

My First Holy Communion

Catechism

Jesus gives himself to me in the Blessed Sacrament

For children preparing to receive the Body and Blood of Christ

My name:

My parish:

A note for parents, catechists and priests

This catechism is written for children of approximately seven to nine years of age who are preparing for First Holy Communion. It assumes that preparation for First Confession is complete and that sacramental Confession will precede First Holy Communion.

Pastoral principles

Faith before festivity. A child is preparing to receive Jesus Christ himself, not merely to take part in a family celebration.

Understanding according to capacity. A child need not use advanced theological language, but must distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food and receive with faith and devotion.

Confession first. Children who have reached the use of reason are to make sacramental Confession before First Holy Communion.

Reverence without fear. Worthy reception should be taught clearly without producing scrupulosity or making a child afraid of the merciful Lord.

Sunday worship. Preparation belongs within regular Sunday Mass, family prayer and the living practice of the parish.

How to use this book

The twelve lessons should be arranged at a convenient time for parent and child or mentor and family. Each lesson presents one central truth, a short explanation, a question to talk about, five catechism questions and answers, a prayer and a practical action. Children should first answer in their own words and then learn the short formal answer.

Practical directions for receiving Holy Communion must be rehearsed reverently and adapted to the approved practice of the parish. Parents should tell the parish priest well in advance about coeliac disease, swallowing difficulties, disability or another medical need; no one should improvise the Eucharistic elements or manner of reception.

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God Feeds His Children

REMEMBER God gives us natural food for the body and the Holy Eucharist as supernatural food for the soul.

God created us with a body and a soul. Food keeps the body alive, while grace gives the soul a share in God's own life. Because he loves us, God provides for both.

Baptism gives us new life in Christ, Confirmation strengthens that life, and the Holy Eucharist nourishes it. The Eucharist completes Christian initiation and is the source and summit of Christian life.

At Mass, Jesus gathers his Church, teaches us through his word, offers his one sacrifice to the Father and feeds us with himself. We prepare because this gift is holy beyond measure.

Talk About It: We need food to keep our bodies alive. What do you think our souls need in order to grow in friendship with God?

(God gives natural food for bodily life and grace for supernatural life; in the Eucharist Christ himself nourishes the life begun in Baptism.)

Learn these answers

1. Why did God make us?

God made us to know him, love him and serve him in this life, and to be happy with him for ever in heaven.

2. What gives supernatural life to the soul?

Sanctifying grace gives the soul a share in God's own life.

3. Which sacrament nourishes the life of grace?

The Holy Eucharist nourishes the life of grace.

4. Why is the Eucharist the source and summit of Christian life?

Because Christ himself is present, offered and received in it, and every grace leads us to union with him.

5. Why do we prepare carefully for First Holy Communion?

Because we are preparing to receive Jesus Christ himself with faith, love and reverence.

PRAYER Father in heaven, thank you for giving me life and calling me to your table. Prepare my heart to receive your Son with faith and love. Amen.

THIS WEEK At Sunday Mass, notice the altar, the ambo and the tabernacle. Ask what each one is for.

The Passover, the Manna and the Bread of Life

REMEMBER God prepared his people for the Eucharist through the Passover, the manna and the promises of Jesus.

At the first Passover, God delivered Israel from slavery. A lamb was sacrificed, and the people ate the Passover meal before beginning their journey to freedom.

In the desert, God fed his people with manna from heaven. These gifts pointed forward to Jesus, the true Paschal Lamb and the true Bread from heaven.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). He promised to give himself for the life of the world. At the Last Supper and on the Cross, he fulfilled what the earlier signs had foretold.

Talk About It: God fed his people with manna while they travelled through the desert. How is our life like a journey, and what food does Jesus give us for it?

(God's earlier gifts prepared his people for something greater. Jesus is the true Bread from heaven and accompanies us on our journey towards heaven.)

Learn these answers

1. What did God do at the Passover?

God delivered his people from slavery and led them towards freedom.

2. What was the manna?

Manna was the food God gave Israel in the desert.

3. What did the Passover lamb point towards?

It pointed towards Jesus, the Lamb of God who saves us by his sacrifice.

4. Who is the true Bread from heaven?

Jesus Christ is the true Bread from heaven.

5. Where does Jesus teach about the Bread of Life?

Jesus teaches about the Bread of Life in the sixth chapter of Saint John's Gospel.

PRAYER Lord Jesus, Bread of Life and Lamb of God, lead me out of sin and nourish me on the journey to heaven. Amen.

THIS WEEK Read or listen to Exodus 12:1-14, Exodus 16:4-15 or John 6:32-40.

Jesus Institutes the Holy Eucharist

REMEMBER At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the Eucharist and commanded the Apostles to celebrate it in his memory.

On the night before he died, Jesus celebrated the Passover with his Apostles. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body." He took the chalice and declared it to be his Blood of the new covenant.

Jesus then commanded, "Do this in remembrance of me." He gave the Apostles and their successors the sacred ministry of celebrating the Eucharist.

The Last Supper, the Sacrifice of the Cross and every Mass belong to one mystery of Christ's saving love. The Eucharist is both the memorial of his sacrifice and the sacred banquet in which he gives himself to us.

Talk About It: At the Last Supper, Jesus didn't say, "This is a picture of my body." What did he say, and why does that matter?

(Jesus declared the bread to be his Body and the wine his Blood, and commanded the Apostles to continue celebrating the Eucharist.)

Learn these answers

1. When did Jesus institute the Holy Eucharist?

Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, on the night before he died.

2. What did Jesus take at the Last Supper?

Jesus took bread and a chalice of wine.

3. What did Jesus declare about the bread and wine?

He declared the bread to be his Body and the wine to be his Blood.

4. What command did Jesus give the Apostles?

Jesus commanded them to celebrate the Eucharist in remembrance of him.

5. Who can consecrate the Eucharist?

A validly ordained bishop or priest can consecrate the Eucharist.

PRAYER Lord Jesus, thank you for loving us to the end and giving the Church the Holy Eucharist. Help me to treasure your gift. Amen.

THIS WEEK Find the account of the Last Supper in Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-20 or 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

Jesus Is Truly Present

REMEMBER In the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus Christ is truly, really and substantially present: Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

After the consecration, what appears to be bread and wine is no longer ordinary bread and wine. The living and glorious Jesus is present whole and entire.

We do not believe this because our eyes can see the change. We believe because Jesus, who is Truth itself, has spoken, and because his Church has faithfully handed on his teaching from the Apostles.

The Eucharist is a sacred sign, but it is not merely a symbol. It contains the reality it signifies: Jesus Christ himself, who gives his Body and Blood for our salvation.

Talk About It: After the consecration, the Host still looks and tastes as it did before. So why do we believe it really is Jesus?

(Christian faith is not restricted to what our senses can discover. We believe the Real Presence because Christ, who is Truth, has spoken and the Church faithfully hands on his teaching.)

Learn these answers

1. Who is present in the Holy Eucharist?

Jesus Christ is present in the Holy Eucharist.

2. How is Jesus present?

Jesus is truly, really and substantially present.

3. What is present in the Blessed Sacrament?

The Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ are present.

4. Is the Eucharist merely a symbol of Jesus?

No. The Eucharist is a sacramental sign in which Jesus himself is truly present.

5. Why do we believe in the Real Presence?

We believe because Jesus has spoken and the Church faithfully teaches his words.

PRAYER Lord Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. Strengthen my faith and teach me to adore you. Amen.

THIS WEEK When you pass before the tabernacle, make a careful genuflection if you are able and say quietly, "My Lord and my God."

Transubstantiation

REMEMBER At the consecration, the whole substance of bread and wine becomes the Body and Blood of Christ, while the appearances remain.

Things have an underlying reality, what they are, and qualities our senses notice, such as colour, taste, weight and shape. The Church calls these outward qualities the appearances or species.

By the power of the Holy Spirit and the words of Christ spoken by the priest, the whole substance of bread is changed into Christ's Body and the whole substance of wine into his Blood. This change is called transubstantiation.

The appearances of bread and wine remain. Christ remains present as long as those appearances remain. He is whole and entire under either species and in every part after the host is broken.

Talk About It: What changes at the consecration, and what stays the same?

(Let the children wrestle with this one. Draw out the distinction carefully: what the bread and wine are changes; what our senses perceive remains. That change of the whole substance is what the Church calls transubstantiation.)

Learn these answers

1. What is transubstantiation?

It is the change of the whole substance of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

2. What remains after the consecration?

The appearances of bread and wine remain.

3. When does the change take place?

It takes place at the consecration by the power of the Holy Spirit and the words of Christ spoken by the priest.

4. How long does Christ remain present?

Christ remains present as long as the Eucharistic appearances remain.

5. Do we receive the whole Christ under the host alone?

Yes. Jesus is present whole and entire under either Eucharistic species.

PRAYER Jesus, eternal Truth, I believe what you have revealed. Help me to trust your word when my senses cannot see the mystery. Amen.

THIS WEEK Learn the word transubstantiation slowly: trans-sub-stan-ti-a-tion. Explain it in your own words.

Adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament

REMEMBER Because Jesus is truly present, we worship and adore the Blessed Sacrament during Mass and outside Mass.

Consecrated hosts are reserved in the tabernacle so that Holy Communion can be taken to the sick and so that the faithful may pray before the Lord. The sanctuary lamp indicates and honours his presence.

A genuflection is an act of adoration made by bending the right knee to the ground. Those who cannot genuflect may make another reverent gesture. Our silence, posture and attention should express faith.

We may visit Jesus in the tabernacle, adore him when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, receive Benediction and join Eucharistic processions. Adoration always leads us back to the Sacrifice of the Mass and to loving service.

Talk About It: Why do we genuflect towards the tabernacle rather than towards an ordinary chair, statue or table in the church?

(Our bodily action expresses what we believe. We adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament because Jesus himself is truly present there.)

Learn these answers

1. Where is the Blessed Sacrament reserved?

The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the tabernacle.

2. What does the sanctuary lamp tell us?

It indicates and honours the presence of Christ in the tabernacle.

3. Why do Catholics genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament?

They genuflect to adore Jesus Christ, who is truly present.

4. May we worship the Eucharist outside Mass?

Yes. The Church worships Christ in the Eucharist during Mass and outside Mass.

5. What is Benediction?

Benediction is a service of adoration in which a priest or deacon blesses the people with the Blessed Sacrament.

PRAYER O Sacrament most holy, O Sacrament divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine. Amen.

THIS WEEK Make a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament with your family and spend one quiet minute with Jesus.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

REMEMBER The Mass makes present sacramentally the one Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross; it is the same sacrifice offered in an unbloody manner.

On Calvary, Jesus offered himself once for all to the Father for our salvation. He rose from the dead and dies no more. His sacrifice is perfect and can never be repeated.

At Mass, the same Christ offers himself through the ministry of the priest. The Sacrifice of the Cross is made present sacramentally and its fruits are applied to the Church. Christ is not crucified again.

The Mass is offered to God alone for adoration and praise, thanksgiving, reparation for sin and petition for every need. The living and the faithful departed are remembered in Christ's one offering.

Talk About It: Jesus died on the Cross once. So when we say that the Mass is a sacrifice, does Jesus die again? What is happening instead?

(Draw out the distinction especially carefully: Calvary is not repeated. Christ's one perfect sacrifice is made sacramentally present at Mass; the victim and principal priest are the same, although the manner of offering differs.)

Learn these answers

1. What is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass?

The Mass is the sacrifice in which Christ makes present and offers sacramentally his one Sacrifice of the Cross.

2. Are the Mass and Calvary two different sacrifices?

No. They are one single sacrifice, differing in the manner of offering.

3. Does Jesus suffer and die again at Mass?

No. The risen Christ does not die again; his one sacrifice is made present in an unbloody manner.

4. Who is the principal priest and victim of the Mass?

Jesus Christ is both the principal priest who offers and the victim who is offered.

5. For what purposes is Mass offered?

Mass is offered for adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and petition.

PRAYER Eternal Father, I offer myself with Jesus in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Receive my prayer, work, joys and sufferings through him. Amen.

THIS WEEK At the elevation, look towards the Sacred Host and the chalice and adore Jesus in silence.

The Parts of the Mass

REMEMBER The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist form one act of worship, with rites that open and conclude the celebration.

The Introductory Rites gather us and prepare us. We make the Sign of the Cross, acknowledge our sins, praise God and pray together.

In the Liturgy of the Word, God speaks through Sacred Scripture. We listen to the readings and homily, profess the Creed on Sundays and solemnities, and pray for the Church and the world.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the gifts are prepared and the Eucharistic Prayer is offered. The Communion Rite prepares us to receive Christ. The Concluding Rites bless and send us to live the Gospel.

Talk About It: Think about the Mass we have just celebrated. Can you remember one moment when God was speaking to us, and one moment when the Church was offering worship to God?

(Scripture and the homily in the Liturgy of the Word, and the Church's thanksgiving and offering in the Liturgy of the Eucharist.)

Learn these answers

1. What are the two principal parts of the Mass?

They are the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

2. What happens in the Liturgy of the Word?

God speaks to us in Scripture, and the Church responds in faith and prayer.

3. What happens in the Liturgy of the Eucharist?

The gifts are prepared, the Eucharistic Prayer is offered and Christ becomes present in the consecrated species.

4. What is the high point of the Eucharistic Prayer?

The consecration is the high point, within the whole prayer of thanksgiving and offering.

5. What do the Concluding Rites do?

They bless and send us to love God and serve our neighbour.

PRAYER Holy Spirit, help me to listen to God's word, unite myself to Christ's offering and take part in Mass with faith. Amen.

THIS WEEK Use Appendix A at Sunday Mass and mark each part as it happens.

Offering Ourselves with Jesus

REMEMBER At Mass, the baptised unite their lives, prayers, work, joys and sufferings with the perfect offering of Christ.

The priest acts in the person of Christ the Head, but the whole Church participates in the Mass. Each person takes part according to his or her place and calling.

We participate inwardly by faith, attention, prayer and self-offering, and outwardly by listening, answering, singing, keeping silence and using the Church's gestures. Active participation begins in the heart.

At the preparation of the gifts, we may place our whole life spiritually on the altar. United with Jesus, even small duties, sacrifices and acts of love can be offered to the Father.

Talk About It: When the bread and wine are carried to the altar, what could you silently place there with them from your own life?

(Children might suggest schoolwork, someone they love, something difficult, a worry, an act of kindness, their family, etc. Draw out that participation at Mass is interior as well as exterior: we unite our lives with Christ's perfect offering.)

Learn these answers

1. Who celebrates the Eucharistic liturgy?

Christ and his Church celebrate the Eucharistic liturgy.

2. How does the priest act at Mass?

The priest acts sacramentally in the person of Christ the Head.

3. How do the faithful participate inwardly?

They participate through faith, attention, prayer and self-offering.

4. How do the faithful participate outwardly?

They listen, answer, sing, keep silence and use the Church's gestures reverently.

5. What may we offer with Jesus?

We may offer our prayers, work, joys, sufferings and our whole lives.

PRAYER Father, through Jesus your Son, receive all that I am and all that I do. May my life become an offering of love. Amen.

THIS WEEK Before Mass, choose one joy, difficulty or person to place spiritually on the altar with the gifts.

Preparing to Receive Worthily

REMEMBER We prepare for Holy Communion with Catholic faith, a soul in the state of grace, the Eucharistic fast and reverent attention.

A child preparing for First Holy Communion must have sufficient knowledge, understand the mystery of Christ according to his or her capacity and be able to receive the Body of Christ with faith and devotion. Anyone conscious of mortal sin must receive sacramental absolution before Holy Communion. First sacramental Confession must precede First Holy Communion. If a child is unsure, the child may ask a parent, catechist or priest without fear.

The Eucharistic fast means taking no food or drink for at least one hour before receiving Holy Communion; water and medicine do not break the fast. We also prepare by prayer, suitable dress, forgiveness and arriving in good time.

Talk About It: If Holy Communion really is Jesus, what are some ways our preparation should show that we know whom we are going to receive?

(State of grace, Confession when necessary, the Eucharistic fast, prayer, forgiveness, arriving in good time and attentive participation. These aren't arbitrary rules; they express faith in the holiness of the One we receive.)

Learn these answers

1. What must a child understand before First Holy Communion?

The child must distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food and receive with faith and devotion.

2. What is the state of grace?

It is friendship with God and the possession of sanctifying grace.

3. What must someone conscious of mortal sin do before Communion?

The person must receive sacramental absolution before receiving Holy Communion.

4. What is the Eucharistic fast?

It is abstaining from food and drink for at least one hour before Communion, except for water and medicine.

5. How else should we prepare?

We should pray, forgive others, dress suitably, arrive in good time and take part attentively in Mass.

PRAYER Come, Holy Spirit. Give me faith, a clean heart, loving desire and reverence as I prepare to receive Jesus. Amen.

THIS WEEK With an adult, work out when the one-hour fast begins for the usual time of Communion in your parish.

Receiving Holy Communion Reverently

REMEMBER We approach in faith, receive according to the Church's approved practice, answer "Amen" and consume the Sacred Host immediately.

Follow the Communion procession calmly and prayerfully. In England and Wales, Holy Communion is normally received standing, though an individual may kneel. When receiving standing, make a reverent bow before the Sacrament. The minister shows the host and says, "The Body of Christ." Look towards the Sacred Host and answer clearly, "Amen," expressing your faith. Receive either on the tongue or, where permitted, in the hand, according to your choice and the approved practice.

Consume the whole Sacred Host immediately and reverently. Never carry it away or pass it to another person. If there is any difficulty, remain calm and follow the minister's help. Return to your place and pray in thanksgiving.

Talk About It: When the minister says "The Body of Christ" and you answer "Amen", what are you actually saying yes to?

("I believe." The child's Amen is a profession of faith that the One being received is truly Christ. Then connect that belief with reverent approach, reception, immediate consumption of the Host and thanksgiving.)

Learn these answers

1. How should we approach Holy Communion?

We should approach calmly, prayerfully and reverently.

2. What does the minister say?

The minister says, "The Body of Christ."

3. What do we answer?

We answer, "Amen," expressing our faith in Christ's Real Presence.

4. How may the Sacred Host be received?

It may be received on the tongue or, where permitted, in the hand.

5. What must we do after receiving the Sacred Host?

We must consume it immediately and return to our place for thanksgiving.

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

THIS WEEK Practise the Communion procession and the approved manner of reception with your catechist or parent, using an unconsecrated practice host.

Thanksgiving and a Eucharistic Life

REMEMBER Holy Communion unites us more closely to Christ, strengthens charity, cleanses venial sins and gives a pledge of heaven.

After receiving Holy Communion, Jesus is sacramentally present within us while the Eucharistic species remain. This is a precious time for silent adoration, thanksgiving, self-offering and petition.

Holy Communion increases our union with Christ, strengthens sanctifying grace and charity, forgives venial sins, helps preserve us from grave sin and deepens the unity of the Church. It is food for our journey and a pledge of eternal life.

A Eucharistic life continues after Mass. We keep Sunday holy, receive Communion frequently when properly disposed, return regularly to Confession, adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and recognise him in people who need our love.

Talk About It: If receiving Jesus in Holy Communion brings us closer to him, what difference should that make to the way we treat people after we leave church?

(Communion isn't finished when Mass ends. Union with Christ should bear fruit in worship, charity, forgiveness, service and love of neighbour.)

Learn these answers

1. What should we do after receiving Holy Communion?

We should adore Jesus, thank him, offer ourselves and ask for the graces we need.

2. What is the chief fruit of Holy Communion?

The chief fruit is a closer union with Jesus Christ.

3. Does Holy Communion forgive mortal sin?

No. Holy Communion presupposes the state of grace; mortal sin is forgiven through sacramental Confession.

4. What sins does Holy Communion cleanse?

Holy Communion cleanses venial sins and helps preserve us from grave sin.

5. How do we live a Eucharistic life?

We worship faithfully, remain close to the sacraments and give ourselves in love to God and neighbour.

PRAYER Lord Jesus, remain with me by your grace. Make my heart like yours and teach me to become a gift of love for others. Amen.

THIS WEEK Choose one regular practice: thanksgiving after Communion, a weekly visit to the tabernacle or a monthly Confession.

Appendix A - A Child's Guide to the Mass

The Mass has two principal parts - the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist - joined so closely that they form one act of worship. Introductory and Concluding Rites open and close the celebration.

Part	What happens	How I take part
Introductory Rites	Entrance, Sign of the Cross and greeting	Stand and join the procession hymn. Make the Sign of the Cross carefully and answer the greeting.
Introductory Rites	Penitential Act, Kyrie, Gloria and Collect	Acknowledge your sins, ask mercy, praise God and unite your prayer to the Collect.
Liturgy of the Word	Readings, psalm and Gospel	Listen for what God is saying. Join the psalm and Gospel acclamations.
Liturgy of the Word	Homily, Creed and Universal Prayer	Listen, profess the Catholic faith and pray for the Church and the world.
Liturgy of the Eucharist	Preparation of the gifts	Offer yourself and your whole life with the bread and wine placed on the altar.
Liturgy of the Eucharist	Eucharistic Prayer	Listen in reverent silence and unite yourself to the Church's thanksgiving and offering.
Liturgy of the Eucharist	Epiclesis and consecration	Kneel according to local practice. Adore Christ as the host and chalice are shown.
Liturgy of the Eucharist	Memorial, intercessions and doxology	Remember Christ's saving work, pray with the Church and answer the Great Amen.
Communion Rite	Our Father, Sign of Peace and Lamb of God	Pray for daily bread and forgiveness, offer peace soberly and ask the Lamb of God for mercy.
Communion Rite	Invitation and Holy Communion	Pray the act of humility, process reverently, receive if properly disposed and give thanks.
Concluding Rites	Blessing and dismissal	Receive the blessing and accept the mission to glorify God by your life.

Appendix B

My First Holy Communion Step by Step

Step	What happens	What I do
1	Prepare	Make a good Confession beforehand. Keep the Eucharistic fast. Pray and arrive in good time.
2	Take part	Join the whole Mass with attention, responses, singing, silence and reverent posture.
3	Adore	At the consecration and elevation, adore Jesus truly present in the Sacred Host and Precious Blood.
4	Approach	Join the Communion procession calmly. Make the approved sign of reverence.
5	Profess faith	When the minister says, "The Body of Christ," answer clearly, "Amen."
6	Receive	Receive on the tongue or, where permitted, in the hand. Consume the Sacred Host immediately.
7	Give thanks	Return quietly to your place. Adore, thank, offer and ask. Join the Prayer after Communion.
8	Live the gift	Let friendship with Jesus shape your prayer, choices, service and love of neighbour.

IF I AM UNSURE I may remain in my place or approach with my arms crossed for a blessing if that is the parish practice. I should never receive merely because other people are receiving.

A simple practice dialogue

Minister: The Body of Christ.

Child: Amen.

Child: Receives and consumes the Sacred Host immediately, then returns reverently to pray.

Appendix C

Prayers Before and After Holy Communion

Before Mass

PRAY Come, Holy Spirit. Open my mind to God's word, unite my heart to the offering of Jesus and prepare me to receive him with faith. Amen.

Act of Faith

PRAY Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that you are truly, really and substantially present in the Blessed Sacrament: Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

Act of Adoration

PRAY My Lord and my God, I adore you with the angels and saints. You are my Creator, my Saviour and my King.

Act of Contrition

PRAY O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, and by the help of your grace I will not sin again. Amen.

Act of Humility

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

Act of Desire

PRAY Come, Lord Jesus. I long to receive you with faith and love. Take possession of my heart and make it entirely yours.

Thanksgiving

PRAY Lord Jesus, I adore you and thank you for giving yourself to me. Keep me close to you and never let me be separated from you. Amen.

Offering after Communion

PRAY Jesus, I offer you my body and soul, my thoughts and words, my work and play, my joys and sufferings. Use them for your glory.

Petition after Communion

PRAY Merciful Jesus, bless my family, my parish, those who suffer and those who have asked for my prayers. Give us the grace to love you faithfully.

Anima Christi

PRAY Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me. O good Jesus, hear me. Within your wounds hide me. Permit me not to be separated from you. From the wicked enemy defend me. At the hour of my death call me, and bid me come to you, that with your saints I may praise you for ever and ever. Amen.

Spiritual Communion

PRAY Lord Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament. Since I cannot receive you sacramentally now, come spiritually into my heart. Unite me to yourself and keep me faithful. Amen.

NOTE Spiritual Communion is a prayer of desire. It does not replace sacramental Communion or the Sunday obligation when a person is able to attend Mass.

Appendix D

Summary Catechism

These questions gather the essential answers from the lessons. Children should understand the meaning before being asked to remember the wording.

1. Why did God make us?

God made us to know him, love him and serve him in this life, and to be happy with him for ever in heaven.

2. What is sanctifying grace?

Sanctifying grace is the gift that gives us a share in God's life and makes us his children.

3. What is the Holy Eucharist?

The sacrament in which Jesus Christ is truly present, offered and received under the appearances of bread and wine.

4. When did Jesus institute the Eucharist?

At the Last Supper, on the night before he died.

5. What did Jesus declare about the bread and wine?

He declared the bread to be his Body and the wine to be his Blood.

6. Who can consecrate the Eucharist?

A validly ordained bishop or priest.

7. Who is present in the Blessed Sacrament?

Jesus Christ is truly, really and substantially present.

8. What of Christ is present?

His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity: the whole Christ.

9. Is the Eucharist merely a symbol?

No. It is a sacramental sign in which Jesus himself is truly present.

10. What is transubstantiation?

The change of the whole substance of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

11. What remains after the consecration?

The appearances of bread and wine remain.

12. How long does Christ remain present?

As long as the Eucharistic appearances remain.

13. Is the whole Christ present under either species?

Yes. The whole Christ is present under either species and in every part.

14. Why do we adore the Blessed Sacrament?

Because Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is present.

15. Where is the Blessed Sacrament reserved?

In the tabernacle.

16. What is the Mass?

The sacrifice in which Christ makes present and offers sacramentally his one Sacrifice of the Cross.

17. Are Mass and Calvary one sacrifice?

Yes. The victim and principal priest are the same; only the manner of offering differs.

18. Does Jesus die again at Mass?

No. His one sacrifice is made present in an unbloody manner.

19. For what purposes is Mass offered?

For adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and petition.

20. What are the two principal parts of Mass?

The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

21. How do the faithful participate?

By faith, attention, prayer, responses, silence and offering themselves with Christ.

22. What must a child understand before First Communion?

The child must distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food and receive with faith and devotion.

23. What must precede First Holy Communion?

Proper preparation and sacramental Confession must precede it.

24. Who may receive Holy Communion worthily?

A Catholic who is properly disposed and in the state of grace.

25. What must someone conscious of mortal sin do?

Receive sacramental absolution before Holy Communion.

26. What is the Eucharistic fast?

No food or drink for at least one hour before Communion, except water and medicine.

27. What does the minister say?

The minister says, "The Body of Christ."

28. What does the communicant answer?

The communicant answers, "Amen."

29. What is the chief fruit of Holy Communion?

A closer union with Jesus Christ.

30. How should we live after Communion?

In faithful worship, charity, frequent Confession, adoration and love of neighbour.

Appendix E

Readiness Guide for Parents and Catechists

Readiness is not perfect memory or mature theological language. A child should show sufficient understanding according to his or her capacity, distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food, desire to receive Jesus and be able to participate with faith and devotion.

Area	What readiness looks like	Ready
Jesus Christ	The child knows that Jesus is the eternal Son of God made man, who died and rose for us.	☐
Real Presence	The child believes that the consecrated Eucharist is truly Jesus Christ, not ordinary bread or merely a symbol.	☐
Mass as sacrifice	The child understands simply that Mass makes present Christ's one Sacrifice of the Cross.	☐
Sacramental disposition	The child has made First Confession, understands the state of grace and knows to seek help when unsure.	☐
Eucharistic fast	The child can observe the one-hour fast with appropriate adult support.	☐
Practical reception	The child can join the procession, make the approved sign of reverence, answer "Amen," receive and consume the host reverently.	☐
Prayer and thanksgiving	The child can take part in Mass and pray simply before and after Communion.	☐
Pastoral judgement	Parents, catechists and the parish priest have had a reasonable opportunity to support the child and make needed adaptations.	☐

Pastoral and safeguarding note

Preparation must respect each child's dignity and capacity. A disability, learning difference or medical need does not by itself prevent reception. Reasonable adaptations should be arranged with the family and parish priest. Children should never be shamed, frightened, publicly tested or pressured to receive.

CANONICAL NOTE Children who have reached the use of reason are to receive proper preparation and sacramental Confession before First Holy Communion.

Sources and doctrinal references

Sacred Scripture. References are given throughout. Short quotations follow the English Standard Version - Catholic Edition.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Nos. 1322-1419 on the Sacrament of the Eucharist, especially 1362-1381 on sacrifice and Real Presence and 1382-1405 on Communion and its fruits.

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Questions 271-294 on the Eucharist.

Code of Canon Law. Canons 897-923, especially 913-919 on children, disposition, Confession and the Eucharistic fast; canon 827 on catechetical publications.

General Instruction of the Roman Missal. Current edition for England and Wales, especially nos. 28, 160-161 and 274.

Joseph Deharbe, S.J.. A Full Catechism of the Catholic Religion, English translation by John Fander (London, 1863), especially pp. 259-277.

Doctrinal standard

Where local practice or terminology differs, the approved liturgical books, diocesan policy and the directions of the parish priest govern practical preparation. No text in this draft should be interpreted contrary to the Catechism of the Catholic Church or the competent ecclesiastical authority.