

# My First EUCHARIST

Sharing a Special Meal with Jesus



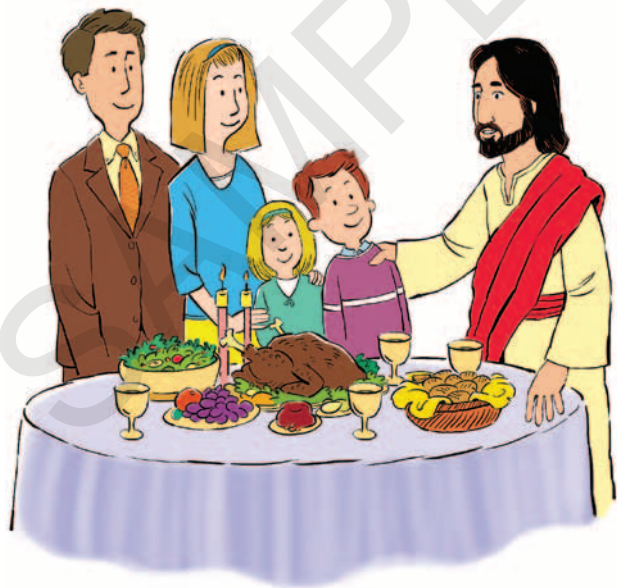
Kathy Coffey

## 1. My Big Day

Your First Eucharist is a Big Day. It is so special, you will prepare for it like you get ready for Christmas or Easter.

Sometimes, you ask people to your home. Friends or family come to eat, play or have a party. You welcome them. Now, you are making a home in your heart for Jesus. What a great guest!

And he wants to be with *you*, to share your life.



## 2. Jesus Loved to Eat with Friends!

Think of the person who loves you most. Now think about him or her caring for you, or doing something kind. That shows you a little of who Jesus is. He is love straight through. He treated everyone—even people who were angry, hurt or mean—with kindness. He was the best person who has ever lived. And he lives in people who are like him. You are like him too. The Eucharist is the food that makes you strong, like Jesus.

We learn who Jesus is by reading stories about him in the Gospels, the part of the Bible that tells about Jesus. There we see how much he liked his friends. He liked to be with them and tell them stories. He reminded them that they were God's beloved children.

There are many stories about Jesus sharing meals with others. Sharing meals was a way for Jesus to show us how to share our life with others. We learn a lot about him when we look at the stories of his meals. Here are some stories about Jesus' meals.



## **A Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11)**

Have you ever been to a wedding? What happens there? Happy people dress up in their best clothes. A bride and groom look especially beautiful and happy. When they come in with their friends and family, it's called a *procession*. There's music and dancing. Lots of good things to eat and drink. Weddings are fun!

Jesus thought so too. One day, he went with his mother and his friends to a wedding in the small village of Cana. They were all having a good time. Then Jesus' mother noticed something sad. The wine had run out! She told her son, "they have no wine."

Jesus told the waiters, "fill the six big stone jars with water." Then he asked them to taste it. It wasn't water! It was wine! A really good wine. He surprised everyone.

### **What to do with your parents and family...**

Act out the story of the wedding at Cana with your family. Pretend to be the bride, groom, or mother/father of the bride or groom. Start the story, beginning, "something great happened at the wedding today..."

Afterwards, talk about a time when you were surprised when you got more food than you expected to get.



## The Last Supper (Luke 22:14-20)

Before Jesus was going to die, he had a last, special meal with his friends. He liked telling and hearing stories, sharing food with them. Jesus wanted to stay with his friends even after his death. He also wants to be with us. This is how he does it:

He gave them bread, but it was more than bread. It was his body. He told them, "when you eat this, remember me." He gave them wine, but it was more than wine. It was his blood. He told them, "when you drink this, remember me."

Today, Jesus does the same thing. He gives us the bread which is his body and the wine which is his blood.



## **What to do with your parents and family...**

Remember a special meal that you had...

Where did you eat?

Who came?

How did you feel after the meal?

Write three words below that say  
how you felt.

If you wish, draw a picture of the special meal  
and the people you shared it with.

### 3. How Do We Get Ready?

Here are some things you can do before your First Eucharist:

*Spend quiet time with Jesus.*

You may want to have a special prayer place in your home. In this corner or on this table, place a candle, Bible, a plant, or something special to you. Or you may want to tell Jesus “thanks” when you are outside and see a beautiful river, sky, or tree. He is like a friend you want to spend lots of time with. You want to get to know him better.





### *Have a ritual with your family.*

A ritual means something we do over and over, the same way. Maybe when you go to bed, you brush your teeth, put on pajamas and hear a story. You can do a First Eucharist ritual like this:

With an adult, light a candle. Read one of the Bible stories above. (You can also read more meal stories of Jesus eating with friends. Have your mom or dad look up Luke 7:36-50, Mark 14:12-16, 22-26, John 21:3-14 in the Bible).

Have a few quiet minutes afterwards. Then talk about the story. Ask any questions you have.

End with a prayer, maybe thanking Jesus for giving us the gift of himself—or something else you're thankful for.

### *Have Family Meals.*

As often as you can, eat with your family. Say grace before or after you do.

### *Say "Thanks."*

Eucharist means "thanksgiving." Try to thank God for 3 things every day—at meals or as you fall asleep.

### *Celebrate Mass often.*

When you go to Mass, look for the Parts below. When people go to Communion, know that you'll also be going very soon!

## 4. The Parts of the Mass

When we go to church for Mass, the parts of the Mass are a bit like a family meal. We gather, hear stories about Jesus, then remember his Last Supper meal and are sent out to be like Jesus at home and at school.

### **1. The Introductory Rites**

We go into the church and make the sign of the cross. It shows we belong to Jesus and each other. We are all marked with the same special sign. Sometimes we all sing the same song, because we are one family.

Make a cross in this space:

Then we say we're sorry if we've done anything wrong. We ask for God's mercy. Then we praise God in the "Gloria," as the angels did at Jesus' birth.

At what other times, outside of church, do you praise God? Name one here:

## ***2. The Liturgy of the Word***

First we hear stories about the people and times before Jesus. Then we hear about him and his friends. It's like hearing the stories at a family dinner.

### *Prayer of the Faithful*

Jesus wants us to have a heart as big as his. So we pray for:

the church all over the world,  
people who have trouble,  
our own cities and neighborhoods,  
the sick and the dead.

Draw or write below: for whom do you pray?

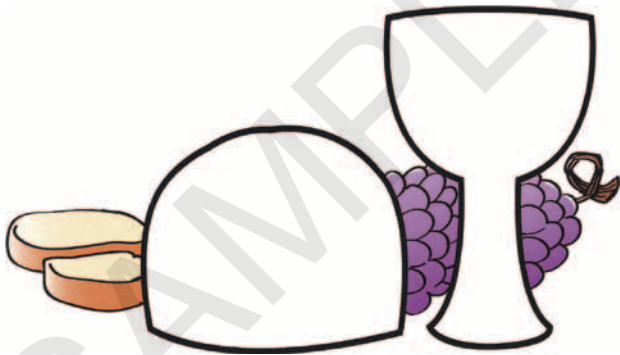
### *"I Believe"*

We join with people around the world who believe in Jesus as we do. We say together what we believe about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

### *Preparation of the Gifts*

When the bread and wine are carried to the altar, they stand for us. We bring ourselves to be changed into Jesus.

On the bread and cup below, draw what you bring to the Eucharist: fun? family? sports? friendships? sadness? worry? happiness? hobbies? schoolwork?



### **3. The Eucharistic Prayer**

#### *Holy, Holy, Holy*

Have you ever seen something so beautiful, you could hardly speak? That is how we feel now. All we can do is repeat the word *holy*. We use the same word the angels did, adoring God (Isaiah 6:1-3).

### *The Consecration*

Here, we lift our hearts in prayer. The priest asks God to change our gifts of bread and wine into the body and blood of his son, Jesus. The word *Consecration* means to make something holy.

These are the words the priest says, like Jesus' said at his last supper.

“Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body, which will be given up for you.

Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this in memory of me.”



## *The Our Father*

You may know this prayer that Jesus taught us to say. Sometimes, we join hands with each other now and say it together.

Our Father who art in Heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name;  
Thy kingdom come  
Thy will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our trespasses  
As we forgive those who trespass against us;  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.

## *Sign of Peace*

This is when we shake hands or hug each other. Before Communion, we offer each other Christ's peace. We try to make peace with each other and inside our own hearts.

Has anyone outside of church offered you a sign of peace? Maybe a backrub, a shared lunch, a ticket to a ballgame?

## *The Lamb of God*

Read the story of the Roman centurion (Matthew 8:5-13 or Luke 7:1-6). We say the same words he did.

## *Communion*

When we receive the bread and wine, we are receiving Jesus' body and blood. We are joined with him and each other. So we are careful and prayerful.

#### **4. The Concluding Rites**

Jesus' friends are kind, as he is. We are sent forth to be like Jesus, helping others. We are sent out to change the world and bring good.

Draw or write below someone you will be kind to this week. Show what could you do for them.

#### **5. What does Eucharist mean?**

When someone loves you a lot, you try to make them happy. Remember now (or tell someone) how you once did something kind for mom or dad, a grandparent, friend, brother or sister.

Jesus loves us and gives himself to us. That makes us want to be better people. He always reached out to the sick, the hungry and the hurting. So do we.

With the Eucharist, we have his strength. With his help, we can do things we never thought we could do alone. Now we belong in a special way to God and God's family.

## Notes for Parents

### *First Eucharist and Beyond*

Your child can't do this preparation alone. The more they see you getting excited about First Eucharist, the more they will share your joy. So, set aside regular time for preparation and for helping your child understand the words and ideas in this book.

You'll want to help your child remember the stories about Jesus because they tell us so much about him. While your child can enjoy the story, you may want to go deeper, pointing out the compassionate kind of person who does these things.

Involve family members and friends as much as possible. Stress that the important thing isn't the child's clothes, but the child's eagerness to be united with Jesus—and Jesus' wanting to be with them. Try to go to Mass with your child every Sunday, helping him or her to identify the parts of the Mass.

After receiving First Eucharist, your child won't suddenly become pious and prissy. But you DO want to encourage him or her to lead a Christ-like life. They will know what this is if you model it. Yes, that's a large order! Unless your child sees you praying, being grateful every day, attending Mass and helping others, the sacrament won't mean as much. Your example plays a huge, important part!