

# NOTES FOR PARENTS ON THE SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST

It was at Last Supper that Jesus instituted the Eucharist.

*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.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

Matthew 26: 26-28

Jesus told his disciples to celebrate what he had done at the Last Supper and to do this in memory of him. It is a memory of his Life, Death and Resurrection. This is what takes place in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Bread and wine are used in this sacrament. Jesus spoke of himself as the Bread of Life. Bread is the basic nourishment for many people. Jesus spoke of the wine as being his Blood. In outward appearances wine resembles blood.

## The Sunday Eucharist

The Sunday Eucharist (Mass) is at the heart of Catholic faith and life. It is where Catholics gather to celebrate as community and receive strength for the Christian journey. They listen to God's Word and seek to apply it to their lives. What they receive in Communion is truly the Body and Blood of Christ in the form of bread and wine.

## The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

When Christ ascended to heaven he chose to remain with his Church in a special way. He gave us his sacramental presence. He wanted us to have the memorial of the love with which he loved us to the end, even to the giving of his life. In his Eucharistic presence he remains in our midst as the one who loved us and gave himself up for us, and he remains under signs that express and communicate this love – he feeds us. Christ's presence in the Eucharist cannot be understood by our senses, it relies on faith.

## Altar

The altar is the focal point of the church building. It represents the table of the Last Supper. It is consecrated and marked with five crosses symbolizing the five wounds of Christ. It is here that the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered. From the altar we receive the Bread of Life, the Body and Blood of Christ.

## Tabernacle

The Eucharist, (the Blessed Sacrament) is kept in the tabernacle for when it is needed for the sick and housebound and the dying. People show a sign of respect by bowing in front of the tabernacle. There is always a light in front of the tabernacle as a reminder of Christ's presence.

# The structure of the Eucharist (Mass)

The structure of the Eucharist may be divided into four sections:

- The Introductory Rites
- The Liturgy of the Word
- The Liturgy of the Eucharist
- The Communion and Concluding Rites

What happens when:

## **The Introductory Rites**

- Gathering
- Entrance procession
- The penitential act
- Glory to God (on Sundays and special feast days, but not during Advent or Lent)

## **The Liturgy of the Word**

- The first reading
- The responsorial psalm
- The second reading (on Sundays and special feast days)
- Gospel acclamation
- Gospel procession
- The Gospel
- The homily
- The Creed (on Sundays and special feast days)
- The Prayers of the Faithful (bidding prayers)

## **The Liturgy of the Eucharist**

- Presentation of the gifts
- The Eucharist prayer
- Holy, holy, holy
- Consecration of bread and wine
- The Mystery of Faith
- Presenting consecrated host and the chalice of Consecrated wine

## **The Communion and Concluding Rites**

- The Our Father
- Exchanging the sign of peace
- The Lamb of God
- Receiving communion
- Quiet prayer
- Blessing
- The sending out

## *In Come and See*

The Eucharist is studied by every year group and is the second topic of the Spring term. It follows the local Church topic where pupils gain an understanding of the life of the Church and it is followed by the Lent Easter topic which explores the sacrifice of Jesus and adds to the understanding of the Eucharist. Although the theme for all year groups is the same, the topics gradually help pupils to understand the important aspects of the sacrament in a developmental way.

### **EYFS - Gathering**

In EYFS, during this topic, the first thing children will explore is people coming together to celebrate. Catholics are united in that they believe that coming together for Sunday Eucharist or Mass, is important.

### **YEAR 1 - Meals**

In their topic 'Meals' the children focus on the Eucharist as a meal – the last meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. They learn that there are two main parts of the Mass – the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

### **YEAR 2 - Thanksgiving,**

The Mass as a special time to offer thanks. The children are introduced briefly to what happens during the 4 parts of the Mass. We Gather, We Listen, We Give Thanks and We Go Out. Children experience this liturgical format each day as they gather together for Collective Worship in school.

### **YEAR 3 - Listening and Sharing,**

The children focus on listening to the Word of God and sharing in Holy Communion.

### **YEAR 4 - Giving and Receiving**

The children learn how the Eucharist challenges and enables living and growing / giving and receiving in communion. The pupils learn about the Communion Rite and how Jesus gives himself in Holy Communion.

### **YEAR 5 - Memorial Sacrifice**

Children remember the Passover story and make links to their topic on Judaism. They learn about how the Eucharist keeps the memory of Jesus' sacrifice alive and present in a special way.

### **YEAR 6 - Unity**

This topic sets out the structure of Holy Communion and gives reasons for the actions and symbols used. Children explore how the Eucharist challenges and enables the Christian family to live and grow together in communion (relationship) every day.