

THIS IS MY CHURCH



Dear parents and catechists,

All children learn most effectively with examples that relate to their own experience, and some absolutely require it. This is an example you can follow for creating your own *This Is My Church* book using the template provided on the ministry webpage just below the link you used to access this copy. Here is the [link to the page it is listed on](#). Take pictures of your parish church to develop a personalized “church tour,” so that your own church can be visited frequently, simply by visiting these pages. And don't forget the people: pastor, priests, deacons, parish catechetical leader, catechists, ushers, greeters, choir, music director, and other parishioners. Our Catholic Church is a VERY big family! However, the purpose is not for children to visit the church within a book, but so they can become familiar with this sacred space, and therefore feel comfortable during their actual visits and participate in Mass and other times of communal prayer, as they are able.

You will notice that there are very few words on the picture pages. This is so the person with developmental or learning disabilities you are sharing this with may focus on the pictures. On the back of each picture page is more specific information. Much of this is intended for you, which you can then share in the way best understood by your son, daughter or learner.

Yours in Christ,
Anne Masters, Ph.D., FAAIDD
Pastoral Ministry with Persons with Disabilities
Archdiocese of Newark
Anne.Masters@rcan.org 973-497-4309

This is a *PRAISE** resource developed by the department for Pastoral Ministry with Persons with Disabilities of the Archdiocese of Newark. Please feel free to share it with anyone you know wishing to help children become familiar with their parish church, the sacred space we gather to worship God and celebrate God's presence with us in life.

**Persons Recognized Accepted In Spirited Energy* - The *PRAISE* Project is the work of talented professional educators with generous hearts in collaboration with the department for Pastoral Ministry with Persons with Disabilities.

We come here to Mass on Sundays because we are happy that God is with us always and we thank God for this.



This is my church,
Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament

The pastor guides us and helps our parish live like Jesus wants us to.



Fr. Ted, our pastor.

There are many people in the Church. Everyone has something to do: welcoming people, singing, playing an instrument, distributing Holy Communion, proclaiming the Word of God, participating in Mass, etc.

[Insert pictures of people in your church on the next page. Add as many pages as necessary. Even include people who normally sit near you in Mass.]

Here is the altar and it is also called, “The Table of the Lord.” It is on this table that the bread & wine become Jesus.

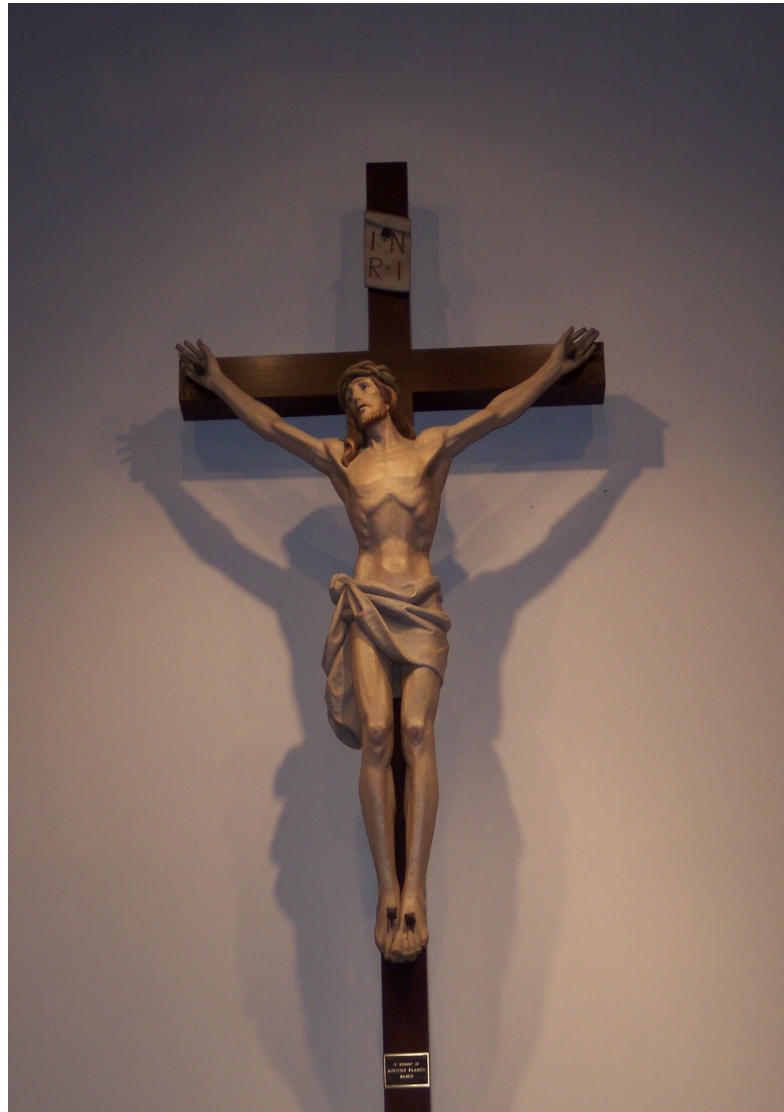
It is from this table that we are all fed.



Altar

The crucifix shows that Jesus died on a cross.

When we go to Mass, we remember that
Jesus died and was raised from the dead.



Crucifix - Jesus on the cross

Here is the ambo, where God and Jesus stories are told. They are in the Bible.

This ambo is bigger and different from the one in your parish.



Ambo - where God and Jesus stories are told. 13

This is the Tabernacle that holds Jesus in the Sacred Hosts. It is in The Lady Chapel, named in honor of Mary, the Blessed Mother.



Tabernacle - A special place for Jesus.

The Sanctuary Lamp is near the Tabernacle.

It is always lit. This shows us that Jesus is present in the Tabernacle and with us always.



The Sanctuary Lamp

The water of Baptism cleans us and makes us new.
At Baptism we become part of the Church.



Baptism Font

This is the Reconciliation Room, where we tell the priest about the unloving choices we have made. He forgives us in the place of Jesus.



Reconciliation Room

We light a candle and say a prayer for someone or ask God to help us. A candle with light is a sign that God is with us.



Prayer Candles

This is the Sacristy where supplies for Mass are kept.



Sacristy

We put our hand in the Holy Water and bless our self with the Sign of the Cross. It is like washing our spirit clean and having God cover us. We do this when we enter a church and when we leave. This reminds us of our baptism.



The Holy Water Font

The music of the piano is beautiful. It helps us to sing our prayers to God and make them stronger.



The Piano

These are books that are good to read. They tell us about God and about being Catholic.



Books about our faith.

The archbishop guides his church, the parishes of the archdiocese. He is the pastor of the archdiocese.

He serves like Jesus the Good Shepherd.

The crosier, the pastoral staff, carried by him reminds us of this.

The hat worn by the archbishop for Mass is called a mitre.

Here is Cardinal Tobin





Here is another picture of Cardinal Tobin

In the Gospel by Matthew, Jesus said, “You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church.”
(Mt 16:18)

The pope guides the Church, in the place of St. Peter. St. Peter was a follower of Jesus and we say he was the first pope.

The pope is also the Bishop of Rome.

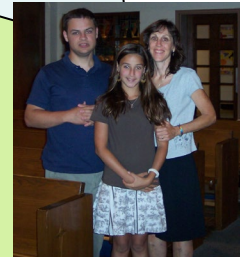


Pope Francis

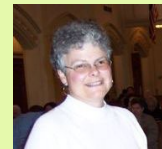
Together, all parishes around the world in the different archdioceses and dioceses, including the Vatican, make up the whole Church.

But the Church is the people, not the buildings. The buildings are where the people meet.

Pope in Rome



Parishes



(Arch)dioceses



The Whole Church