

## The Mass: Sacrifice and Meal

In this unit students explore the Mass as sacrifice and meal. They examine the writings of Paul to explore how the early Christians lived as a community and how they re-enacted and celebrated the Last Supper. Students learn about the parts of the Mass and how these nourish and unify the Church. At the conclusion of the unit students are invited to plan and celebrate a parish daily Mass or class 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:

**#1396** *The unity of the Mystical Body: the Eucharist makes the Church.* Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body – the Church. Communion renews, strengthens and deepens this incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism. In Baptism we have been called to form but one body. The Eucharist fulfils this call: ‘The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread’:

If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the table of the Lord; it is your sacrament that you receive. To that which you are you respond ‘Amen’ (‘yes, it is true!’) and by responding to it you assent to it. For you hear the words, ‘the Body of Christ’ and respond ‘Amen’. Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your ‘Amen’ may be true.

(See *Compendium #274 What does the Eucharist represent in the life of the Church?*)

**#1368** *The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of the Church.* The Church which is the Body of Christ participates in the offering of her Head. With him, she herself is offered whole and entire. She unites herself to his intercession with the Father for all men. In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. (See *Compendium #281 In what way does the Church participate in Christ’s sacrifice?*)

**#1348** *All gather together.* Christians come together in one place for the Eucharistic assembly. At its head is Christ himself, the principal agent of the Eucharist. He is high priest of the New Covenant; it is he himself who presides invisibly over every Eucharistic celebration. It is in representing him that the bishop or priest acting *in the person of Christ the head (in persona Christi capitis)* presides over the assembly, speaks after the readings, receives the offerings, and says the Eucharistic Prayer. All have their own active parts to play in the celebration, each in his own way: readers, those who bring up the offerings, those who give communion and the whole people whose ‘Amen’ manifests their participation.

### SPIRITUAL REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS

In the Eucharist we celebrate and participate in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ’s saving death and resurrection. We do this by taking bread, which is blessed, broken and given and by taking wine which is blessed and given. As Jesus taught, through the consecration the bread is changed into his Body, given up for us, and the wine is changed into his Blood, given up for us- a sacrifice of self-giving love. the blessed,

broken and given bread and the blessed and given wine that Jesus Christ identified as his body given and his blood shed on the cross. In taking, eating and drinking the Eucharist we receive now the new life gained in his death and resurrection, and are drawn into his self giving love so we can believe that life comes out of death, healing out of brokenness. In the Eucharist we are fed and sustained in this new way of life. In this mystery we enter into communion with Christ and become a communion of people living in Christ; we become his body, the Church.

How have you experienced the pattern of brokenness and death into new life and joy in your own life? Do you experience the Mass as something that sustains you and unites you in community with others? What is the significance of the breaking of bread and the sharing of wine for you?

The very structure of the Mass is one that unites us with each other and with Christ, and that transforms and sustains us as the Body of Christ. We assemble and unite as one body gathered in by God in the Introductory Rites. As broken people who yearn for wholeness and peace we respond to God's healing and mercy in the Penitential Rite. As we engage with Scripture in the Liturgy of the Word we are drawn deeper into the life of God and God's people, nourished by the Word and transformed through the Word. When we offer Christ's saving sacrifice and are united to it as we eat and drink the body and blood of Christ we too are called to become the body and blood of Christ. We become what we eat. The Eucharist nourishes us and unites us to become Christ's body in the world. It transforms us to become active agents of God's forgiveness, hope and love. This is reflected in the Dismissal Rite in the Mass in which we are commissioned to 'Go in peace to love and serve'.

The Mass is not a static ritual but a dynamic, sacred act between God and God's People in which the community is continually sustained and transformed as the Body of Christ in the world.

## **LINKS WITH STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES**

Humans need love, friendship and belonging. They yearn for peace and harmony. In order to live they need food. To flourish they need joy and celebration. Students need and long for the same things. The symbols, signs, actions and rituals of the Mass draw students into the life of God who nourishes and transforms their needs and yearnings. They are united with Christ and with each other. *How do students understand and experience the Mass? How do students see the connection between these needs and yearnings and the Mass? What is the significance of the Introductory Rites and Penitential Rite for them? Or the Liturgy of the Word? What is the significance of the consecrated bread and wine for them? How do they connect the commissioning in the Dismissal Rite to their own lives?*

Students have many experiences of being part of the Body of Christ. At school, in the parish and in family life they live as members of the Body of Christ. As baptised people they are the Body of Christ active in the world in the ways they live a life of love, peace, forgiveness and joy.

St Teresa of Avila describes this reality:

*Christ has no body now but yours  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours  
Yours are the eyes through which  
He looks with compassion on this world  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

*What do students associate with the image of the Church as the Body of Christ? Do they see themselves as part of this Body? In what ways do they need to be supported and nourished to make the Body of Christ active in their world? What significance does the Mass have for them as members of the Body of Christ?*

## **EXPLANATION OF SCRIPTURE**

### **1 Cor 11: 23–27**

Paul hands on to the Christians in Corinth the tradition about the Eucharist that he himself had received from the apostles. He wants them to realise just how significant and sacred an act this is.

He tells the Corinthians how Jesus took bread, identifying it with his own body which was to be broken on the next day on the Cross, and broke it among his disciples. He tells how Jesus also took a cup of wine which he identified with his blood to be poured out on the cross: 'This cup is the *new covenant* in my blood which will be poured out for you'. A new relationship is forged between God and humanity because of Jesus Christ and his obedience even to death. Just as blood was poured out during the ancient sacrifices to seal the covenant with God, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's own Son, will seal this new covenant.

It is important to understand that God did not punish Jesus Christ for our sins. Jesus died as a result of the same human sin – envy, jealousy and violence – that has caused, and continues to cause, the suffering and death of millions of people. In Jesus Christ, God absorbs the violence and sin of all the world. *In* Jesus, the innocent victim, God asserts everlasting solidarity with all who suffer at the hands of others, and *through* Jesus God forgives the ignorance, envy and violence of human beings. When we celebrate the Eucharistic sacrifice this is the new covenant that we celebrate, and by eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ we commit ourselves to living in his way of forgiveness, love and peace.

## **POSSIBILITIES FOR PRAYER AND WORSHIP**

- Decorate the prayer space with symbols and objects used at the Mass, e.g. the Sacramentary, a lectionary, chalice, paten, bread and wine, and pictures of the community at worship.
- Students form pairs or groups to prepare and celebrate an Introductory Rite and Liturgy of the Word following the structure used at daily Mass. This brief liturgy can be celebrated in the parish church or in the classroom:
  1. Song
  2. Greeting
  3. Penitential Rite
  4. Prayer
  5. Reading
  6. Responsorial Psalm
  7. Gospel Acclamation
  8. Gospel
  9. Reflection on the Gospel
  10. Intercessions.

- Choose prayers from the Mass for class prayer. The following prayer, for example, can be used as a meditation:

'By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity'.

Read the prayer slowly. Invite the students to reflect on the meaning of the words for a few moments. The whole prayer, or a short phrase from it, can be used as a prayer mantra.

- Pray in the Taizé style. This involves a form of meditative singing. The students face towards a large cross or icon of Jesus Christ. A song leader begins the chant and, gradually, all join in. The chant rises and fades away after a few minutes. A sung antiphon such as 'Eat This Bread' (No. 205, *Gather Australia*) would be appropriate for this unit. Psalms, readings and intercessions alternate with the chant.
- Prepare a class Mass. Ensure that the Parts of the Mass are sung. See, for example, the 'Mass of Creation' (Nos 88–102, *Gather Australia*). Students form groups to prepare readings, music, processions and decor for the celebration.
- The phrase 'Now we are the body of Christ and individually members of it' (c.f. 1 Cor 27) can be used as a response to spontaneous prayers of intercession for the school and parish community.

**Related Chapters** – *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 6: Chapter 12, We Gather to Worship.

**Faith concepts:** the Eucharist, sacrifice, meal, liturgy, unity, nourishment.

**Seeking understanding:**

Why is celebrating the Mass important for the Catholic faith community?

**Understandings:**

Throughout the Mass the Church is nourished and united.

In the Liturgy of the Word Catholics hear God’s Word and reflect on what it means for their lives.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist Catholics offer Jesus’ sacrifice and share his Body and Blood as one community.

**Scripture Text:** 1 Cor 11: 23–27.

**Unit specific learning:**

<b>Students will learn about</b>	<b>Students will learn to</b>	<b>Students will undertake to</b>
<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Reasoning &amp; Responding</i>	<i>Personal &amp; Communal Engagement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The words, actions, symbols, characters and events of Acts 2: 42–47 and 1 Cor 11: 23-27 and how these relate to the signs, symbols, actions and significance of the Mass.</li><li>• The structure and parts of the Mass: Gathering, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Dismissal and how these are a source and sign of nourishment and unity.</li><li>• The Mass as meal and sacrifice.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relate the actions, beliefs and messages of Scripture to their own lives.</li><li>• Give their reasons and ideas about the significance of the Mass for Christians and for themselves.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan and celebrate a parish or class Mass.</li></ul>

## PHASES OF STUDENT INQUIRY

<b>Additional Reading for Teachers</b>	<b>Orientation to Inquiry</b> <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>	<b>Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Story Time</b> Introduce a picture story book about food, celebration and community such as <i>Let's Eat</i> by Ana Zamorana and Amy Griffin. Scan the introductory pictures on the cover and first pages and ask students to predict the central theme of the story before reading it.  After the story lead a discussion of the text using the following questions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What is the story about?</li> <li>– Who are the people in the story?</li> <li>– What are they doing together?</li> <li>– What is their relationship with each other?</li> <li>– How are they feeling about one another?</li> <li>– What is the mood of the gathering at the end of the story, and why?</li> </ul>               Students reflect on their own experiences of significant meals and share these with the class.             </li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Life-Giving Meals</b> Students record their response to the question: 'Why is celebrating a meal together so important or life-giving?' Students are encouraged to consider the following elements: food and drink; community; joy; love; shared memories; friendship; listening and being heard; belonging.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Why is the Mass so important for Catholics?</b> Pose this question to the class. Choose a strategy for students to consider and share their initial responses. Strategies might include: Rocket Writing; Brainstorming; Think, Pair, Share (Kath Murdoch, <i>Classroom Connections</i>, pp. 13, 29, 34)</p>	<p><b>Assessment for/as Learning</b> These responses will give an insight into students' values, attitudes, perceptions and understanding of the significance of the Mass in the Church. Refrain from correcting students' responses at this stage. As they progress through the unit their responses will most likely be affirmed, deepened or challenged. At the end of the unit students are invited to respond to this question again in light of new learning and insights and to reflect on changes in their thinking, perceptions and values.</p>
<p><b>Additional Reading for Teachers</b></p>	<p><b>Development</b> <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><b>Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning</b></p>
<p>The <b>Eucharist</b> 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"> <li>• <b>we gather</b> together in his name under the leadership of the priest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Early Christian Community in Acts: Listening and Responding to the Word- Scriptural Think Pad</b> Read Acts 2: 42–47: The Early Christian Community (<i>KWL</i>, 2nd edn,</li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessment of Learning</b> The group task will demonstrate students' comprehension of Acts 2: 42–47 and how students relate this text to their own lives.</p>

- we listen and respond to the **reading of Scripture**
- we celebrate the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and receive from his altar table **the sacrament of his body and blood**

The Mass/Eucharist is a re-presentation – an extension through time and space of the one **perfect sacrifice** offered once and for all by Jesus Christ on the cross.

In the same way it is also the **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 his body and blood in memory of him.

These **two aspects** of the Mass – holy sacrifice and meal – are irrevocably joined: St Paul says ‘For as often as you *eat* this bread and *drink* this cup, you *proclaim* the Lord’s death until he comes’ (1 Cor 11: 26).

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.

So the Eucharist is really **the work of Christ** in which we join. Our joining is important

Year 6, Chapter 13, p. 113).

Form four learning groups with students of different learning styles. On a large sheet of paper students:

- describe in one or two sentences the meaning of the passage
- draw a sequence of pictures depicting the events of the passage
- write and illustrate how this passage relates to a real-life situation in their own world
- draw one or more symbols that capture the main theme or message of the text.

(See ‘Scripture Think Pad’, Dan White, *Into the Deep*, pp. 82–83).

As a whole class note the ‘connections to life’ section of the Think Pad. Make links to the events, symbols and feelings of the story in the orientation phase.

### **The Early Christian Community and the Last Supper**

- Tell the story of the Last Supper (1 Cor 11: 23–27) using concrete materials. Discuss the symbols of bread and wine, the signs of the Body and Blood of Christ.

I wonder what you associate with bread? e.g. it is eaten and is a source

<p>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 <b>Acts of the Apostles</b> emphasises how, from the very beginning, in the ritual gathering together to break bread and pray, the <b>early Christians</b> 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>of food and nourishment; one loaf can be broken up and shared with many</p> <p>I wonder what you associate with wine? e.g. joy, festive occasions, parties, meals; it is shared with others. I wonder why Jesus changed the bread and the wine into his Body and Blood?</p> <p>I wonder why it is important for Catholics to drink from the one cup and eat from the one loaf in the Eucharist?</p> <p>See the notes in the ‘Explanation of Scripture’ section.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <i>KWL</i>, 2nd edn, Year 6, Chapter 13, p. 111</li> </ul> <p>I wonder if you know people who have made sacrifices for others? e.g. parents, grandparents.</p> <p>I wonder if you ever make sacrifices? e.g. giving up something special for something more important.</p> <p>I wonder what kind of sacrifices Jesus made?</p> <p>I wonder why we remember Jesus’ sacrifice in the Mass?</p>	
<p>The <b>Mass</b> is the source and summit of Christian life.</p> <p>In the Mass Catholics gather as one people. They are nourished by God’s Word and by the sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood. They</p>	<p><b>How is the Church nourished and united?</b> <b>The Structure of the Mass</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <i>KWL</i>, 2nd edn, Year 6, Chapter 13, pp. 112 and 116–117.</li> </ul> <p>Students brainstorm all the actions,</p>	

are united by sharing in the one Body and Blood of Christ. They are blessed and sent forth as one people to live God's Word in their daily life.

Christians come to the Mass as individuals but each movement of the Mass draws these individuals together as one body – the Body of Christ. We assemble and are brought together in the **Introductory Rites**. We are united as one as we listen and respond to the **Word of God** together. Eating and drinking the sacrament of the **Body and Blood of Christ** we become what we receive: the Body of Christ. At the **Dismissal** we are blessed, not as individuals, but as one people, **the Body of Christ**, sent out into the world to bring wholeness and healing. What we receive at the Mass (healing and wholeness) we are sent forth to bring to others – 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord'.

### **The Structure of the Mass** **Introductory Rites**

Entrance Song/Antiphon

Penitential Rite

(Gloria on Sundays and major Feast Days, except in Lent and Advent)

Opening Prayer

### **Liturgy of the Word**

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm

Second Reading (on Sundays and Feasts)

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel

gestures, texts, signs and symbols of the Mass they can recall and record these. Collate on a wall chart according to which of the four main parts of the Mass they belong.

Invite students to identify missing actions, gestures, symbols, signs etc. in their brainstorm by going through a missal or viewing a DVD of the Mass. These can be added to the wall chart.

- Read *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 6, Chapter 13, pp. 114–115. Ask students to identify where these texts and actions occur in the Mass and why.

Ask students:

I wonder what parts of the Mass bring us together as one people? e.g. the Introductory Rites; listening to the Word; Prayers of Intercession; Lamb of God; Sign of Peace; sharing in the one Body and Blood of Christ.

I wonder what parts of the Mass nourish us? e.g. listening to the word; sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ.

See the notes in the first column for teacher information.

Invite students to select one part of the Mass, or one symbol, action or text from the Mass and represent its significance in the Mass for Catholics.

### **Assessment of Learning**

This task will allow students to demonstrate how they interpret liturgical symbols, actions, texts or rites as signs of nourishment and unity.

<p>Homily          Creed (on Sundays and Feasts and Solemnities)          Intercessions  <b>Liturgy of the Eucharist</b>          Preparation of Gifts          Preface          Eucharistic Prayer          Our Father          Lamb of God/Breaking of Bread          Communion          Concluding Rites          Blessing          Dismissal</p>	<p>Students could choose to represent this through one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– digital photos</li> <li>– poster</li> <li>– 3D sculpture</li> <li>– diagram</li> <li>– written explanation</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Additional Reading for Teachers</b></p>	<p><b>SYNTHESIS</b></p> <p><i>How will students demonstrate their understandings, beliefs, values, skills and feelings in relation to the topic? How will students 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>	<p><b>Assessment:          for learning, as learning, of learning</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prepare and Celebrate a Class Mass</b>              Drawing on their new knowledge of the parts of the Mass and their understanding that the celebration of the Mass is where Christians are nourished and united, students prepare a parish daily Mass or a class Mass.</li> </ul> <p>Students select hymns and readings, write Prayers of the Faithful and prepare and choose gifts to bring</p>	<p><b>Assessment of Learning</b>          This task will allow students to demonstrate their knowledge of the symbols, rites, actions and parts of the Mass as well as their ability to plan a liturgy.</p>

	forward in the offertory procession.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Self-Reflection</b> Students complete the following sentence starter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The celebration of the Mass is important to Catholics because ...</li> <li>– It is important to me personally because ...</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessment as/of Learning</b> The self-reflection will provide students with an opportunity to consider their learning throughout the unit. It will also provide teachers with information about students' understandings of the topic.</p>

## RESOURCES

### ***To Know, Worship and Love, 2nd Edition***

Year 6: Chapter 12, We Gather to Worship.

### **Teacher Resources**

Murdoch, K 1998, *Classroom Connections*, Eleanor Curtain Publishing, South Yarra.

O'Brien, K, Todd, S & White, D 2003, *Into the Deep*, KD Publications, Marayong, NSW.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS**

This unit may be used to assess some of the Level 4 standards.

Students express the significance of ritual in the Catholic Tradition by planning and evaluating prayer, liturgical and sacramental experiences. Students explain Christian signs and symbols drawing on personal insights that are informed by Scripture, Tradition, liturgy, culture and life.