The Sacrifice of the Mass

Learning Goals

› Jesus is the Lamb of God who frees us from sin and spiritual death.
› The Mass is a re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.
› The Mass is divided into two main parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
› We worship and receive the Lord in His Word and in His Body and Blood from the same altar at every Mass.

Connection to the Catechism of the Catholic Church

› CCC 103
› CCC 1334
› CCC 1341-1344
› CCC 1346
› CCC 1348-1355
› CCC 1362-1366

Vocabulary

› Passover
› Lamb of God
› The Mass
› Liturgy of the Word
› Liturgy of the Eucharist

BIBLICAL TOUCHSTONES

I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. Seraphim were stationed above; each of them had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they hovered. One cried out to the other: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts! All the earth is filled with his glory!”

ISAIAH 6:1-3

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”

JOHN 1:29
Lesson Plan

Materials

- The Passover Lamb
- Liturgy of the Word
- Liturgy of the Eucharist

DAY ONE

Warm-Up

A. Project John 1:29, and have a student stand and read it aloud:

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”

B. Explain to your students that this passage appears in John’s Gospel where John the Baptist was baptizing people in the Jordan River. When Jesus came to meet John and his followers, John introduced Jesus to them in this way. Ask your students the following questions:

- What animal does John call Jesus? A lamb, the Lamb of God.
- What did John say that Jesus, the Lamb of God, will do? Take away the sin of the world.
- What are lambs usually like? Small, innocent, shy, meek, cute, cuddly, soft, gentle, kind, and so forth.
- Do you think a lamb is a good animal to compare Jesus to? Why or why not? Answers will vary, but most students will likely answer no, because Jesus is God and King of the universe, not cute and cuddly.

Why did John describe Jesus as the Lamb of God? Accept reasoned answers. Then explain that this seemingly strange description of Jesus actually connects Jesus’ suffering, death, and Resurrection to the events of the Old Testament. In this lesson, we’re going to learn about those events.

Activity

A. Ask students to turn to The Passover Lamb (page 236). Have them work in pairs to read the information and complete the focus questions.

B. When students have finished, review and discuss the correct answers to the focus questions.

Materials

- The Passover Lamb
- Liturgy of the Word
- Liturgy of the Eucharist
Formative Assessment

A. Project Luke 22:14-20, and have a student stand and read it aloud:

When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles. He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it [again] until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you [that] from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.”

B. Ask your students the following questions:

› What is this Scripture passage the story of? The Last Supper.

› What special meal was Jesus sharing with His Apostles? The Passover.

› What similarities do you see between this account of the Last Supper and the Passover that we studied in the last lesson? Jesus says He has desired to eat this Passover with His Apostles. There was a cup of wine and bread. Jesus said the cup of wine is the new covenant in His blood, which will be shed for us.

› Notice that while there is bread and wine, there is no lamb at this Passover meal. Why do you think that is? Jesus is the Lamb of God, as John the Baptist announced. He gives us His Body and Blood to eat and drink, just as the Israelites had to eat the flesh of the original Passover lamb.

› As in the original Passover, Jesus asked His Apostles to remember this event, to “do this in memory” of Him. How is this sacred meal made present to us today? At every Mass when we receive the Eucharist.

C. Explain to your students that the sacrifice of the Mass is a re-presentation of Jesus’ one sacrifice on the Cross. When we receive the Eucharist, we are receiving the Lamb of God who takes away our sin and we are taking part in the New Passover.

DAY TWO

Warm-Up

A. Project Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 103, and have a student stand and read it aloud:

[T]he Church has always venerated the Scriptures as she venerates the Lord’s Body. She never ceases to present to the faithful the bread of life, taken from the one table of God’s Word and Christ’s Body.
B. Ask your students the following questions:

- What does it mean to “venerate” something or someone? To honor.
- What two things does this Catechism reference tell us that we honor? The Scriptures and the Lord’s Body.
- Where are the Scriptures and Lord’s Body presented to us? The one table of God’s Word and Christ’s Body. In other words, when we come before the altar at every Mass.

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. The liturgy of the Word and the 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. In today’s lesson, we are going to explore the different parts of the Liturgy of the Word.

Activity

Have your students turn to Liturgy of the Word (page 239). Ask them to read the essay, then use the information they learned to fill in the term matching.

Formative Assessment

A. When students have completed Liturgy of the Word, review and discuss the correct answers.
B. Have students write on their own paper a response to the following prompt:

- Today’s lesson helped me understand...

DAY THREE

Warm-Up

A. First, review the parts of the Liturgy of the Word from the previous lesson.
B. Then project Isaiah 6:1-3, and have a student stand and read it aloud:

I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. Seraphim were stationed above; each of them had six wings: with two they covered...
Activity

Have your students turn to **Liturgy of the Eucharist (page 242)**. Have your students read the essay, then use the information they learned to fill in the term matching.

**Assessment**

A. When students have completed **Liturgy of the Eucharist**, review and discuss the correct answers.

B. Have students write on their own paper a paragraph in response to the following prompt:

> If I were to explain the Mass so that a person could really understand it, I would say... (Hint: Think of the different parts of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist as well as the Passover sacrifice.)
The Passover Lamb

Directions: Read the information below, then answer the questions that follow.

In the book of Exodus we meet the Israelites after they have been enslaved in Egypt for almost 500 years. The Egyptians were cruel to the Israelites. So God sent an Israelite man named Moses to free the Israelites from slavery.

Moses asked the Pharaoh to let God’s people go, but Pharaoh refused. So God sent nine plagues upon Egypt. God turned the Nile River into blood, sent large swarms of insects, killed the Egyptian cattle, and ruined the Egyptian crops. He blocked out the sun and made it completely dark during the daytime. After each plague, Moses asked Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free. Pharaoh refused every time. Finally, God decided to send a tenth plague, the plague of death.

On the fourteenth night of the month, God would send an angel of death upon Egypt. All of the firstborn children would die. God gave Moses specific instructions to follow so that the firstborn of the Israelites would not die. Each Israelite family had to take a male lamb without any broken bones or defects and kill it. Then they had to spread the blood of the lamb on their doorposts. This was to be a sign for the angel of death to pass over the Israelite houses. Then they were to roast and eat the flesh of the lamb that had been sacrificed. God commanded the Israelites to remember this event every year with a sacred meal of unleavened bread, a cup of wine, and a lamb.

That night, the angel of death came and killed the firstborn children in Egypt, including Pharaoh’s son.
**Answer Key**

1. They were slaves of the Egyptians. Moses.

2. Ten Plagues. Some examples are: God turned the Nile River to blood, sent large swarms of insects, killed the Egyptian cattle, and ruined the Egyptian crops. He blocked out the sun and made it completely dark during the daytime.

3. A plague of death. God would send the angel of death to kill the firstborn children throughout Egypt.

4. Kill it, spread its blood on their doorposts, and roast and eat its flesh.

The angel passed over the homes of the Israelites who had marked their doorposts with the lamb's blood. Their sons were not killed. This event became known as the Passover. Afterward, Pharaoh let the Israelites go free.

In the Old Testament, the sacrifice of the lamb saved God's people from physical death. But, because of sin, we all deserved a fate worse than physical death. Sin causes us to die spiritually. When we sin, we are separated from God. Jesus came to save us from spiritual death. He came to reunite us with God. His sacrifice on the Cross freed us from sin and saved us from death. In a similar way, the Passover lamb in the Exodus had freed the Israelites from slavery and saved them from physical death. Therefore, when John the Baptist called Jesus “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29), he wasn’t comparing Jesus to a random animal. He was announcing that Jesus was the sacrificial lamb of a new Passover, one that would free God's people from sin.
5. Remember the Passover event with a sacred meal of unleavened bread, wine, and a lamb.

6. The angel of death came down upon Egypt and killed the firstborn children of Egypt, including Pharaoh’s son. The Israelites were spared. Then Pharaoh let the Israelites go free.

7. Spiritual death, separation from God.


9. As the Passover lamb in the Exodus freed the Israelites from slavery and saved them from physical death, Jesus’ sacrifice frees us from sin and spiritual death.

10. Jesus was the sacrificial lamb of a new Passover, one that would free us from sin.
**Liturgy of the Word**

**Directions:** Read the information below, then use that knowledge to complete the term matching that follows.

In the Liturgy of the Word we receive the written Word of God. It begins with the First Reading. Normally the first reading is taken from the Old Testament. At special times of the year, such as during the Easter season, the First Reading may come from a New Testament writing other than the Gospels. Next comes the Responsorial Psalm, a hymn taken from one of the 150 psalms in the Old Testament. The Responsorial Psalm is meant to be sung. The cantor, or lead singer, leads the congregation by singing the psalm first and then inviting the people to join in the response. After the Psalm comes the Second Reading. The Second Reading is taken from one of the writings of the New Testament other than the Gospels. Then follows the Gospel Acclamation, which is a sung or spoken sign of respect for the importance of the Gospels. Normally we sing the word Alleluia, which means “Praise God.” During Lent we sing a different Gospel Acclamation in order to save the Alleluia for the Easter celebration. After the Gospel Acclamation, the priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel. This reading is taken from one of the four Gospels in the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. The Gospel proclamation is the high point of the Liturgy of the
Word. It is through the Gospels that we best come to know Jesus.

All the readings we hear throughout the year tell us the story of Jesus. We hear about when he was conceived in Mary’s womb, when He was born, when He ascended into Heaven, and when He sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. We hear about how we wait in joyful hope of His return.

After the Gospel is read, the priest will give a Homily. He will preach about the Eucharistic celebration or help us to understand the readings from Mass. Next, on Sundays and holy days, we stand and recite the Profession of Faith together as one people of God; this can be either the Nicene Creed or the Apostles’ Creed. When we do this, we profess what we believe as members of the Church. The Liturgy of the Word ends with the Prayer of the Faithful. Together we lift up to God our needs and the needs of the world and ask Him to hear our prayers.
1. Gospel
2. Responsorial Psalm
3. Second Reading
4. Prayers of the Faithful
5. Liturgy of the Word
6. First Reading
7. Homily
8. Profession of Faith
9. Gospel Acclamation
10. Gospel

Term Matching

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 taken from one of the 150 Psalms in the Old Testament.
3. We hear a reading from a writing of the New Testament.
4. We pray for our needs and the needs of the world.
5. We receive the written Word of God.
6. We hear a reading from an Old Testament book.
7. The priest preaches on the Eucharistic celebration or help us to understand the readings and the Gospel.
8. We profess our beliefs as members of the Church.
9. We sing or speak a sign of respect for the importance of the Gospel.
10. Through these we best come to know Jesus.

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Liturgy of the Eucharist

**Directions:** Read the information below, then use that knowledge to complete the term matching that follows.

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. We receive Christ in His Body and Blood. The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the **Offertory,** or the presentation of the Bread and Wine. Members of the congregation bring to the priest the unconsecrated bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Christ. We also offer money in support of the Church and the poor. The priest will prepare the altar for consecration and pray over the offerings. Next, the priest will begin the **Eucharistic Prayer,** a prayer of thanksgiving and consecration. Part of this prayer is the **Preface,** which begins with “The Lord be with you...” Here, we prepare to offer our hearts to God. We sing or recite together the **Sanctus,** or **Holy, Holy.** In this prayer we praise God and prepare for the **Consecration.** Next is the **Epiclesis,** in which the priest asks the Father to send His Holy Spirit to bless the bread and wine so that by His power they might become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Acting in the person of Christ, the priest gives thanks and praise to God, and, in the Consecration, he repeats Jesus’ words at the Last Supper. It is at this moment, at the Consecration, that the bread becomes the Body of Christ and the wine becomes the Blood of Christ. Then, we pray together the **Mystery of Faith.** Here we state that we believe that we will receive the real Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist and that we will continue to do so until He comes again. The priest continues to pray, and we end together with a great **Amen.** Next, the congregation prays together the **Lord’s Prayer,** the prayer that Jesus taught us. We exchange a **Sign of Peace** with those around us to
show that we share in God's love and mercy. Then we pray the Lamb of God and ask for God's mercy and peace. We do this in part to recall how Christ's sacrifice redeemed the world from sin. Finally, we receive the Eucharist in Holy Communion. We receive Christ's true Body and Blood under the appearance of bread and wine. This moment is the highest point of our Christian worship. The Eucharistic celebration concludes with the Prayer after Communion. Here we pray that the grace we received from the Eucharist will be with us when we go forth from the Mass.

**Term Matching**

_______________ 1. The priest asks the Father to send His Spirit upon the bread and wine.

_______________ 2. A prayer in which we offer our hearts to God.

_______________ 3. A prayer of thanksgiving and consecration.

_______________ 4. The highest point of Christian worship, when we receive Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist.

_______________ 5. The presentation of the bread and wine.

_______________ 6. A prayer of praise to God.

_______________ 7. The heart of the Mass, when we receive Christ's Body and Blood.
8. We pray that the grace from the Eucharist will be with as when we go forth from the Mass.

9. The priest repeats the words of Christ at the Last Supper, and the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

10. We state that we believe we are receiving Jesus' Body and Blood.

11. A sign that we share in God's love and mercy.

12. We ask for God's mercy and peace.

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That night, the angel of death came and killed the firstborn children in Egypt, including Pharaoh’s son.
The angel passed over the homes of the Israelites who had marked their doorposts with the lamb’s blood. Their sons were not killed. This event became known as the Passover. Afterward, Pharaoh let the Israelites go free.

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1.  What were the Israelites doing in Egypt for nearly 500 years? Whom did God send to save them?

2.  After Pharaoh refused to free the Israelites, what did God send upon Egypt? Give two examples.

3.  What was the tenth plague?

4.  What did the Israelites have to do with the lamb?
5. What did God command the Israelites to do every year?

6. What happened on the night of the Passover?

7. What fate do we deserve because of sin?

8. What did Jesus come to save us from? How did He do this?

9. How is Jesus’ sacrifice similar to the sacrifice of the Passover lamb?

10. What did John the Baptist mean when he called Jesus “the Lamb of God”?
Liturgy of the Word

**Directions:** Read the information below, then use that knowledge to complete the term matching that follows.

In the **Liturgy of the Word** we receive the written Word of God. It begins with the **First Reading**. Normally the first reading is taken from the Old Testament. At special times of the year, such as during the Easter season, the First Reading may come from a New Testament writing other than the Gospels. Next comes the **Responsorial Psalm**, a hymn taken from one of the 150 psalms in the Old Testament. The Responsorial Psalm is meant to be sung. The cantor, or lead singer, leads the congregation by singing the psalm first and then inviting the people to join in the response. After the Psalm comes the **Second Reading**. The Second Reading is taken from one of the writings of the New Testament other than the Gospels. Then follows the **Gospel Acclamation**, which is a sung or spoken sign of respect for the importance of the Gospels. Normally we sing the word Alleluia, which means “Praise God.” During Lent we sing a different Gospel Acclamation in order to save the Alleluia for the Easter celebration. After the Gospel Acclamation, the priest or deacon proclaims the **Gospel**. This reading is taken from one of the four Gospels in the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. The Gospel proclamation is the high point of the Liturgy of the
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Term Matching

_______________ 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 taken from one of the 150 Psalms in the Old Testament.

_______________ 3. We hear a reading from a writing of the New Testament.

_______________ 4. We pray for our needs and the needs of the world.

_______________ 5. We receive the written Word of God.

_______________ 6. We hear a reading from an Old Testament book.

_______________ 7. The priest preaches on the Eucharistic celebration or help us to understand the readings and the Gospel.

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**Term Matching**

1. The priest asks the Father to send His Spirit upon the bread and wine.
2. A prayer in which we offer our hearts to God.
3. A prayer of thanksgiving and consecration.
4. The highest point of Christian worship, when we receive Christ’s Body and Blood in the Eucharist.
5. The presentation of the bread and wine.
6. A prayer of praise to God.
7. The heart of the Mass, when we receive Christ’s Body and Blood.
8. We pray that the grace from the Eucharist will be with us as when we go forth from the Mass.

9. The priest repeats the words of Christ at the Last Supper, and the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

10. We state that we believe we are receiving Jesus’ Body and Blood.

11. A sign that we share in God’s love and mercy.

12. We ask for God’s mercy and peace.

13. The prayer Jesus taught us.

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