



Primary Collective Worship Resources

The Mass 1: We come to the table

Step 1: We gather

Gather the children and begin your session by saying that we are going to spend some time learning about the Mass. In this first session, we will focus on how a community of people who believe the same things gather together, and then do certain things together to feel that sense of community; for example, making the sign of the cross together at the beginning of Mass and all singing hymns together.

The children know about gathering. They gather for school, they gather to play and they gather for celebrations, for parties.

Ask the children to think about what they do when they are preparing for a birthday party. You might have a bare table available and some things to put onto the table to prepare for the party – a table cloth, some decorations, flowers, balloons and glasses for drinks and plates for the food you will share. You may have a cake on the table with some candles ready to be lit when you sing “Happy Birthday!”

Invite some of the children to set the table and begin a conversation with the group. Would they invite their friends and family to the party? Ask them how they choose the people they will invite. Would they send invitations or invite them personally over the phone or at school?

Step 2: What the Bible says

Now, invite the children, if they want to participate, to copy you as you trace the sign of the cross on yourself with your thumb and pray:

God be in my mind (sign the forehead)
God be on my lips (sign the lips)
And God be in my heart (sign the chest).

Explain to the children that Christians believe that God speaks to humans through the words of the Bible. Read the Gospel of Matthew 18:20-22:

Jesus said, “When any two of you agree on earth about something you are praying for, my Father in heaven will do it for you. And, I will always be there with you because whenever two or three are gathered in my name, I promise to be there with you”.

The leader says, “The Gospel of the Lord”. The response is “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ”.

After putting the Holy Book back in its Special Place, tell the children a little about the passage they have just heard. Jesus was teaching his disciples, his closest friends and followers, when he said this. He promised them that whenever two or more of his followers gathered together, he would be there with them. Christians today believe that this is still true, and that when they gather together, such as when they come together for Mass, Jesus is there with them in spirit.

Explore with the children what it means for Jesus to be present with Christians today. They could suggest some words to describe this.



Step 3: Our life experience

As you move to the Sacred Place, point out that the focal point also has a bare table. The children will prepare the table in the same way as the altar is prepared for Mass. Play the Michael Joncas song, "We come to your feast" and ask the children to listen carefully to the words

We place upon your table a gleaming cloth of white
the weaving of our stories, the fabric of our lives;
the dreams of those before us, the ancient hopeful cries
the promise of our future: our needing and our nurture
lie here before our eyes.

Pause now to ask the children if they have noticed the white cloth on the altar in the church. Ask them, too, who they meet when they come to Mass, such as their friends, family and other people they know. They're the people who make up their community. There are old people and young babies and all gather together to worship God and to tell God about their needs. Invite two of the children to place the white cloth on the table.

Listen now to the second verse:

We come to your feast, we come to your feast:
the young and the old, the frightened, the bold,
the greatest and the least.
We come to your feast, we come to your feast
with the fruits of our lands and the work of our hands
we come to your feast.

Pause again and invite other children to bring candles and flowers, a cross that they should lay on the table, a plate, a chalice and the Holy Book.

Step 4: How God's word affects our lives

In this session we learn that coming together for a special occasion means preparing for the event and inviting different people. So just as having a birthday party means sending out invitations, getting food ready and decorating the room you will celebrate it in – all of these things bring people together to share and value a special event. So when we come together for Mass, similarly, we need to prepare the Church for this holy event – so we prepare the altar with a special cloth, we have candles and a Holy Book that is the Bible which is clearly seen and we have special words and prayers that are said during this time. The priest wears special clothes and everyone is invited to celebrate together.

You might try to teach the children the song that was sung in this session. It will be the refrain in the next two sessions and it would be good if they could join in with it then.

Encourage the children to respond to what they have experienced. They can talk about what it was like to prepare the altar. Ask them if they ever thought of the altar like a table that they have at home where they have special meals or celebrations.



Liturgy Sheet: The Mass 1

Hymn

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Listen now to the second verse:

We come to your feast, we come to your feast:
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We come to your feast, we come to your feast
with the fruits of our lands and the work of our hands
we come to your feast.

The children set the table with the cloth, the candles and flowers.



You might finish with the refrain of “We come to your feast”.

We come to your feast, we come to your feast:
the young and the old, the frightened, the bold,
the greatest and the least.
We come to your feast, we come to your feast
with the fruits of our lands and the work of our hands
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