



## FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME



### UNIT 13

# We Gather as God's Family

#### AIMS

1. To understand that as Christians we come together to **celebrate** every time we gather for the **Holy Mass**.
2. To understand the **need** and **duty** to take part in the celebration of the Mass **every** Sunday.
3. To start exploring the different parts of the Mass and understand the different parts of the **Introductory Rite** of the Mass.

#### KEY WORDS

- WE BELONG TO GOD'S FAMILY
- MASS
- SING
- SIGN OF THE CROSS
- PENITENTIAL RITE
- GLORIA

#### INTRODUCTION

Show pictures about different aspects of family life. Invite children to talk about what makes them feel members of a family and record their responses.

The fact that we are members of a family makes us feel happy. Show the poster or banner with the words WE BELONG TO GOD'S FAMILY and ask what it means. Recall the main points from Units 1 and 2. (Possibly refer to the Tree symbol used in Unit 1.)

#### RESOURCES

- Large poster or flashcards with key words shown above
- Images showing family life
- Other images showing Introductory Rite of the Mass
- Mass Responses; Prayer Book

#### MAIN

- Ask about how do we show that we are members of God's family and let the children give their own views. Guide them to realise that when we are gathered for the Mass on Sundays (or any other day of the week) we come together as God's family. All of us together are the "Church" - one big community/group (differentiate this from the "church" as just a building).
- When we gather together we celebrate the MASS (show flashcard/image). Brainstorm for ideas about what we do in church, who goes to church, who do we meet in church, different parts of the mass etc. Explain that in this session and the coming two we are going to talk about the different parts of the Holy Mass. This will help us understand what goes on in church so we can take part as best we can and get ready for our First Holy Communion. (*Over these 3 sessions a display chart or similar could be used to add flashcards about the different parts of the Mass*).
- Talk about the introduction of the Mass. Ask the children how do we start the Mass. Sometimes, especially on Sundays we SING a hymn. Through our singing we praise God and we show our joy as we gather together to celebrate. We then make the SIGN OF THE CROSS. This reminds us that we are gathered in the name of the Holy Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Following the first greeting, the priest invites us to recall our sins so that we can ask God's mercy and forgiveness. In the PENITENTIAL RITE we show that we need God's forgiveness. We use prayer *'I Confess....* (see Prayer Book) and the words: "Lord have mercy", "Christ have mercy" etc. Remind that we should always join in and say the RESPONSES together with all the other people at Mass. This is one way how we take part in the celebration of the Mass.
- On Sundays and special feasts, we are also invited to sing (or say) the GLORIA. This is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God. We honour him for his goodness and praise his greatness. Go through and talk about words in the Gloria using the Prayer Book.
- The priest then says the OPENING PRAYER - a short prayer related to the day's liturgy theme.
- Say that following this introduction to the Mass there are two main parts: the LITURGY OF THE WORD and the LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST. We will talk about these parts in the coming two sessions.

#### CONCLUDING PRAYER

Keep a few moments of silence and invite the children to think about the greatness of the gift that God is giving them for the first time in the coming weeks - their FIRST HOLY COMMUNION: Receiving the Body of Christ for the first time.

Remind about the Penitential Rite and the prayer I CONFESS... Invite the children to read through this prayer and reflect on key words and phrases.

#### NOTES

It may be useful to point out that another word sometimes used for the MASS is the EUCHARIST. Although this word is often used to mean Holy Communion itself, it is also used in a wider sense to mean the celebration of the Mass itself.

#### ACTIVITY

Talk to the children about how central is the Holy Mass in our Faith. As Catholic Christians we go to Mass EVERY Sunday. This is the most important prayer for us. It is also at mass that we receive Holy Communion - which is what we are getting ready for.

Hand out worksheet 13 and talk about the contents and tasks to be completed at home.