

# Session 1 – Eucharist is About Belonging – Part A

## Opening Prayer



**Parent:** We begin this retreat in gratitude, In the name of the Father...

**Child:** Thank You for our family

**Parent:** Thank you for our children

**Child:** Thank You for our parents, the first to share their faith with us

**Child:** Thank You for brothers and sisters

**Child:** Thank you for this time together

**Parent:** What else do we want to thank God for today?

Encourage family members to add things they are grateful for after which a parent leads the family in the prayer below.

God,

You loved us first and chose us to be your friends. We belong to you.  
Through the waters of Baptism we became one of your followers and  
members of your Body, the church.

Fill us with a desire to become closer to you and each other as we prepare  
as a family for N's \_\_\_\_\_ first Holy Communion.  
(First Communicant's first name)

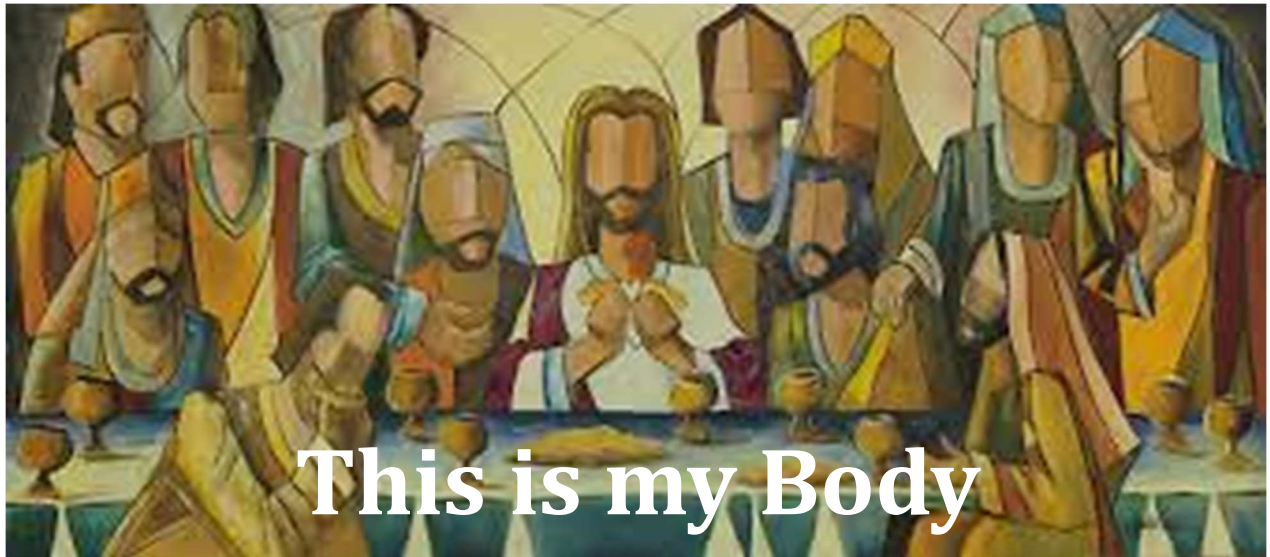
In Jesus' name, we pray.

All: **Amen**

Play the following YouTube video, encouraging your child/ren to sing along and do the motions. This is the class song the children will sing class at their First Communion.

**Thankful** – [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U\\_ewLEvA8\\_o&t=1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_ewLEvA8_o&t=1s)

## Slide 1: Contemporary image of the Last Supper



### Parent Notes

Ask your child to tell you what is happening in the picture. We call it the Last Supper because it was the last time Jesus ate with his friends before He died on the cross. Explore with each other why this was such an important event to Jesus and his disciples.

**Tip:** Do not settle for the first or expected answer – some version of “He wanted to give them His Body and Blood.” Explore with them other dimensions of the event (see below).

- Jesus made sure every one of them were present (even Judas), because unity makes us stronger (He was telling and showing them, ***“We are in this together.”***)
- Jesus wanted his friends to know how much he loved them
- Jesus He wanted to tell them to love each other
- Jesus wanted to show them how important service was as a way to love (washing of the feet)
- Understanding the power of being together Jesus asked them to gather regularly to pray together and share a meal, He returned to the Father.
  - ★ You can use the recent COVID experience to talk about how important being with others is and how much you all missed being able to be with family and friends.  
**Presence is a powerful gift** to give and receive.
- Jesus wanted them to know that love was more powerful than anything – even suffering and death. In giving them his Body and Blood he was promising that he would be with them always and that life would continue after his death, their deaths

*Jesus of Nazareth  
requests the honor of your presence  
at supper with his disciples.*



*Celebrate with Us at the Banquet of Life*

### Parent Notes

- Jesus did not intend what we call the Last Supper to be the last time his disciples gathered to be with one another – when we celebrate the Eucharist we are also participating in the Lord's Supper. This is why we also call the Last Supper, the First Communion.
- Christ invites us to sit at His table, not the Pope, not the Church, **Christ himself**. He asks us to gather with his disciples living now, to receive the gift of His Body and Blood – (***'Do this in memory of me'***). Church teaching about regular attendance at Mass only echoes what Jesus told his disciples to do at the Last Supper.
- Why is it important to celebrate the Eucharist every week? (For the same reasons Jesus wanted the disciples to be at the Last Supper)
  - To experience the power of presence and the strength that comes from unity
  - To know how much Jesus loves us and is always with us (the real presence)
  - To remind us again that He [Christ] and we [his disciples] are in this together and no matter what happens love will see us through
  - To remind us to love each other and be of service - receiving the Eucharist expands our capacity to love others, to become more like Christ
- ★ Again, make use of our recent COVID experiences as an example. We can Zoom, Skype, call others, use Duo, Hangouts, Instagram, Facebook, wave at people from our cars or from 6 feet away, and play games with our friends on the computer, but it is not the same as **being** together. It is true we can pray anytime, anywhere...but it is not the same as celebrating the Eucharist with our faith community.



- **COMMUNION is not an object** it is an experience. The experience of communion, unity, deeper bonds of affection with the Lord and each other, is what the Eucharist effects. Communion is not automatic. We all have to do our part in forming and sustaining the experience of communion we share. **Holy Communion is both a gift we receive** (receive the Body/Blood of Christ) **and a gift we give** to others (**We become the Body of Christ in the world**). It would be impossible to become a community, a member of the Body of Christ, without being together, being present to each other, sharing with each other, serving each other, supporting and encouraging each other.

**Relationships are fluid.** Think about family members and friends you use to see regularly, but now do not. Without regular, on-going interaction, some of those relationships will fade. Others, where the bonds formed were powerful and long lasting, remain part of our lives. When we re-connect, we might say, ***“We didn’t miss a beat, we picked up right where we left off.”*** Even this is a recognition that the relationship, while still strong, experienced a hiatus of sorts. It was not diminished by time and distance; neither did it grow. Regular, personal interaction is what allows us to grow in our relationships. This is why we have access to the Eucharist so frequently. Kids know this instinctively. Below are a few kid friendly examples if they are struggling with the concept.

**Examples:** Anyone can show up to your soccer game but that does not make them a member of the team. Anyone can sign-up to be a member of your dance class, but if they never come to the class or rehearsals, do they dance in the recital/show?

- **Holy Communion is both a gift we receive** (receive the Body/Blood of Christ) **and a gift we give** to others (**We become the Body of Christ in the world**). It would be impossible to become a community, a member of the Body of Christ, without being together, being present to each other, sharing with each other, serving each other, supporting and encouraging each other.



**It is time to take a break! Thank everyone for spending this time together as a family and for their sharing. If someone said or did something that was especially kind, thoughtful, made you think, or helped you understand something, thank that person by name.**

### Slide 3: Why Be Baptized?

**Every human being is part of God's family. God is Father to all, no matter when or where one is born.**

**This is why everyone deserves to be treated with respect.**

**God loves each of his sons and daughters unconditionally.**

No matter what one thinks, feels, says or does, **or** does not think, feel, say or do, can ever change the way God loves them.



**Being Baptized is the **experience** of being drenched, immersed in God's love.**

**Baptism makes us a **follower** of Jesus, a **member** of the Body of Christ (the Church).**

#### Parent Notes

**Tip:** You may have never considered these questions so take some time to think through your answers before you do this section of the retreat.

- Knowing an event occurred is different from knowing **why** an event occurred. Understanding why we make certain choices and do certain things, gives meaning to our choices and actions
- **Exploring the Question** – Many folks believe that baptism makes us part of God's family and insures us of God's love and protection. **This is not what we believe as Catholics.** We believe all human beings are part of God's family and as beloved sons and daughters; everyone is loved unconditionally and forever. Baptism reminds us of this truth.

**As Catholics we believe, baptism makes us followers (disciples) of Jesus** and members of the Body of Christ, the Church. Baptism draws us in - bring us closer to God and each other.

This raises important questions for Catholic Christians. Discuss the following questions with your children. Their first response to each question may be *"I don't know."* They may never have thought about these questions before so help them think through the questions.

1. If simply being born a human being makes us part of God's family, and God loves all his sons and daughters equally, why do we need to be baptized?
2. All people are children of God, but not all people are followers of Jesus. How is a follower of Jesus different from other children of God?

- **Parent Faith Sharing** – If possible, have pictures or mementos of your First Communicant's baptism, you can share with them at this time. Speak from your heart. There are no right or wrong answers. If both parents are present, both should share.

1. Tell your children why **you chose** to have them baptized? Be as specific and personal as possible. Why was having your child baptized important to you?

**Tip: Share your response as a story.** Tell them how and why you picked the date, and the Church, maybe even the Priest, for their Baptism. How/why did you choose their godparents? What did they wear on that day? Tell them how you felt during the actual baptism (nervous, scared, excited, happy, peaceful...).

Share with them what you remember about the Baptism and the celebration you had as part of the day.

Tell them how you felt that night when you put them to bed that knowing they are baptized.

How do you feel now about having made that decision?

#### Slide 4 – The Gifts we receive in Baptism

### The Gifts we receive as Baptized Christians

- In Baptism the Holy Spirit made us one with Jesus
- Because we belong to Jesus, everything about our lives is different
- Everywhere we go and in everything we do, Jesus is with us.
- We are connected to everyone and everything through Jesus
- We are set alight with the fire of God's love.

#### Parent Notes

- Summarize the key points in the slide above.
  - In Baptism, the Holy Spirit made us one with Jesus. As wonderful as that is, it is important to know that the Holy Spirit continues to help us have a personal relationship with Jesus, every day of our lives.
  - Because we belong to Jesus, everything about our lives is brighter, happier, more hopeful... because,

- **Jesus is with us everywhere we go and in everything, we do**, supporting us, helping us. As a disciple of Jesus we belong to Him, he recognizes us, accepts us, and appreciates us.
- **We are connected to everyone and everything through Jesus**. We not only belong to Jesus we are a member of The Body of Christ, the Church.
- **Others recognize us as the friends of Jesus**. They see Jesus in us because of what we say and do. ***“We will know they are Christians by their love.”***

**Family Faith Sharing Activity – see next page**

**When you finish the Reflection sheet, you can**

1. **Scan it and email it to Joan Sloan, [jsloan@holyfamilyparish.org](mailto:jsloan@holyfamilyparish.org)**
2. **Print it out, fill it out and either mail it to Holy Family: attention Joan Sloan or Dr. Peg Hanrahan or drop it off at Holy Family using the Drop Box at the Main western entrance to the Church.**
3. **Fill out the Acrobat Adobe version, available on the parish website and email it to Joan Sloan.**

Jesus invites many people to follow Him and be one of his disciples.

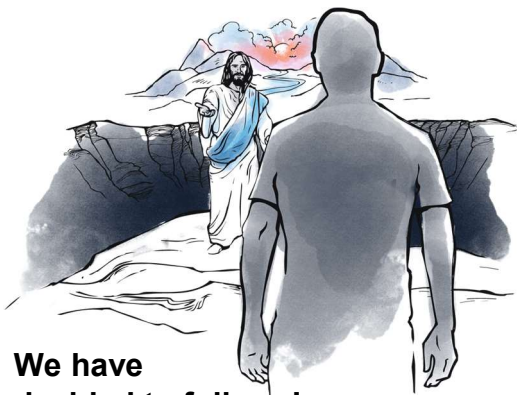
Some follow and some do not.

Talk with your family and write down some reasons why you think some people choose not to follow Jesus.



Talk with your family about why you have decided to follow Jesus.

Write down one or two of your reasons.



We have  
decided to follow Jesus

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#1 Thing

Talk with your family and come up with one Thing you could do as a family to help each other become even better disciples. **Make sure it is something you can do.** Write your idea here

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*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up*

1 Thessalonians 5:11

**St. Paul** tells us to encourage one another. Think about some qualities Jesus had or the Things Jesus did. To follow Jesus means to Become more like Jesus. Take some time to Tell your family members how you see them Being disciples of Jesus. Make sure you say At least one thing to each of your family Members or more than one thing if you like.