

Understanding the Mass Vestibule

Each week, we are explaining the different parts of the Mass - what is in the church, what we use in the Mass, and why (and how) we celebrate Mass the way we do.

*Today our topic is the **Vestibule**.*

When you first enter a Catholic church, you will enter the **vestibule**, also known as the gathering space or narthex.

This is the area between the outside doors of the church and the inner doors leading into the worship space, and it marks where we will begin our encounter of the Church at prayer.

In the early history of the Church, the narthex was a waiting area for unbaptised people and penitents, who were not permitted to participate in all or part of the Mass.



This changed a long time ago, and today we welcome everyone into the main area of the church to participate in the Mass.

We still have the entrance area, though, and it is where we are welcomed each Sunday, and where baptisms, funerals and weddings begin. It is also a place for religious literature and for parish notices or displays.

Draw a picture of what the vestibule in your church looks like here:

