

The Eucharist – Celebrating Jesus’ Presence

In the beginning of this unit students explore the communal and celebratory nature of the Eucharist. They examine the origins of the Eucharist in the Passover and the Last Supper. Students investigate the parts of the Mass and the symbols, signs and rituals in each part. They are given the opportunity to consider the significance of the Mass in their own lives. At the end of the unit students are invited to plan and participate in a celebration of the Mass.

DOCTRINAL FOCUS

In planning to teach this unit the following references from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church are recommended:

#1136 Liturgy is an ‘action’ of the *whole Christ (Christus totus)*. Those who even now celebrate it without signs are already in the heavenly liturgy, where celebration is wholly communion and feast.

(See *Compendium #222 What is the work of Christ in the liturgy?*)

#1346 The liturgy of the Eucharist unfolds according to a fundamental structure which has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our own day. It displays two great parts that form a fundamental unity:

- the gathering, the Liturgy of the Word, with readings, homily and general intercessions;
- the Liturgy of the Eucharist, with the presentation of the bread and wine, the consecratory thanksgiving, and communion.

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.

(See *Compendium #277 How is the celebration of the Eucharist carried out?*)

#1412 The essential signs of the eucharistic sacrament are wheat bread and grape wine, on which the blessing of the Holy Spirit is invoked and the priest pronounces the words of consecration spoken by Jesus Christ during the Last Supper: ‘This is my body which will be given up for you ... This is the cup of my blood ...’

(See *Compendium #279 What are the essential elements for celebrating the Eucharist?*)

#1374 The mode of Christ's presence under the eucharistic species is unique. In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist ‘the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore *the whole Christ, is truly, really, and substantially contained*’.

(See *Compendium #282 How is Christ present in the Eucharist?*)

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS

Think of the elements of significant meals: the gathering of people who have something in common and who are important to each other; the sharing of stories, of hopes and of losses, and of carefully prepared food and drink; the hug or farewell at the end that sends people off to live in the spirit of warmth and encouragement shared in the meal. How are the rituals, signs, symbols and stories of the Mass similar to this

experience? What is your sense of God and of community in celebrations of the Eucharist?

We are nourished by the Word, the Body and Blood of Christ, and through the solidarity or communion of each other to live the word of God in our daily lives. What place does the Eucharist have in your life? How is your life nourished to live the word?

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. Where do you see signs of the Paschal mystery in your own life and in the world?

Where are the places and what are the experiences in which death and destruction are gradually transformed into hope and new beginnings? These are signs of the risen Christ in our midst. This is what Catholics celebrate and pray about in the Mass.

LINKS WITH STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

Many students will be preparing to celebrate the sacrament of the First Eucharist. *How can the preparation of the First Eucharist be meaningful, real and accessible to all students?*

Students belong to a local and global community. Through belonging to this community students are offered opportunities of participation, contribution and personal growth. *Through their preparation for the First Eucharist how will students be encouraged to participate and contribute to the Church community?*

We are present to others through our listening, speaking and actions. Through loving thoughts, words and actions Jesus Christ is present in the world around us. Jesus Christ is especially present to us in the celebration of the Mass. *How best can students explore how they have been present to others?*

EXPLANATION OF SCRIPTURE

Lk 22: 13–20

Luke's account of the Last supper of Jesus Christ with his apostles makes it clear that it is a Passover meal that is being celebrated. This ritual Jewish meal celebrates the faithfulness and mercy of God bringing his captive people out of slavery in Egypt, and makes this wonderful act of redemption part of the experience of those who celebrate it.

Believers in Jesus Christ were quick to draw parallels between Israel passing from captivity to freedom and Jesus passing from death to life. The Eucharist was also understood as a participation in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.

Jesus' words as the meal began, 'I have longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffer', leave no doubt about the immense significance of this meal. Jesus Christ looked forward to its final fulfilment in the Kingdom of God. He also associated it with his death on the next day. Referring to the bread he said, 'This is my body which will be given for you, do this as a memorial of me' and 'This cup is the new Covenant in my blood which will be poured out for you'.

The word 'memorial' here has a stronger meaning than simply bringing something to mind, or even having nostalgic thoughts of times past or evocative memories of a dead family member. Memorial, as used in Luke's narrative, has an active sense: the Eucharist is a memorial which makes present for Christians throughout history the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ until his coming. And so throughout history we participate in the Eucharist, sharing among us the body and blood which Jesus Christ first gave to his disciples at the Last Supper, celebrating the memorial of his death and resurrection, modelling our lives on his self-giving love, and looking forward to the time when he comes in glory and all will be fulfilled. The concept of memorial is developed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

POSSIBILITIES FOR PRAYER AND WORSHIP

- Highlight the place of the Word with drapes, ribbons and candles. Students prepare a Liturgy of the Word around a gospel passage chosen by them. Include the welcoming of the word by using a gospel acclamation, standing to read the word, raising the Book at the end of the reading and responding to the word by using the appropriate response: 'The Gospel of the Lord:' 'Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ'.
- During this unit begin class prayer with the greeting from 'In Tradition' in *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 3, Chapter 7, p. 57. The students respond, 'And also with you!'
- Use the symbols of initiation in prayer.
- Invite to your classroom members of the parish who have received the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil. They may wish to describe what the experience meant for them. Pray a prayer of thanksgiving with them.
- Have a class Renewal of Baptism Promises during which the students are sprinkled or blessed with holy water.
- Involve the class in preparing a Mass. Learn some simple eucharistic songs and chants, e.g. 'Lord, We Come to Your Table', 'This Is My Body' (Michael Herry, *Sing Spirit, Sing Life*, Marist Brothers Music); 'God's Greatest Gift', 'We Remember' (Bernadette Farrell, *Share the Light*, OCP Publications).
- At the end of each school day commission the students to 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!' They respond: 'Thanks be to God!'

Related Chapters – *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 3: Chapter 7, Loving and Praising Our God in the Liturgy; Chapter 10, Welcomed Into the Life of God's Family; Chapter 11, Jesus Christ is Present When We Celebrate the Eucharist.

Faith concepts: real presence, celebration, ritual, symbol, story, community, nourishment.

Seeking understanding:

What are the symbols and rituals of the Mass and what do they mean?

Why do Catholics celebrate the Mass?

Understandings:

The Jewish people take and bless bread and wine at Passover to recall the journey from slavery to freedom.

Christians take and bless bread and wine in the Mass to remember and celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is present in the celebration of the Eucharist in the priest, the assembly, the word and, most especially, in the Body and Blood of Christ.

In the Liturgy of the Word the community listens and responds to the Word of God.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist the community is fed and united through the Body and Blood of Christ.

Bread is a staple food that feeds people and wine is a festive drink that helps people celebrate together.

Scripture Text: Lk 22: 13–20.

Unit specific learning:

Students will learn about	Students will learn to	Students will undertake to
<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Reasoning & Responding</i>	<i>Personal & Communal Engagement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The experience of the Mass as a communal celebration of Christians' lives in Christ. • The main parts of the Mass and their meaning: Introductory Rite; Liturgy of the Word; Liturgy of the Eucharist; Concluding Rites. • The signs of bread and wine and the rituals of consecration and communion, and the meaning of these for Christians. • The sacred objects of the Mass, e.g. chalice, ciborium, paten, lectern, lectionary. • The relationship between Passover and the Last Supper. • The relationship between the Last Supper and the Mass. • The setting, location, characters, events and main teachings in the narratives of the Passover (Ex 12: 1–14) and the Last Supper (Lk 22: 13–20). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express their feelings, perceptions, beliefs and thinking about the significance of the Mass in their own lives in light of what they have learned about the Mass. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and celebrate a Mass.

PHASES OF STUDENT INQUIRY

Additional Reading for Teachers	Orientation to Inquiry <i>What do students already know, think or feel in relation to the topic? What are students' questions about the topic? What experiences and reflections can we offer students to become engaged with the topic?</i>	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning
<p>The Eucharist is the source and summit of all Christian life. It is the rite of the Church in which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we gather together in his name under the leadership of the priest • we listen and respond to the reading of Scripture • we celebrate the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and receive from his table the sacrament of his body and blood. <p>The Mass/Eucharist is a representation – an extension through time and space of the one perfect sacrifice offered once and for all by Jesus Christ on the Cross. It is also the re-enactment and celebration of the Last Supper of Jesus Christ in which he took bread and wine, associating them with his death on the next day, and invited his disciples to eat and drink in memory of him. These two aspects of the Mass, holy sacrifice and holy meal, are irrevocably joined: St Paul says, 'For as often as you <i>eat</i> this bread and <i>drink</i> this cup, you <i>proclaim</i> the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo Share About Celebration Students bring a photo of a celebration that is special to them. They share their experience of this celebration in small groups. <i>What was the purpose of the celebration? What did people wear? Were there speeches/stories told? Were presents exchanged? Who was at the celebration? What food and drink was shared? How did you say goodbye?</i> <p>Alternatively, organise a class or parish meal and invite students to take on particular roles, e.g. choosing music, welcoming people, saying a blessing over the food, preparing the environment, setting the table etc. Use the matrix below to reflect on the meal after it has occurred.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo Display In the room students display their photos of special meals and celebrations. • Matrix About Celebration In groups children divide a large art sheet into quarters. Label each section with these headings: people gathering; stories told; food and drink shared; saying goodbye. Draw and 	<p>Assessment for Learning These tasks will indicate students' understanding of the elements of meal and celebration. This may influence the understanding of the Mass that students bring to the topic.</p>

<p>Lord's death until he comes' (1 Cor 11: 26).</p> <p>The Mass/Eucharist is the greatest act of which we are capable because it unites us to each other, living or dead, in the one great body of which Christ is the head. 'Through him, with him and in him' we can offer to God, in the Holy Spirit, the glory and honour we owe to God as our creator, our life, our hope.</p> <p>So the Eucharist is really the work of Christ in which we join. Our joining is important though. We should do all we can to prepare well for the Mass. Its human dimension – words, signs, actions, symbols – are important and help us to be joined into the mystery, but the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in our minds and hearts is more important than external details.</p> <p>This reading from the Acts of the Apostles emphasises how, from the very beginning, in the ritual gathering together to break bread and pray, the early Christians were sustained in their mission to bring about the Kingdom. The Eucharist has been part of the life of the Church from the very beginning.</p>	<p>label the elements of each section. When completed cut into quarters for a wall display.</p> <p>Students can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Place a photo in each quarter. – Illustrate each element. – Write a description of each element. <table border="1" data-bbox="819 501 1525 775"> <tr> <td data-bbox="819 501 1173 636">People Gathering</td> <td data-bbox="1173 501 1525 636">Stories Told</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="819 636 1173 775">Food and Drink Shared</td> <td data-bbox="1173 636 1525 775">Saying Goodbye</td> </tr> </table>	People Gathering	Stories Told	Food and Drink Shared	Saying Goodbye	
People Gathering	Stories Told					
Food and Drink Shared	Saying Goodbye					
<p>Additional Reading for Teachers</p>	<p>Development</p> <p><i>What experiences and religious texts will provide new learning for students? What skills will students need in order to work with these resources? What strategies and tools will enable students to think and reflect on these experiences and texts? How will students process their thinking and learning?</i></p>	<p>Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning</p>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venn Diagram Introduce a picture of the Last Supper (artist's 					

	<p>impression). Use a Venn diagram to compare the picture of The Last Supper and a photo of one of the celebrations displayed in the Orientation phase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided Meditation (Lk 22: 13–20) Students participate in a meditation based on Lk 22: 13–20. After the meditation the students explore the following wonderings: <p>I wonder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – what the room of the Last Supper was like? – how Jesus felt and what he was thinking about at this celebration? – what the disciples were feeling and thinking? – what it would have been like to have shared this meal with Jesus? – what Jesus meant by ‘This is my body which will be given for you’? – what I like to remember about Jesus? – how is Jesus special to me? 	
<p>Passover: The chief festival of Judaism which celebrates the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.</p> <p>Israelites: People of Israel. All Israelite families went to Jerusalem each year to celebrate the Passover festival. Jesus was celebrating the Passover in Jerusalem with his disciples at the Last Supper.</p> <p>Unleavened Bread: Bread or cakes baked without yeast and used by the Jews as food, especially at certain feasts, e.g. Passover. In the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the Story of the Passover Students view or read the Passover account in Exodus 12: 1–14. The animation, <i>Prince of Egypt</i> may be a helpful resource as well as children’s bibles and non fiction texts about foods, symbols, rituals and practices of Passover. <p>As a class, explore and record on a chart, characters, events, key words, context (what happened before and after Ex 12: 1–14), setting and symbols, what they perceive to be the main messages of the narrative, and the feelings, thoughts and questions that the story</p>	<p>Assessment for Learning The Scripture Probe will demonstrate students’ understanding and perceptions of the Passover in Exodus. This is necessary in order for students to compare the text with elements of the Last Supper and the Mass.</p>

bread of the Eucharist is traditionally unleavened, while most of the Eastern churches used leavened bread.

evokes in students. As a class compare charts.

Students choose to work in pairs or individually to reflect further on an event or character of the Passover story that stays in their mind. They may depict this part of the story through their own choice of:

- using concrete materials, Godly play materials, plasticine or playdough
- painting or charcoal drawing
- writing down their thoughts
- dramatising or roleplaying
- choosing a song or piece of music that reminds them of the story

This is a form of prayer and contemplation. Invite students to share their reflections if they wish but respect their choice not to share.

Suggested Excursions/Guest Speaker

- Jewish Museum
- Local synagogue
- Invite a rabbi or member of a local Jewish community to speak to children about the Passover festival.

- **Investigating the Last Supper**

Before telling the Lucan version of the Last Supper orient students to the story with a song version of the story or by placing symbols from the story before the students.

Students use a Scripture Probe to explore the Last Supper (Lk 22: 13–20). Explore characters, events, key words, context, setting, symbols, the main messages of the narrative, and the feelings, thoughts and questions that

Assessment for Learning

The Scripture Probe will demonstrate students' understanding of the Last Supper account in Luke's Gospel.

	<p>the story evokes in students. Students choose to record this information on either a chart or mobile or a concertina booklet. Some students may choose to dramatise the narrative or use concrete materials to retell the story focusing on the elements from the Scripture Probe.</p> <p>Invite students to identify links between the Last Supper story and the Eucharist:</p> <p>I wonder how this story relates to the celebration of the Eucharist?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare/Contrast Strategy: Venn Diagram Students use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the story of the Passover and The Last Supper story, identifying differences and similarities between the two. 	<p>This is necessary in order for students to compare the text with elements of the Passover and the Mass.</p> <p>Assessment of Learning This task will demonstrate how students understand the relationship between the Last Supper account in Luke and the Passover.</p>
<p>Introductory Rites: The rites at the beginning of the Mass, which come before the reading from Scripture. The introductory rites consist of Entrance, the Greeting, introductory remarks by the priest or commentator, the Penitential Rite, The Gloria, the Opening Prayer.</p> <p>The Liturgy of the Word: It is the part of the Mass that begins with the first scriptural reading and ends after the Prayers of the Faithful. The readings are taken from the Old Testament and the New Testament. The first reading is followed by the singing or recitation of a psalm (this is the Responsorial Psalm), and the second reading is followed by the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the Mass Students identify their knowledge of the Mass by using a K–W–L–H organiser: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What we Know – What we Want to find out – What we Learned – How we learned it. <p>Using their organisers the students formulate questions to be given to the parish priest or a parishioner prior to the interview.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview The students interview the parish priest, pastoral associate or a parishioner from the liturgy group about the Mass. The focus of this 	<p>Assessment for Learning This task will allow students to demonstrate what they already know about the Mass, will show any misunderstandings or gaps in knowledge, and will inform planning for the rest of the unit.</p>

Alleluia or Gospel Acclamation which prepares for the gospel.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist: The part of the Mass that begins with the preparation of the gifts, and ends with the Prayer after Communion. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist the gifts are prepared, Jesus Christ's work of redemption is celebrated, and God is thanked for giving Jesus Christ to the world.

Concluding Rite: The short rite at the end of the Mass consisting of a greeting, the blessing and the dismissal.

Paten: A saucer-like dish which holds the bread to be consecrated at the Mass. It is usually gilded. Patens are blessed by a bishop or priest.

Chalice: The cup or goblet used for the

interview will be students' questions from the previous task as well as:

- What are the four parts of the Mass? (Introductory Rite, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Concluding Rite)
- What are the important symbols and rituals of the Mass?
- What do these symbols and rituals mean?
- Why do Catholics celebrate the Mass?

This information can be supported with written and visual information from *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 3, Chapters 7 and 11.

In collaborative groups students record their information about each question onto a data chart using words, symbols and pictures:

What are the parts of the Mass?	What are the symbols and rituals in the Mass?
Why do Catholics celebrate the Mass?	What do the symbols and rituals mean?

As a whole class develop a class chart drawing on each group's responses. Alternatively, students could develop a whole class PowerPoint to synthesise their learning. This could be viewed at a formation session for parents.

- **Church Visit**
Visit the church and invite the priest or a parishioner to show the students the ciborium, chalice and paten. Take digital photos and

Assessment for Learning

Students' knowledge of the parts, symbols and rituals of the Mass is necessary in order to understand their meaning later in the unit.

consecration of the wine in the celebration of the Eucharist. It is usually made of gold or silver. Chalices are blessed by a bishop or priest.

Ciborium: A vessel used to hold small Communion Hosts. It resembles a chalice, but has a lid.

label them for classroom display. Model for students:

- how to receive the Body and Blood in the Communion Rite
- how to genuflect
- how to approach and read from the lectern
- how to take up the gifts during the procession of gifts

• **Video and Review a School Mass**
 The students view a video (perhaps a video of a school Mass) and review a school Mass. Each part of the Mass can be viewed separately and analysed. In groups students complete a flowchart depicting the roles, actions and symbols that form the parts of the Mass.

Introductory Rite Liturgy of the Word Liturgy of the Eucharist Concluding Rite

Students write/illustrate/model with playdough how the presence of Jesus Christ is evident to them or when they feel close to Christ in the Mass.

Students attach this information to the current wall display, drawing links between the names of the parts of the Mass and headings of the matrix.

Assessment of Learning
 The flowchart will demonstrate students' understanding of the meaning of each part of the Mass, particularly in relation to how Christ is experienced.

Additional Reading for Teachers

SYNTHESIS

How will students demonstrate their understandings, beliefs, values, skills and feelings in relation to the topic? How will students

**Assessment:
 for learning, as learning, of
 learning**

	<p><i>take action based on their learning? What strategies and tools will enable students to discern their action, to plan and implement action and to evaluate their action?</i></p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindmap Students complete a mindmap showing the different parts of the Mass. This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – parts of the Mass – music – symbols – rituals – actions – prayers – places • Personal Reflection Invite students to reflect on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I already knew ... – I have now learned ... – I am wondering why ... – I liked ... – I was surprised by ... – Now that I know ... I think (feel, believe, wonder) ... – Next time I celebrate the Mass I ... <p>I think celebrating the Mass is important because ...</p> 	<p>Assessment of Learning The mindmap may indicate students' knowledge of the parts, symbols and rituals of the Mass, their inter-relationship and meaning.</p> <p>Assessment as Learning The personal reflection will enable students to monitor and evaluate their own learning during the topic. It may also demonstrate to teachers the value students place on celebrating the Eucharist in their own lives.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of a Mass Students plan and prepare a Mass as a way of showing their understanding of the structure and flow of the celebration. Invite their families and parishioners to join in the celebration. Alternatively, students assist in planning the Mass celebrating their First Communion. This planning could be done with the support of 	<p>Assessment of Learning The planning of a Mass will indicate students' knowledge and understanding of the structure and parts of the Mass.</p>

	parishioners.	
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RESOURCES

To Know, Worship and Love, 2nd Edition

Year 3: Chapter 7, Loving and Praising Our God in the Liturgy; Chapter 10, Welcomed Into the Life of God's Family; Chapter 11, Jesus Is Present When We Celebrate the Eucharist.

CDs, DVDs

Farrell, B 2000, 'God's Greatest Gift' and 'We Remember' in *Share the Light*, OCP Publications.

Herry, M 1996, 'Lord, We Come to Your Table' and 'This Is My Body' in *Sing Spirit, Sing Life*, Marist Brothers Music.

The Prince of Egypt 1998, animation, Dreamworks, USA.

Teacher Resources

Begue, P & Duchesneau, C 1989, *How to Understand the Sacraments*, SCM Press, London.

Websites

The RESource website has an introduction to the Eucharist and contains useful links to related websites.

<<http://www.resource.melb.catholic.edu.au/>>

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS

This unit may be used to assess some of the Level 3 standards.

Students collaboratively plan liturgy using appropriate symbols, words and actions, following a given liturgical form. Students interpret key actions, signs and symbols of liturgy and sacrament by providing a meaningful explanation of their significance.