



CATECHETICAL SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 18, 2011

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



Opening of the Year In-Service for Parish and Catholic School Catechists and Teachers

Preparing for and Celebrating First Holy Communion

By Maruja Sedano, Director of the Office for Catechesis and Youth Ministry, Archdiocese of Chicago

Purpose

The purpose of this in-service is to help parish and Catholic school catechists/teachers to deepen their understanding of the Sacrament of the Eucharist and the changes in the *Roman Missal* as they prepare others to fully, actively, and consciously receive their First Holy Communion.

Schedule

You may use this in-service as: one 3-hour session; two 1.5-hour sessions; or three 1-hour sessions. Be sure to begin and end each session with prayer.

- Welcome, Introduction, and Opening Prayer Service (15 minutes)
- Part I (35 minutes): Eucharist as Thanksgiving, Covenant, Meal, and Sacrifice
- Break (10 minutes)
- Part II (40 minutes): The Mass, a Family Gathering Break (10 minutes)

- Part III (40 minutes): Understanding the Changes in the *Roman Missal*
- Closing (10 minutes)

Materials Needed

- Tables and chairs, arranged for groups of four to six participants
- Table with refreshments
- Name tags
- A small table to be used as a prayer setting with colorful or liturgically appropriate cloth, a book stand, the Bible or the Lectionary, two candles, and bread, grapes, or wine, symbols of the Eucharist
- Tape or CD player, appropriate religious music, hymnals or handouts with the songs chosen for the opening prayer
- Projector and equipment for PowerPoint presentations or visual charts of the different parts of the Mass
- Sufficient copies of current Missals; handouts with

important words and their meanings related to the Eucharist and the Mass, such as *transubstantiation, anamnesis, real presence*, etc.

- Copies of the actual revised texts of the *Roman Missal*, available at www.usccb.org/romanmissal
- A set (or one for each table if possible) of the USCCB *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (USCCA)-approved religious education texts used in your parish or Catholic school catechetical/religious education sessions. Especially the texts related to the preparation of children, youths, or adults for the reception of First Holy Communion.
- Copies of the articles downloaded from the “Teaching Aids” section of the online resource for Celebrating the Catechetical Year 2011 www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday
- Podium or small table and a microphone for the speaker

Preparation

- One to two weeks before:
- Read the articles found in the “Teaching Aids” section of the online resource for Celebrating the Catechetical Year 2011 www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday
- (This in-service is based in part on these articles.)
- Read the downloaded copies of the actual approved revised texts of the *Roman Missal* available at www.usccb.org/romanmissal

(You will need to make copies for each participant for Part III of this in-service.)

- The DVD-ROM “Become One Body, One Spirit” and the *Parish Guide to Implementing the Roman Missal, Third Edition*, from www.usccb.org/liturgy may also be of assistance to you.
- Develop an opening prayer service, using the suggestions provided in the prayer service below. Select the hymns or songs to open and conclude the prayer service, and assign one of your catechists to read the Scripture passages that will be used during the in-service.
- To help you focus on the theme for each session, prepare a PowerPoint slide show or handouts summarizing the main points of each presentation. You may also use visual charts of the various parts of the Mass.
- Gather the set (or one set per table) of the USCCB-approved religious education texts used in your parish or Catholic school catechetical/religious education sessions. (You will need this for Parts I and II of this in-service.)
- Be sure to make sufficient copies of any handout available for participants.

Day of the In-Service

- Prepare the prayer table, covered with a liturgical or colored cloth, in a location in the room visible to all. On the table, place the book stand holding the Bible or the Lectionary, the candles, and

- the eucharistic symbols of bread and wine.
- Set up enough tables and chairs in the room for everyone.
- Bookmark the Bible or Lectionary to the passage(s) you have chosen.
- Bookmark the sessions related to the preparation of children, youths, and adults for the reception of First Holy Communion on the USCCB-approved religious education texts used in your parish or Catholic school catechetical/religious education sessions.
- Set up the tape or CD player, appropriate religious music, and hymnals or handouts with the songs chosen for the opening prayer.
- Set up the overhead projector, equipment for PowerPoint presentations, or visual charts of the different parts of the Mass.
- You may wish to have religious music playing as participants gather and sign in. Also distribute copies of the schedule, the seven articles, the actual revised texts of the *Roman Missal*, and any other handouts available for the in-service.

Welcome, Introduction, and Explanation of the Process (5 minutes)

Welcome everyone, explain the purpose of the workshop, and review the schedule. Tell participants that the materials used to prepare the presentation come from the online resources for Celebrating the

Catechetical Year 2011, from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Opening Prayer Service (15 minutes)

Lead the planned opening prayer service:

- Opening song:
- Opening prayer:
- One or more Scripture readings from the following:

1 Cor 11:23-26

Jn 6:51-53

1 Cor 10:16-17

1 Thes 1:2

- Time for reflection on the reading
- Prayer of the faithful:
- Concluding prayer:
- Concluding song:

First Presentation (40 minutes)

The first presentation covers the articles “The Eucharist in the New Testament” by Scott Hahn, PhD, and “The Theological, Spiritual, and Practical Meaning of the Eucharist” by Benedictine Fr. Thomas Acklin, OSB. The articles reflect on the Eucharist as thanksgiving, covenant, meal, and sacrifice, as well as the real presence of Jesus.

Eucharist as Thanksgiving, Covenant, Meal, and Sacrifice

For the Facilitator (20 minutes)

Start the session by asking the participants to recall an important moment in their lives and why this moment is important. Invite some people to share with the entire group.

- Say that the Eucharist is one of these important moments, because at the Eucharist we celebrate the memorial of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus, and we become united with the redemptive sacrifice of Christ. The Eucharist demands us to be in solidarity with those who suffer and leads us to serve others, especially the poor.
- Remind the participants that the objective of all catechesis is to facilitate the encounter between the people and God so they can enter into a loving relationship with him. In the Eucharist we encounter God through the Body and Blood of Jesus present to us under the appearances of bread and wine.
- If you prepared a PowerPoint presentation or visual charts for this part of the workshop using the content presented in the articles above, this is the time to present it along with your comments. Make sure you draw attention to the main aspects of the Eucharist as thanksgiving, covenant, meal, and memorial sacrifice.
- As you move through the presentation, make references to the USCCB USCCA-approved catechetical/religious education sessions on the catechist guides and student books, and point out the age-appropriate activities catechists and teachers can use to teach their students the theology, spirituality, and practical meaning of the Eucharist. You may also direct your catechists/teachers to the

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, especially Chapter 17 in which the Eucharist is discussed.

- Draw attention to the vocabulary for the Eucharist. If you prepared a handout with important words and their meanings related to the Eucharist and the Mass, this is the time to distribute it.
- It is important that children, youths, and adults learn the meanings of the words we use related to the Eucharist. Approved catechetical/religious education series will have an age-appropriate vocabulary, either in each session or at the end as an appendix. Look at the series your parish or Catholic school uses and point out that section or chapters to your catechists/teachers.

Group Sharing (15 minutes)

Ask the participants to discuss the following questions at their tables and to designate a spokesperson who will share the group responses with the large group.

- What does it mean to be in a “covenantal relationship” with God?
- How do you see your life participating in the life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus celebrated in the Eucharist?
- How do you show thanks for the gift of Jesus present in the Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine?
- What can you do to foster a relationship with Jesus in the children, youths, or adults you

- are preparing for First Communion?
- Allow time for sharing with the large group.

Break (10 minutes)

Allow time for refreshments, use of the restrooms, and sharing among participants.

***Second Presentation
(40 minutes)***

The second presentation covers the articles “Beyond First Communion—Ongoing Catechesis on the Words, Signs, Rituals, and Symbols Used in the Eucharist” by Benedictine Fr. Jeremy Driscoll and “Supernatural Selection: Evolution and Going to Church” by Christopher T. Baglow, PhD.

***The Mass, a Family Gathering
For the Facilitator
(20 minutes)***

- Start by asking the participants to share their recollections of going to Mass as children, youths, and adults. Allow time for a few participants to share with the entire group.
- Explain that after the Resurrection of Jesus, the Church continued gathering to celebrate the sacramental presence of Christ. This gathering is called the *Liturgy of the Eucharist* or *Mass*, and it is the central thanksgiving prayer of the Church. The word liturgy means the “public work or project undertaken by an individual for the good of the community.” (David W. Fagerberg, *“Theologia Prima: The Liturgical Mystery*

and the Mystery of God,” *Letter and Spirit* 2 [2006]: 58-59, as cited by Dr. Baglow in his article “Supernatural Selection Evolution and Going to Church”, page 5). ” Christ undertook a work on behalf of all of us, and his work continues in the activities of his Mystical Body, the Church. The Mass is the public “project” or liturgy of the Church, where all the baptized, as a family of God, participate in the life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ.

- If you prepared a PowerPoint presentation or visual charts explaining the Mass, this is the time to present them in some detail. Review with the participants the parts, words, signs, rituals, and symbols used in the celebration of the Mass. What happens during the Consecration (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], no. 1413)? What are the effects of Holy Communion (CCC, no. 1416)? It is important that the children, youths, and adults learn the parts of the Mass and that they understand the meaning of the rituals and signs so they can participate fully.
- If you prepared a handout with important words and their meanings related to the Eucharist and the Mass, this is the time to distribute it. Draw attention to the vocabulary used in the celebration of the Mass and the reception of Holy Communion. USCCB-approved catechetical/religious education texts will have an age-

appropriate vocabulary, either in each session or at the end as an appendix. Look at the series used at your parish or Catholic school and point out that section to your catechists/teachers.

- Stress the importance of being adequately prepared to receive Holy Communion: “They [should] have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so that they understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and are able to receive the body of Christ with faith and devotion” (*Code of Canon Law*, c. 913 §1). Mention that the USCCB sacramental guidelines and approved catechetical texts should be used for the preparation of candidates for the reception of First Holy Communion.
- Note that, although age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Eucharist is necessary for the reception of the Eucharist, as catechists and teachers we need to give special attention to the formation of the heart and the desire of the candidate to receive the Lord. Social and family pressures may distract the children and youth from the real reason they are receiving Jesus for the first time.
- Point out that the participants need to teach and practice with the children, youths, and adults the proper way to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus. Stress the importance of showing appropriate behavior, reverence, and devotion as they approach the altar to receive Communion,

as well as an attitude of thanksgiving after they return to their places in the church.

- Stress the importance of going to Mass and receiving Holy Communion regularly, especially on Sundays, to be fed spiritually and to strengthen their relationship with God and his family.
- The Church has always honored the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist as manifested in the many devotions, such as the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, eucharistic processions, etc. Encourage your catechists to participate in these devotions with the people they are preparing.

Group Sharing (15 minutes)

Ask the participants to discuss the following questions and to designate a spokesperson who will share the group responses with the large group.

What is your experience of the Mass as a family gathering?

Why do you think it is important to understand fully the parts, words, rituals, and symbols of the Mass?

Have you ever participated in a eucharistic procession or in the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament? What did the experience mean to you?

Share one or two things you do well in preparing children, youths, or adults to receive First Holy Communion.

Break (10 minutes)

Allow time for refreshments, use of the restrooms, and sharing among participants.

Third Presentation(40 minutes)

The Third Presentation covers the articles “Eucharistic Mystagogy” by Dr. Gerard Baumbach, “Celebrating the Mass Through the Ages” by Norbertine Fr. Alfred McBride, and “Background on and Changes in the New Translation of the *Roman Missal*” by Monsignor James P. Moroney.

Understanding the Changes in the Roman Missal

For the Facilitator (20 minutes)

For this part of the in-service you will need to feel comfortable with the new revised texts of the *Roman Missal*. Study them and pray them beforehand in order to be prepared and confident during the in-service. You will also need to have handouts of the revised texts for each participant. Copies of the actual approved texts are available at www.usccb.org/romanmissal.

- Start by taking the pulse of your catechists/teachers about their feelings toward the changes in the *Roman Missal*. Ask the general group:
- What have you heard, and how do you feel about the changes in the prayers of the Mass that will be used starting the first Sunday of Advent 2011?
- Listen to the responses. It is possible that the majority of your audience was born after the Vatican II changes in the liturgy, and the only way they know how to pray at Mass is the current way. Older catechists/teachers may have grown accustomed to praying the Mass as we do today. Be aware that some people may

express frustration while others may find the changes a good opportunity to catechize and to grow in unity within the liturgy.

- At this session there is not enough time to go through a long and detailed explanation of the changes. Use this time to give a general overview of the development of the Mass, the biblical roots, and reasons for the changes. It is important that today, catechists/teachers see and compare the current prayers with the new prayers of the Mass, especially the congregation’s responses. You may use another time for a more extensive in-service that includes the priest’s prayers and responses.
- Anticipate questions from the participants such as: “Why the changes?” “Who decided on the translation?” and “What role did the USCCB play in the changes?” To help you prepare for the answers, go to the www.usccb.org/romanmissal for samples of the most frequently asked questions.
- Using the content of the articles above, you can develop a short PowerPoint presentation summarizing the historical development of the Mass since the time of the early Church and how the new translation came about. Emphasize that in reality the main structure of the Mass (the four parts: *Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist*, and the *Concluding Rites*) has remained through the centuries. What actually changes in each part of

the Mass are some of the words in the prayers of the priest and the responses of the congregation.

- Direct the participants to look at the handouts of the changing texts as outlined on the USCCB website at www.usccb.org/romanmissal. Go through each part of the congregation's responses; compare the current version with the new, making reference to the scriptural roots for the new responses. Recite together the responses to the celebrant's greeting, the Penitential Act (Confiteor), the Gloria, the responses at the Gospel, the Creed, prayers before Communion, etc.
- Point out the importance of using gestures with reverence, such as the intentional action of the Sign of the Cross, striking of the breast during the Confiteor, the triple sign of the cross before the Gospel, bowing during the Creed, etc.

- Allow time to listen to the comments arising from participants. Their understanding of the changes is of most importance since they are the ones who will be teaching the children, youths, and adults to pray with the new texts.
- As you come to the conclusion of the in-service, a very important word to remember is *mystagogy*, the word used since the early times of the Church to describe the period of post-baptismal catechesis. The *National Directory for Catechesis* calls us to engage in ongoing catechesis for our own deepening of the faith. Ask your catechists/teachers, as part of their own ongoing formation, to take some time to go over the revised texts, to read them aloud and to pray them. In a word, ask them to make them their own between now and the first Sunday of Advent, when the changes will take effect.

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