

The Mass and Holy Days of Obligation

UNIT 1, LESSON 2

Suggested Grade Levels

- › 4th–6th grade

Learning Goals

- › The Mass is the celebration of Divine Worship and the highest celebration of our Faith.
- › The Mass is celebrated in two main parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- › The Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist together form “one single act of worship” the Eucharistic table set for us is the table both of the Word of God and of the Body of the Lord. (CCC 1346)
- › The faithful are required to participate in Mass on Sundays, solemnities, and Holy Days of Obligation.



Connection to the Catechism of the Catholic Church

- › CCC 1070
- › CCC 1193
- › CCC 1323
- › CCC 1346



Vocabulary

- › Liturgy of the Word
- › Liturgy of the Eucharist
- › The Parts of the Mass
- › Holy Days of Obligation

BIBLICAL TOUCHSTONES

“For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.”

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.

ACTS 2:42

Lesson Plan

Materials

- ▶ Handout A: The Order of the Mass
- ▶ Handout B: Liturgy of the Word Fill-in-the-Blanks
- ▶ Bible readings available at [SophiaOnline.org/DailyReadings](https://www.sophiaonline.org/DailyReadings)
- ▶ Construction paper

DAY ONE

Warm-Up

A. Ask your students the following questions:

- ▶ What is the Mass? *Mass is a celebration, a memorial, a sacrifice, and a sacrament.*
- ▶ What do we do at Mass? *Pray, worship, receive the Eucharist, listen to readings, sing hymns, and so forth.*

B. Explain to your students that the celebration of the Eucharist was instituted by Christ at the Last Supper (CCC 1323), and that it has been celebrated by the Church from the time of the Apostles to the present (Acts 2:42, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

C. Before you begin the activity, note that the best way to learn about the Mass is simple – to go to Mass! This lesson can provide context and foundation for an enriched understanding of what is happening, but can never replace participating in the reality that takes place at every Mass.

If at all possible, take your class to Mass after presenting this lesson.

Activity

A. Ask students to turn to **Handout A: The Order of the Mass (page 33)**.

B. Ask your students to verbally match the parts of the Introductory Rite to their definition by asking in which part of the Introductory Rite...

- ▶ ...do we sing a hymn or the introit or entrance antiphon? *Entrance*
- ▶ ...does the priest greet the congregation? *Greeting*
- ▶ ...do we prepare our hearts to receive the Lord? *Penitential Act*
- ▶ ...do we ask the Lord for mercy? *Kyrie*
- ▶ ...do we give thanks and praise to God? *Gloria*
- ▶ ...do we offer the community's prayers of the day and prepares us to hear the written Word of God? *Collect*

C. Explain to your students that there are two main parts of the Mass: The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. (Today's lesson focuses on the Liturgy of the Word.) Explain that the Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist together form "one single act of worship" (CCC 1346) because they both prepare us to receive Christ, first in the Word of God then in His Body and Blood.

- D. Project on the board the readings from the upcoming Sunday's Mass found at **SophiaOnline.org/DailyReadings**. Optionally, they can locate the readings in Scripture. Have students identify that the first reading and psalm come from the Old Testament, while the second reading and Gospel come from the New Testament.
- E. Have students read the first and second readings, the Psalm, and the Gospel. Have them look for key words, images, or themes that connect them. Point out that whatever we hear in the first reading Christ fulfills in the Gospel, the high point of the Liturgy of the Word.
- F. Explain to your students that the priest will explain the Gospel or other readings in a homily after the Gospel is read. After the homily, the faithful profess our beliefs in the Creed (project on board if students are not familiar). The Liturgy concludes with the Prayer of the Faithful, when those gathered pray for their needs and the needs of the world.
- G. Explain that the readings, etc., we hear in the Liturgy of the Word prepare us to receive Jesus in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Because Christ is the Word of God, we worship Him in the Liturgy of the Word by listening, similar to the way that we worship Him by receiving His Body and Blood in the Eucharist.

Formative Assessment

Have students complete the activity on **Handout B: Liturgy of the Word Fill-In-The-Blank (page 34)** with the parts of the Introductory Rite and the Liturgy of the Word using **Handout A: The Order of the Mass**.

DAY TWO

Warm-Up

- A. Review with students the parts of the Liturgy of the Word, explaining that first in the Liturgy of the Word we receive the written word of God. Because Christ is the Word, the readings and responses order our minds and hearts to Christ. This is why the highest point of the Liturgy of the Word is the Gospel, the proclaimed life and teachings of Christ.
- B. Explain to your students that once our minds and hearts have been fed with Holy Scripture, prayer, and reflection, we are ready to continue the Mass with the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This is the heart of the Mass, because we receive Christ in His Body and Blood. Explain that the Eucharist was established at the Last Supper (Luke 22:19-20), in which Christ commanded His disciples to continue the celebration of His Sacrifice.

Activity

- A. Ask students to turn to **Handout A: The Order of the Mass (page 33)**.
- B. The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the Offertory, or the presentation of the Bread and Wine. Members of the congregation bring the unconsecrated bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Christ to the priest. We also offer money in support of the Church and the poor.
- C. Conduct a mini-lecture with your students that explains the following parts of the Eucharistic Prayer:
- ▶ *The Preface* begins with “The Lord be with you...” We prepare to offer our hearts to God.
 - ▶ The *Sanctus*, or *Holy, Holy, Holy* has been part of the Mass from the first century AD, and has Old and New Testament roots. In it we praise God and prepare for the Consecration.
 - ▶ In *the Mystery of Faith* (“We proclaim your death, O Lord...,” “When we eat this Bread...,” or “Save us Savior...”) we state that we believe that we are receiving the real Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist and that we will continue to until He comes again.
 - ▶ In the person of Christ, the priest gives thanks and praise to God and, in the *Consecration*, calls down the Holy Spirit and repeats Jesus’ words at the Last Supper. It is at this moment of Consecration, when Heaven and Earth are joined, that the bread becomes the Body of Christ and the wine becomes the Blood of Christ.
 - ▶ Next, the congregation prays *the Lord’s Prayer*, the prayer that Jesus taught us, and exchanges the sign of peace as a gesture of sharing in God’s love and mercy.
 - ▶ We invoke *the Lamb of God*, asking for mercy. We do this in part to recall how Christ’s sacrifice redeemed the world from sin.
 - ▶ We then declare our unworthiness as we make our way to the Minister of the Eucharist to receive *Holy Communion*.
 - ▶ The Eucharistic celebration concludes with the *Prayer after Communion*, in which we pray that the benefits of the Eucharist will remain present in our lives outside of the Church community.
- D. Explain to your students that at the end of Mass, or the Concluding Rites, the priest gives the congregation a final blessing and tells us to “Go forth.” This is not an end to our encounter with God; it is a sending forth. Remind students that as Catholics understand it, liturgy includes the celebration of Divine Worship, the proclamation of the Gospel, and activity charity. Though the rite of celebration has ended we continue the liturgy by our lives until we join at Mass again.

Formative assessment

- A. Cut out in advance the cards from **Teacher Resource: Liturgy of the Eucharist Matching (page 31 in this guide)**. Include the parts of Liturgy of the Word if not enough cards for each student.

- B. Distribute one card to each student randomly and out of order. Have them find the card that matches theirs (“Lord’s Prayer” with “the prayer that Jesus taught us,” etc.), then have the pairs of students line up in order. Have them recite their cards down their rows in order.

DAY THREE

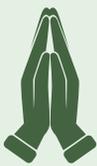
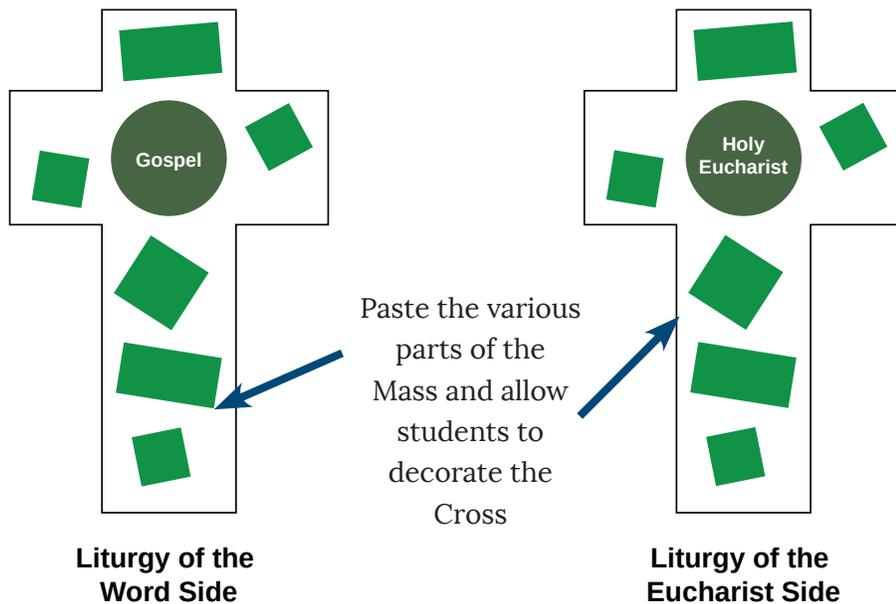
Warm-Up

- A. Review parts of the Mass with students. Discuss with students how the parts of the Mass are ordered to Christ. (The Liturgy of the Word, Christ is the Word; we receive Christ in the Eucharist; we are instructed to proclaim the Gospel, etc.)
- B. Ask students when we are supposed to participate in Mass.
- › Sundays – Third Commandment, keep holy the Lord’s day
 - › Solemnities and important feasts – for example, St. Joseph’s school might have a school Mass on the Feast of St. Joseph, and students receiving Confirmation have a special Mass for the Sacrament, etc.
 - › Holy Days of Obligation – important feast days in the life of the Catholic community on which, in addition to Sundays, Catholics are obligated to participate in Mass according to the precepts of the Church
- C. Conduct a mini-lecture with your students explaining the Holy Days of Obligation:
- › Mary, Mother of God – January 1
 - › The Ascension – Thursday of the Sixth Week of Easter
 - › The Assumption of Mary – August 15
 - › All Saints Day – November 1
 - › The Immaculate Conception – December 8
 - › The Nativity (Christmas) – December 25
- D. Briefly review the dates with students. Project either the date or the feast title on the board and have them match the appropriate date or title with it.
- E. Have your students recall that the Mass is the celebration of Divine Worship and the highest celebration of our Faith. In the Mass we remember Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross for us and we receive Him in the Eucharist, thus it is a way we participate in God’s love for us and express our love for God. It is therefore proper for Catholics to participate in Mass on Sundays to keep God’s commandment, but also to celebrate together on important feasts in the Church community. Even more, we should remember what a precious gift it is to be able to receive the Eucharist, and go as often as possible, even every day.

Assessment

- Have your students cut a cross out of a large sheet of construction paper.
- Distribute various smaller strips of paper on which the parts of the Mass (from **Handout A: The Order of the Mass**) are printed.
- On one side, at the center of the Cross, have them paste The Gospel. On the other at the center, have them paste Holy Communion. (They can write on the Gospel side Liturgy of the Word and on the Communion side Liturgy of the Eucharist.)
- Have them paste the appropriate parts on the appropriate sides. When they are finished pasting, review the various parts with them to make sure they are on the right sides. Ask them to recall which each part is. Discuss how these two parts have one center (Jesus Christ) and how they make one celebration and one sacrifice.
- Once you have reviewed, they can decorate their crosses. Suggest images like bread and wine or images mentioned in the readings of the upcoming Sunday Mass. When they have finished you can display them in the classroom, or they can use them as a reference for the parts of the Mass.

Example Cross:



Live the Liturgy

Take your students to Mass soon after presenting this lesson.

Liturgy of the Eucharist Matching

1 Preface	A We prepare to offer our hearts to God.	2 Holy Holy Holy
3 Mystery of Faith	B We state that we believe that we are receiving the real Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.	4 Consecration
5 Holy Communion	C We receive Christ's Body and Blood.	6 Lord's Prayer

<p>7 Sign of Peace</p>	<p>D A gesture of the congregation sharing in God's love and mercy</p>	<p>9 Prayer after Communion</p>
<p>8 Lamb of God</p>	<p>E We ask for mercy while recalling Christ's sacrifice to redeem us from sin.</p>	<p>F We praise God and prepare for the Consecration.</p>
<p>6 The priest calls down the Holy Spirit and repeats Jesus' words at the Last Supper. The bread becomes the Body of Christ and the wine becomes His Blood.</p>	<p>H The prayer that Jesus taught us</p>	<p>I We pray that the benefits of the Eucharist will remain present in our lives outside of the Church community.</p>

The Order of the Mass

In the liturgy of the Church, we bless and adore God the Father as the source of all the blessings of creation. We adore Him for the salvation He has offered us in his Son, so that we can be His sons and daughters. When we gather to pray, the Holy Spirit works in the liturgy to prepare us to encounter Christ. He helps us remember Christ, and make Him present to us. The Mass is a re-presentation of Jesus' sacrifice, and the Holy Spirit makes the saving work of Christ present and active

by His transforming power, transforming our hearts. He makes the gift of Communion bear fruit in the Church. The Lord's Day, Sunday, is the principal day for the celebration of the Eucharist because it is the day of the Resurrection. It is the most important day for the worshippers gathered, the Christian family, and it is our day of joy and rest from work. Sunday is "the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year" (CCC 1193).

Introductory Rites

- › Entrance
- › Greeting
- › Penitential Act
- › Glory to God
- › Collect

Liturgy of the Word

- › First Reading
- › Responsorial Psalm
- › Second Reading (on Sundays and solemnities)
- › Gospel Acclamation
- › Gospel
- › Homily
- › Profession of Faith (on Sundays, solemnities, and special occasions)
- › Prayer of the Faithful

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- › Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar
- › Prayer over the Offerings
- › Eucharistic Prayer
- › Preface
- › Holy, Holy, Holy
- › First half of prayer, including Consecration
- › Mystery of Faith
- › Second half of prayer, ending with Doxology
- › The Lord's Prayer
- › Sign of Peace
- › Lamb of God
- › Communion
- › Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rites

- › Optional announcements
- › Greeting and Blessing
- › Dismissal

Liturgy of the Word Fill-In-The-Blank

Directions: Using the information on **The Order of the Mass**, insert the answer in the blank to the left of each statement.

- _____ 1. The high point of the Liturgy of the Word in which we hear the life and teachings of Christ.
- _____ 2. We sing a hymn or the introit (antiphon).
- _____ 3. We hear a selection from the New Testament.
- _____ 4. The priest greets the congregation.
- _____ 5. We pray for our needs and the needs of the world.
- _____ 6. We receive the written Word of God.
- _____ 7. We hear a selection from the Old Testament.
- _____ 8. We prepare our hearts to receive the Lord.
- _____ 9. We meditate on God's Word in a poetic form.
- _____ 10. The priest preaches on the Eucharistic celebration or explains the readings and Gospel.
- _____ 11. We give thanks and praise to God.
- _____ 12. We profess our beliefs as members of the Church.
- _____ 13. The priest offers the community's prayers of the day and prepares us to hear the written Word of God.
- _____ 14. We ask the Lord for mercy.

Answer Key

Teacher Resource: Liturgy of the Eucharist Matching

1. A
2. F
3. B
4. G
5. C
6. H
7. D
8. E
9. I

Handout B: Liturgy of the Word Fill-in-the-Blank

1. Gospel
2. Entrance
3. Second Reading
4. Greeting
5. Prayer of the Faithful
6. Liturgy of the Word
7. First Reading
8. Penitential Act
9. Psalm
10. Homily
11. Gloria
12. Creed
13. Collect
14. Kyrie