

THE CHURCH

Community – Part 2



The Mass is Jesus' work. Through the Holy Spirit, it is possible for us to share in this work; we offer worship to God by giving ourselves to Him in the prayer of the Mass. In the Mass, the work of our redemption—ours individually, and that of the whole world—is continually being carried out.

The CONNECT section of the parent sheet connects you with the information that was presented to your teen in our last small discipleship group. The DISCUSS section contains questions that you can use to start meaningful discussion on the topic covered and how it relates to your teen's life. The COMMIT section explains to you the commitment or challenge that your teen committed to as a way to grow in his or her faith.



CONNECT

When we go to Mass, we can not only show our gratitude to God for all of His blessings in our lives, but we can unite ourselves to Christ in His prayer and sacrifice for the salvation of souls. We do this when we receive Him fully in the Eucharist—the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. Catholics believe that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross happened once for all at Calvary, but that we are able to be present at Calvary at each and every Mass.

Last session we learned that the Church was more than a building; she is the family of God and the hope for the world. The characteristics of God's family are that she is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. In this session we looked at the life of the early Church, and especially how *"they devoted themselves...to the breaking of the bread"* (Acts 2:42). We discussed what the Church means when she says that the Eucharist is *"the source and summit of the Christian life"* (CCC 1324).



“So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. And fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

—Acts 2:41-47



DISCUSS

We read in John 6:66 that even many of Jesus’ disciples could not believe His teaching on the Eucharist, and they left him. It takes faith to believe that God, who is all-powerful, would humble Himself in such a radical way. The Catechism tells us that *“the Eucharist...makes present the sacrifice of the cross”* (CCC 1366). By allowing Jesus to make us one with Him in this way, our entire lives will be transformed.

Here are some conversation starters to help you discuss this topic with your teen. Be sure to share your perspectives as well.

- » A teenage son told his father that he did not want to go to Mass because he did not “get anything out of it.” The father simply replied, “Son, love isn’t love until it is given away.” What do you think his dad was trying to say?
- » Despite the evidence from early Church writings and from Scripture, many Christians (even Catholics) have trouble believing that the Eucharist is truly the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus. Why do you think that is? What is one way you can help someone understand this truth of our faith better?

St. Augustine gave this encouragement for people when receiving the Eucharist: “Behold what you are; become what you receive.” What did he mean by this? How has the gift of the Eucharist transformed your own life?



COMMIT

By looking at the life and worship of the early Church, we can better understand why the Church does what it does today. Since her very beginning, the Church has devoted herself “to the breaking of the bread”; the Eucharist, in fact, is “the source and summit of the Christian life” (CCC 1324).

This week, the teens were challenged to pray a rosary for Catholics who have stopped attending Mass, that they might come to understand how much the Church needs them, and how much they need Jesus in the Eucharist, through the Church.



“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.”

—John 6:53-56