



Eucharist Retreats

Children's Retreat: Eucharist

Overview

In this retreat model, four activity centers will be created in which children can be together to build community and reinforce what they have learned about the Sacrament of the Eucharist. This is a 3hour retreat model; however, the time and activities may be modified according to your particular needs.

Retreat at a Glance

- A. Welcome and Opening Prayer (15 minutes)
- B. Directions for the Day (10 minutes)
- C. Activity Centers: Part 1 (60 minutes)
- D. Break (20 minutes)
- E. Activity Centers: Part 2 (60 minutes)
- F. Closing Prayer (15 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

Materials Needed

- a Bible, a candle, and other items to create a prayer space
- blank name tags and markers
- copies of the following handouts:
 - "An Exodus Celebration of God's Power and Love" (Document #: TX005772), enough for the adult leaders
 - "Guided Meditation before the Blessed Sacrament" (Document #: TX005773), enough for the adult leaders
 - "A Special Passover Meal with Jesus" (Document #: TX005774), enough for the adult leaders
 - "Script for a Special Passover Meal with Jesus" (Document #: TX005775), enough for each child
- materials for the activity centers you choose

- additional worksheets, games, or short activities for each activity center
- refreshments for break time

Preparation Tasks

- Ask the catechists, parents, or other volunteers to help set up for the retreat, lead child groups and activities, bring snacks, provide hospitality, and clean up after the retreat.
- Decide how many activity centers you need for your scheduled time frame and plan the specific activities (see the following pages).
- Arrange the children into four groups in advance (you may need only two groups if you have a smaller number of children). Assign each group two or more adult leaders, and give each group an identifying color or name.
- Make name tags for the children and the adult leaders, using the selected identifying color or name.
- Create a rotation schedule for the groups, and provide the activity leaders with some additional short activities in case the children finish early.

Retreat Outline

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer (15 minutes)

1. **Welcome** the children and the adult leaders to the retreat. Tell them that a retreat is a time to step aside from normal activities and routines and focus on God and our faith. Explain that this retreat is a time to spend together and to think about the sacrament that they will soon be celebrating for the first time.
2. **Invite** everyone present to quiet themselves and prepare for prayer, recalling that they are in the holy presence of God. Continue with the following prayer, inviting the children to repeat the phrases after each break:
 - God, our Father, / we thank you for bringing us together today. / Be with us / as we continue to prepare / to receive Holy Communion. / Bless all of those in the Church / who are preparing to receive / the Eucharist for the first time. / We ask this / and all things / in the name of Jesus Christ, / who is Lord, / forever and ever. / Amen.

B. Directions for the Day (10 minutes)

1. **Explain** to the children that they are going to go to different activity centers today. Tell them that they are going to be grouped according to the color or name on their name tags. Point out the adult leaders who will lead each group so the children know where their group will meet.
2. **Describe** the different activity centers that are available, and identify the activity leaders.
3. **Encourage** the children to enjoy themselves.

C. Activity Centers: Part 1 (60 minutes)

The following are examples of possible activity centers that you may make available. For each center, make sure to have additional worksheets, games, or short activities that the children can complete if they finish before it is time to move to the next activity center. In this first part, each group will experience half of the activity centers—30 minutes each. The groups will complete the other centers after the break.

Activity Centers

- **Music:** Use the handout “An Exodus Celebration of God’s Power and Love” (Document #: TX005772).
- **Prayer:** Use the handout “Guided Meditation before the Blessed Sacrament” (Document #: TX005773).
- **Drama:** Use the handouts “A Special Passover Meal with Jesus” (Document #: TX005774) and “Script for a Special Passover Meal with Jesus” (Document #: TX005775).
- **Art:** Decorate an altar cloth or a banner using various art supplies for the First Eucharist liturgy.

Note: For additional activity center options, you may wish to use some of the core activities that the children enjoyed throughout the chapters, or you may wish to use some of the additional activity options at the end of each chapter that were not used before.

D. Break (20 minutes)

The experience of sharing food builds community and unity. Include some healthy snacks, such as crackers, fruit, and juice, as options for the break. Be aware of any food allergies that might exist within the group and adjust your snack menu accordingly.

E. Activity Centers: Part 2 (60 minutes)

Continue the retreat with the remaining activity center rotations (30 minutes each).

F. Closing Prayer (15 minutes)

1. **Bring** all of the children and adult leaders together for a closing prayer.
2. **Ask** the participants to quiet themselves and remember that they are in the holy presence of God.
3. **Begin** the prayer by singing one of the Eucharist hymns the children know or are learning for the First Eucharist liturgy. You may wish to invite several musicians to lead the hymn, or have an appropriate recorded version of the song available.
4. **Lead** the group in a prayer:
 - Lord God, we thank you for this time together on retreat. We know you are present with us each day. We ask for the gift of your Holy Spirit to continue to guide us as we near the day of our First Eucharist. Help us to learn and grow in faith as we become closer to you each day. Amen.
5. **Close** with the Lord’s Prayer and the Sign of the Cross.

Parent-Child Retreat: Eucharist

Overview

In this retreat model, three activity centers will be created in which children and parents can learn and have fun together. This is a 2-hour retreat model; however, the time and activity centers may be modified according to your particular needs.

Retreat at a Glance

- A. Welcome and Opening Prayer (15 minutes)
- B. Directions for the Day (10 minutes)
- C. Activity Centers (each family completes each of three centers) (75 minutes)
- D. Closing Prayer and Sending Forth (20 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

Materials Needed

- a Bible, a candle, and other items to create a prayer space
- light refreshments
- blank name tags and markers
- pens and pencils
- blank name tags for gifts activity, one for each participant
- materials for each activity center
- additional worksheet games or activities that families can complete if they finish an activity early
- index cards for at-home family activity suggestions
- a basket or decorative box for family activity cards

Preparation Tasks

- Notify families in advance that they and their children will be involved in an art activity and that they will want to dress accordingly.
- Ask the catechists, parents, or other volunteers to help set up for the retreat, lead child-parent groups and activities, be helpers at each of the centers, bring snacks, provide hospitality, and clean up after the retreat.
- Select a volunteer to read Romans 12:3–8 for the opening prayer. Ask them to begin with “A reading from the Letter to the Romans” and end with “The Word of the Lord.” Prepare a script to be inserted into the Bible if necessary.

- ❑ Arrange the participants into three groups in advance. You might indicate the three different groups by colored dots on their name tags or list the activities on their name tags in the order they are to follow.
- ❑ Determine where the activity centers will take place and where the large-group gathering will occur. Set the room(s) accordingly with chairs, tables, prayer space, and materials needed.
- ❑ Write different family activities on index cards for the sending forth. These activities might include the following: help someone in need, avoid a disagreement, share with a family member, share with a friend or neighbor, do chores without complaining, feed the hungry.

Retreat Outline

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer (15 minutes)

1. **Welcome** the families to the retreat. Explain to them that the purpose of this gathering is to provide some quality time for them and their child to be together, sharing their faith through different activities. Remind them that with today's busy pace, it is crucial to take some time to step back and focus on those things that are at the center of our lives.
2. **Ask** the participants to quiet themselves and remember that they are in the holy presence of God. Light the candle, and invite the volunteer to proclaim Romans 12:3–8.
3. **Take** a few moment of silence, and then make some brief comments about how the strength of the Body of Christ, the Church, consists of the many different gifts that each of us has and offers to each other and to the world.
4. **Invite** the parents to think of a gift that their child has demonstrated. Have them write this on a blank name tag and place it on their child's shirt.
5. **Encourage** the children to think of a gift their parent has demonstrated. Give them examples, such as "being funny" or "always being there." Have the children write this on a blank name tag and place it on their parent's shirt.
6. **Invite** everyone to stand, and together pray the Lord's Prayer.
7. **Close** with the Sign of the Cross.

B. Directions for the Day (10 minutes)

1. **Explain** to the participants that they will now break into their smaller groups and proceed to the activity centers assigned to their particular group.
2. **Inform** them that there will be a helper at each activity center to explain how to complete the activity. This person will also indicate when it is time to move to the next activity.
3. **Tell** the participants how long they will have at each activity center, and explain that they will all gather together for a closing prayer after they have completed all of the activities.

C. Activity Centers (75 minutes)

Art Center (25 minutes)

In this activity center, families will be asked to take part in creating a mural collage of the Body of Christ in the parish.

Materials Needed

- 8½-x-11-inch blank drawing paper
- markers
- poster paints and paint brushes
- glue and tape
- drop cloths
- paper towels
- smocks or oversized shirts for the children
- variety of decorative elements (lace, sequins, yarn, cotton, buttons, etc.)

Choose a large wall or floor space for this activity, and place a drawing or painting of Jesus in the center of the space. Title it "Our Parish Family Is the Body of Christ." Ask each family to create a picture of their family on an 8½-x-11-inch piece of paper and identify themselves on the drawing, such as "The Rodriguez Family." Invite them to use the materials provided to add to their drawings. Have them place their drawings around the image of Christ.

Liturgy Center (25 minutes)

In this activity center, families will learn and identify articles used in the Eucharistic liturgy.

Materials Needed

- index cards with numbers
- a sheet of paper for each family with the name of each of the liturgical items
- the actual liturgical items (or photos of them) for identification, such as: altar, ambo, tabernacle, chalice, paten, purificator, Lectionary, Sacramentary, chasuble

Place items around the sanctuary and sacristy that are related to the Mass. Use index cards to assign a number to each item. Give each family a list of the items; the list should not be in numerical order. Ask them to identify each of the items on display by putting the number of the item next to the name of the item on their worksheet. Ask volunteers to help the families handle or touch the smaller items, and to explain how and when they are used at the altar or in the liturgy. Give the volunteer helpers answer sheets so the families can check their answers and, if they wish, go back and make corrections. If it is not practical to have families in the church, take pictures of the items and make large prints. Number the pictures and display them on the wall or on a table at the activity center.

Prayer Center (25 minutes)

In this activity center, families will make a prayer book together.

Materials Needed

- paper
- scissors
- pens and pencils
- markers and colored pencils
- hole punches and staplers
- yarn and ribbon
- card stock
- used textbooks for illustrations
- glue
- prayer starters

Provide a variety of prayer starters (e.g., “Thank you, God, for . . .”) that could be used as prayers before Mass or after Communion. Each family member should choose two prayer starters to complete. Themes of prayer could include desire for Jesus, sorrow for sin, love, adoration, praise, thanksgiving, guidance, or a special intention. When the families are done, invite them to bind their prayers into a personal prayer book for First Eucharist, using the hole punches, staplers, yarn, and ribbon.

D. Closing Prayer and Sending Forth (20 minutes)

1. **Invite** the participants to quiet themselves and remember that they are in the holy presence of God.
2. **Lead** the following prayer:
 - God our Father, we thank you for this special time together to celebrate your love and celebrate each other. We ask you to continue to guide us as we prepare for the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Help us always to celebrate the gifts you have given us to share with one another. We ask for your blessings on all of those in the Church throughout the world who are preparing for First Eucharist. Send us the Holy Spirit to help us follow Jesus every day. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.
3. **Ask** the parents to bless their children by tracing the Sign of the Cross on their child’s forehead with their thumb. Then ask the children to bless their parents by tracing the Sign of the cross on their parent’s forehead with their thumb.
4. **Invite** everyone to pray the Lord’s Prayer, and end with the Sign of the Cross.
5. **Thank** everyone for coming, and ask each family to draw out one card from the basket or decorative box as they leave. Tell them that they will find a suggestion on the card for how families can live out their faith. Ask them to find ways during the week to complete this action in their home, school, or neighborhood.

An Exodus Celebration of God's Power and Love

Materials and Preparation

For this activity, you will need a large space where noise will not disturb others. A gym or grassy playing field would be ideal. You will also need tambourines, cymbals, and other rhythm instruments. If you don't have or cannot borrow rhythm instruments, the children can each make a tambourine by punching holes around one half side of a Styrofoam plate and attaching bells with wire or string.

Activity Directions

1. **Ask** the children what meal Jesus ate with his friends the night before he died. (*the Last Supper*)
What feast were they celebrating? (*the Jewish feast of Passover*)
2. **Give** a short narrative of the Exodus story in your own words. Include these points:
 - The Jewish people celebrate Passover to remember and thank God for saving their ancestors from slavery and death when they fled Egypt long ago. This is also called the Exodus. The word *exodus* means "departure" or "going out," and we call this event the Exodus because Moses led the people out of Egypt.
 - At first the ruler of Egypt said the Jewish people could go. Then he changed his mind. He didn't want to let God's people go free. He sent his soldiers to stop them and bring them back.
 - God helped his people escape. He made a path for the people right through the middle of the Red Sea. The water stood up like a wall on both sides and the people walked through safely.
 - When God's people were all across, the water crashed back down. The soldiers who were chasing them were all drowned in the sea. God's people were saved.
 - Moses' sister Miriam led the joyful people in singing and dancing, rejoicing and praising God.
3. **Teach** the children the following rhyme:

God said his people should be free
So Moses led the people right out to the sea.
The water opened up to let them pass
And drowned Pharaoh's army with a mighty crash.
4. **Choose** one child to be Moses, and then arrange the other children into three groups: God's people, Egyptian soldiers, and water. Choose one child from God's people to be Miriam.
5. **Explain** to the children they are going to recreate the Exodus story. Remind them that this should be a fun activity. It is important that they are gentle in their actions. Describe, in advance, the following actions. Then lead the children in the role-play and rhyme activity.
 - The water stands as two rows close together.
 - Moses leads God's people toward the water. The soldiers are in pursuit.
 - When the people arrive, the water parts to make a path in the middle.

- Moses leads God's people through the water.
 - When the Egyptian soldiers are in the middle of the water, the water closes in and covers them.
 - Then Miriam begins the celebration. Holding up her tambourine, she shouts: "God has saved his people. Praise to our God forever!"
6. **Encourage** everyone to join in the celebration. If possible, play some Middle Eastern instrumental music to back up the tambourines and to provide a beat for the children to dance to.
7. **Allow** the children to take turns with the different parts if there is time.

Guided Meditation before the Blessed Sacrament

The following resource provides an outline and script for leading children through a guided meditation. If this is the first time you are using a guided meditation with the children, you may want to take some time to explain this form of prayer to them. Invite them to listen quietly and to use their imagination throughout the prayer.

Materials and Preparation

- Have enough chairs so that the children have an empty place on both sides of them. This will create an environment with less distraction. If there are pews in front of the tabernacle, be prepared to space the children accordingly so they have space around them.
- Provide a CD player and a CD with soft, meditative background music with no words.
- Practice the meditation aloud several times by yourself to get the tone and delivery you want. It will be helpful to read slowly and with a voice that is soft and calming but clear enough for the children to hear easily.
- The pauses are important in a guided meditation. They give the children enough time to visualize what you are saying. Make sure not to give too much time, or the children may become restless or their minds may wander.
- Before the children arrive for the meditation, have the music playing softly and have the lights dimmed, if possible. You want them to arrive in a space already set for the meditation.

Guided Meditation Directions

8. **Welcome** the children as they arrive, and ask them to sit down with at least one chair (or space) between them. Continue with the following:
 - This is the tabernacle, and this is the tabernacle lamp. (*Point to the tabernacle lamp.*) Does anyone know what it means when the candle by the tabernacle is lit? (*Ask several children to share their responses.*) Yes, it means that Jesus is present. He is right here with us.
 - We are going to use the next few minutes to think and to pray quietly. While we are here, rest your voices. I will be talking and leading you in prayer. I am going to help you think about Jesus and invite you to talk to Jesus quietly in your heart. You are getting ready to receive Jesus soon, and I want to help you feel really close to Jesus.

- Rest your hands in your lap. Close your eyes, or look at a candle or the cross. Take a deep breath, and imagine that you are breathing in God's love. As you breathe out, whisper the name Jesus. *(Repeat this several times with the children.)* Now try to rest your eyes and listen carefully.
 - Keeping your eyes closed, imagine that you have just walked in the door of a little room. *(Pause.)* It may be very fancy or very plain. Look around your room. *(Pause)* You like this room. The walls are your favorite color. You can hear soft music in this room. You also see a small stained-glass window, like the windows in church, with lots of pretty colors. *(Pause.)* You see the sunlight coming through the window—it makes everything sparkle. How does it make you feel? *(Pause.)* You see a table. Is it a kitchen table or a dining room table or maybe a breakfast bar? Maybe it is a picnic table or a booth like in a restaurant. *(Pause.)* You sit down at the table. It is just your size. You feel very relaxed and peaceful. *(Pause.)* Now someone else comes into your room. You look around to see who it is. Right away, you know it is Jesus. *(Pause)*
 - Jesus sits down beside you. Feel how near he is to you. *(Pause.)* You look at Jesus, and he smiles at you. You smile back at Jesus. Jesus has such gentle eyes. His eyes seem to say, "I love you." *(Pause.)* Jesus says your name. . . . It sounds so beautiful. You feel warm and cozy. *(Pause.)* Without using any words, you say hello to Jesus. *(Pause)* Then Jesus begins to talk to you. Jesus says, "I want you to know how happy I am to be here with you. I love you so much. Very soon, I will be even closer to you. I am even more excited than you are about to receive your First Eucharist." *(Pause.)*
 - Now Jesus wants to talk to you about what happens at Mass. He says, "In the Eucharist you give gifts of bread and wine. But you also give me your good works and your prayers. In a way, you give me yourself. During the liturgy, the Holy Spirit changes the bread into my Body—for you!—and the wine into my Blood—for you! I give these special gifts back to you so you can share my life." *(Pause.)*
 - Jesus asks, "What would you like to tell me now?" He smiles again, and waits. It is your turn to talk to Jesus—silently, in your heart. Tell Jesus how you feel about receiving First Eucharist. Maybe you will tell him that you are so excited, or very happy, or maybe even a little bit nervous. Tell Jesus what you like about getting ready for First Eucharist. Tell him what is hard for you. Maybe the hardest part is the waiting—waiting to receive Jesus! Now I am going to give you a little quiet time to talk to Jesus in your own words. *(Long pause)*
 - It is almost time to go. Say goodbye to Jesus, but remember, Jesus is always with you. With your eyes still closed, look around again at the little room you are in and feel how comfortable and calm the room makes you feel.
 - Now I want you to become aware of the place we are in and the seat you are sitting on. When the music stops, everyone will take a deep breath and slowly open their eyes. *(Stop the music and give the children time to open their eyes.)* Now let's all stay quiet, genuflect, and make the Sign of the Cross. *(Genuflect and make the Sign of the Cross.)* Let's leave this space now, silently. We can begin speaking again once we have left.
- 9. Use** your normal speaking voice to indicate to the children that they can talk (after you have left the space). If there is time, it will be helpful to gather the children in a room and talk about their experiences in the guided meditation. You may also wish to have them draw or write a journal entry describing their encounter with Jesus in the guided meditation.

10. Encourage any children who share that they did not see Jesus. Though most children will have no problem with the guided meditation, some may have difficulty closing their eyes or calming themselves enough to maintain attention. Assure these children that sometimes this kind of prayer takes practice and that they can always talk to Jesus in their own prayers.

A Special Passover Meal with Jesus

For this activity, the children will reenact the Last Supper using a script (see the handout “Script for a Special Passover Meal with Jesus” [Document #: TX005775]). Adjust the number of roles according to the number of children in the group. The ideal group is thirteen children (Jesus and the Twelve Apostles) around the table and two narrators who stand. If you don’t have enough children for the Twelve Apostles, ask the children to recall how many Apostles were at the Last Supper. Tell them that you will just pretend the others are there. If you have a large enough group, you may wish to set up multiple tables and have adult leaders direct the children at each table.

Materials and Preparation

Materials

- table space for approximately thirteen children
- a tablecloth
- whole wheat pita bread
- serving plate
- grape juice
- a plastic wine glass and small cups
- paper towels or moist washcloths for clean up
- copies of the handout “Script for a Special Passover Meal with Jesus” (Document #: TX005775), one for each child
- different color highlighters

Preparation Tasks

- Break the pita bread into twelve pieces and put them on a serving plate.
- Place the tablecloth over the table, and put a cup at each place at the table. Pour the grape juice into one plastic wine glass for Jesus and small clear plastic cups, one for each child.
- Highlight each narrator’s part, and choose two children to read these lines.
- Choose three children to read each Apostle’s part. Highlight each part on a script.
- On the script handout, use a different color to highlight directions to pick up the plate of bread, pass the bread, and to take up the cup of wine.
- Be sure to highlight the “All” parts on each script.
- Place a script handout face down at each place at the table.

Directions for the Meal

11. Have the children take a place at the table. Tell them that they are going to reenact the Last Supper. They will each read the part or parts highlighted on their script. Ask them to turn over their scripts and find their part or parts.

12. **Set** the plate of pita bread in front of "Jesus." Indicate the directions in the script to hold up the plate of bread and to pass the bread.
13. **Place** the wine glass with grape juice in front of "Jesus." Indicate the directions in the script to hold up the cup.
14. **Invite** the first narrator to begin, once everyone is set and has reviewed their parts.
15. **Remind** the children that they will have a snack later. They should understand that the act of eating this "meal" together is symbolic.
16. **Lead** a short discussion, after the reenactment, about the connection between Passover, the Last Supper, and the Eucharist. Make sure to highlight the following points:
 - The Passover is a feast that celebrates that God saved his people from slavery in Egypt.
 - Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with the Apostles, but at this meal, Jesus offered himself as the one who would save all people.
 - The Eucharist or Mass is our celebration of the Last Supper. We remember what Jesus did, just as he asked us to. Jesus gives us himself as the one who saves us all. In the Eucharist, we eat and drink the bread and wine that has become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

Script for a Special Passover Meal with Jesus

Narrator 1: The great feast of Passover was coming. God's people would remember how God saved them from slavery.

Narrator 2: Jesus said that he was God's own Son and that he would suffer and die to save everyone from sin.

Narrator 1: The leaders of the people wanted to stop Jesus from teaching about that.

Narrator 2: But Jesus wasn't afraid. He reserved a big room where he would eat the Passover meal with the Apostles.

Narrator 1: The Apostles were Jesus' closest friends and followers and would soon be the ones teaching everyone about Jesus.

Narrator 2: On Passover night, when the sun was going down, Jesus and the Apostles went to a big, upstairs room. Jesus took his place at the table. The Apostles sat down too.

Jesus: I have wanted so much to eat this Passover meal with you one last time before I suffer and die.

Narrator 1: Then Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to his Father in Heaven.

Jesus: Blessed are you, God; you give us this bread. We thank you for the earth that grows seeds and the hands that make bread. We remember how you set your people free. (*Hold up the plate of bread.*)

All: Blessed are you, God.

Narrator 2: Jesus broke the bread and gave pieces of the bread to his friends.

Jesus: Take this and eat it. (*Distribute the bread pieces to the others.*)

Narrator 1: But then he said words they had never heard before.

Jesus: This is my body to be given for you. Keep doing this as a way to remember me.

Narrator 2: Jesus took the cup of wine and gave thanks to his Father in Heaven.

Jesus: Blessed are you, God. You give us this wine to drink. Thank you for the earth that grows vines and the hands that make wine. (*Hold up the glass of juice.*)

All: Blessed are you, God.

Narrator 1: Then Jesus passed the cup of wine to his friends.

Jesus: Take this, all of you, and drink it. (*Everyone drinks from their cup of juice.*)

Narrator 2: But then he said words they had never heard before.

Jesus: This is my blood, which will be poured out for you for the forgiveness of sin. Keep doing this as a way to remember me.

Narrator 1: At the end of the supper, Jesus and the Apostles sang a hymn of praise and thanks to God.

All: God's love lasts forever.

Apostle 1: God made the earth and sky, sun, moon, and stars.

All: God's love lasts forever.

Apostle 2: God remembers us when we have trouble and need help.

All: God's love lasts forever.

Apostle 3: God gives food to all creatures.

All: God's love lasts forever.

Narrator 2: The Church has been celebrating the Eucharist ever since that night of the Last Supper. We continue to celebrate that Jesus is with us in a very special way in the Eucharist.

Narrator 1: This is truly a reason to give thanks and praise to God!

Family Prayer before First Eucharist

The following prayers are intended to help your family focus more deeply on the celebration of First Eucharist that will be taking place soon. Through these prayers, you, your child, and your family will be asking for guidance as you continue to grow as disciples and continue your journey of faith together. By creating the time to pray these short, daily prayers as a family, you will be reinforcing for your family how important these final days of preparation are.

Note: When the prayer refers to “our child,” feel free to insert your child’s name for a more personalized prayer.

Sunday before the Celebration of First Eucharist

Child: This is the day the Lord has made.

All: Let us be glad and rejoice in it.

Parent: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

Parent: (*Proclaim Matthew 26:26–28.*) The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Child: Jesus, you call us to your table. You want to give us yourself in Holy Communion. Help us to be ready to receive you.

Parent: God our Father, help us during this next week to prepare our child to welcome your Son, Jesus, into their hearts.

All: Jesus, you touched the hearts of many people. They loved to be with you. Soon you will be with us in a wonderful new way. Help us to bring happiness to others by smiling and doing things cheerfully. Amen.

Monday

Child: At the Last Supper, Jesus said, “I pray for them . . . for those you gave me, for they belong to you” (John 17:9).

Parent: God our Father, help us most especially during these next days to prepare our child to receive your Son, Jesus.

All: Jesus, we remember your hours of prayer at the Last Supper, in the garden, and on the cross. We unite ourselves with you. We pray for ourselves and others that we may be more like you.

Child: Come, Lord Jesus, make your home in my heart.

Tuesday

Child: Jesus said, "If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples" (John 13:35).

Parent: God our Father, help us most especially during these next days to prepare our child to receive your Son, Jesus.

All: Jesus, you were always kind and loving. Please help us to follow your example by being kind to everyone we meet.

Child: Come, Lord Jesus, make your home in my heart.

Wednesday

Child: Jesus said, "Your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Parent: God our Father, help us most especially during these next days to prepare our child to receive your Son, Jesus.

All: Jesus, we read in the Gospels of the many ways you helped others, either by your words or your actions. Help us follow your example by giving a helping hand to someone in need.

Child: Come, Lord Jesus, make your home in my heart.

Thursday

Child: God our Father sent Jesus to show us the way of service. He showed his love every minute of the day.

Parent: God our Father, help us most especially during these next days to prepare our child to receive your Son, Jesus.

All: Jesus, you are gentle and humble of heart. Accept the works and prayers of this day and give us the rest we need to serve you better tomorrow. Help us be attentive to the needs of others and try to help before being asked.

Child: Come, Lord Jesus, make your home in my heart.

Friday

Child: "Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good; his love is eternal" (1 Chronicles 16:34).

Parent: God our Father, help us most especially during these next days to prepare our child to receive your Son, Jesus.

All: Jesus, we thank you for calling us together and forming us into a family. There is no other family exactly like ours. No other family can give you what you expect from us. We praise you, we bless you, and we thank you!

Child: Come, Lord Jesus, make your home in my heart.

Saturday before First Communion

Child: “Find out for yourself how good the LORD is” (Psalm 34:8). Jesus, the day we have been waiting for is almost here. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Parent: Lord, please grant your special graces and blessing to our child this night, tomorrow, and always. (*Make the Sign of the Cross on your child’s forehead in blessing.*)

All: Come, Lord Jesus, make your home in my heart.

(The scriptural quotations on this handout are from the *Good News Translation*® [*Today’s English Version, Second Edition*]. Copyright © 1992 by the American Bible Society. All rights reserved.)