



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME



UNIT 15

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

AIMS

1. To understand the significance of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
2. To recognise that at Consecration bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ which we receive in Holy Communion.

KEY WORDS

- LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST
- OFFERTORY
- CONSECRATION
- OUR FATHER
- SHARE PEACE
- HOLY COMMUNION
- CONCLUDING RITE

INTRODUCTION

Read or narrate the story of the miracle of the feeding to the 5000 (Used in Unit 1 - see side B of worksheet 1. Explain that the short story shown on Side b of Worksheet 15 is the follow up to that miracle. Read or narrate the story in your own words. Highlight and discuss the words of Jesus: *Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood will have eternal life. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Those who eat this bread will live forever.* Say that Jesus gave us his flesh and blood when he had the **Last Supper** with the 12 apostles (show image) and briefly narrate what happened. Also say that we too are invited to share in this meal at **Mass** (show image) when we receive **Holy Communion**.

MAIN

- The LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST starts with the preparation of the gifts in the **Offertory**. Explain how the bread and wine are usually carried from the back of the church and given to the priest who puts them on the altar/table. Also say that at this time we should also think of offering ourselves. We offer some money too which is collected for the needs of the church and parish. (As for the previous session it may be helpful if children have a copy of the missalet to follow each step).
- The priest then starts reciting the EUCHARISTIC PRAYER (show Flashcard). Stress that this is a very important prayer during which the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Make an emphasis on the Words of **Consecration**: *'to become the body and blood.....'* In the Eucharistic prayer we also pray for special people and other intentions. We pray for the Church, the Pope and the bishops. We pray for our friends and other people in need. We also pray for the dead. We say the "Our Father" to show that we are gathered together in the Church as God's family. We also share peace together. At the Communion Rite then we receive the Body of Jesus. We come forward and the priest gives us the host as he says "The Body of Christ" to which we answer, "Amen". We then keep a moment of silence to thank Jesus for coming to us in Holy Communion. The mass ends with the concluding rites. The priest reads the last prayer and sends us forth to share the joy of Communion with others by loving and serving the Lord.
- As this is the main session on the theme of the Eucharist and Communion, take some more time to talk about the two ways of receiving the Holy Communion. One can receive Communion either in the hand or on the tongue. When receiving communion on the hand, one should put the right hand under the left. The priest will put the Host on the palm of our hand. We then take a step to the side, take the host with the right hand and eat it before walking back to our place. Say that during some masses the priest gives Communion with the two species, that is the body and blood of Christ. Show how to hold the Chalice/cup carefully and reverently when drinking the blood of Christ.
- Explain the Eucharistic **fasting rule**. As Catholics we are requested to fast from all solid food and drink (except water or medicine) for one hour before receiving Communion.
- Mention also that in order to receive Communion one must be in God's Grace, that is friend of God and free from any Big/Mortal sin in which case one has to go to confession before receiving communion.

RESOURCES

- Flash cards with Key Words shown above and display poster
- Missalets used in the parish church.
- Images: Last Supper, Mass
- Worksheet 15

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Show an image with some aspect of the Holy Eucharist. Light a candle. Read an extract from the Eucharistic Prayer.

Invite children to say their own prayers asking Jesus to help them as they prepare for their first Holy Communion.

Introduce and sing 'This is my Body' (see Resources) or a similar Eucharistic hymn.

NOTES

More practical advice on how to receive Holy Communion could be given on another occasion when children practice for their First Holy Communion mass.

ACTIVITY

Remind the children to pay more attention to the different parts referred to in today's session when they attend Sunday Mass.

Hand out Worksheet 15 and briefly go through the different parts children should complete at home.