

Name: _____

Date: _____

Entering the Church

When you enter the church, you will find a holy water font or stoup near the doors. The water is blessed and crossing yourself with it is the first thing you should do when you come into the church. Dip your forefingers of your right hand into the blessed water and make the Sign of the Cross. As you make the Sign of the Cross you should say, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

As you walk down the aisle to sit, be mindful of the Presence of God. We should be quiet while we find a seat and try not to distract others. When you finally choose a row to sit in, genuflect toward the front of the church in the direction of the tabernacle, which contains the Blessed Sacrament. When you genuflect, lower yourself onto your right knee until it touches the floor. At the same time, make the Sign of the Cross.

If there are kneelers where you are sitting, make the Sign of the Cross again and kneel. If there are no kneelers, sit in a prayerful posture with your hands resting on your lap. Prepare yourself and clear your mind for God. Sometimes it is helpful to pray a few memorized prayers, but these should always be followed by a real conversation with God. Tell Him what is on your mind and reflect on where God is in your life as you kneel or sit in the church.

During this time of private prayer, the priest may be preparing the altar servers or lectors. The priest may also be in the confessional, hearing confessions.

What do we do?	What does the priest do?	What are other roles?	What are objects used?

Name: _____

Opening Procession

Mass begins with everyone standing and singing the opening hymn. If incense is used, the procession is led by a thurifer carrying a thurible with burning incense. Next comes the cross bearer holding aloft the Processional Cross--usually there are two altar servers holding candles on either side. If there are other servers, they follow behind the cross bearer. If there are concelebrants (one or more priests who are not the principle celebrant), they come next. Then comes the deacon or lector who carries the Book of the Gospels overhead. Last is the presider of the liturgy, a priest or bishop. If there are two deacons, one will be with the Mass celebrant. When they arrive at the sanctuary of the church, together they make a profound bow toward the altar. The Book of the Gospels is then placed on the altar. The deacon and priest will go to the altar and venerate (honor) it by kissing it. If appropriate, the priest incenses the cross and the altar. The priest then walks and stands in front of the celebrant's or presider's chair. During the whole procession, we stand and sing the opening hymn.

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Name: _____

Greeting

When the opening hymn has concluded, the priest and the people, who are still standing, make the Sign of the Cross while the priest, facing the people, says:

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

The people reply: “Amen.”

Then the priest, extending his hands, greets the people, saying;

“The Lord be with you.”

The people: “And with your spirit.”

In this first greeting a bishop, instead of “The Lord be with you,” says:

“Peace be with you.”

The priest may, very briefly, introduce the faithful to the Mass of the day.

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Name: _____

Two Readings and the Psalm

Two readings and a Psalm are read by a lecturer (a participant in the Mass chosen to read the Word of God). The priest, along with other participants, listen and reflect. At times, the Psalm can be sung by someone called a cantor. The first reading will be from the Hebrew Scriptures. It will relate to the Gospel selection and will give background and insight into the meaning of what Jesus will do in the Gospel. Then we will sing or recite a Psalm—a song from God’s own inspired hymnal, the Book of Psalms of the Hebrew Bible. The second reading will usually be from one of the letters of Paul or another apostolic writing. The third reading will be taken from one of the four Gospels. Some visitors to the Catholic Mass are surprised to find us reading from the Bible! We have not generally been famous for our Bible reading, and yet the Mass has always been basically and fundamentally biblical. Even some Catholics might be surprised to learn how much of the Mass is taken directly from the Bible: Not only the three readings and the Psalm, not only the obviously biblical prayers such as the “Holy, Holy, Holy” and “The Lord’s Prayer,” but most of the words and phrases of the prayers of the Mass are all taken from the Bible.

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Name: _____

The Gospel

Those participating in the Mass stand for the reading of the Gospel. Because of the unique presence of Christ in the proclamation of the Gospel, it has long been the custom to stand in attentive reverence to hear these words. We believe that Christ “is present in His Word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the church” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, #7). The priest will again greet us with “The Lord be with you.” He then introduces the Gospel reading while marking a small cross on his forehead, lips, and heart with his thumb while praying silently that God cleanses his mind and his heart so that his lips may worthily proclaim the Gospel. In many places, the congregation praying performs this ritual action along with the priest. The Gospel reading concludes with the ritual formula “The Gospel of the Lord” and we respond, “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,” again proclaiming our faith in the presence of Christ in the Word. Then we sit for the homily.

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The Homily

During the homily, the priest stands at the ambo and explains how the Word of God (heard in the readings and Gospel) applies to our life today. Those participating in the Mass sit calmly and reflect on the words of the priest. The homily means more than just a sermon or a talk about how we are to live or what we are to believe. It is an act of worship rooted in the texts of the Mass and especially in the readings from Scripture which have just been proclaimed. The homily takes that word and brings it to our life situation today. Just as a large piece of bread is broken to feed individual persons, the Word of God must be broken open so it can be received and digested by the congregation.

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Name: _____

Prayers of the Faithful

In the Prayers of the Faithful we pray for the needs of all the Church, living and dead. We ask for God's help for all of humanity. We call on God in petition to intercede in our lives with help and guidance. The priest begins this prayer with a brief introduction, by which he invites the faithful to pray, and likewise he concludes with a prayer. The intentions are announced from the ambo or from another suitable place by a cantor, a lector, or one of the lay faithful.

Usually the Prayers of the Faithful follow this order:

1. Prayers for the universal Church, the pope, and the bishops.
2. Prayers for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world.
3. Prayers for those burdened by any kind of difficulty.
4. Prayers for the needs of the local church and community.

We stand and the reader presents our needs to God. We pray silently as the reader prays aloud.

Reader: "We pray to the Lord."

People: "Lord, hear our prayer."

The priest summarizes our needs. We pray silently as he prays aloud.

People: "Amen."

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Name: _____

Preparation of the Gifts

In most churches, a basket is passed around and the people can contribute some money to help support the Church. The Church uses that money to help pay for the Church expenses and contributions for the community around the world. It takes money to buy various things like candles, instruments, books, music, etc. The money is also used for missionaries, charities, running the parish, church maintenance, food for the poor, etc.

During the collection, we are sitting and a hymn is sung while the altar is being prepared and the gifts are being assembled. A corporal, purificator, Sacramentary, paten, and chalice are all placed on the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We continue to sing while our gifts, as well as the bread and wine, are brought up to the altar by participants called “gift bearers.”

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Consecration of the Eucharist

During the Consecration, Jesus enters the liturgy (Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity). The priest continues the prayer, giving praise and thanks, and calling upon the Holy Spirit to change our gifts of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. He then recalls the events of the Last Supper—the institution of the Eucharist. As the priest says the Words of Consecration, it is common for the altar server to ring bells in order to communicate that transubstantiation is occurring. At this important moment in the prayer, we proclaim the mystery of faith. Several texts are possible, for example: “We proclaim your Death, O Lord, / and profess your Resurrection / until you come again.” The priest continues recalling the wonderful deeds of salvation: the passion, death and resurrection of Christ.

Our Father and Kiss of Peace

We prepare to eat and drink at the Lord’s Table with those words taught us by Jesus: “Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Keenly aware that communion (the word means “union with”) is the sign and source of our reconciliation and union with God and with one another, we make a gesture of union and forgiveness with those around us and offer them a sign of peace.

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Communion

As God fed our ancestors in the desert on their pilgrimage, so God gives us food for our journey. We approach the minister who gives us the Eucharistic bread with the words “The Body of Christ,” and we respond, “Amen.” We then go to the minister with the cup who gives it to us with the words “The Blood of Christ,” to which we again profess our “Amen.” During this procession we usually sing a hymn which unites our voices, minds, and thoughts, even as the Body and Blood of Christ unites our bodies. Then we pray silently in our hearts, thanking and praising God and asking for all that this Sacrament promises. The priest unites our prayers in the Prayer After Communion, to which we respond, “Amen.”

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Blessing and Dismissal

We bow our heads to receive a blessing. As the priest names the Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—we make the Sign of the Cross. The priest or deacon then dismisses the assembly: “Go in peace.” We give our liturgical “yes” by saying, “Thanks be to God” and committing to live the Eucharist in the world. We leave the assembly and the church building—but we carry something with us. What happens in our lives during the week gives deeper meaning to the ritual actions we have celebrated at Mass, whether it’s family, work with the poor, or just plain work. It is only in relation to our daily lives that the full meaning of the ritual actions of the Mass becomes clear to us.

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