

REMEMBER

Objective

To describe what happens at the Communion Rite

Faith Focus

What happens during the Communion Rite?

List children's responses on the board or on chart paper.

The Communion Rite

Remind children that they will soon be receiving Jesus for the first time in Holy Communion. Read each bulleted statement to children. Stop after each statement, and have children paraphrase it.

- Read the paragraph about preparing to receive Holy Communion. Point out that by learning about this Sacrament, children are preparing for Holy Communion.
- Ask children how we prepare at Mass to receive Communion. *We pray the Lord's Prayer; we remember we are all part of God's family; we share the Sign of Peace.*

Lamb of God

- Read the text aloud.
- Read aloud the Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*) prayer on page 97 in this edition. Have them repeat the prayer after you. You can also have the children turn to page 97 in their books for the prayer.

The Communion Rite

REMEMBER



Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)

Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) is a title for Jesus. This title reminds us that Jesus gave up his life for our sins. When we pray or sing this prayer before Holy Communion, we remember that through Jesus' death and Resurrection our sins are forgiven and we have peace.



68

Faith Focus

What happens during the Communion Rite?

We receive Jesus, the Bread of Life, in Holy Communion. What does this mean?

- We are united to Jesus.
- Our friendship with Jesus grows stronger.
- God forgives our less serious sins if we are sorry and gives us strength to avoid serious sin.
- We are united with the whole Church, the Body of Christ.
- We share in God's promise that we will live in Heaven with Jesus, Mary, and all the saints.

We prepare ourselves to receive Holy Communion. Together we stand and pray the Lord's Prayer. We remember we are one family with God. As a sign of unity, we share the Sign of Peace with each other.

Catechist Background

Real Presence After the consecration, Jesus is truly and fully present under the appearances of both bread and wine. His presence—Body and Blood, soul and divinity—remains in the consecrated Bread and Wine after the celebration of the Eucharist is over. This is one reason why we reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle after Mass. The doctrine of Real Presence is a doctrine of faith. As Saint Thomas Aquinas said, it "cannot be apprehended by the senses but only by faith" (*Summa Theologica IIIa, 9. 75, a. 1.*).

- Although children are concrete thinkers, they also possess a sense of faith and mystery that usually enables them to grasp the meaning of the doctrine when simple phrases such as "This is Jesus" or "This is the Body and Blood of Jesus" are used without attempting to explain the "how."
- One of the primary criteria to discern children's readiness to receive Holy Communion for the first time is that they know the difference between the consecrated Bread we share at Eucharist and ordinary bread.

Holy Communion

During Holy Communion, the priest invites us to the table. He reminds us of Jesus' sacrifice and presence in the Eucharist. He holds up the large Host and says, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb." We come forward in a procession. Sometimes we sing.

When it is our turn to receive Jesus, we cup our hands with one hand on top of the other. The priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion says, "The Body of Christ." We answer, "Amen."

Often, we may also receive from the cup. After we swallow the Host, we go to the deacon or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, who offers the cup and says, "The Blood of Christ." We answer, "Amen." We return to our places. We pray or sing a prayer of thanksgiving.

We should receive Holy Communion every time we participate in the Mass. We must do so at least once a year.

❓ **Why are we blessed to share in the Lord's Supper?**

Faith at Home

Review your child's response to the question. Talk about what happens when we receive Holy Communion by referring to the list on page 68. Use this page to show your child how to go to Holy Communion.



69

Sacrament Background

Communion under both species In the very early Church, receiving Communion under both species was normal. The fact that the Eucharist had its beginnings in the Passover meal, and in other fraternal meals that included rituals around bread and wine, shaped this custom.

When the practice of fully initiating infants became the norm, the practice developed in many churches of giving infants a small piece of the consecrated Bread and a sip of consecrated Wine. When an infant could not swallow the consecrated Bread, the child was given Communion with a sip of consecrated Wine.

The practice of Communion under both species was discouraged during times of plague because of the fear of contagion from using the communal cup. However, the practice was restored in the liturgical renewal after the Second Vatican Council and continues today under the direction of local bishops (*GIRM 283*).



Holy Communion

Write the terms *Host* and *extraordinary minister* on the board or on chart paper. Define these terms as you discuss the information on the page.

- Invite children to study the photograph as you read the text.
- Demonstrate the correct way to receive Holy Communion, and give children time to practice receiving the Host and cup.
- Ask why we pray a prayer of thanksgiving after receiving Communion. **Because we are blessed to have received Jesus, we thank Jesus for all the gifts he gives us.**
- ❓ Read and discuss the question. **Accept all reasonable responses.**

Activity Master

You may wish to use Activity Master 7 on page CE17 to review the order of steps in receiving the Eucharist.



▲ Activity Master 7

Review

- We receive Jesus in Holy Communion during the Communion Rite.
- Priests and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion distribute Communion to us.