celebrated. But God looks at things from a different perspective. God is looking at it from above. God is outside of time and space, and for God, it is one sacrifice perpetuated throughout time.  This isn’t just about remembering an event that happened once in time. It is as if we are participating in that last supper that happened 2,000 years ago every time we go to Mass. |
| REAL PRESENCE In this next part, we will look at the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Your child may have already asked you, “Yeah, but how is this bread *actually* his body? It’s not his actual flesh we are eating. Is it? Yuck!”  When the priest in Persona Christi says, “This is my Body” and “This is my blood”. The words of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, change reality. **In the Eucharist, Christ Himself becomes spiritually present among us by the power of the Holy Spirit. This presence is called the *Real Presence*.**  Let us learn more about this from Bishop Barron, who starts talking about what Thomas Aquinas called *Transubstantiation*. |
| Video camera outlineREAL PRESENCE – BISHOP BARRON [6 MINUTES] 8.54 PM  ([vimeo.com/catholicparishguildford/real-presence](https://vimeo.com/catholicparishguildford/real-presence?share=copy)) |
| Appearance and reality Page 66B  As you can see on **page 66 of the handout**, we have a section all about what we have just heard in the video, and we will chat about it now in our small groups. |
| SMALL GROUP 3 – Appearance and reality [10 minutes] 9.00 pm |
| Q: What do you think about the examples and explanations Bishop Barron gave?  *SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS*  Q: How would you explain this to your child now or in the future?  Q: What do you think your child understands about the Eucharist? |
| OUR PRESENCE MATTERS [5 MINUTES] 9.10 PM  We’ve lightly touched on how we could start to explain to our children the mystery of how bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ.  **We also need to talk about another vital aspect of presence. It’s our presence and how it matters.**  Presence is a relational concept. The Presence of God at Mass pulls us into the equation and stops us from focusing on the how, the if, and the what of the Eucharist.  Think of when your children, especially when they were younger, and how desperate they were for your attention. Do you remember when you put everything down, stopped what you were doing and focused on them, even for just a moment? Do you remember what an amazing difference it made? In that moment, there is a recognition of the “I and the other”; you also open yourself up to give and receive. You have become present in the moment.  The Eucharist at Mass that Jesus asks us to participate in invites us to get out of our heads and into our bodies. Jesus never said, “Think about this” or “Stare at this”. Jesus said, “Take it and eat it” – it is body language. It is a bodily action, and so our physical presence matters. We need a weekly encounter with this reality to recognise it throughout the rest of our week.  This isn’t a transaction. This is meant to be transformational. When Jesus says, “Do this in remembrance of me,” we are re-membered to his presence. This is symbolised by the breaking of bread into lots of smaller pieces. Have you noticed the priest performing this action on the altar? The gift of the Eucharist is being reconnected to that reality.  I was listening to this podcast recently, and a lady was on there talking about how she was at this workshop once all about prayer. She was surrounded by people who said, “Oh yes, I spend 30 minutes in silent meditation every day, or I go to daily Mass, etc”. She felt this was only a path for retired people with ample time to give to this and not for people like her juggling life, work, and screaming babies. She told the guy leading the workshop, “Look, it doesn’t matter how early I get up, my kids will always interrupt me”. He said, “OK, you be, and I’ll be God – let’s do a little role play”. The guy said, “You know it just means so much to me that you get up early or have brought yourself here to be with me”. “I see you there, and I can see how much you love me and how much you want to spend time with me,” “I hear when you cry out for a moment of silence to be with me,” and “I can’t tell you what it means to me”. He continues like this for a while and then says, “You know I love you so much that I can’t bear it; you are so precious to me. So, what I do is I rush into the body of your children, and I wake them up because I want to know what it feels like to be held by you”.  That lady’s life was transformed forever because she realised God was present in those “messy moments”. She just never made herself present to that before. That is also a “real presence”.  We can experience this presence throughout the week, but the weekly Mass gives us the gift of a “re-cognising” of that. We tend to think that we need to be “holy”. We can’t possibly be worthy, or this can’t be something for me when I have a wriggly child sitting next to me, and I have a million things on my mind. We must have faith that he is present, but that doesn’t mean we must be perfect. If we can recognise this for ourselves, then we can share that with our children.  Faith can be messy – it can involve doubts.  Your presence, my presence, the old lady who rolls her eyes at the young family that walks into “her” Mass – her presence, it all matters. **Jesus is inviting us to physically enter his presence so that we can remember he is always at our side throughout the rest of the week. What a wonderful gift!** |
| SMALL GROUP 4 – FINAL CHAT TOGETHER [15 minutes] 9.15 pm |
| When discussing Jesus being present in the Mass, we must remember that we must also be present. We need to be present not just in our heads but also in our bodies, heart, and soul.  Q: How do you think your presence at Mass matters?  Q: What are your hopes regarding your family’s faith and relationship with the Church in the future?  Q: What do you need to help sustain and grow your faith as a family? |
| FEEDBACK FROM SMALL GROUPS [5 MINUTES] 9.30 PM |
| FINAL PRAYER [5 MINUTES] 9.35 PM |
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