

Families and The Mass

Comedian Tim Hawkins said, "Whoever wrote the song 'Easy like Sunday morning' didn't take kids to church on a regular basis."

Tips for parents to have opportunities to discuss the Eucharist -

Talk together. Share family stories. Tell stories about your "God" times. Use Scripture stories, and even children's literature that teach morals. Answer their questions, even the ones they're not asking!

Stress the connection of their Baptism and the Eucharist. Get out your photo albums and recall your child's baptism. Unpack the baptismal garment and tell its history: when and where you bought it or who made it, who else wore it. Celebrate your child's Baptism Day! Light their baptismal candle, say a prayer and have a cake! If you can, attend the Easter Vigil as a family to see our most wonderful celebration of the Sacraments.

Celebrate the liturgical seasons at home. Put out an Advent wreath and the crèche; have Epiphany house blessing; have a Lenten Rice bowl on your table; make Lenten sacrifices together; go to Reconciliation as a family. There are many ways to celebrate the sacredness of Lent.

Put a little *extra* into family meals. (they have a big connection to Eucharist!) Make it a point to eat together as much as you can. Let your child decorate the table for an evening meal. Have dessert! Do the dishes together. Talk about special meals your family has shared.

Pray as a family – often and as a natural part of family life: mealtimes, bedtimes, happy times, worrisome times, after an argument, when someone is in trouble, always on special occasions. Create a prayer space in your home. Pray over your children. Pray for them. Also, pray before and after you receive the Eucharist at Mass.

Make Mass a family event. Sit near the front. Point out one or two things each week for your child to watch for. Talk about the homily on the way home. Before liturgy talk with your family about who you want to pray for during the General Intercessions; and what you want to thank God for during the Eucharistic Prayer. Have brunch afterwards! Spend the day together in a true Sabbath day – a day of rest.

Grow together in appreciation of God’s Word. On Saturday evenings, read the scriptures you will hear at Mass. What is God saying to your family this weekend? How can you put the readings into practice?

Take a tour of your church. Point out to your child where he or she was baptized, show him or her the altar up close, the tabernacle, the oils, etc. Help them be comfortable with the Church itself. When you have time, visit another church as well, to see the space and architecture.

The Eucharist commits and connects us to the poor (CCC #1397). Together fix a meal for a neighbor in need, sort through toys and clothing for gifts to the poor, visit a nursing home, add pennies to a charitable donation.

Keep First Communion first. It should be just what we call it: *first*. Don’t put so much emphasis on this one. It’s important because it is the *first of many*, the *first of a lifetime of coming to the Table*. There should be a second and a third and so on.

Participate in Parish life. You are FAMILY here! Join us for service projects and social events. Let Presentation be a hub for your family. Make sure your child(ren) know that they are loved and welcomed by everyone here.

The celebration of the Eucharist is so essential to Christian life that the Church requires all the faithful to attend Mass every Sunday, as well as on holy days of obligation, and to receive the Eucharist at least during the fifty days of the Easter season.

If your younger children ask why they “have to” attend Mass, explain to them that Mass is where we go to see and hear Jesus: “Jesus was born as a little baby

because he wanted to be with us and share his love with us. After he went to be in heaven, he wanted to be even closer to us—all of us, all around the world—so he gave us some special ways of being close to him.”

You can also adapt the answers below (which are more appropriate for older children and teens) to their level of understanding:

► **Because Jesus gave us himself in the Eucharist.** “I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; . . . he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and . . . abides in me, and I in him” (John 6:51, 54, 56). God chose to meet us by taking on flesh in Jesus Christ, and he chooses to continue meeting us “in the flesh” through the Eucharist, which is his whole body and blood, soul and divinity (Catechism #1413). We also encounter the presence of Christ during Mass in his Word (the Scriptures), the priest (who acts in the person of Christ), and the assembly of the faithful (Catechism #1088).

► **The Eucharist is at the heart of the life of the Church.** Through the celebration of the Eucharist, Jesus’ followers participate in the saving work of his life, death, and Resurrection (Catechism #1407, 1409), and prepare to continue that work in the world. The Eucharist also strengthens the unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ (Catechism #1416).

► **The Eucharistic celebration is a sharing in heaven.** When we go to Mass, we don’t just anticipate heaven, we get to share in it (Catechism #1419).

Best Practices/Practical Ideas:

- Have a “Teaching Mass” - with a script and youth participation
- Send weekly e-mails to all of our parishioners inviting them to celebrate the Eucharist.
- Have a family Mass – with children’s Choir, lectors and greeters
- Each week, at one of the Masses, we had a well-known parishioner give a short presentation on “What the mass means to me”
- Attach other events to Mass – mini retreats, Family Faith programs, etc.
- Offer incentives – have a “passport” they can get stamped when they come to Mass

Video Resources:

Video shown during session – The veil Removed

<https://youtu.be/OOLZDaTglaM>

Wildgoose Ministries: 4 part series on the Mass – great for parents –

<https://wildgoose.tv/programs/collection-57nfokdtkdk?categoryId=23145&permalink=the-mass-an-introduction-part-1-83b4fb>

asks 4 questions – Why Worship on Sundays? Why a meal? Why worship the way we do? Why does the extraordinary come to us in ordinary ways?

Video of 5 year old saying Mass: <https://catholic-link.org/is-it-possible-to-go-to-mass-with-children-tips-for-taking-your-family-to-church/>

Strategies for Families with Kids at Mass (article and video): <https://catholic-link.org/a-catholic-dad-gives-his-10-best-strategies-for-mass-with-kids/>

<https://catholic-link.org/is-it-possible-to-go-to-mass-with-children-tips-for-taking-your-family-to-church/>

Printed Resources:

ARTICLES on Exploring the Mass:

<https://uscatholic.org/articles/201901/how-to-make-mass-mean-more-to-kids/>

<https://www.catechist.com/activities-for-exploring-the-mass/>

Parts of the mass coloring pages: <https://www.amazon.com/Parts-Mass-Paste-Worksheet-Pack/dp/B07NQNQRMT?&linkCode=sl1&tag=cultivatin096->

[20&linkId=5cf1cd61735094bdf5a34cf454286953&language=en_US&ref=as_li_ss_tl](https://www.usccb.org/20&linkId=5cf1cd61735094bdf5a34cf454286953&language=en_US&ref=as_li_ss_tl)

For older kids: <http://www.thegomom.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Mass-Order-of-the-Mass.pdf>

Suggestions for parents to prep kids for Mass:

<https://teachingcatholickids.com/doing-mass-with-kids/>

BOOKS:

30 Questions about the Mass: <https://www.liguori.org/30-questions-about-the-mass.html#show1>

Experiencing Mass with Heart and Mind: <https://www.liguori.org/experiencing-mass-with-heart-and-mind.html>

US Bishops Teaching on the Mass:

https://store.usccb.org/collections/ministry/products/source-of-our-healing-and-hope-u-s-bishops-teach-on-the-mass?utm_source=mailchimp-SOOHH&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=SOOHH&mc_cid=802a73fd85&mc_eid=704975cba4