

*faith
first*

Legacy Edition
SCHOOL



PREPARING
FOR **FIRST**
EUCCHARIST

Using
Faith First Legacy Edition / School
Grade 2

PREPARING FOR **FIRST EUCHARIST**

Using
**Faith First Legacy Edition / School
Grade 2**

Susan Jones

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- 20622:** Preparing for Confirmation: Using Faith First Legacy Edition / School Grade 6
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How to Use This Supplement

The immediate preparation for First Eucharist is a grace-filled time. *Preparing for First Eucharist* will guide you through the steps to use **Faith First® Legacy Edition / School** Grade 2 to prepare children for receiving First Eucharist.

This *Preparing for First Eucharist* supplement has been written to be used in conjunction with the **Faith First Legacy Edition / School** Grade 2 teacher and catechist guides. It will direct you to use the Grade 2 Teacher Guide (TG) used in a school program.

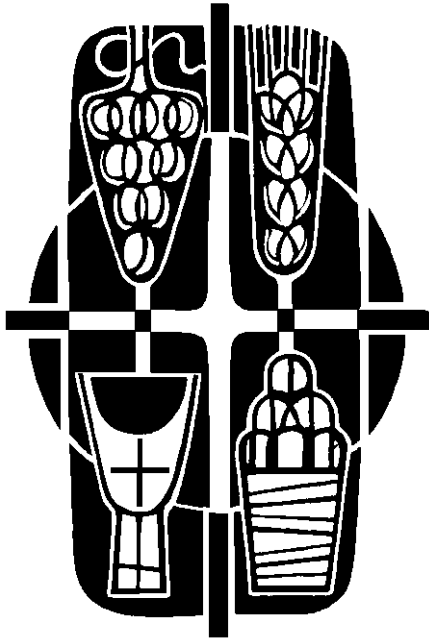
There are five chapters in the child's text that can be used for the children's immediate preparation for First Eucharist. These chapters review the essential concepts that are a part of a sound catechesis for sacramental preparation. It is suggested that you plan your teaching of these lessons with the date of First Eucharist in mind. The five chapters that are taught immediately prior to First Eucharist are Chapters 11, 15, 16, 17, and 8. When this order is followed, the Scripture story of Jesus breaking the bread with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus becomes the climax of First Eucharist preparation.

Preparing for First Eucharist is simple, clear, and easy to use. It consists of a two-page spread for presenting each of the five chapters that are used for the immediate preparation of the children for First Eucharist. There are also six parent letters that are designed to be photocopied and sent home with each child. The first letter introduces the program to the parents. The remaining letters correspond to each of the five chapters.

On the first page of each lesson plan, you will find a brief explanation that places the chapter in the context of immediate preparation for First Eucharist. Specific objectives are named. These objectives will help you focus on teaching the chapter to the children. There is also a list of additional resources, along with practical suggestions, that you might want to use to help the children prepare for First Eucharist. This opening page of each lesson plan also contains a blessing for the children, which we encourage you to pray as you close each of the lessons.

The second page of the lesson plan is a step-by-step process for teaching the lesson. This page clearly identifies the parts of the regular **Faith First Legacy Edition / School** Grade 2 Teacher Guide you should use and also contains additional information not found in the guides that will help you prepare the children for First Eucharist.

Using Chapter 11—We Worship God



Chapter 11 is the ideal setting in which to begin the final weeks of preparation for First Eucharist. Use this chapter to set the stage for how the Church gathers as God's family to celebrate their faith. Review with the children the way we celebrate the sacraments of Baptism and Reconciliation. Help the children recall the words and actions used in both of these sacraments. Then process the various components in this chapter to help the children understand the celebration of the Mass. You might use the family meal and the celebration of other important events in our lives to help the students understand the importance of the celebration of the Eucharist in the life of the Church.

Objectives for First Eucharist Preparation

- Know the words and actions used by the church community at Mass.
- Identify the meaning of the actions and words used at Mass.
- Describe the celebration of the Eucharist as one of the seven sacraments of the Church.

Additional Resources

- Grade 2, **Faith First** video, segments 1, 2, and 4
- **Faith First** Interactive Calendar for Eucharist
- Parent Letter, found on page 15 of this supplement
- Grade 2, **Faith First Legacy Edition Additional Activities** book, pages 11 and 11a
- Books to read:
 - The Sacraments* by Inos Biffi. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
 - A Walk Through Our Church* by Gertrud Mueller Nelson. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press. The symbols used for the sacraments.

Getting Ready for First Eucharist

- As the children's catechist and teacher, it is important that you check that the children have been baptized by verifying their baptismal certificates.
- Practice the songs that the assembly will sing at the celebration of First Eucharist with the children.
- Communicate to the children's parents the specific times for practice and for arrival at the church on First Communion day.

Blessing for the Children



*Jesus Christ, Bread of Life,
be with these children
as the day they will receive
First Eucharist draws closer.
May their excitement become an
eagerness to learn more about you
and your holy sacrament.
Amen.*

Chapter 11

Lesson Plan

Before teaching this chapter, carefully read the “Chapter Background” and “Lesson Planner” on pages 220–222 of the teacher guide (TG).

Day 1

Guide Pages 223–225
Student Pages 139–141

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Ask the children to name some of the people who take part in their family celebrations.
- Point out that when people come together to celebrate something that is very important, many people may take part in the celebration.
- Compare this to the Church gathering for the celebration of the liturgy on Sunday.
- Before you teach pages 140 and 141 of the student book, ask the children, What can we learn about Jesus from his words and actions?
- Remind them that Jairus believed with his whole heart that Jesus could and would help him and his daughter.

Day 2

Guide Pages 226 and 227
Student Page 142 and 143

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Ask the children to name things that they see the worshipping assembly doing at Mass. Responses would include: genuflecting, bowing, standing, kneeling, sitting, processing,

listening, responding, and singing. List these actions on the board.

- Discuss the meaning of each action.
- Invite volunteers to show the correct way to do each action.
- Practice these actions with the children with reverence.
- Discuss what it means to really listen to God.
- Have the children describe how they can be more attentive listeners at Mass. Responses may include: sitting quietly, looking at the priest or reader, thinking about what is being read or said, and so on.

Day 3

Guide Pages 228 and 229
Student Pages 144 and 145

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Remind the children that through Baptism they became members of the Catholic Church.
- Explain that when the sins we commit after Baptism are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we grow in our friendship with Jesus.
- Point out that both Baptism and Reconciliation prepare us for receiving Jesus in the Eucharist.

Day 4

Guide Pages 230 and 231
Student Pages 146 and 147

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Review with the children the actions used by the assembly during Mass.
- Give each child a candle made from paper which you have

prepared in advance and on which you have written the words, “We follow Jesus, the Light of the World.” Tell them that the paper candle is a reminder of the candle they received at Baptism.

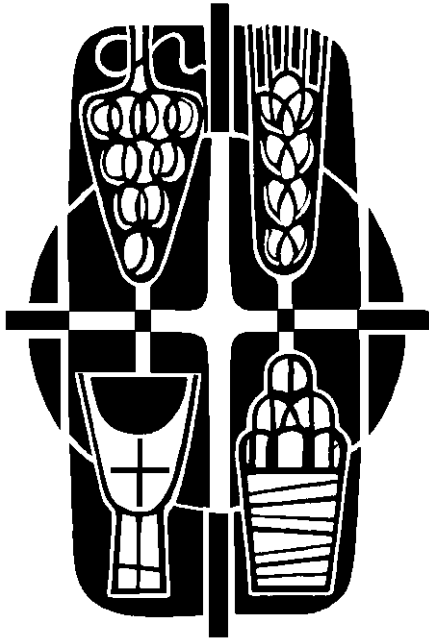
- Invite the children to take their paper candle home and tell their parents what they learned about sacramentals. Encourage them to ask their parents to show them their baptismal candle.
- As you teach page 147 in the student book, have the children identify when each of the gestures named below may be used during the celebration of the Mass and who might perform the gestures: outstretched hands, bowed head, folded hands, and hands raised high.
- Discuss the meaning of the gestures with the children.

Day 5

Guide Pages 232–234
Student Pages 148–150

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Point out the “With My Family” activities on page 150 in the student book. Encourage the children to share them with their family.
- With your arms extended over the children, pray the “Blessing for the Children” found on page 4 of this supplement.
- Tell the children that you will be praying for them in a special way as they prepare to receive First Eucharist.

Using Chapter 15—We Gather for Mass



In Chapter 15 we begin to take a look at the rites of the Mass. In this lesson we will explain and demonstrate the Introductory Rites and the Liturgy of the Word. We will also invite and help the children learn to become more active participants in the celebration of the Mass.

Objectives for First Eucharist Preparation

- Explain the prayers, actions, and responses used during the Introductory Rites of the Mass.
- Explain and demonstrate the readings, actions, and responses that are part of the Liturgy of the Word and help the children understand that these words and actions teach us to live as followers of Jesus.
- Identify the different processions at Mass and explain their meanings.

Additional Resources

- Grade 2, **Faith First** video, segments 1 and 4
- **Faith First** Interactive Calendar for Eucharist
- Parent Letter, found on page 16 of this supplement
- Grade 2, **Faith First Legacy Edition Additional Activities** book, pages 15 and 15a
- Books to read:
 - Sacred Places* by Jane Yolen and David Shannon. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace and Company. Pray everywhere.
 - The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant. New York, NY: Aladdin Paperbacks. A family feast.
 - The Bee Tree* by Patricia Polacco. New York, NY: Philomal Books. God's word is sweeter than honey.

Getting Ready for First Eucharist

- Use a lectionary and show the children the readings for the different Sundays of the year. Point out one of the gospel readings and then show the children where the same reading is found in the Bible.
- Review the good listening techniques that were discussed in Chapter 11. Read a Gospel story aloud to the children and have them practice listening attentively. After you have finished reading, have the children state in a brief sentence what the gospel story was about. Then have the children describe how the story might be asking them to live as followers of Jesus.

Blessing for the Children



*Jesus Christ, Word of God,
fill the children with
your love for them
and with ways they can express
their love for you.
Open their ears and their hearts
as they listen to your word.
Amen.*

Chapter 15

Lesson Plan

Before teaching this chapter, carefully read the “Chapter Background” and “Lesson Planner” on pages 284–286 of the teacher guide (TG).

Day 1

Guide Pages 287–289

Student Pages 187–189

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Ask the children, What will soon be different about the way you now are able to participate in the Mass? Help them to appreciate that they will soon be able to join the faithful in receiving Holy Communion.
- As you teach pages 188 and 189 in the student book, write the words *Welcome*, *Listen*, *Remember*, *Eat*, and *Celebrate* on a poster or on the board. Explain that each action word helps us understand the meaning of what the Church does at Mass. As you discuss the various parts of the Mass over the next few weeks, have the children identify when and how these five actions are being used.
- After teaching the “Faith-Filled People” feature on page 189 in the student book, continue to use the word *assembly* in referring to the faithful who gather to take part in the celebration of Mass. This will help the children recognize that they are part of the assembly.
- Ask the children to identify the people they see helping at Mass. Responses might include the priest, the altar servers, the readers, and the ushers. Explain that these people, as well as all those who gather for Mass, are part of the parish family to which they belong.

Day 2

Guide Pages 290 and 291

Student Pages 190 and 191

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Create a poster, using the title “Liturgy of the Word.” Then have the children help you list the order of the three readings and psalm response proclaimed at Mass. Ask the children to name where each reading is found in the Bible.
- Remind the children that the word *gospel* means “good news.” Emphasize that the four Gospels share the good news about Jesus.
- Visit the church as suggested in the “Teaching Tip” box at the bottom of TG page 290. Point out the altar, tabernacle, and ambo. Show the children the sacred vessels used during Mass, the Lectionary and the Book of the Gospels, and the vestments worn by the priest. As you discuss the vestments, call attention to the different colors worn during the liturgical year. You will find information on the liturgical colors on page 348 in the student book.

Day 3

Guide Pages 292 and 293

Student Pages 192 and 193

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Point out that the homily helps us come to understand the Scripture readings and how to live as followers of Jesus Christ.
- Emphasize that when we pray a creed of the Church, we are saying what we believe as Catholics. Explain that is why this action is called the Profession of Faith.

Day 4

Guide Pages 294 and 295

Student Pages 194 and 195

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.

- Encourage the children to be observant at Mass. Ask that the next time they take part in the celebration of Mass, they look for the things that are carried in procession at the beginning of Mass and the gifts that are brought to the altar at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Invite the children to share what they observed during those two processions at Mass when you begin your religion lesson next week.
- As they act out their processions, invite the children to sing a familiar hymn or a familiar “Alleluia” acclamation.
- As you discuss “What Difference Does Faith Make in My Life?” on page 195 of the student book, have the children turn to page 394 in their book and briefly review with them the responses the assembly says at Mass during the Liturgy of the Word.

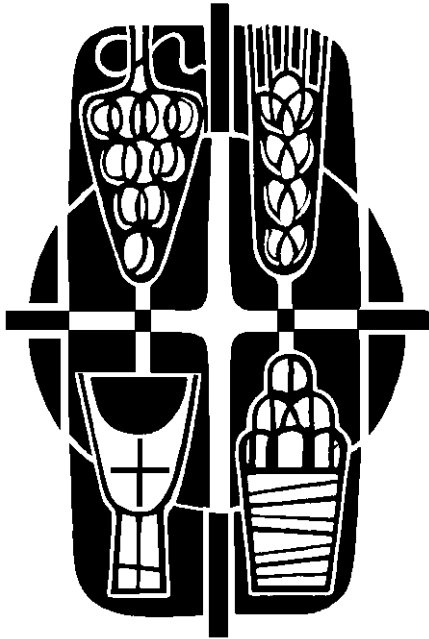
Day 5

Guide Pages 296–298

Student Pages 196–198

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Invite as many of the children who wish to add their own petition to the Prayer of the Faithful to do so.
- Point out the “With My Family” activities on page 198 in the student book. Encourage the children to share them with their family.
- With hands extended over the children, pray aloud the “Blessing for the Children” found on page 6 of this supplement.
- Invite the children to come forward individually to the prayer table and make the Sign of the Cross on the Bible as a sign of reverence for it and to show that they want to listen to and learn from God’s word.
- Tell the children that you will be praying for them in a special way as they prepare to receive First Eucharist.

Using Chapter 16—The Last Supper: A Scripture Story



In Chapter 16 we hear the Gospel story of how Jesus gave us the Eucharist. The children need to listen to the story of the Last Supper as they prepare to receive First Eucharist. The more familiar the children are with this story, the more they will be able to connect the celebration of the Eucharist with what Jesus did at the Last Supper. This will help the children believe more deeply that the Eucharist is Jesus truly and really present with them.

Objectives for First Eucharist Preparation

- Explain the special meal, called the Last Supper, that Jesus and his friends celebrated on the night before he died.
- Become familiar with what Jesus said and did at the Last Supper.
- Understand that at the Eucharist we receive the very same gift of Jesus' Body and Blood that he gave his disciples at the Last Supper.

Additional Resources

- Grade 2, **Faith First** video, segment 7
- **Faith First** Interactive calendar for Eucharist
- Parent Letter, found on page 17 of this supplement
- Grade 2, **Faith First Legacy Edition Additional Activities** book, pages 16 and 16a
- Books to read:
 - Badger's Bring Something Party* by Hiawyn Oram. New York, NY: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books. Come to the banquet, and bring your best self.
 - The Table Where Rich People Sit* by Byrd Baylor. New York, NY: Aladdin Paperbacks. Come to the feast, come to the table of plenty.

Getting Ready for First Eucharist

Talk with the children about all the preparations they are making at home with their families for their First Communion day. Help the children understand that of all the things they will do on their special day, receiving Holy Communion for the first time is the most important event of that day and the reason for everything else their families will do to celebrate that day.

Blessing for the Children



*Jesus Christ, Bread of Life,
be with these children
as they learn of the great love
you have for all people.
Help the children truly believe
that the gift you offer
to them, the Eucharist,
is your Body and Blood.
Amen.*

Chapter 16

Lesson Plan

Before teaching this chapter, carefully read the “Chapter Background” and “Lesson Planner” on pages 300–302 of the teacher guide (TG).

Day 1

Guide Pages 303–305
Student Pages 199–201

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Supplement the content of the “Bible Background,” pages 200 and 201 of the student book, by briefly telling the children the Old Testament story of the Passover, using a children’s storybook. Help the children understand that Jesus and his disciples, as well as Jewish families today, thank and bless God at Passover for the safe deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt.
- Write the terms *celebration of the Passover*, *Last Supper*, and *the night before Jesus died* on the board. Help the children make the connection between these terms.

Day 2

Guide Pages 306 and 307
Student Pages 202 and 203

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Ask and discuss:
 - What did Jesus give his followers? (his Body and Blood, the Eucharist).
 - What did Jesus ask his disciples to do? (to celebrate this special meal in memory of him).
- Explain to the children that the disciples were given the gift of faith to believe that the bread and wine had become Jesus’ Body and Blood. Tell them that we, too, are given the gift of faith to believe that the bread

and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus at Mass.

- Show the children a piece of unleavened bread and a piece of leavened bread. Point out that Jesus and his friends used unleavened bread at the Last Supper because that is what the Israelites had used at the first Passover.
- Tell the children that we continue to use unleavened bread in the celebration of the Mass today. Explain that we do this because Jesus used unleavened bread at the Last Supper.
- Tell the children that we also use wine at Mass as Jesus did at the Last Supper.

Day 3

Guide Pages 308 and 309
Student Pages 204 and 205

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- As you discuss Holy Thursday using the “Our Catholic Faith” feature on page 205 in the student book, use props to have the children help you act out the ritual of the washing of the feet. Emphasize that at Mass on Holy Thursday the Church uses this ritual to remind us to serve others as Jesus did. Note: You may want to use the “The Last Supper” lesson in the “We Celebrate” section of the student book to better link the Holy Thursday celebration to the Last Supper. (See pages 530 and 531 in the teacher guide and pages 371 and 372 in the student book.)
- Show the children an unconsecrated host as suggested in the “Liturgy Tip” box at the bottom of TG page 308.
- Emphasize that receiving the Eucharist strengthens us to live as followers of Jesus.
- Have the children name some of the ways they are living as followers of Jesus.

Day 4

Guide Pages 310 and 311
Student Pages 206 and 207

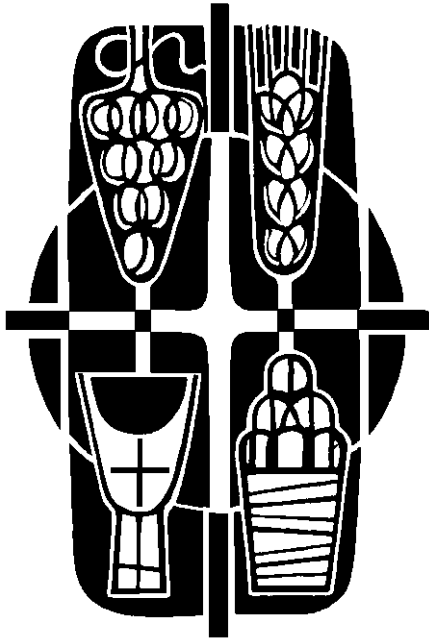
- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Call attention to the ways in which the people of your parish serve others and explain the work of several of those ministries. Conclude by sharing with the children that the ministers of care in your parish bring the Eucharist to parishioners in the hospital and to the elderly or sick parishioners at home who cannot participate in the weekly celebrations of the Eucharist.
- Invite volunteers to read aloud their respective prayer of thanks that they wrote for the activity on page 207 in the student book.
- Explain that it is a great blessing to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Ask the children to name ways they can show reverence and respect for the gift of the Eucharist.

Day 5

Guide Pages 312–314
Student Pages 208–210

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Invite volunteers to express what they are thankful for during the “Blessed Be God” prayer on page 208 of the student book.
- Point out the “With My Family” activities on page 210 in the student book. Encourage the children to share them with their family.
- With hands extended over the children, pray the “Blessing for the Children” found on page 8 of this supplement.
- Tell the children that you will be praying for them in a special way as they prepare to receive First Eucharist.

Using Chapter 17—We Give Thanks to God



In the previous lesson we reviewed what Jesus did and said at the Last Supper. Now we look at the words and actions of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The more the children are able to recognize what is taking place during the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the better they will be able to participate, through their own words and actions, and take their place at the Table of the Lord.

Objectives for First Eucharist Preparation

- Explain that at the Eucharist the church community gathers to thank God for his many gifts and blessings.
- Describe that at the Liturgy of the Eucharist the Church remembers and does what Jesus did and said at the Last Supper.
- Explain that sharing the Eucharist changes us and gives us strength to live as followers of Jesus.

Additional Resources

- Grade 2, **Faith First** video, segment 7
- **Faith First** Interactive calendar for Eucharist
- Parent Letter, found on page 18 of this supplement
- Grade 2, **Faith First Legacy Edition Additional Activities** book, pages 17 and 17a
- Books to read:
 - Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox. Brooklyn, NY: Kane/Miller Book Publishers. “Do this in memory of me.”
 - Miss Rumphius* by Barbara Cooney. New York, NY: Penguin Books. Spread thanks and tell about the kingdom.

Getting Ready for First Eucharist

- Talk with the children about fasting from food and drink, except water, for one hour before receiving Holy Communion.
- Have the children go to the Faith First Activity “Where Do Hosts Come From?” on the **Faith First** web site. To locate this, go to www.FaithFirst.com and open the Kids Clubhouse section. Click on the Faith First Activities box, scroll down to the Faith First Legacy Edition Grade 2 section, and click on the Chapter 8 book.

Blessing for the Children



*Jesus Christ,
Gift of the Father,
open the minds and hearts
of these children to your great love.*

*Strengthen their faith
in your Son, Jesus,
the Bread of life.*

Amen.

Chapter 17

Lesson Plan

Before teaching this chapter, carefully read the “Chapter Background” and “Lesson Planner” on pages 316–318 of the teacher guide (TG).

Day 1

Guide Pages 319–321
Student Pages 211–213

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Before asking the “Faith Focus” question on page 212 in the student book, review with the children what happens in the Liturgy of the Word.
- Explain to the children that during the Liturgy of the Eucharist we ask God to accept not only our gifts of bread and wine but also our life as a gift. Emphasize that at Mass we give the gift of ourself to God the Father, as Jesus did.
- Remind the children that all our blessings come from God.

Day 2

Guide Pages 322 and 323
Student Pages 214 and 215

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Say aloud the words of consecration as printed on page 214 in the student book both for the bread and for the wine. Repeat the words, omitting one or two key words and ask the children to supply the missing words.
- Print the word *consecrate* on the board. Explain that *consecrate* means “to make holy” and that the words spoken by the priest are called the words of consecration. Tell the children that only a priest can consecrate the bread and wine at Mass.
- Emphasize that the bread and wine become Jesus’ Body and Blood through the power of the Holy Spirit and the words of the priest.

- Explain that when we say “Amen” at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, we are saying that we truly believe that bread and wine have become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

Day 3

Guide Pages 324 and 325
Student Pages 216 and 217

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Explain to the children that another name for the special cup that the priest uses at Mass is chalice. Print the word *chalice* on the board.
- Print the term *Holy Communion* on the board. Beneath it, print the words *priest*, *deacon*, and *extraordinary minister of Holy Communion*. Explain that these are the ministers from whom we receive Holy Communion at Mass.
- Discuss with the children whether they plan to receive the Body of Christ in Holy Communion when they make their First Communion in their hand or on their tongue. Emphasize that it is important to make this decision before approaching the altar on the day of their First Communion.
- Help the children practice the proper way to receive Holy Communion. As the children practice, have them bow their heads and pray the correct responses at the proper times.

Day 4

Guide Pages 326 and 327
Student Pages 218 and 219

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Using the pictures on page 218 in the student book, have the children name some things that they are asked to do that are sometimes difficult to do, such as helping at home, doing chores, sharing our things, and

telling the truth. Tell them that when they choose to do the right thing out of their love for God and others when it is difficult, they are making small, but important sacrifices.

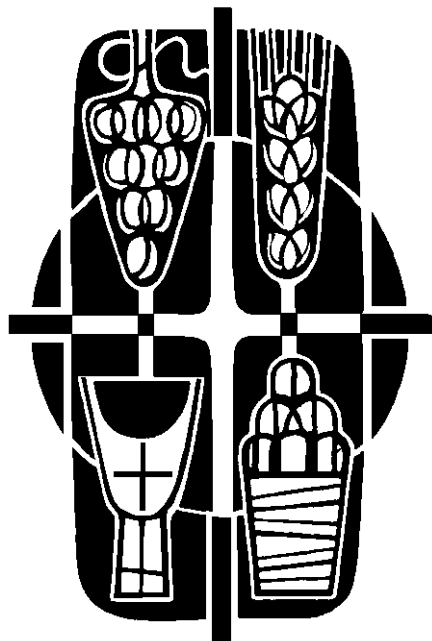
- Emphasize that the sacrifices they make because of their love for God, for their family, and for other people are signs that they are trying to live as Jesus taught.
- Before doing the activity on page 219 in the student book, brainstorm with the children reasons why Catholics take part regularly in Mass. Possible responses might include: to thank God for his love for us, to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus, and so on. Then have the children work independently on the “Celebrating Mass” activity.

Day 5

Guide Pages 328–330
Student Pages 220–222

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Show the children statues, medals, pictures, or other items that Catholics use that show we are followers of Jesus. Remind the children that these things are called sacramentals.
- Tell the children that they may receive some of these sacramentals as gifts when they celebrate their First Communion. Discuss with the children ways they might treat and use these gifts.
- Point out the “With My Family” activities on page 222 in the student book. Encourage the children to share them with their family.
- Pray the “Blessing for the Children” found on page 10 of this supplement.
- Tell the children you are proud of the work they are doing to prepare to receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

Using Chapter 8—The Traveler on the Road to Emmaus: A Scripture Story



In the previous lessons we have talked with the children about shared meals and celebrations, the Gospel story of the Last Supper, and we demonstrated and explained the rites of the Mass. In this lesson we will listen to and talk about the Gospel story of the Risen Jesus sharing a meal with two of his followers. We will discover that we are spiritually fed and nourished when we receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion and that at the end of Mass we are invited to tell everyone we meet about Jesus.

Objectives for First Eucharist Preparation

- Recognize Jesus in the blessing and breaking of the bread at Mass, just as the disciples who traveled with Jesus to Emmaus recognized him in the blessing and breaking of bread.
- Describe ways in which the celebration of the Eucharist helps us live as followers of Jesus.
- Summarize what we have learned about the Eucharist.

Additional Resources

- **Faith First** Interactive Calendar for Eucharist
- Parent Letter, found on page 19 of this supplement
- Grade 2, **Faith First Legacy Parish Edition Additional Activities** book, pages 8 and 8a
- Books to read:
 - Bread, Bread, Bread* by Ann Morris. New York, NY: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books. The breaking and sharing of bread—Eucharist.
 - Bread Is for Eating* by David Gershator. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, Inc. Bread—the work of human hands.

Getting Ready for First Eucharist

- Review the prayer that is said by the assembly before communion: “Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.” Talk about the meaning and importance of this prayer as a way to prepare for receiving the Eucharist.
- Talk with the children about what will happen on the day of First Eucharist.
- Provide reminders to the children and their families about any details for First Eucharist day, such as times for practice, arrival, where to gather, and so on.
- Spend some time in prayer this week. Thank God for the privilege to join with the parents in preparing their children for First Eucharist. Pray that everyone continues to be nourished at the Table of the Lord.

Blessing for the Children



*Jesus Christ, Bread of Life,
travel beside these children
as they take their final steps
in their journey to your table.*

*Help them recognize you
in the words of Holy Scripture,
in the Blessed Sacrament,
in your people, and in themselves.*

*Draw the children close to you so they
may radiate your love to others.*

Amen.

Chapter 8

Lesson Plan

Before teaching this chapter, carefully read the “Chapter Background” and “Lesson Planner” on pages 164–166 of the teacher guide (TG).

Day 1

Guide Pages 167–169
Student Pages 97–99

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- As you teach page 98 of the student book explain to the children that there were no printed books in Jesus’ time and that, after Jesus died and rose from the dead and returned to his Father in heaven people first learned about Jesus from the stories told by the Apostles and other followers of Jesus. Explain that many years later, these stories were written down and eventually were gathered together and became part of the Bible we read today.
- After the students complete the activity on page 99 in the student book, poll the class to learn what favorite Bible stories they have in common.

Day 2

Guide Pages 170 and 171
Student Pages 100 and 101

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Explain that God gives us the gift of faith to help us know that Jesus is always with us.
- Remind the children of the unique way that Jesus is present with us when we celebrate the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ.

Day 3

Guide Pages 172 and 173
Student Pages 102 and 103

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Establish that bread was an important food for Jesus, his family, and his neighbors. Point out that, in Jesus’ time, baking and sharing bread with a stranger was a sign of hospitality and generosity.
- Emphasize that sharing bread (eating a meal) together reminds us of Jesus, the Bread of Life, who gives himself to us in the Eucharist.

Day 4

Guide Pages 174 and 175
Student Pages 104 and 105

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- Ask the children to share their thoughts as they look forward to receiving Holy Communion for the first time.
- Allow the children to ask any questions they may have about the Eucharist and the First Eucharist celebration.
- Give each child a red crayon and a heart made from white paper that has been divided into at least six parts. Call on volunteers to name something they have learned while preparing for First Eucharist.
- As the children share what they have learned, invite everyone to color one section of their hearts if they recall learning the same thing. Continue until all hearts are completely colored.
- Affirm children in the efforts that they have made to prepare well to receive First Holy Communion. Point out that their red hearts are symbols of their love for Jesus and his love for them.

- As you and the children read the first paragraph on page 105 of the student book together, encourage the children to name some of the talents they have and want to share with their family, friends, and other people. Affirm the children by calling attention to the talents you have seen in them.

Day 5

Guide Pages 176–178
Student Pages 106–108

- Teach the lesson plan outlined in the teacher guide.
- After they have prayed the meditation prayer on page 106 of the student book, ask the children to share what they want to tell others about Jesus.
- Point out the “With My Family” activities on page 108 in the student book. Encourage the children to share them with their family.
- Provide an appropriate snack of crackers and juice for the children. Allow them to enjoy one another’s company as they share the snack together.
- Remind the children that sharing a snack, a meal, is something that friends do. Recall that the most special meal of all is the Eucharist, where Jesus is present in a unique way. Emphasize that when we receive Holy Communion, what looks and tastes like bread and what looks and tastes like wine are really and truly Jesus.
- Pray the “Blessing for the Children” found on page 12 of this supplement.
- Ask the children to include in their prayers on their First Communion Day all the people who have helped them prepare for First Eucharist.



Dear Parents,

What an exciting time for your family! Beginning next week, the final preparations for your child's celebration of First Eucharist will be getting underway in class, just as they are at home. With your child's celebration of First Eucharist only a month and a half away, we want you and your child to be involved in five important lessons to help prepare for First Eucharist. It is our hope that by communicating with you each week we will be able to help one another appreciate this grace-filled time for your child, your family, and our parish community.

Each week your child will bring home a letter similar to this one. It will contain background information on the topic of the week's lesson and help you know what your child is learning in class. It will also include activities that you and your child can do together during the week. These activities will help your family set aside time to focus on this very important time in your child's and your family's life. During these final weeks of preparation, we will also be enlisting your help in some of the preparations that need one-on-one attention or extra practice.

Please know that you have done a wonderful job as the primary educator of your child. Your dedication has made this a time of wonder and awe for your child. We feel privileged to be a part of this special time in the life of your child and of your family. Remember that the parish is here to help and serve you. If you have any questions or concerns at all, feel free to call on us.

We are keeping you and your child in our prayers. We hope you will do the same for us. May the Lord guide us as we bring the children to a deeper friendship with Jesus, the Bread of Life.

Sincerely,



Dear Parents,

This week we are working on Chapter 11, “We Worship God,” pages 139–150 in your child’s text. The discussion of this chapter begins with a comparison of family celebrations with the celebration of the Mass. We invite you to continue this discussion by sharing with your child those things that are part of your family meal with those that are similar to the celebration of Mass. For example, point out that you share stories about your day during your meal much like we tell and listen to stories from the Scripture during the Mass; compare the serving dishes to the paten and other vessels used at Mass; remind your child that the cup used at Mass is called a chalice. Such comparisons will help your child see that the Eucharist is a celebration at which we gather as God’s family, the People of God.

One of our goals during these final weeks of your child’s preparation for First Eucharist is to help your child become more familiar with the meaning of the words and actions used at Mass. Children sometimes learn to do things while never really understanding why they do them. Talk with your child about sitting and attentively listening to the stories of God’s people—a sign that we believe the Bible is God’s own word to us. Point out that standing during the reading of the Gospel at Mass is a sign of respect for Jesus who is present with us.

This time of preparation for First Eucharist is an opportunity to strengthen your family’s custom of praying together at dinnertime or bedtime. Each evening have one family member say a blessing prayer for your child, asking God to watch over and guide him or her. A sample prayer could be: Jesus, true Bread come down from heaven, help my child always hunger for your love. Amen. Then invite your child to pray a blessing prayer for your family. Your child’s prayer could be: Jesus, my Friend, watch over my family and fill them with your love. Amen.

Have a wonderful week. Remember, we’re praying for one another.

Sincerely,



Dear Parents,

This week we are using Chapter 15, “We Gather for Mass,” on pages 187–198 of your child’s text. In this chapter your child will grow in his or her understanding that the parish community is our family within the Catholic Church. Together, we can help the children appreciate that just as all families need to spend time together and celebrate important events together, so too, their parish family comes together to celebrate God’s love and blessings. Your commitment to this weekly time of worship is perhaps one of the greatest gifts you can give to your child.

This week’s lesson will focus on the order of the Mass, beginning with the Introductory Rites. The children will become familiar with the prayers led by the presider during these rites and they will practice the responses to these prayers. We encourage you to review and practice these responses at home.

The children will also learn that the Liturgy of the Word follows the Introductory Rites. The first reading and psalm response usually come from the Old Testament. The second reading and the Gospel reading are from the New Testament. Our belief that the Scripture is God’s own word to us will be stressed. This week is a wonderful opportunity to spend time as a family reading from the Bible. As you read the Bible together, you might conclude the reading by practicing the assembly’s responses, Thanks be to God and Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ. The children will feel more a part of the worshiping assembly at church, the more they are familiar with the responses.

Sometimes it may be difficult for a young child to listen attentively to the homily. One way to help your child listen is to talk about the Scripture readings before going to church and then, after Mass, to discuss the readings and the homily as a family. You might also talk about the message of the homily on the drive home from church or during your next family meal. Such conversations are wonderful moments of faith sharing.

The five processions at Mass are explained on page 194 of your child’s text. Review these with your child and have a procession as a family. Your child will enjoy being the one honored to carry the Bible and lead the family to a place of prayer.

Enjoy your week. We can all feel the sense of excitement mounting as the celebration of the children’s First Eucharist draws near.

Sincerely,



Dear Parents,

This week's lesson, Chapter 16, "The Last Supper: A Scripture Story" on pages 199–210 of your child's text, centers around the account of the Last Supper in the Gospel. While we are all very familiar with the Gospel account of the Last Supper, we really never tire of hearing it retold. Each time we listen to it or read it, we rediscover the depth of God's love for us. Take the time this week to reread with your child the adaptation of the story of the Last Supper on pages 202–203 of your child's text and share how you would have felt if you had been there. Invite your child to do the same.

When Jesus and his disciples gathered for the Last Supper during Passover, they were continuing and taking part in an important tradition of the Jewish people. Your child is beginning to understand the meaning of and to look forward to family traditions. Discuss your family traditions and the special events that these traditions celebrate. Ask your child what parts of those celebrations they most enjoy. Invite your child to help plan your family's celebration of his or her First Communion Day. Include some of your family's traditions.

Children preparing for First Eucharist are also still at an age when believing is uncluttered with multitudes of questions. Theirs is a simple, childlike faith. When we share with them that the consecrated Bread and Wine of the Eucharist is really and truly Jesus, they believe. What a wonderful gift is the simplicity of a child's faith.

When you take part in Mass as a family, sit where your child has a good view of what is taking place. Help your child to stay focused by gently whispering what the presider or other ministers are doing. Point out what part of the Mass is being celebrated. Encourage your child to say the responses and to sing the hymns with the assembly.

When it is time for the assembly to receive Holy Communion, invite your child to process alongside you and to observe how you reverently receive Communion. In many parishes children who have not yet received First Eucharist are invited to cross their arms over their chest, approach the priest or other minister, and receive a blessing. After Mass talk with your child about what your family has just celebrated and how the Mass is like the Last Supper.

Value the time as your child's First Eucharist grows closer, as a time for your family to grow closer to Jesus.

Sincerely,



Dear Parents,

This week your child is working on Chapter 17, "We Give Thanks and Praise to God," on pages 211–222 of the child's text. This lesson explains the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The word "eucharist" means "to give thanks." We begin the Liturgy of the Eucharist by blessing and thanking God for the gifts of bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Jesus. We also ask God to accept the gift of ourselves and pray that God will accept and be pleased with our gifts.

Your child is no stranger to giving and receiving gifts. One only needs to watch the face of a child to see what wonderful gift-givers children are and how much delight they take in making someone happy. This week talk with your child about giving and receiving gifts. Help your child compose a prayer thanking God for the gift of Jesus, the Bread of Life, whom they will be receiving in Holy Communion. Appreciate and value the loving thoughts your child will express in this prayer. Let your child decorate the prayer, and keep a copy of it in a special envelope. Open the envelope and pray the prayer together with your child on First Communion day.

Review the words of the Eucharistic Prayer that are found on page 214 of your child's text. Emphasize that during the Eucharistic Prayer the Church does and says what Jesus did at the Last Supper in memory of Jesus as he asked us to do.

It is important that your child understand that the Eucharist is truly spiritual food. Explain that just as we need to eat regular food for our physical health, we need to share the Eucharist on a regular basis to nourish our life in Christ. Point out that reading Scripture, praying, and receiving the Eucharist strengthen the new life in Jesus they have received in Baptism. Spend a little extra time with your child this week reading Scripture, praying, and talking about the importance of receiving the Eucharist regularly.

Feel the love and support of your parish family during these final weeks.

Sincerely,



Dear Parents,

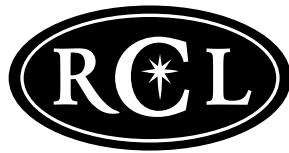
This is an exciting week. It is the final week of preparation for First Eucharist. This week your child is working on Chapter 8, "The Traveler on the Road to Emmaus: A Scripture Story." An adapted version of this story is found on pages 100–101 in your child's text. You can find the complete story in Luke 24:13–31. An important point about this story is that the disciples at first did not recognize that the stranger on the road was Jesus. Often, we too do not recognize Jesus. Jesus meets us in everyday and unexpected places as he met his disciples, who were walking to Emmaus.

At the end of Mass the priest or deacon gives the command: "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." Help your child understand that when they help other people, they are serving the Lord. Jesus himself taught us this. Explain to your child that, as Christians, we all have the responsibility to help others come to know Jesus. Encourage your child to do this in simple ways each day. Share with your child the expression "Actions speak louder than words." Point out to your child his or her loving actions and how these actions will help others come to know Jesus.

This would be a wonderful time to have your own special family celebration in preparation for the day of your child's First Eucharist. If possible, bake bread together as a family. (Frozen bread dough can make this an easy activity.) Set your table with a candle or two, glasses of grape juice, and a Bible opened to the story of the disciples meeting Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Read the Scripture story, break and share the bread, and enjoy drinking the juice. Together say a prayer thanking God for all the blessings he has given to you. Decide one way your family can help other people come to know Jesus. End with a family hug.

This week say a prayer praising God for the gift of the Blessed Sacrament and for the gift of our children. What a privilege to bring these two great gifts together.

Sincerely,



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