



# EUCCHARIST INSTRUCTION AT HOME

## Session 1      We Gather

### Goals:

To acquaint children with the gathering part of the liturgy – why we do what we do and how do we do it.

### Background for the topic:

The family of God gathers each Sunday to be together, to pray, to hear the family stories, to talk and to eat. We then leave to go out and be with others and share what we have learned.

We are members of our families through birth, adoption, marriage. We are members of God's family through our baptism.

In this lesson we will focus on the family of God gathering to worship

### Response:

*Talk about your families.*

What do you do when you get together? (For instance, at Thanksgiving or Christmas or a birthday.) Encourage responses of storytelling, greeting one another, sharing a meal.

*Talk about the family of God.*

How are we made members of this family?

(Baptism)

Emphasize that at our baptism we are given a new name – “Christian”. We are sealed as Christ's own forever. The water dries up, the oil goes away, but we are always children of God.

Find photos of your child's baptism, the certificate. If your child received a candle, bring that out and talk about how you light it on the anniversary of their baptism. Talk about the day. Who was there? What did you do as a special celebration after the service? Talk about godparents. If possible have the child get together with as many of the godparents as possible. Your child may wish to draw a picture or write something to the godparent.

If your child made a baptismal remembrance place it on your devotion center. You may even wish to make baptismal remembrances for each member of your family. Say a prayer at mealtime this week thanking God for the food, for your family's lives and for other blessings and needs that you have.

*Prayer for those baptized: BCP 308*

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon these your servants the forgiveness of sin, and have raised them to the new life of grace. Sustain them, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give them an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. *Amen.*



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## Session 2 We Hear the Word of God

### Goals:

Families have stories. The Church has a story too. We hear these stories at every Eucharist.

### Background for the topic:

When families get together they visit, tell stories. These stories help the family know who they are and what is going on in their lives.

When the church gathers for worship we hear the stories of our faith – the Old Testament stories, the Psalms, the stories of the early Church usually through the words of Peter or Paul, and the stories of Jesus’ ministry – the Gospel. These Old Testament stories come from the part of the Bible that we share with our Jewish brothers and sisters. We will hear stories of Moses, Sarah, Ruth, Samuel, Esther, and David, and of the prophets like Isaiah, Elijah, Jeremiah, Micah who lived before Jesus. The Psalms are the oldest songs of God’s people. These were the hymns that Jesus would have sung in his worship at the Temple. The Epistle stories are like letters or emails that were written to early Christians to help them on their journeys. The last reading is the Gospel. Gospel means good news and the good news is that Jesus loves us. This reading is so important that we stand for this reading and sometimes there is even a little procession.

In this part of our worship we pray, sing hymns and listen to these stories.

### Response:

Talk about family gatherings, reviewing briefly from first session. Who tells the funniest stories in your family? Whose stories do you like best? What stories do you tell?

Young children may need some help in learning a story about themselves or their family. You might enjoy putting together a “picture book” to help the child with the story. Choose photographs or draw pictures of a good story for the child to tell about themselves or their family. You might enjoy looking at a book of the Christmas story for inspiration or another Bible story. Older children could parallel their own story with a biblical story.

Part of your family devotions this week could include some storytelling time. Read a favorite Bible story together. Ask, “where do you fit into this story?” “How do you think the people in the story felt about....?”



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## Session 3 We Respond to the Word

### Goals:

To help children begin to understand the importance of putting themselves into the biblical story, the story of God's family. Our stewardship is one way we respond to God's word too.

### Background for the topic:

We have come together as the family of God. We have sung praises, we have prayed and we have heard God's word through the Old Testament, Psalms, Epistles and the words of Jesus through the Gospel. What does this mean for us? The sermon is a time in the service in which we hear someone explain to us the readings – how they are tied together, what they meant then and what they mean to our lives today. Just like children will ask their parents or teachers to explain something to them, we turn to our leaders in the congregation to help us understand.

We can then think about how we will go out that week and share Jesus' love with others. We will also hear musical offerings from a choir. If we listen carefully we can hear either actual words that were read from scripture or something of the theme. This offering from the choir is like our offerings that we will give.

We will then say a Creed – some words that explain that we believe what we have heard, along with Christians all over the world. We will pray for ourselves, the world and others. We will also tell God that we are sorry for the wrong things that we have done (like when we tell someone we are sorry that we hurt their feelings, etc.) and ask for forgiveness for ourselves and others.

Then we will share the peace of God. And we are now ready to share in Jesus' meal.

### Response:

*Look at the child's 3 pictures from class.* What do you learn from this? Ask them to tell you the story. Other family members can share in the storytelling as well.

*Look at the readings from the past Sunday.* Bring your bulletin home so that you will have the references (maybe even the scripture written out.) Find these readings in your own Bible. Is one of them a favorite? Is one of them really new?

*Talk about forgiving others.* How do we do that? What happens when we do?

*Read the story of the Prodigal Son.* (Luke 15:22-32)

- How do you think the father felt when the youngest son left? When he returned?
- How did the oldest son feel when the younger brother left? When he returned?
- How did the youngest son feel when he left? When he returned?

In the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* this story is called "The Found Son." What does that say to you?

Make a forgiveness banner to serve as the underlay for your devotion space. Cut pictures from magazines or words to glue on a piece of construction paper that symbolize those things for which you want to be forgiven or to forgive others.



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## Session 4      We Offer Our Gifts

### Goals:

To help children appreciate the many gifts they have been given and to share those gifts with others. It is easier to ask for help than to give thanks.

### Background for the topic:

Celebrations are so important to us all, and especially to children. Children have a way of cutting to the chase and making something relevant and real. Celebrations are ways in which we remember. We celebrate birthdays, wedding anniversaries, graduations, baptisms and holidays. We retell the stories of the event; we usually share a meal or food of some sort. We remember who we are in these celebrations and we celebrate who we are because of these events. We don't come to birthday parties with sad faces. We are happy.

The family is the child's primary source of faith development. Likewise the celebration of the Eucharist is the heart and soul of our faith life. Everything else we do flows out of this. We all come to a fuller sense of the Eucharist as we continue to come together to celebrate this meal. We are happy to come to the Lord's table each Sunday where we will meet Jesus! That is good news.

It is our privilege to serve as role models of lived faith and love for our children (all our children). Children model their lives upon the lives of adults who are important to them. When we share our faith

with our children and invite them to grow upon in that faith, we ourselves come to a closer relationship with God.

And when we come together to celebrate, there is always someone who has worked very hard to make the time special. They may have made special food, cleaned the house, and decorated with flowers, pretty plates. They may have set a beautiful table around which we would eat. This is their gift to us. In the church when we come together to celebrate someone has worked hard to make the time special. Some of these people we never see doing this work. There are people who clean, arrange the flowers, clean the special cloths and dishes we will use in the Eucharist, set out the bread and wine, read the stories so that they know them, prepare a sermon that helps us understand the readings, prepare and practice the music. We have an altar – a table on which we celebrate Jesus' meal. It is a special and holy place, and it is covered with a beautiful cloth and sometimes a beautiful colored cloth as well.

These are all part of our offerings when the family of God gathers. We will give our gifts of money at the start of this part of the service and some people from the congregation will bring forward the bread and wine to be used in the Eucharist, symbolizing that they are the gifts of the people for the people of God and ask Jesus' blessing on them.



**Response:**

*Talk about celebrations.* How do you as a family celebrate birthdays? Thanksgiving? Christmas? First day of school?

If you have special china, linens, silverware show these to the children. You could even have a celebration dinner this week using these items. Talk about how special preparations are done for festive meals. What can the child do to help? Or you might have a meal that is special to the child and include some balloons and a special treat.

Ask the child about special meals at church. How does the church prepare for a special meal each week?

*Talk about giving gifts.* What kind of gifts do we like? What kind of gifts can we bring to church? Look around the church on your next visit. Point out vases, flowers, books, Church School classes and materials. All these are gifts that we give with our offerings.



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## Session 5 We Celebrate

### Goals:

The Eucharist is the family of God's celebration.

### Background for the topic:

The table has been prepared as we brought our gifts forward. The priest has placed the special cup (chalice) and plate (paten) with the bread on it. A little water has been poured in the cup of wine. And now we gather as the family of God to celebrate this special meal. We have been getting ready for this meal in the service to this point. We have gathered as a family, sung our songs, listened to our stories, heard how we might put ourselves into these stories, prayed for ourselves and others, asked for forgiveness and shared the peace of God with our friends. We have offered our gifts of money, bread and wine and now we are ready to come to the meal.

We will hear stories and sing songs of praise and thanksgiving. We remember Jesus' words to his disciples at the last Passover meal when he told them to eat the bread and drink the wine and remember him and he would be with them. We hear this as a story. We will pray that Jesus will use us for his work. This is like the grace we would say before each meal that we eat. And then as the family of God we are invited to pray the prayer Jesus taught us, The Lord's Prayer. We may sing another song reminding us that we are the family of God coming together for a special meal – not just any meal. The bread and wine are symbols of Jesus' body and blood. We are not really eating meat and drinking blood. We will hear the words "the Body of Christ given for you." "The Blood of Christ shed for you." We will respond with "Amen" to show that we believe this.

We don't know exactly how this happens or when it happens, but we believe that we are sharing in Christ's sacrifice to us and that he loves us.

We will sing hymns or the choir will sing during this time. It is a joyful time, a festive time, not a sad time. We can think about sharing a meal with Jesus, his disciples and all the saints who have gone on before us – we are all together.

Now, when we have dinner at someone's home, we don't rush off as soon as dessert is finished. We stay a bit and visit and we certainly thank the host/hostess for a lovely time and meal before we leave. So the same is true for the Eucharist. After everyone has finished and returned to their pews, we say a prayer of thanksgiving. We may also say special prayers and give some bread and wine to a person called a Eucharistic Visitor who will take communion to someone in the church who might be too sick to come to church. Then we join in singing a hymn and get ready to leave.

### Response:

*Ask your child about the sacristy.* What did they see there? What did it remind them of?

Ask the names of the special dishes used. Have your child draw a picture their plate at a celebration meal. Have your child draw the plate and cup used for the Eucharist.

*Discuss manners.* How do we behave in church? In the grocery store? At school? At home? On the playground? What is the same? What is different?



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## Session 6      The Dismissal

### Goals:

Our worship is over, we have heard the stories, we have given gifts and we have celebrated. Now the work begins. We will learn how we can go out into the world during the next week and share the good news.

### Background:

We have come together as a family, heard our stories, learned how we could put ourselves into these stories, sung praises, prayed, asked for forgiveness and have forgiven others, celebrated with Jesus in his feast. We have thanked him for this wonderful meal and now we have to leave. We are going out into the world. What will we do differently this week? How will we live into the Gospel message we heard today?

The last words we hear in the liturgy are “Let us go forth in the name of the Lord!” And we respond, “Thanks be to God, Alleluia.”

### Response:

What does this mean for us? The easy part of our day is finished. The hard part is beginning.

How do we feel when we leave a family celebration? We are glad we were together, we have heard new stories, relived old stories, eaten good food. We celebrated. We may even have been given gifts. We have a good idea of who we are and whose we are. Isn't this the same as we leave worship? And what gifts have been given us!

- Don't you feel better after you have eaten?
- What do we say after a meal?
- What do we do in church after receiving Communion? (Prayers of thanksgiving.)
- How might we live differently this week after Sunday?
- What are we called to do? To be?
- How as a family can we help each other do this?

This is the last session for Eucharist instruction. It is our hope that both you and your child will have gained a better understanding or renewed understanding of the Eucharist. Your clergy person and or your Christian Formation leader in your church will be very happy to answer any questions or provide more resources.

### *Prayer for those baptized: BCP 308*

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon these your servants the forgiveness of sin, and have raised them to the new life of grace. Sustain them, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give them an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. *Amen.*