MY FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Catechism

Jesus gives himself to me

Twelve gentle conversations for children aged 7–9

With a parent, carer or parish mentor · No lesson preparation needed

My name _____

St Mary's · St John Bosco · St Edward's

To the adult sharing this book

You do not need teaching experience or a prepared lesson. Read the teaching aloud and use the questions and answers provided.

You need only this book. The opening activities use conversation, imagination or simple movements. No printing, craft materials or internet searches are required. The twelve numbered titles also match the parish Activity & Conversation Companion, if you wish to use the two together.

Begin with one conversation. Around ten to fifteen minutes may be enough. Stop sooner if the child becomes tired. You can continue another day.

For each conversation:

1. Ask the opening question and listen.
2. Read the teaching slowly.
3. Use the questions to check understanding.
4. Read the short answer to remember.
5. Pray together.
6. Choose the simple practical step.

The suggested answers show the meaning to look for. The child may express that meaning in different words. If an answer is mistaken, explain the point kindly and try again together.

The child may answer by speaking, pointing, signing or another suitable way. Reading and writing ability are not tests of readiness for Holy Communion.

The parish priest guides preparation and discerns readiness with the family. This book is for a baptised Catholic child preparing for First Holy Communion. Preparation for First Confession should also be completed, and the child should make First Confession before First Holy Communion.

Parents remain present and involved when a mentor works with their child.

A useful opening prayer for every conversation

> Jesus, help us to listen, understand and love you.
> Be with us as we learn together.
> Amen.

If a question arises which you cannot answer

Say:

> “That is a good question. Let us ask Father.”

You do not need to invent an answer.

A welcome for the child

You are preparing for something wonderful.

You are preparing to receive Jesus in Holy Communion.

Jesus knows you. He loves you. He wants you to know him, love him and live close to him.

You may have many questions. You may feel excited. You may feel a little nervous. You can talk about all these things.

You do not have to understand everything at once.

We will learn together, pray together and discover what Jesus gives us in the Holy Eucharist.

The twelve conversations

01 God Feeds His Children

02 The Passover, the Manna and the Bread of Life

03 Jesus Institutes the Holy Eucharist

04 Jesus Is Truly Present

05 Transubstantiation

06 Adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament

07 The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

08 The Parts of the Mass

09 Offering Ourselves with Jesus

10 Preparing to Receive Worthily

11 Receiving Holy Communion Reverently

12 Thanksgiving and a Eucharistic Life

Then: a Mass guide, prayers, a day-of guide and gentle review.

CONVERSATION 01 / 12

God Feeds His Children

> **THE IMPORTANT TRUTH**
> In Holy Communion, Jesus nourishes the life of grace in us.

Begin together

Ask:

> "What happens when we have not eaten for a long time?"

Let the child answer.

Help if needed: we become hungry and may feel weak or tired. Food helps our bodies live and grow.

Read together

God made you and loves you.

You have a body and a soul. Your body and soul belong together: together they make you the person you are.

Your body needs food, water and rest.

God also gives you something that ordinary food cannot give. He gives you a share in his own life. This wonderful gift is called **grace**.

At Baptism, God washed away sin and gave you new life as his child. You became a member of the Church, the family of God.

God made us to know, love and serve him, and to share his happiness in heaven. Baptism begins the life of grace; Confirmation strengthens it; Holy Communion nourishes it. Together these are called the sacraments of Christian initiation.

The Church calls the Eucharist the **source and summit** of Christian life. It is our greatest act of worship: Jesus is present, offered and received here, and he feeds our life with God.

God wants this life of grace to grow.

He helps us through prayer, through his teaching and through the sacraments.

A **sacrament** is a special sign given by Jesus through which he truly gives us his grace. In Baptism, for example, we see water being poured, while God gives the new life we cannot see.

In the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, Jesus gives us himself.

When we receive him in Holy Communion, he brings us closer to himself and helps us grow in love.

That is why we call the Eucharist food for our souls.

Our souls do not chew and swallow food as our bodies do. We mean that Jesus strengthens the life of grace in us.

We prepare carefully because the gift we will receive is Jesus himself.

Talk and understand

What is grace?

Grace is God’s gift that helps us live with him. Sanctifying grace gives us a share in his own life.

When did we first receive this new life?

At Baptism.

Who comes to us in Holy Communion?

Jesus himself.

Does receiving Holy Communion mean that we will never have to try to do good again?

No. Jesus helps us, and we must welcome his help and choose to follow him.

Remember

> **Who nourishes our life of grace in Holy Communion?**
> Jesus nourishes our life of grace by giving us himself.

Pray together

> Dear Jesus,
> thank you for loving me.
> Help me to grow in your grace
> and prepare to receive you.
> Amen.

One small step

Before bed, say:

> “Jesus, help me to live as God’s child.”

CONVERSATION 02 / 12

The Passover, the Manna and the Bread of Life

> **THE IMPORTANT TRUTH**
> God prepared his people for the gift of Jesus.

Begin together

Ask:

> “If we were going on a long journey, what would we need?”

Accept ordinary answers such as food, water, directions and someone to help.

Say:

> “Today we will hear about God helping his people on a journey.”

Read together

Long before Jesus was born, God’s people were slaves in Egypt.

They were treated cruelly. They could not simply leave.

God heard their cries and sent Moses to lead them to freedom.

Before they left, God told the families to prepare a special meal. A lamb was sacrificed, and its blood marked their doorways. God protected his people and brought them out of slavery.

This rescue is remembered at **Passover**.

Later, as the people travelled through the desert, they became hungry.

God gave them food called **manna**. They gathered it and ate it. God was teaching them to trust his care.

These events helped prepare people to understand Jesus.

The Passover lamb points towards Jesus, who gives his life to save us from sin. That is why we call Jesus the **Lamb of God**.

The manna points towards the greater food Jesus would give.

Jesus called himself the **Bread of Life**.

He came to give us more than food for our bodies. He came to give us life with God.

In the Eucharist, Jesus gives us himself as food for our journey towards heaven.

Talk and understand

What did God rescue his people from in Egypt?

Slavery.

What was manna?

Food God gave his people in the desert.

Why do we call Jesus the Lamb of God?

Because he gives his life to save us from sin.

Who is the Bread of Life?

Jesus.

Remember

> **Who is the Bread of Life?**
> Jesus is the Bread of Life, who gives himself to us.

Pray together

> Jesus, Bread of Life,
> thank you for caring for your people.
> Help me to trust you
> and follow you towards heaven.
> Amen.

One small step

At Mass, listen for the words **"Lamb of God."** Remember that we are praying to Jesus.

Bible background for the adult: Exodus 12; Exodus 16; John 6. The teaching needed for this conversation is supplied above.

CONVERSATION 03 / 12

Jesus Institutes the Holy Eucharist

> **THE IMPORTANT TRUTH**
> Jesus gave us the Eucharist at the Last Supper.

Begin together

Ask:

> “What is a special meal you remember sharing with other people?”

Listen, then say:

> “Today we will hear about the meal Jesus shared with his Apostles before he died.”

Read together

Jesus is the Son of God.

He became truly human and lived among us. He taught people, healed the sick, forgave sins and showed us the Father’s love.

He chose the Apostles to be especially close to him and to continue his work.

On the night before he died, Jesus gathered with them for a meal. We call this the **Last Supper**.

During the meal, Jesus took bread and gave thanks.

He gave it to his Apostles, saying that it was his Body.

Then he took a cup of wine and gave it to them, saying that it was his Blood of the new covenant. A covenant is a lasting bond with God.

Jesus told them to do this in memory of him. At Mass his saving gift is made present; we do not merely think back to a meal long ago.

He was giving his Church the Holy Eucharist.

The next day, Jesus freely gave his life on the Cross to save us from sin. On the third day, he rose from the dead.

Jesus is alive for ever.

At Mass, the Church does what Jesus commanded at the Last Supper.

Jesus works through the priest. Through Christ’s words and the power of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine become his Body and Blood.

Only an ordained bishop or priest can consecrate the Eucharist. This ministry is received through the sacrament of Holy Orders.

We cannot make the Eucharist ourselves by repeating words over food. It is Jesus who acts through the ministry he has given to his Church.

Talk and understand

When did Jesus give us the Eucharist?

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

What did Jesus give his Apostles under the appearances of bread and wine?

His Body and Blood.

What happened after Jesus died?

He rose from the dead.

Who acts through the priest at Mass?

Jesus.

Remember

> **When did Jesus institute the Holy Eucharist?**
> Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper.

Explain that **institute** means “establish” or “give us something to continue.”

Pray together

> Lord Jesus,
> thank you for the Last Supper,
> for your love on the Cross
> and for rising from the dead.
> Thank you for giving us the Eucharist.
> Amen.

One small step

At the next Mass, listen carefully when the priest recalls what Jesus did at the Last Supper.

Bible background: Luke 22:14–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26.

CONVERSATION 04 / 12

Jesus Is Truly Present

> **THE IMPORTANT TRUTH**
> The Holy Eucharist is truly Jesus.

Begin together

Ask:

> "Is a photograph of someone the same as having that person with us?"

Help if needed: a photograph shows us what someone looks like, but the photograph is not the person.

Read together

A photograph can remind us of someone we love.

The Eucharist is much more than a reminder of Jesus.

Jesus himself is truly present.

Before the consecration at Mass, there is bread and wine.

After the consecration, what looks like bread is the Body of Christ, and what looks like wine is the Blood of Christ.

Consecration is the name we use for this holy change within the Eucharistic Prayer.

Our eyes still see the appearances of bread and wine.

But Jesus has told us what he gives, and we trust him. He is the Son of God and always speaks the truth.

We call this the **Real Presence**. The Church says that Jesus is truly, really and substantially present: he himself is here, not just a thought or reminder.

Jesus is present with his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

This means the whole Jesus is present.

His **divinity** means that he is God. Jesus is truly God and truly human.

When you receive the Sacred Host, you receive the whole Jesus. You do not receive only one part of him.

You receive the same living Jesus who was born of Mary, died for us and rose again.

You may feel happy and peaceful when you receive him. You may feel very ordinary.

Jesus' presence does not depend on how you feel.

He is faithful to his promise.

Talk and understand

Is the Eucharist only a reminder of Jesus?

No. Jesus himself is truly present.

What do we mean by the Real Presence?

Jesus is really present in the Holy Eucharist.

Do we receive only a part of Jesus in the Sacred Host?

No. We receive the whole Jesus.

If we do not feel anything unusual, is Jesus still present?

Yes.

Remember

> **Who is present in the Holy Eucharist?**
> Jesus Christ is truly present: Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

Pray together

> Jesus,
> I believe that you are truly present
> in the Holy Eucharist.
> Help me to trust your words
> and love you more.
> Amen.

One small step

When the priest shows the Sacred Host at Mass, pray quietly:

> “Jesus, I believe in you.”

CONVERSATION 05 / 12

Transubstantiation

> **THE IMPORTANT TRUTH**
> What the bread and wine are changes; their appearances remain.

Begin together

Ask:

> "What can our senses tell us about food?"

Help if needed: we can notice its colour, shape, smell, taste and how it feels.

Say:

> "Our senses tell us many things. Today we will learn about something they cannot discover on their own."

Read together

At Mass, something wonderful happens which our eyes cannot see.

The bread becomes the Body of Christ.

The wine becomes the Blood of Christ.

They still look, taste and feel as they did before.

The Church has a special word for this change:

Transubstantiation.

You can say it slowly:

Tran-sub-stan-shee-ay-shun.

You do not have to say the long word perfectly to understand the important truth.

The Church calls what something really is its **substance**. At the consecration, by the power of the Holy Spirit and Jesus' words spoken by the priest, the whole substance of bread and wine changes into Christ's Body and Blood. The appearances, also called **species**, remain.

Jesus is not hiding inside ordinary bread.

The bread itself has been changed.

Nor is it simply a case of us thinking about bread differently. Jesus truly acts.

After the consecration, we call the consecrated bread the **Sacred Host**. A host is the small piece of bread used at Mass; after consecration it is truly Christ's Body.

We also call the Eucharist the **Blessed Sacrament**.

When the Sacred Host is broken, Jesus is not hurt or divided into pieces.

The whole Jesus is present under either appearance: what looks like bread or what looks like wine. He is also whole in every part of the Sacred Host.

Jesus remains present for as long as the appearances of bread or wine remain. That is why we treat the Blessed Sacrament with such care, both during Mass and afterwards.

Talk and understand

What changes at the consecration?

What the bread and wine are. They become Christ's Body and Blood.

What remains the same?

Their appearances: what our senses notice.

Is Jesus simply hiding inside ordinary bread?

No. The bread has truly become his Body.

Is Jesus hurt when the Sacred Host is broken?

No. The whole living Jesus is present in each part.

Remember

> **What is transubstantiation?**
> It is the change of bread and wine into Christ's Body and Blood, while their appearances remain.

Pray together

> Jesus,
> some things are too wonderful
> for my eyes to discover.
> Help me to believe what you teach
> and receive your gifts with love.
> Amen.

One small step

Tell someone at home:

> "At Mass, what the bread and wine are changes, although their appearances stay the same."

For the adult: Avoid demonstrations with hidden objects, disguises or food colouring. These suggest a different kind of change.

CONVERSATION 06 / 12

Adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament

> **THE IMPORTANT TRUTH**
> We adore the Blessed Sacrament because Jesus is truly present.

Begin together

Ask:

> “How can our bodies show someone that we are listening or that we respect them?”

Accept answers such as facing them, being still or listening carefully.

Read together

Because Jesus is God, we worship him.

One word for this worship is **adoration**.

Adoration means recognising God’s greatness and offering him our love and worship.

We adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament because he is truly present.

After Mass, Sacred Hosts are kept in a special place called the **tabernacle**.

They are kept so that Holy Communion can be taken to people who are sick and so that we can pray before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

A special lamp burns near the tabernacle when the Blessed Sacrament is reserved there. It is called the **sanctuary lamp**.

When we come before Jesus in the tabernacle, we normally **genuflect**. This means briefly bending the right knee to the ground.

It is a way of saying with our bodies:

“Jesus, you are my Lord. I adore you.”

If someone cannot kneel, they can show reverence in another suitable way. God knows their love.

Sometimes the Sacred Host is placed in a special holder called a **monstrance**, so that people can gather for adoration. At **Benediction**, a priest or deacon blesses the people with the Blessed Sacrament. Jesus may also be carried reverently in a Eucharistic procession. Adoration leads us back to Mass and to loving others.

You do not need many words when you pray before Jesus.

You can thank him, ask for help or simply remain quietly with him.

A short prayer said with love matters.

Talk and understand

Where is the Blessed Sacrament kept after Mass?

In the tabernacle.

Why do we genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament?

To adore Jesus, who is truly present.

Are we worshipping the metal or wood of the tabernacle?

No. We are worshipping Jesus.

What could you say to Jesus during a short visit?

Accept a simple prayer of love, thanks, sorrow or asking for help.

Remember

> **Why do we adore the Blessed Sacrament?**
> Because Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, is truly present.

Pray together

> Jesus, my Lord and my God,
> I adore you.
> Thank you for welcoming me
> into your presence.
> Amen.

One small step

At church, ask an adult to show you the tabernacle and sanctuary lamp. Spend a quiet moment saying:

> “Jesus, I love you.”

CONVERSATION 07 / 12

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

> **THE IMPORTANT TRUTH**
> At Mass, Jesus makes present his one sacrifice on the Cross.

Begin together

Ask:

> "Can you think of something loving that costs us an effort?"

Possible answers include sharing something precious, helping when tired or giving up a turn for someone else.

Say:

> "Jesus' gift of himself is greater than anything we can give."

Read together

Jesus loves us completely.

On the Cross, he freely offered his life to the Father to save us from sin.

We call this his **sacrifice**.

A sacrifice is an offering made to God. Jesus offered himself in perfect love and obedience.

He died once.

Then he rose from the dead. He is alive for ever and will never die again.

At every Mass, his one sacrifice is made present in a wonderful sacramental way.

We are truly brought into the offering he made for us.

The Mass is therefore much more than a story about something long ago.

It is also much more than a meal we have invented.

Jesus acts. Through the priest, he offers the same sacrifice to the Father, without suffering or dying again. Jesus is both the priest who offers and the gift offered.

The Church joins in his offering. We adore the Father, thank him, ask him to heal the harm of sin and pray for the needs of the living and the dead. The Church calls these **adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and petition**.

Then Jesus gives himself to us in Holy Communion.

The Mass is both a holy sacrifice and a sacred meal.

The Jesus who gives himself **for us** also gives himself **to us**.

Talk and understand

What did Jesus offer on the Cross?

He offered himself.

Does Jesus die again at Mass?

No. He died once and is alive for ever.

What happens to his one sacrifice at Mass?

It is made present sacramentally, so that we can share in his offering.

What can we do during Mass?

Worship, give thanks, ask forgiveness, pray and offer ourselves with Jesus.

Remember

> **What is the Mass?**
> The Mass makes present Jesus' one sacrifice on the Cross.

Pray together

> Heavenly Father,
> thank you for the love of Jesus.
> Help me to join in his offering
> and give you my heart.
> Amen.

One small step

At the next Mass, quietly say:

> "Father, thank you for Jesus."

For the adult: The child does not need to explain how sacramental presence works. Look for understanding that Jesus died once, is alive, and truly makes his one sacrifice present at Mass.

CONVERSATION 08 / 12

The Parts of the Mass

> **THE IMPORTANT TRUTH**
> At Mass, we listen to God’s word and share in Christ’s offering.

Begin together

Ask:

> “What is one thing you have noticed at Mass?”

Accept any genuine observation. Help the child connect it with the explanation below.

Read together

The Mass has two main parts:

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

Liturgy means the Church’s public worship.

These two parts belong together as one celebration. There are also prayers and actions which begin and end the Mass.

We gather and prepare.

We make the Sign of the Cross.

We ask God for mercy.

We praise him and pray together.

We listen to God’s word.

We hear readings from the Bible.

The Bible is Sacred Scripture: writings inspired by God.

The Gospel tells us about Jesus’ life and teaching.

The priest or deacon explains the readings in the homily.

On Sundays, we normally profess our faith together in the Creed. We also pray for the Church and the world.

We join in the Eucharist.

Bread and wine are brought to the altar.

The **altar** is the holy table on which the sacrifice of the Mass is offered.

The priest leads the Eucharistic Prayer. We join in its thanksgiving and offering.

At the consecration, the bread and wine become Christ’s Body and Blood. This is the high point within the whole Eucharistic Prayer of thanksgiving and offering.

We pray the Our Father and prepare for Holy Communion. These prayers and actions form the **Communion Rite**.

Those who are prepared receive Jesus, and we give thanks.

We receive God’s blessing and are sent out.

We go to live what we have celebrated: loving God and serving others.

You take part by listening, praying, singing, answering and being quietly attentive.

If your mind wanders, gently turn your attention back to God.

Talk and understand

What are the two main parts of Mass?

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

What do we hear in the Liturgy of the Word?

God’s word in the Bible.

What happens at the consecration?

The bread and wine become Christ’s Body and Blood.

Can silence be a way of taking part?

Yes. We can listen, adore and pray silently.

Remember

> **How do I take part in Mass?**
> I listen, pray and join in the worship of the Church.

Pray together

> Holy Spirit,
> help me to listen to God’s word,
> pray with the Church
> and take part in Mass with love.
> Amen.

One small step

At the next Mass, notice when the Gospel is read. Afterwards, tell an adult one thing you heard.

CONVERSATION 09 / 12

Offering Ourselves with Jesus

> **THE IMPORTANT TRUTH**
> We can offer our lives to the Father with Jesus.

Begin together

Ask:

> "What is one good thing from today? Was anything difficult?"

The child may answer or choose to keep something private.

Read together

At Mass, bread and wine are placed on the altar. Jesus works through the priest in a special way, while the whole Church joins in the prayer.

We can also offer something which cannot be carried in a dish or a cup.

We can offer ourselves.

This means giving our lives to God with love.

We can offer him our work and play, our happiness and worries, our friendships and difficulties.

We join these things to Jesus' perfect offering.

Perhaps you worked hard at something difficult.

Perhaps you were kind when you felt cross.

Perhaps someone you love is ill.

You can bring all these things to God in prayer.

You do not need to pretend that everything is easy.

You can say:

"Father, this is hard. Please help me. I offer you my day with Jesus."

Offering ourselves also means being willing to follow God.

If we ask God to help us love others, we should try to act lovingly.

If we have hurt someone, we should be willing to say sorry and put things right.

Our love at Mass should continue at home, at school and wherever we go.

God cares about the small choices of every day.

Talk and understand

What can we offer to God at Mass?

Our whole lives: our work, joys, difficulties, prayers and acts of love.

Do we physically climb onto the altar?

No. We offer ourselves in our hearts and prayers.

With whom do we make our offering?

With Jesus.

If we offer God our day, how might we treat other people?

With kindness, patience, honesty and a willingness to help.

Remember

> **What can I offer with Jesus at Mass?**
> I can offer my whole life to the Father.

Pray together

> Heavenly Father,
> I offer you this day with Jesus.
> Receive my work and play,
> my joys and difficulties.
> Help me to love you in everything I do.
> Amen.

One small step

Choose one person to pray for at the next Mass. You do not have to tell anyone who it is.

CONVERSATION 10 / 12

Preparing to Receive Worthily

> **THE IMPORTANT TRUTH**
> We prepare our hearts and bodies to receive Jesus.

Begin together

Ask:

> "How might we prepare to welcome someone important into our home?"

Accept answers, then say:

> "For Holy Communion, the most important preparation happens in our hearts."

Read together

Jesus welcomes us with love.

We prepare for Holy Communion because we believe that we are receiving him.

We want to come with faith, sorrow for our sins and a sincere desire to love him.

We should receive Holy Communion in a **state of grace**.

This means having God's life of sanctifying grace in us.

Sin is a choice against God's love and commandments.

Some sins are venial. They hurt our friendship with God.

A mortal sin is a gravely wrong choice made with full knowledge and deliberate consent. It destroys the life of sanctifying grace in the soul.

An accident, an unwanted thought or a feeling which comes without our choosing is not the same as deliberately choosing sin.

Jesus gives us the sacrament of Confession so that we can receive forgiveness and begin again.

Before First Holy Communion, you make your First Confession.

If someone knows that they have committed a mortal sin, they must receive forgiveness in Confession before receiving Holy Communion. Holy Communion strengthens a person already in the state of grace; it is not how mortal sin is forgiven.

If you are unsure or worried, speak privately to the priest. He is there to help.

We also prepare through the **Eucharistic fast**.

Normally, we have no food or drink for at least one hour before receiving Holy Communion. Water and medicine are allowed.

An adult will help you with the time.

Before Mass, we can pray, prepare calmly and arrive in good time.

Our clothes should be suitable and respectful. They do not need to be expensive.

The greatest treasure on your First Holy Communion day is Jesus.

Talk and understand

Use these invented examples. Do not ask the child to reveal personal sins.

Sam accidentally spills a drink. Is an accident automatically a sin?

No. Sin involves a wrong choice.

Anna is worried about whether she should receive Communion. Who can help her?

The priest.

What sacrament do we receive before First Holy Communion?

First Confession.

What are we allowed during the Eucharistic fast?

Water and medicine.

Remember

> **How should I prepare for Holy Communion?**
> With faith, a heart in God’s grace, prayer and the Eucharistic fast.

Pray together

> Merciful Jesus,
> thank you for forgiving sins.
> Help me to turn away from wrong,
> welcome your grace
> and prepare to receive you.
> Amen.

One small step

Ask the adult caring for you to help you understand the one-hour fast.

For the adult: The hour is counted before receiving Communion, not before Mass begins. Explain any health or feeding needs to the priest so suitable arrangements can be made. Never ask the child what they have confessed.

CONVERSATION 11 / 12

Receiving Holy Communion Reverently

> **THE IMPORTANT TRUTH**
> We receive the Sacred Host carefully because it is Jesus.

Begin together

Ask:

> "How do we handle something precious?"

Help if needed: carefully, attentively and without rushing.

Say:

> "Today we will learn how to receive the greatest gift of all."

Read together

When the time comes for Holy Communion, you join the procession calmly.

You are going to receive Jesus.

The minister holds up the Sacred Host and says:

"The Body of Christ."

You answer:

"Amen."

Here, your Amen expresses your faith. You are saying that you believe the One you receive is truly Jesus.

In England and Wales, Holy Communion is normally received standing, although you may receive kneeling.

If receiving standing, make a reverent bow before you receive.

You may receive on the tongue or in the hand.

If you receive on the tongue:

Say "Amen," then open your mouth and gently extend your tongue. Remain still while the minister places the Sacred Host on it.

If you receive in the hand:

Place one open hand on top of the other to make a steady place for the Sacred Host.

Allow the minister to place it in your hand.

Then take it with your other hand and place it in your mouth immediately, before walking away.

You must consume the Sacred Host. Never put it in a pocket, take it back to your seat uneaten or give it to someone else.

You receive the whole Jesus in the Sacred Host. You do not need to receive from the chalice to receive the whole Christ.

If anything goes wrong, stay calm and tell the minister. You will be helped.

Return quietly to your place and pray.

Jesus has given himself to you.

Talk and understand

What does the minister say?

"The Body of Christ."

What do you answer?

"Amen."

What must you do with the Sacred Host?

Consume it immediately and reverently.

What should you do if you are confused or something goes wrong?

Stay calm and ask the minister for help.

Remember

> **What does my Amen express?**
> My Amen expresses my faith that I am receiving Jesus Christ.

Practise together

Without using food or pretending to celebrate Mass:

1. Walk forward calmly.
2. Practise a reverent bow.
3. The adult says, "What will you answer when the minister says 'The Body of Christ'?"
4. The child answers, "Amen."
5. Practise the chosen posture for receiving, with empty hands or without placing anything in the mouth.
6. Walk back quietly.

The parish will also help with practical preparation.

Pray together

> Jesus,
> help me to receive you
> with faith, love and care.
> When I feel nervous,
> help me remember that you love me.
> Amen.

One small step

Decide with the adult caring for you which manner of receiving you will practise with the parish.

For the adult: Tell the priest beforehand about coeliac disease, swallowing difficulties, sensory needs or other concerns affecting reception.

CONVERSATION 12 / 12

Thanksgiving and a Eucharistic Life

> **THE IMPORTANT TRUTH**
> Holy Communion helps us live more closely united to Jesus.

Begin together

Ask:

> "When someone gives us a wonderful gift, what do we want to say?"

Help if needed: "Thank you."

Read together

After receiving Holy Communion, return quietly to your place.

This is a precious time to pray.

Jesus has given himself to you.

You can adore him, thank him, offer yourself to him and ask for his help.

You do not need a long speech.

You might say:

"Jesus, I love you. Thank you for coming to me. Help me to follow you."

You may also be quietly attentive without saying many words.

Holy Communion brings us closer to Jesus and strengthens our love.

When we receive him with the right disposition, he strengthens the life of grace in us, forgives venial sins and helps protect us from serious sin.

He also brings us closer together as members of his Church.

After the appearances of the Sacred Host no longer remain, Jesus' sacramental presence in that form ends. But the grace and friendship he gives are meant to continue.

Holy Communion should make a difference to how we live.

Jesus helps us to pray, forgive, tell the truth, share and care for people who need us.

We still have choices to make. We can ask for his help whenever doing good is difficult.

Your First Holy Communion is the beginning of a continuing Eucharistic life.

We return to Sunday Mass.

We receive Holy Communion when properly prepared.

We go to Confession regularly.

We pray at home and learn to love our neighbours.

Jesus accompanies us throughout our lives. Holy Communion is a **pledge**, or promise, of eternal life: he leads us towards the happiness of heaven.

Talk and understand

What should we do after receiving Holy Communion?

Pray and thank Jesus.

What does Holy Communion help to grow in us?

Our union with Jesus, the life of grace and love.

Does First Holy Communion mean we have finished learning and coming to Mass?

No. It begins a continuing Eucharistic life.

What is one way we could live close to Jesus this week?

Accept a realistic example of prayer, worship, forgiveness, honesty, kindness or service.

Remember

> **How should I live after Holy Communion?**
> I should remain close to Jesus through prayer, the sacraments and love of others.

Pray together

> Jesus,
> thank you for giving yourself to me.
> Stay close to me by your grace.
> Help me to pray faithfully,
> forgive generously
> and love the people around me.
> Lead me towards heaven.
> Amen.

One small step

Choose one simple habit to continue: a bedtime prayer, thanksgiving after Communion or a daily act of kindness.

My simple guide to Sunday Mass

You can look at this before Mass. You do not need to follow it like a worksheet during the celebration.

What is happening?	How can I take part?
We arrive at church.	Become quiet, greet Jesus and prepare to pray.
Mass begins.	Stand with the congregation, join the singing and make the Sign of the Cross.
We ask for mercy.	Ask God to forgive sins and help us begin again.
We hear the readings.	Listen for something God wants to teach us.
We hear the Gospel.	Stand and listen carefully to the words about Jesus.
We hear the homily.	Listen as the priest or deacon explains the teaching.
We profess our faith and pray for others.	Join in the words I know and listen to the prayers.
Bread and wine are prepared.	Offer my life to the Father with Jesus.
The priest leads the Eucharistic Prayer.	Join in the responses and pray attentively.
The Sacred Host and chalice are shown.	Adore Jesus, who is truly present.
We prepare for Communion.	Pray the Our Father and ask Jesus for mercy.
I receive Holy Communion.	Answer “Amen,” receive reverently and consume the Sacred Host immediately.
I return to my place.	Thank Jesus and pray.
We receive the blessing and are sent out.	Go to love God and serve others.

For standing, sitting and kneeling, follow the parish’s directions as you are able. An adult can quietly help you.

Prayers I can use

The Sign of the Cross

With your right hand, touch your forehead, chest, left shoulder and right shoulder as you pray:

> In the name of the Father,
> and of the Son,
> and of the Holy Spirit.
> Amen.

Before Mass

> Jesus, I am here with you.
> Help me to listen and pray.
> I offer you my day
> and the people I love.
> Amen.

An act of faith

> Jesus, I believe that you are truly present
> in the Blessed Sacrament.
> Help me to trust you
> and love you more.
> Amen.

A prayer of sorrow

> My God, I am sorry for my sins.
> I am sorry for choosing what is wrong
> and failing to do what is good.
> With your help, I will turn away from sin
> and try to follow you faithfully.
> Amen.

At Mass, before Holy Communion

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

Before receiving Holy Communion

> Jesus,
> I believe in you.
> I hope in you.
> I love you.
> Help me to receive you with a faithful heart.
> Amen.

After Holy Communion

> Jesus, I adore you.
> Thank you for giving yourself to me.
> I give you my thoughts, words and actions.
> Help me to love you and other people.
> Bless my family and those who need your help.
> Keep me close to you.
> Amen.

When I am not receiving Holy Communion

> Jesus,
> I believe that you are present
> in the Blessed Sacrament.
> I want to be close to you.
> Help me to love you
> and prepare to receive you.
> Amen.

You can remain in your place and pray. Follow the parish's guidance about any other arrangements. This is often called **Spiritual Communion**: a prayer of desire to be close to Jesus. It is different from receiving him sacramentally and does not replace Sunday Mass when we are able to attend.

The Our Father

> Our Father, who art in heaven,
> hallowed be 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.
> Amen.

Words explained

Hallowed means honoured as holy.

Thy means your.

Trespasses means sins.

Temptation is something drawing us towards doing wrong. Being tempted is not itself a sin.

Deliver us means rescue or save us.

My First Holy Communion day

Before leaving home

Pray briefly. Let an adult help you keep the Eucharistic fast and get ready calmly.

Remember:

> “Today I am receiving Jesus.”

When you arrive

Find your place and follow the parish’s directions.

Speak to an adult if you feel worried or do not understand what to do.

During Mass

Listen, pray and join in.

Your clothes and photographs may be special, but Jesus is the centre of the celebration.

At Holy Communion

Approach calmly.

Show reverence.

Listen to the words:

> “The Body of Christ.”

Answer:

> “Amen.”

Receive and consume the Sacred Host carefully.

After receiving

Return to your place and thank Jesus.

You can use the thanksgiving prayer in this book.

After Mass

Celebrate joyfully with your family.

Remember that you will return to Mass and continue receiving Jesus.

This is your **first** Holy Communion.

It is the beginning of many meetings with him.

A gentle final conversation

For the adult

Use these questions over one or more conversations. Do not introduce them as an examination.

Allow the child to answer before giving help. Use an earlier lesson if something needs explaining again.

Ask the child	Meaning to listen for
Who is Jesus?	He is the Son of God, who became human, died for us and rose again.
Who will you receive in Holy Communion?	Jesus himself.
Is the Sacred Host ordinary bread after the consecration?	No. It has become the Body of Christ, although the appearances remain.
Does Jesus die again at Mass?	No. His one sacrifice is made present.
Why do we pray before the tabernacle?	Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament.
How do we prepare for Holy Communion?	Faith, prayer, being in a state of grace and keeping the Eucharistic fast with adult help.
What sacrament comes before First Holy Communion?	First Confession.
What do you answer when the minister says “The Body of Christ”?	“Amen.”
What do you do after receiving the Sacred Host?	Consume it immediately, return quietly and thank Jesus.
What happens after your First Holy Communion day?	We continue Sunday Mass, prayer, Confession and living with Jesus.

Also invite the child to say:

> “Is there anything you want to ask?”
> “Is anything worrying you?”
> “What are you looking forward to?”

A child does not need perfect wording or a detailed explanation of every mystery. Readiness means distinguishing the Body of Christ from ordinary food and receiving with faith and devotion, according to capacity. Share progress and any difficulties with the parish priest, who discerns readiness.

A simple mentor check-in

Use this when the family has already worked through some of the book. There is no need to repeat all the teaching.

Welcome

> “How have you been? What have you noticed at Mass?”

Look back

> “Which part of the book have you shared? What did you find interesting?”

Check one truth

Choose a question from the relevant lesson.

> “How would you explain that in your own words?”

Listen. Clarify the teaching gently if needed.

Connect with life

> “Where might you notice this at Mass?”
> “How could this help you during the week?”

Pray

Use the prayer from the lesson together.

Agree the next step

Choose the next conversation or return to a point which needs more time.

Finish by making clear when the family will next have support.

For the adult: A disability, learning difference or medical need does not by itself prevent reception. Arrange suitable adaptations with the family and priest; never improvise the Eucharistic elements or manner of reception. Do not shame, pressure or publicly test a child.

Continuing with Jesus

Keep coming to Sunday Mass.

Keep speaking to Jesus in prayer.

Keep asking questions.

When you do wrong, be sorry, seek forgiveness and begin again.

Receive the help Jesus gives through Confession and Holy Communion.

Look for small ways to love the people around you.

You do not have to make this journey alone.

Your family and your parish are here to help you.

And Jesus, who gives himself to you, calls you to remain close to him.

> **Jesus, help me to know you,**
> **love you and follow you,**
> **today and throughout my life.**
> **Amen.**