

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Corpus Christi
The Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ
Year B
3 June 2018

Catechist Background

The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, popularly known as *Corpus Christi*, was instituted in Liege in Belgium in 1246 and extended to the whole Church by Urban IV in 1264 as a celebration of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. In the 14th century the custom developed of carrying the Blessed Sacrament in a splendid procession through the locality after the Mass on the feast of Corpus Christi. In many parts of the world this tradition continues.

In the gospel today we hear Mark's account of Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples as a celebration of the Jewish feast of Passover. Mark, however, omits many elements of the Passover meal. He describes only those elements that are essential to the Eucharist, the Mass. Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it and shared it amongst his disciples. With similar words he shared also the cup with his disciples.

Jesus explains that this bread now shared is his body, the wine his own blood. He calls it 'the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many.' The New Covenant is the promise of God's love that will now be sealed by Jesus' own blood.

The Gospel reminds us that the Eucharist is a memorial of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. We believe that Jesus is truly present to us in the elements of bread and wine.

Through our celebration of the Eucharist we are nourished for the life in Christ that we are called to live throughout the week.

The liturgical colour for today is white.

Setting the Scene

For the activity described below, you will need small pieces of paper for the children to draw their faces on, and a chalice-like cup or ciborium-like dish, and materials for drawing.

We Say Sorry

Leader: You have given us your life, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You are always with us, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You share yourself with us in the Eucharist, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

We Pray (1)

God, help us to join in your love so that we can live out the peace of your Kingdom. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Mark 14:12-16,22-26

Discuss with the children the times when they celebrate being together by having a special meal: Christmas, Easter, birthdays, weddings etc. Ask them if they have any more examples. Discuss what is eaten on these special occasions. Help them to see that certain foods are linked with certain celebrations – birthday cakes, Christmas pudding etc etc. When we see these special foods it makes the occasion real and might also remind us of previous celebrations. Help them to see that these special meals help to bring the family closer together.

Tell them that today we are going to hear about a special meal that Jesus celebrated with his disciples, called the Last Supper. Ask them to listen carefully to what Jesus says and does in the gospel passage. Introduce the word Passover. Tell the children that this is a festival celebrated every year by the Jewish people to remember an occasion a long time ago when God saved his people from slavery and led them into freedom.

Reflecting on the readings with the children:

Help the children to recall what they have heard. Do they recognise any of the words Jesus used? What do we do to remember the Last Supper that Jesus celebrated with his disciples? (*come to Mass/celebrate the Eucharist*). The disciples prepared for the Passover meal. What preparations are made for the celebration of the Eucharist each Sunday? (*the church is made ready – cleaning, flowers, cloths, the priest prepares his homily, music rehearsed, servers, readers etc prepare.*) How do we make ourselves ready? These preparations show us how important the Eucharist is for us. Draw from them the reasons – we remember that Jesus died for us and rose again to new life, we receive Communion, we gather together to celebrate all that God has done for us.

Ask them to recall again the words of Jesus at the Last Supper – ‘This is my body. This is my blood.’ We believe that the bread and wine we bring to the altar at mass become the body and blood of Jesus which we receive in Communion because Jesus told us it was. Jesus told the disciples that each time they shared bread and wine and remembered him he was there in a very special way. When we share that presence together it brings us all closer together – one family around the table. This is true even if we are still too young to have received Communion – our presence there makes us one.

Response:

Have a simple line drawing of chalice and host on a flipchart or poster. Have the words ‘We are one family in Jesus’ below. Cut out from folded paper a string of ‘children shapes’. Separate them and give one to each child. Have them write their Christian name on the shape and bring them forward to stick on the poster. You might sing the refrain to the hymn ‘Bind us together’, or ‘We are one in the Spirit.’

Ask the children to watch and listen carefully today for the priest to say the words that Jesus said.

We believe:

Relating the Creed to what you have shared with the children, ask this series of questions and invite the children to reply, “I do”, e.g.

- Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, who made us to be one family?

- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, who gave us himself in a very special way at the Last Supper?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who helps us to be united as one family?

We pray:

Jesus has said he is with us always as we pray, so we pray:

Leader: For all the people in our parish who help to make our celebration of the Eucharist so beautiful, Lord, in your mercy,

Response Hear our prayer.

Leader: For all the children in our parish who have received (or will receive) Jesus in Communion for the first time this year, Lord in your mercy,

Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: For people we know who are suffering from illness or sadness, that they may know the peace and love God has for them, Lord, in your mercy,

Response: Hear our prayer.

Suggestion: You may ask a child or some children to read the bidding prayers. It is good for the children to participate and it can help to train your next generation of readers.

