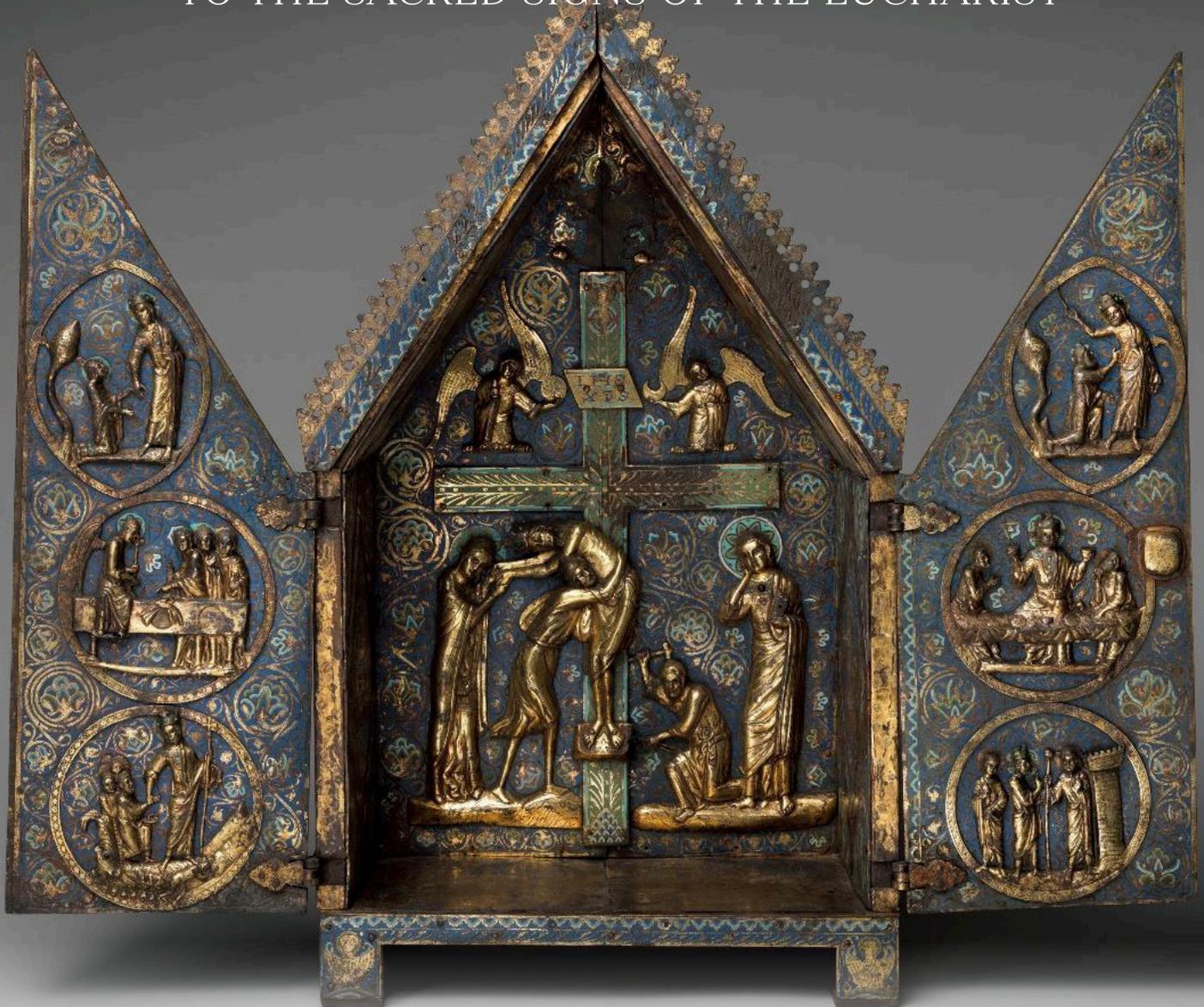


COME LET US WORSHIP:

A CHILDREN'S GUIDE
TO THE SACRED SIGNS OF THE EUCHARIST



by Anne Heekin-Canedy, MA

Master of Catechesis, The Catholic University of America



WELCOMING
CHILDREN
in WORSHIP

THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA





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INTRODUCTION

FOR PARENTS, PASTORS, CATECHISTS, AND TEACHERS

In 1911, Romano Guardini, an Italian-born German Catholic priest and theologian, wrote a little book called *Sacred Signs*, which was written, in the words of Guardini, “to help open up the world of the liturgy.”¹ This opening up, as Guardini saw it, required a method of liturgical formation that would consider the experience of the whole person, spirit and body. It would also reclaim the capacity of the person to see and understand the signs, symbols, and gestures of the liturgy.

For more than a century, Guardini’s little book has continued to inspire, and the principles he sketches out in the introduction to *Sacred Signs* are as relevant today as they were when first published. Above all, they remind us that formation for the liturgy requires more than instruction, which by itself is superficial; rather, what is called for is engagement of the entire self, uniting intellect and experience, as well as the spiritual and material.²

Taken together, these principles have informed the methods we propose in this resource, methods which have proved to be fruitful, especially with children, who, by learning to see and learning to do, assimilate the meaning of the signs, symbols, and gestures of the liturgy.³ These methods include beginning with the basics, privileging experience over classroom instruction, and encouraging repetition to promote understanding.⁴ More specifically, our methods bring to the fore these principles of liturgical formation of children that:

- Highlight the goodness of Creation (body and soul) and prioritize the child’s participation (acclamations and responses, bringing up the gifts);
- Acclimate the child to the physical space (architecture, orientation, the liturgical year);
- Instruct the child in bodily movements (standing, kneeling, walking, hands);
- Present the objects and gestures of the liturgy as part of the child’s lived reality (chalice, paten, linens, epiclesis).

Your primary source of materials is your environment—the church, its structure and layout, its decoration—and the articles it holds for use in the Mass. Each lesson, however, provides the following support:

- Lesson Objective
- Suggested Materials
- Vocabulary
- Guiding Children’s Experience
- Children’s Activity
- Summary Lesson Plan

In addition to materials for artwork and for some activities, the only other item you will need is a Bible in order to locate and read selected passages. We recommend using the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (NRSVCE) or the New American Bible Revised Edition (NABRE).

Thank you for your interest in using this resource for the liturgical formation of your students and children. May the Holy Spirit guide you and keep you as you carry out the vital ministry of forming the children in your care for worship and prayer.

A WORD ON FORMING CHILDREN FOR PRAYER AND WORSHIP

In the Catholic tradition the Mass is “the highest point in all our prayer.”⁵ Accordingly, formation in prayer is a natural, and arguably essential, part of liturgical formation. To this end, we have incorporated a period of prayer into the beginning of each lesson.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* mentions five forms of prayer: blessing and adoration, praise, thanksgiving, petition, intercession. Similarly, it identifies three expressions of prayer: vocal prayer, meditation, contemplative prayer.⁶ Against this background, we begin each lesson with *lectio divina*, which familiarizes children with these forms and expressions and the discipline required for participation in the Mass. A description of this practice may be found below.

We also recommend teaching children the responses, acclamations, and prayers of the Mass. These include the Confiteor, the Gloria, the Nicene Creed, the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy), the Our Father, the Invitation to Prayer (Lord, I am not worthy), and the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God). These also may be found below.

Lectio divina and teaching children to pray with scripture

Lectio divina is an ancient practice dating back to the early Church. It is a method of praying with Scripture that helps us to discern what God is speaking to our hearts. There are four steps: **lectio, meditatio, oratio, and contemplatio or reading, meditation, prayer and contemplation**. Each of these steps is described below.

Lectio: Once you have chosen a Scripture passage, read it (or have it read to you) slowly and carefully. What does it mean, in the literal sense?

Meditatio: Read or listen to the passage again. Are there words or phrases that stand out to you? Ponder them. How do they make you feel? What is God saying to you?

Oratio: Read or listen to the passage again. In light of your meditation, respond to God. What would you like to say to him?

Contemplatio: Read or listen to the passage again. Now sit in silence, and rest in God. Listen for what he may be speaking to your heart.

With young children, our purpose is to show them that the Bible is a special book. We teach them how to hold it so they can feel its weight, and we let them turn its pages. The passages we read to them are narrative in nature, and we guide their responses with questions. Older children who are seven and above may be led through the usual steps. The passages we read to them may be narrative or not, and their responses, if they wish, may be private. Even so, their responses may still need to be prompted by questions, until they grow in prayer and worship.

Notes

1. Romano Guardini, *Sacred Signs*, trans. Grace Branham (St. Louis: Pio Decimo Press, 1956), <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/sacred-signs-11190>.
2. Romano Guardini, *Liturgy and Liturgical Formation*, trans. Jan Bentz (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2022), viii.
3. Fr. Samuel Weber, OSB, “Sacred Signs and Religious Formation: An Application of the Teachings of Monsignor Romano Guardini,” *Adoremus* 14, no.1 (March 2008), <https://adoremus.org/2008/03/sacred-signs-and-religious-formation/>.
4. Weber, “Sacred Signs.”
5. Benedict XVI, General Audience, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20120111.html.
6. Catechism of the Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana-United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 2626-2643.

PRAYERS OF THE MASS FOR CHILDREN TO KNOW | *printable page*

Confiteor

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have
failed to do,
through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask the blessed Mary
ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of
the Father, have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial
with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate
of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and Son,
who with the Father and Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic
Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of
the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE MASS FOR CHILDREN TO KNOW | *printable page*

Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy)

Holy, Holy, Holy
Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Our Father

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed by thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Invitation to Communion

Lord I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.

Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)

Lamb of God,
you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God,
You take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God,
you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.





UNIT VI | Lesson Sixteen

WELCOMING CHILDREN TO SACRED SPACE

Even More Elements of the Mass

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce and make accessible additional items on or near the altar during the Mass.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

- Bible
 - Image of Limoges tabernacle
 - “The Lord Is My Shepherd,” *A New Heaven*, by The Sixteen and Harry Christophers, digital download on iTunes or Amazon Music
 - Phone or other device for playing music
 - 11” x 17” white cardstock
 - Chart depicting and labeling additional liturgical elements of the Mass
 - Coloring sheet for additional liturgical elements of the Mass
 - Colored pencils
-

VOCABULARY

Ciborium

a small, covered cup or bowl made of precious metal; it holds the bread that becomes the Body of Christ

Tabernacle

an ornamental, locked box where the bread that becomes the Body of Christ is kept

Sanctuary Lamp

a red lamp which is lit to signify the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Pray *lectio divina* using Ephesians 6:4.

GUIDING CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE

Print the chart depicting the additional liturgical elements of the Mass onto the cardstock.

First, remind the children that the altar is the table from which the Mass is celebrated. It is also the table from which we are invited to share a special sacred meal—the bread and wine of the Eucharist that become the sacramental presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus for us. Review items from earlier lessons, such as:

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Altar cloth | 4. Paten | 7. Roman Missal | 10. Lectionary |
| 2. Altar candles | 5. Crucifix | 8. Cruets | 11. Paten |
| 3. Chalice | 6. Bookstand | 9. Lavabo | 12. Roman Missal |

Note that there are other liturgical elements that are equally important to the celebration of the Mass.

Using the chart, name the ciborium. Tell the children the ciborium is a small, covered cup or bowl. Like the chalice, it is made from a precious metal. The ciborium holds the bread that becomes the Body of Christ. Next, point out the tabernacle. The tabernacle is a box or cabinet made from a precious metal, stone, or wood. It is where the ciborium holding the Body of Christ is kept. This Body of Christ is so special that the tabernacle is always kept locked.

Now, point out the sanctuary lamp. The sanctuary lamp is a red lamp with a candle in it. It is usually placed near the tabernacle. When the lamp is lit, it tells us that the bread that becomes the Body of Christ during Mass is in the tabernacle. Tell the children that the ciborium, tabernacle, and sanctuary lamp are all signs of the respect and reverence that the Body of Christ is due.

Ask the children if they would like to see a picture of the tabernacle. Show them the photograph of the Limoges tabernacle. Tell the children that this tabernacle was fabricated in Limoges, France around the year 1200. Note the strong physical presence in the image of Christ on the exterior.

As before, we have provided a list of questions for your use with the children. You may, however, develop your own. The only criteria is that they assist the children in their reflections. For the activity, have the children color in the coloring sheet for the additional liturgical elements of the Mass, while listening to “The Lord Is My Shepherd.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- > *Why do we keep the bread that becomes the Body of Christ in the tabernacle?*
- > *How do we know the bread that is the Body of Christ is in the tabernacle?*
- > *What would it mean if the sanctuary lamp were not lit?*

ACTIVITY

*Have the children use the activity sheet to draw the additional liturgical elements of the Mass, while listening to **The Lord Is My Shepherd**.*

- Hand out the activity sheet.
- Review the additional liturgical elements of the Mass with the children.
- Have the children draw the additional liturgical elements of the Mass.

Ciborium

Sanctuary Lamp

Tabernacle

SUMMARY LESSON PLAN

Lesson Sixteen: Welcoming Children to Sacred Space (*Even More Liturgical Elements of the Mass*)

MATERIALS: Bible, image of Limoges tabernacle, “The Lord Is My Shepherd,” phone or other device for playing music, 11” x 17” white cardstock, chart depicting and labeling the additional liturgical elements of the Mass, activity sheet for additional liturgical elements of the Mass, colored pencils

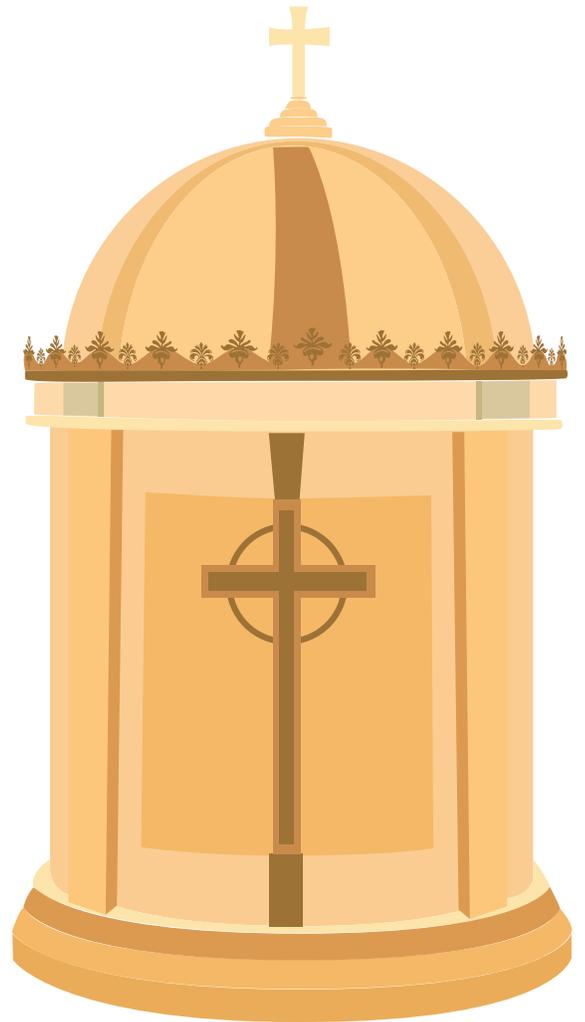
MOMENTS	PREPARATION	PRESENTATION/ACTIVITY	NOTES
Gathering and Prayer	Mark Ephesians 6:4 in your Bible.	Pray <i>lectio divina</i> : Ephesians 6:4.	
1st Moment		Remind children that the altar is the table from which the Mass is celebrated. It is also the table from which we are invited to share a special meal—the bread and wine of the Eucharist that become the Body and Blood of Christ. Review the items from the earlier lesson.	
2nd Moment	Print the chart depicting the additional liturgical elements of the Mass onto the cardstock.	Point to the chart. Tell children the ciborium is a small, covered cup or bowl. It holds the consecrated bread which is the Body of Christ. The tabernacle is a box or cabinet where the ciborium holding the Body of Christ is kept. The Body of Christ is so special that the tabernacle is kept locked. The sanctuary lamp is a red lamp with a candle in it. It is usually placed near the tabernacle. When the lamp is lit, it tells us that the Body of Christ is in the tabernacle. Tell children that the ciborium, tabernacle, and sanctuary lamp are all signs of the respect and reverence that the Body of Christ is due.	Like the chalice, the ciborium is made from a precious metal. The tabernacle can be made from a precious metal, stone, or wood.
3rd Moment	Print photograph of the tabernacle.	Ask children if they would like to see a picture of a tabernacle. Examine the photograph of a tabernacle together.	The tabernacle was fabricated in Limoges, France c. 1200. The style of the tabernacle is Gothic. It is currently on view in the Louvre Museum in Paris, France.
4th Moment		Ask children to share their reflections, using the questions provided as a guide.	
Activity	Print copies of the activity sheet. Have “The Lord Is My Shepherd” ready to play.	Have children draw the additional liturgical elements for the Mass. Play “The Lord Is My Shepherd.”	
Closing Prayer	Choose closing prayer.	Pray closing prayer.	

Tabernacle about the crucifixion of Jesus-Christ (c. 1200), Limoges, France. Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain

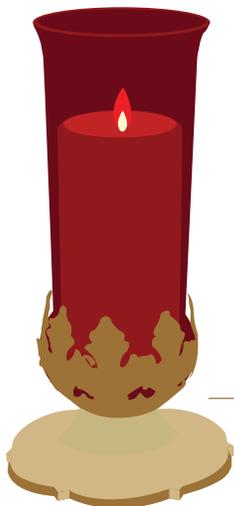




Ciborium



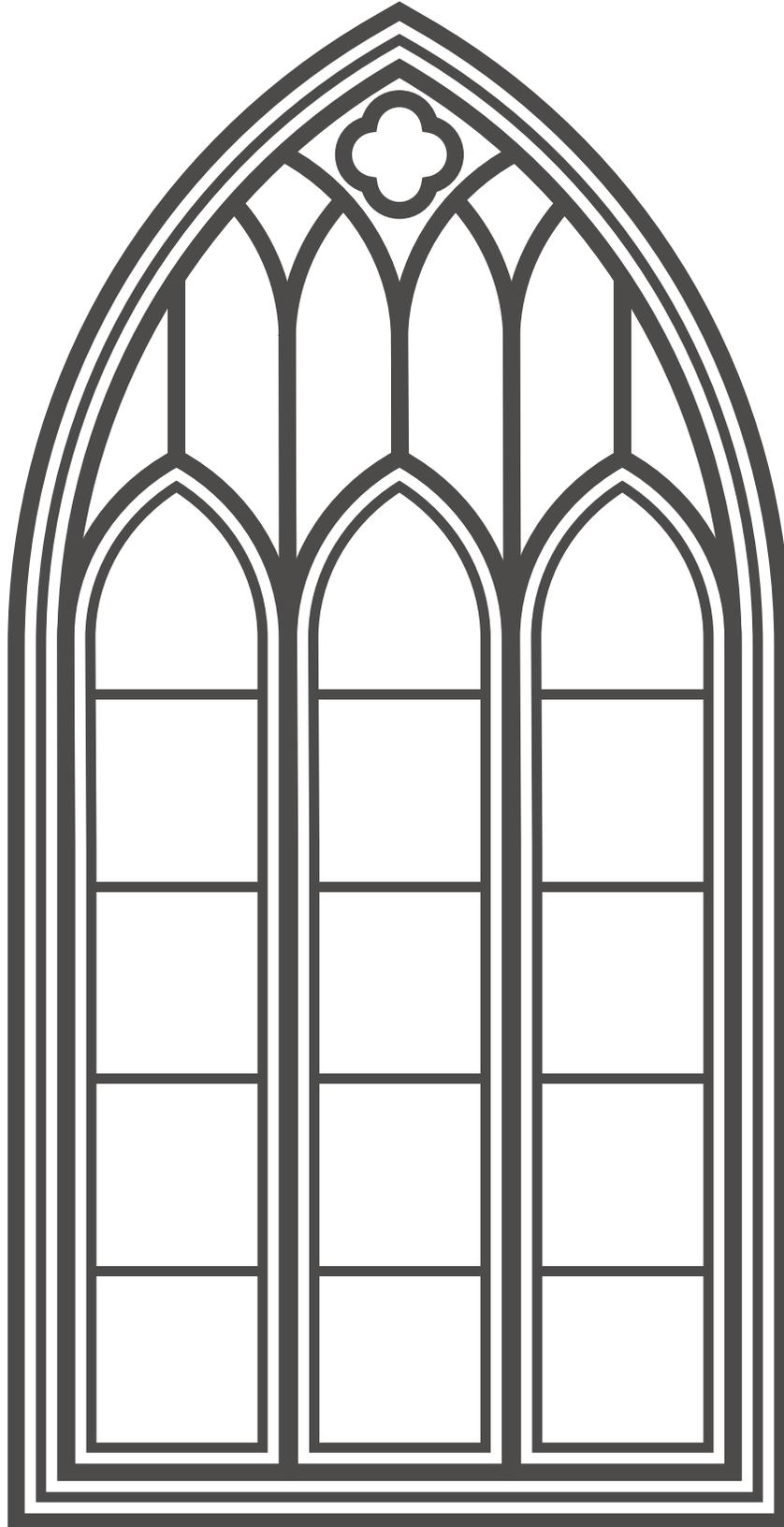
Tabernacle



Sanctuary Lamp

BONUS ACTIVITY

Inspired by the stained glass windows you see at your local Church, color this Window with colored pencils.





UNIT VI | Lesson Seventeen

WELCOMING CHILDREN TO SACRED SPACE

Vestments of the Priest

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce and make accessible the vestments worn by the priest during the Mass.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

- Bible
 - 11”x 17” white cardboard
 - Chart depicting and labeling the vestments of the priest
-

VOCABULARY

Alb	a white robe that reaches to the ankles
Amice	a rectangle of white cloth worn around the neck, crossed over the chest, and tied in back with two cloth ribbons
Cincture	a long cord tied around the waist of the alb
Chasuble	an outer garment worn over the alb and stole; its color varies with respect to the season or feast day
Stole	a long narrow band of cloth worn around the neck and over the front of the alb; its color varies with respect to the season or feast day

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Pray *lectio divina* using Mark 12:33.

GUIDING CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE

Print the chart depicting the vestments worn by the priest during the Mass onto the cardstock.

Remind the children that the priest wears special clothing called vestments during the Mass. Review the vestments from previous lessons, namely the alb and the chasuble.

Using the chart, name the alb. Explain that the alb, which is always white, symbolizes purity. Then name the cincture. The cincture is a long cord that is tied around the waist of the alb. It symbolizes self-discipline and reminds the priest that he should lead a holy life.

Then name the amice. The amice is a rectangle of white cloth worn around the neck, crossed over the chest, and tied in back with two cloth ribbons. Note that the amice is optional. Not every priest wears an amice, but for those who do, it is a symbol of God's protection from the devil.

Point to the stole. Explain that the stole is a long narrow band of fabric that is worn around the neck and over the front of the alb. It symbolizes the authority of the priest and his role as a mediator between God and his people. Its color depends on the season or feast day.

Review the chasuble. The chasuble is the outermost garment and therefore the most visible of the vestments. The chasuble is a symbol of charity and represents the willingness of the priest to take on the "yoke of Christ" and to serve God's people. Like the stole, its color depends on the season or feast day.

As before, we have provided a list of questions for your use with the children. You may, however, develop your own. For the activity, teach the children to sing "Holy, Holy, Holy" as a way to encourage the participation of the children in the Mass.¹

Notes

1. "The Meaning Behind the Church's Liturgical Fashion," St Faustina Catholic Church, <https://saintfaustinachurch.org/news/the-meaning-behind-the-churchs-liturgical-fashion>

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- > *Why does the priest wear special clothing when he celebrates the Mass?*
- > *What would it be like if the priest wore his regular clothes when he celebrated the Mass?*
- > *Does anyone else wear special clothing during the Mass?*

ACTIVITY

Teach children to sing **Holy, Holy, Holy** however it is sung in your parish.

You will want to revisit this activity throughout the course of the year.



HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Holy, holy, holy!
 Lord God Almighty
 Early in the morning
 Our song shall rise to Thee

Holy, holy, holy!
 Merciful and mighty
 God in three persons
 Blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy!
 Though the darkness hide Thee
 Though the eye of sinful man
 Thy glory may not see
 Only Thou art holy
 There is none beside Thee
 Perfect in power, in love and purity

Holy, holy, holy!
 Lord God Almighty
 All Thy works shall praise
 Thy name
 In earth and sky and sea

Holy, holy, holy!
 Merciful and mighty
 God in three persons
 Blessed Trinity
 Oh God in three persons
 Blessed Trinity!

SUMMARY LESSON PLAN

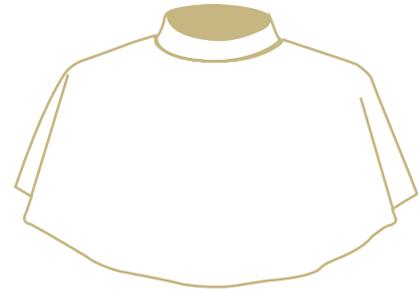
Lesson Seventeen: Welcoming Children to Sacred Space (*Vestments of the Priest*)

MATERIALS: Bible, 11"x17" cardstock, chart depicting and labeling the vestments of the priest

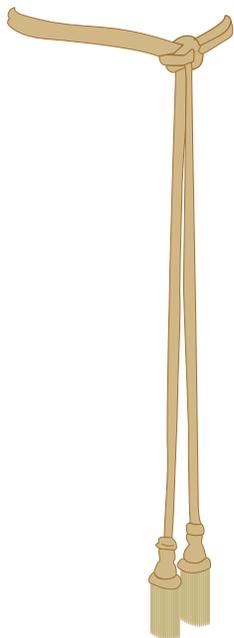
MOMENTS	PREPARATION	PRESENTATION/ACTIVITY	NOTES
Gathering and Prayer	Mark the passage from Mark 12:33 in your Bible.	Pray <i>lectio divina</i> : Mark 12:33.	
1st Moment		Remind children that the priest wears special clothing called vestments during the Mass. Review the items from the earlier lesson.	
2nd Moment	Print the chart depicting the vestments of the priest onto the cardstock.	Point to the chart. Identify the alb. The cincture is a long cord that is tied around the waist of the alb. The amice is a rectangle of white cloth worn around the neck, crossed over the chest, and tied in back with two cloth ribbons. Note that the amice is optional. The stole is a long narrow band of fabric that is worn around the neck and over the front of the alb. The chasuble is the outermost garment and most visible of the vestments.	The alb, which is always white, symbolizes purity. The cincture symbolizes self-discipline and reminds the priest that he should lead a holy life. The amice symbolizes God's protection from the devil. The stole symbolizes the authority of the priest and his role as a mediator between God and his people. Its color depends on the season or feast day. The chasuble symbolizes charity and represents the willingness of the priest to take on the "yoke of Christ" and to serve God's people. Like the stole, its color depends on the season or feast day.
3rd Moment		Ask children to share their reflections, using the questions provided as a guide.	
Activity		Teach children to sing "Holy, Holy, Holy" however it is sung in your parish.	
Closing Prayer	Choose closing prayer.	Pray closing prayer.	



Alb



Amice



Cincture



Chasuble



Stole



UNIT VI | Lesson Eighteen

WELCOMING CHILDREN TO SACRED SPACE

Altar Service

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce children to the role and responsibilities of the altar server.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

- Bible
-

VOCABULARY

Altar Server a boy or girl who is trained to assist the priest during the Mass

Altar Server Vestments an alb with cincture or cassock with surplice

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Pray *lectio divina* using James 3:17.

GUIDING CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE

Tell the children that an altar server is a boy or girl who is trained to assist the priest during Mass. An altar server must be mature enough to understand his or her duties and to carry them out well. An altar server will have made his or her First Holy Communion.¹ Some altar servers are only seven or eight years old!

Explain to the children that in addition to assisting the priest, the duties of an altar server require him or her to participate in the Mass in a special way. Overall, these duties may include:

- Lighting candles
- Participating in processions (carrying the processional cross, carrying the processional candles)
- Holding the book of the Lectionary that contains readings from the Bible, the Word of God.
- Preparing the altar
- Assisting the priest with the preparation of the gifts
- Ringing the consecration bells
- Responding to prayers and readings
- Singing hymns and other chants
- Responding to additional cues from the priest²

Explain that altar servers guide the participation of the assembly at Mass. They show us when to sit, when to kneel, and when to stand. They also show us when to respond to the priest, when to pray in communion with the assembly, and when to sing or chant. Through the performance of their duties, altar servers are integral to the worship-life of the parish.

As before, we have provided a list of questions for your use with the children. You may, however, develop your own. For the activity, we end as we began—in the church. In coordination with your pastor or the person responsible for training altar servers in your parish, arrange for the children to view and participate in (depending upon age) the basic duties of altar servers.

Notes

1. "Guidelines for Altar Servers," United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/frequently-asked-questions/guidelines-for-altar-servers>.
2. "Sacred Roles: Understanding the Duties of Altar Servers," St. Jerome Church, January 15, 2024,
<https://www.saintjeromechurch.org/religious-education/sacred-roles-understanding-the-duties-of-altar-servers/>

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- > *How is the role of the altar server important?*
- > *How should an altar server perform his or her role?*
- > *Do you have to be a grown-up to be an altar server?*

ACTIVITY

In coordination with your pastor or the person responsible for training altar servers in your parish, arrange for the children to view and/or participate in the basic duties of altar servers, depending upon their age.



SUMMARY LESSON PLAN

Lesson Eighteen: Welcoming Children to Sacred Space (*Altar Service*)

MATERIALS: Bible

MOMENTS	PREPARATION	PRESENTATION/ACTIVITY	NOTES
Gathering and Prayer	Mark James 3:17 in your Bible.	Pray <i>lectio divina</i> : James 3:17.	
1st Moment		Tell children that an altar server is a boy or girl who is trained to assist the priest during the Mass.	An altar server must be mature enough to understand his or her duties and to carry them out well. An altar server will have made his or her First Holy Communion. Some altar servers are only seven or eight years old!
2nd Moment	Print copies of <i>Our Lady of Guadalupe</i> .	Explain that in addition to assisting the priest, the duties of an altar server require him or her to participate in the Mass in a special way. Describe the duties of an altar server.	Duties may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting candles • Carrying processional cross • Carrying processional candles • Holding book • Preparing altar • Assisting with the gifts • Ringing the bells • Responding to prayers and readings • Singing hymns and chants
3rd Moment		Point out that altar servers guide the participation of the assembly at Mass. Through the performance of their duties, altar servers are integral to the worship-life of the parish.	Altar servers show us when to sit, when to kneel, and when to stand. They show us when to respond, when to pray, and when to sing or chant.
4th Moment		Ask children to share their experience, using the questions provided as a guide.	
Activity		In coordination with your pastor or person responsible for training altar servers in your parish, arrange for children to view and participate in (depending upon age) the basic duties of altar servers.	
Closing Prayer	Choose closing prayer.	Pray closing prayer.	

BONUS ACTIVITY

Inspired by the stained glass windows you see at your local Church, color this Window with colored pencils.

