

Invited by Christ

*Preparing for First Reconciliation
and First Eucharist*

OUTLINE FOR FIRST PARENT MEETING

Pflaum.....
SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

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Outline for First Parent Meeting

Living Communion in the Church

Framework for this Meeting

The Eucharistic celebration brings together the universal Church: the Body of Christ. The People of God respond to Jesus' call to share a meal and be nourished by the Eucharist. The love that Jesus has with his Father reveals God's covenant with humanity. Participants become aware that this love is the foundation of the Christian community.

MATERIALS:

- ◆ Bible
- ◆ "Living Communion in the Church" Parent Booklet, one for each participant
- ◆ Digital device to play slideshow
- ◆ "Living Communion in the Church" Slideshow

Introduction

- ◆ Welcome the parents and give a booklet to each participant.

- ◆ **Say:** "Your children are preparing to receive the Eucharist for the first time. This is an important step for them and for you. Our parish community is very happy to welcome them and accompany them as they prepare for Christ's incredible gift of love. The catechists who will guide them on this path are [name catechists].

At your child's Baptism, you opened the way to new life in Christ. During this journey towards First Communion, your children will certainly ask you questions and will want to know your opinion on what they will discover, as well as talk about your experience of this sacrament. However, children's questions are sometimes confusing. Don't worry. An entire life is not long enough to fully understand the mystery of the gift that God offers in the Eucharist. This is the mystery of faith.

Today, you will share your experiences as well as your questions so that everyone can discover the link between the Eucharist and the Christian community. During this meeting, there will be a time for discussion with the

goal of enriching each other. We ask you to listen carefully, without judgment. There is no obligation to respond and there are no right or wrong answers. You have been given a booklet in which you can keep notes."

Called to Live Together (pages 1-2 in Parent Booklet)

Section Highlights: Humans have an innate desire to create relationships. Based on their experience, participants discover that in the Church, as in any social group, what we experience together creates bonds with fellow members of the Body of Christ.

The Relationships That Surround Us

- ◆ Begin by saying: "Anthropologists agree that humans have an innate desire to create relationships."
- ◆ Show the slideshow "Living in Communion with the Church." Watch the first six slides and take time to explore the images. Each participant chooses one image that challenges them in relation to the statement: **humans desire to create relationships**. On page 1 of the Parent Booklet, participants may write notes about or draw the image they selected.
- ◆ Invite those who wish to respond, and briefly comment on their choice. (Do not enter into a debate.)
- ◆ During a short period of silence, invite participants to identify groups they belong to in their own lives (e.g., clubs, school community, parish, etc.). Then, participants can write down three key words that evoke the idea of community on page 1 of the Parent Booklet.
- ◆ Invite parents to share their ideas with the group, if they wish.
- ◆ Have participants turn to page 2 of the Parent Booklet. **Say:** "In our Church, we also use the word community. Think about when we gather for Mass. Think about the ways we build community in our parishes." Invite participants to share ways

that their parish builds community or ministries of the parish that offer parishioners to grow in relationship with one another in the name of Christ.

- ◆ **Say:** “The Church offers many different ways to unite the members of the Christian community. These things derive their origin and their meaning from the earliest days of the Church, when the first Christian communities came together.”

Choosing to Live Together in Faith (Page 3 in Parent Booklet)

Section Highlights: In the Christian community, despite our human frailties, everyone aspires to live out the fraternity promised to the children of God. Based on the account of the Acts of Apostles 2:42-47, the participants will compare the testimony of Luke and the reality of Christian communities they meet today.

Acts of the Apostles

- ◆ **Introduce:** “We are going to hear the story of the life of the first Christian communities, as reported by Saint Luke. After the Resurrection of Jesus, Christian communities formed in anticipation of the return of Christ, which they hoped was imminent. Let’s see how they were organized and what they experienced as a community of faith. During the reading, note what seems essential to the community and ponder what might be difficult to do.”
- ◆ Invite participants to turn to page 3 of the Parent Booklet. Read Acts 2:42-47. (If possible, have someone other than the meeting leader read this reading from the Bible.)

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of

heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

- ◆ Encourage participants to write down their responses to the questions on page 3 of the Parent Booklet. After time for reflection, **say:** “What do you think brings the Christian community together today?” Invite participants to share their thoughts.

Transition

- ◆ **Say:** “Saint Luke told us about the life of the first Christian communities. Today, these practices are essential for the life of the Church and for following a Christian way of life. When Catholics celebrate the Eucharist, they come together in the name of Jesus Christ, who calls them to live as brothers and sisters.”

Gather at the Call of Christ (Pages 4-6 in Parent Booklet)

Section Highlights: When Jesus fed the crowds, he took care of the people who gathered. This reveals the link that united him to his Father. By meditating on the account of the multiplication of the loaves, we become aware of the abundant love of God that manifests itself for us even today in the Eucharist.

- ◆ **Say:** “We are going to hear the Word of God from the Gospel according to Saint Mark. You will be guided through the reading, step-by-step. We invite you to let the Word resonate in you in the silence of your hearts.” Invite participants to make the Sign of the Cross and pray the words on page 4: “I open my heart to the loving presence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I open my heart to the Word of God.”
- ◆ Invite a participant to volunteer to read from the Gospel of Mark.

Volunteer Reads Mk 6:34-38

When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. By now it was already late and his disciples approached him and said, “This is a deserted place and

it is already very late. Dismiss them so that they can go to the surrounding farms and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” He said to them in reply, “Give them some food yourselves.” But they said to him, “Are we to buy two hundred days’ wages worth of food and give it to them to eat?” He asked them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out they said, “Five loaves and two fish.”

- ◆ **Say:** “I invite you to take a few moments to read this passage again to yourself on page 4 of your booklet. Contemplate the scene, the places, the crowd. Imagine that you are there, too. You can be a disciple, a participant among the crowd, or even an aloof bystander. You are there with the others by the shore and evening is approaching.”

A moment of silence.

- ◆ **Say:** “Let the words exchanged between the different characters resonate within you. First, hear the crowd whispering around you. Then hear the disciples say, ‘It is already late. The place is deserted; send them away.’ You hear their worry: ‘Shall we spend our money to feed them?’ Then hear Jesus say, ‘Go ahead—give them something to eat!’”

A moment of silence.

- ◆ **Say:** “Now examine the actions and attitudes of those who are there. The large groups of people are like sheep without a shepherd. The worried disciples approach Jesus. They protest in the middle of the crowd and Jesus is filled with pity. He instructs them and speaks with certainty of his Father. He hears the disciples’ request and puts his trust in them.”

A moment of silence.

Continue reading the Gospel Mk 6:39-44

So he gave orders to have them sit down in groups on the green grass. The people took their places in rows by hundreds and by fifties. Then, taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to [his] disciples to set before the people; he also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied. And they picked up twelve wicker baskets full of fragments and what was left of the fish. Those who ate [of the loaves] were five thousand men.

- ◆ **Say:** “Come back to this scene by the lake. Night is coming and no village is around. The crowd slowly sits down. Five thousand men, women, and children are waiting, having been fed by the words of Jesus. Imagine the disciples calling out: ‘Sit down, sit down!’ Jesus takes the bread and the fish and looks to heaven. He prays, blesses the food, gives thanks to God, and then breaks bread for all. He instructs the disciples to pass out the bread and fish. After everything had been passed out, twelve baskets are overflowing with leftovers. The crowd is satisfied.”

A moment of silence.

Transition

- ◆ **Introduce:** “In this Gospel, in the midst of the crowd, Jesus takes the bread, blesses it, and shares it with all. During Mass we bring bread and wine to the altar. The priest presents the gifts to God in the name of the whole assembly during the Eucharistic prayer. This is the high point of the Mass.

Now, we will reflect on an excerpt of the Eucharistic Prayer. The ‘consecration’ part of the prayer, reserved for the priest, repeats the words and the actions of Jesus during the last meal he shared with his disciples.”

- ◆ Suggest that 7 participants each read a slide and show *Excerpt from Eucharistic Prayer III* from the “Living Communion in the Church” slideshow. Alternatively, you may read the excerpt below, which is also found on pages 5 and 6 of the parent booklet.

You are indeed Holy, O Lord, and all you have created rightly gives you praise, for through your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power and working of the Holy Spirit, you give life to all things and make them holy, and you never cease to gather a people to yourself, so that from the rising of the sun to its setting a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.

...Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you: by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts we have brought to you for consecration, that they may become the Body and Blood of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ at whose command we celebrate these mysteries....

Therefore, O Lord, we celebrate the memorial of the saving Passion of your Son, his wondrous Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, and as we look forward to his second coming, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice.

Look, we pray, upon the oblation of your Church, and, recognizing the sacrificial Victim by whose death you willed to reconcile us to yourself, grant that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ.

May he make of us an eternal offering to you, so that we may obtain an inheritance with your elect, especially with the most blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with blessed Joseph, her Spouse, with your blessed Apostles and glorious Martyrs, and with all the Saints, on whose constant intercession in your presence we rely for unflinching help.

May this Sacrifice of our reconciliation, we pray, O Lord, advance the peace and salvation of all the world. Be pleased to confirm in faith and charity your pilgrim Church on earth, with your servant [name] our Pope and [name] our Bishop, the Order of Bishops, all the clergy, and the entire people you have gained for your own. Listen graciously to the prayers of this family, whom you have summoned before you: in your compassion, O merciful Father, gather to yourself all your children scattered throughout the world....

...Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever. Amen.

- ◆ Invite participants to take some time for silence to let this prayer resonate in them.
- ◆ Close the prayer by saying: “Together, let’s make the Sign of the Cross.”

Reminders

- ◆ Encourage participants to renew their love for Jesus’ great gift of the Eucharist as they accompany their child(ren) on this sacramental journey. Remind parents to attend Mass each Sunday and to set aside time for special opportunities for family prayer, such as going to adoration or reading the Gospel at home.
- ◆ Invite parents to work with their child(ren) on the “With My Family” sections at the end of each step of the Invited by Christ program.
- ◆ If you haven’t already, provide a schedule listing session dates and important dates.

Living Communion in the Church

Called to Live Together

- Choose one or two images from the slideshow that illustrate how we desire to create relationships in our lives.

Think about the groups you belong to (clubs, school, parish, etc.). Select three keywords that evoke the idea of *community*.

SHARE YOUR IDEAS WITH OTHERS, IF YOU WISH.

My Notes



- We also talk about *community* within the Church.
- How do you feel like part of the community during the celebration of the Mass? During other parish activities? In other parts of your life?

SHARE YOUR IDEAS!

My Notes



The Church offers gestures, words, and attitudes that unite Christian community members. Their origins and meaning date back to the early Church, when the first Christian communities gathered.

Choosing to Live Together in Faith

You may choose to highlight or circle keywords in the text.



Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

In this example of Christian community:

- What values seem essential?
- What would you find difficult or discouraging?

In your opinion, what brings the Christian community together today?

Saint Luke's writing describes the foundational structure and values of the first Christian communities. Even today, these practices are essential for the life of the Church and Christians. When we celebrate the Eucharist, we gather in the name of Christ, who calls us to live as brothers and sisters.

Gather at the Call of Christ

(Sign of the Cross)

I open my heart to the loving presence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I open my heart to the Word of God.

Mark 6:34-44



When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. By now it was already late and his disciples approached him and said, "This is a deserted place and it is already very late. Dismiss them so that they can go to the surrounding farms and villages and buy themselves something to eat." He said to them in reply, "Give them some food yourselves." But they said to him, "Are we to buy two hundred days' wages worth of food and give it to them to eat?" He asked them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they had found out they said, "Five loaves and two fish."

Moment of silence for reflection.

So he gave orders to have them sit down in groups on the green grass. The people took their places in rows by hundreds and by fifties. Then, taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to [his] disciples to set before the people; he also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied. And they picked up twelve wicker baskets full of fragments and what was left of the fish. Those who ate [of the loaves] were five thousand men.

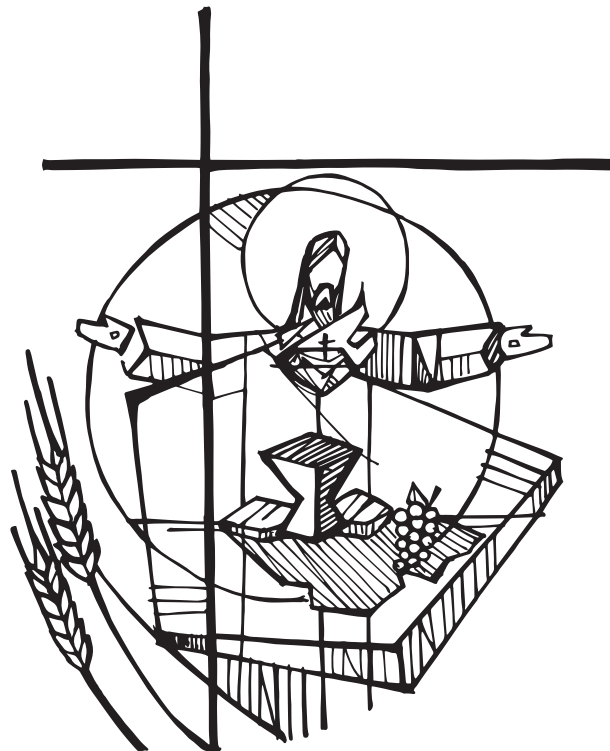
Moment of silence for reflection.

● **Excerpt from Eucharistic Prayer III**

You are indeed Holy, O Lord, and all you have created rightly gives you praise, for through your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power and working of the Holy Spirit, you give life to all things and make them holy, and you never cease to gather a people to yourself, so that from the rising of the sun to its setting a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.

...Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you: by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts we have brought to you for consecration, that they may become the Body and Blood of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ at whose command we celebrate these mysteries....

Therefore, O Lord, we celebrate the memorial of the saving Passion of your Son, his wondrous Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, and as we look forward to his second coming, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice.



Look, we pray, upon the oblation of your Church, and, recognizing the sacrificial Victim by whose death you willed to reconcile us to yourself, grant that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ.

May he make of us an eternal offering to you, so that we may obtain an inheritance with your elect, especially with the most blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with blessed Joseph, her Spouse, with your blessed Apostles and glorious Martyrs, and with all the Saints, on whose constant intercession in your presence we rely for unfailing help.

May this Sacrifice of our reconciliation, we pray, O Lord, advance the peace and salvation of all the world. Be pleased to confirm in faith and charity your pilgrim Church on earth, with your servant [name] our Pope and [name] our Bishop, the Order of Bishops, all the clergy, and the entire people you have gained for your own. Listen graciously to the prayers of this family, whom you have summoned before you: in your compassion, O merciful Father, gather to yourself all your children scattered throughout the world.

To our departed brothers and sisters and to all who were pleasing to you at their passing from this life, give kind admittance to your kingdom. There we hope to enjoy for ever the fullness of your glory through Christ our Lord through whom you bestow on the world all that is good.



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