



## DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

# Children's Liturgy of the Word

## THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

### *Corpus Christi*

#### Overview

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, known as Corpus Christi, celebrates the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. This day is marked by joyful adoration, public witness, and gratitude for Christ's presence in the bread and wine. It is rooted in the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper.

The Catholic Church teaches that, through the Holy Spirit and the priest's words of consecration, bread and wine are transubstantiated<sup>1</sup> into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ. This is the essence of the "Real Presence."

Corpus Christi is celebrated through three main actions: gathering for Mass, holding a Eucharistic procession, and engaging in adoration. It is a vital spiritual event that reminds us that the Eucharist is our "food for hunger for eternal life" and transforms our lives and the world.

By receiving and adoring the Body of Christ, we enter into deeper communion with God and one another, embodying the "one body" St. Paul describes.

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<sup>1</sup> The doctrine on the Eucharist was officially stated by the Fourth Lateran Council. St. Thomas Aquinas studied the Real Presence in great detail to further Catholic understanding. The Council of Trent reaffirmed the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist after the Protestant Reformation.

## Leader Reflection Questions

- † How does the Eucharist shape my faith?
- † How does the Eucharist influence my daily life, actions, and relationships?

## Key Messages for Children

- † Jesus is really and truly present: Eucharist isn't just a symbol or a reminder. When the priest says the special words at Mass, the little piece of bread and the wine truly become the Body and Blood of Jesus
- † The Eucharist is food for our souls: Just like regular food helps our bodies grow strong, the Eucharist helps our souls grow strong. It fills us with Jesus's love, helps us make good choices, and reminds us that Jesus is always with us.
- † We can all welcome Jesus.
  - If a child has made their First Communion, they get to receive this amazing gift.
  - If a child has not yet made their First Communion, they can still welcome Jesus by saying a special prayer in your heart, like, "Jesus, I love you. Please come into my heart." Jesus hears you and is happy you are talking to Him

## Catechist Corner

- † The Real Presence is the heart of the Solemnity, emphasizing the true presence of Jesus Christ—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity—in bread and wine. It joyfully affirms this essential Catholic belief against any doubt.
- † The Eucharist creates the Church: The Eucharist is not merely a private gift for individual devotion; it is the sacrament that builds and constitutes the Church. In receiving the one Body of Christ, we are united more deeply to God and to one another, becoming "one body."
- † The Eucharist is our spiritual nourishment: Jesus called himself the "Bread of Life." The Eucharist is the spiritual food that sustains us on our earthly pilgrimage. It strengthens us against temptation, deepens our charity, and preserves us for eternal life.

# Contents

Overview .....	1
Leader Reflection Questions .....	2
Key Messages for Children .....	2
Catechist Corner.....	2
Background .....	4
The Liturgy .....	5
Procession from the main Church .....	5
Welcome. ....	5
Readings from the Lectionary .....	6
First Reading.....	6
Responsorial Psalm .....	7
Second Reading.....	8
Gospel .....	9
Simplified Readings for Children .....	10
First Reading.....	10
Responsorial Psalm .....	11
Second Reading.....	12
Gospel .....	13
Reflection: .....	14
Alternative Reflection .....	15
Prayer of the Faithful .....	17
Return to the church.....	17

## Background

**Genesis 14:18-20** is a foundational Old Testament reading for understanding the Eucharist and Christ's priesthood, which is celebrated on Corpus Christi. The Church sees this event not merely as a historical account but as a profound prefigurement, or "type," of the New Covenant. Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine is a type of the pure and bloodless sacrifice that the prophet Malachi foretold would be offered to God throughout the world. This prophecy is fulfilled in the sacrifice of the Mass, which represents Christ's sacrifice in an unbloody manner.

**Psalms 110** is one of the most significant Messianic psalms in the Old Testament and is foundational for understanding both the identity of Jesus Christ and the nature of the Eucharist. The psalm reveals Christ's dual dignity as both eternal King and eternal Priest, which are inextricably linked to the gift of his Body and Blood.

**1 Corinthians 11:23-26** is one of the most ancient and foundational texts in the New Testament concerning the Eucharist. St. Paul wrote it around around 56 AD. It contains the core tenets of what Corpus Christi celebrates: the Real Presence, the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, and its role as a perpetual memorial in the life of the Church.

**Luke 9:11-17** recounts the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fish. It is one of the most significant Gospel readings for Corpus Christi. While the miracle itself addresses the physical hunger of the crowd, the Church has always seen it as a profound prefigurement, or "type," of Holy Eucharist. The actions, words, and setting of this event are rich with symbolism that points directly to the gift of Christ's Body and Blood. It teaches that Jesus is the divine provider who organizes his people into a community, the Church. Through the hands of his chosen ministers, he feeds them with a gift that is miraculously superabundant. This entire event serves as a powerful sign pointing to the reality of the Eucharist, where Christ gives himself as the true bread that satisfies all hunger and gives eternal life.

## The Liturgy

### Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

**Priest:** (in these or similar words)

**My dear children, today is a very special day in our Church: The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. That's a mouthful! We also call it by its shorter name, Corpus Christi, which means "the Body of Christ." Go with your leaders to learn more about Jesus.**

When most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the place of the celebration. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the location of the celebration, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

### Welcome.

The leaders assist the children in sitting and preparing. **Begin with the Sign of the Cross.** Help the children think and connect their actions as they touch their foreheads, shoulders, and stomachs. The leader may say the following prayer in these or similar words.

**Let us pray:**

**Dear God, Dear Jesus, thank you for this special day. Open our ears to hear your word. Open our hearts to love you more. Amen.**

Invite the children to listen to the readings. Proclaiming all the readings is unnecessary; however, the Gospel is required.

## Readings from the Lectionary

### First Reading

A reading from the book of Genesis.

In those days:

After Abram's <sup>2</sup> return

King Melchizedek <sup>3</sup> of Salem <sup>4</sup> brought out bread and wine; he was priest <sup>5</sup> of God Most High.

He blessed Abram and said,

'Blessed be Abram by God Most High,

maker of heaven and earth;

and blessed be God Most High,

who has delivered your enemies into your hand!"

And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

**The word of the Lord.**

**Children: Thanks be to God.**

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

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<sup>2</sup> The original name of Abraham.

<sup>3</sup> The king and priest of Salem in the days of Abraham. He is the first person in Scripture to be called a "priest."

<sup>4</sup> The city of the patriarchal priest-king Melchizedek; it was later known as Jerusalem.

<sup>5</sup> A priest is an authorized mediator who offers a sacrifice to God on behalf of others. Christ is the perfect priest, for he is perfectly united to God in his divinity and fully united to us in his humanity.

## Responsorial Psalm

**R.** You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.

The Lord says to my lord, <sup>6</sup>

"Sit at my right hand

until I make your enemies your footstool." **R.**

The Lord sends out from Zion <sup>7</sup> your mighty sceptre.

Rule in the midst of your foes. **R.**

Your people will offer themselves willingly

on the day you lead your forces on the holy mountains.

From the womb of the morning, like dew,

your youth will come to you. **R.**

The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind,

"You are a priest forever

according to the order of Melchizedek." **R.**

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<sup>6</sup> The difference between the two terms (Lord and lord) reveals a conversation within the Godhead (Lord) and points to the unique identity of Christ (lord).

<sup>7</sup> Zion is an alternative name for Jerusalem. Jerusalem is a more geographical term; Zion is a more religious or theological.

## Second Reading

### **A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.**

Brothers and sisters:

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,  
that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed  
took a loaf of bread,

and when he had given thanks,

he broke it and said,

"This is my Body that is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying,

"This cup is the new covenant in my Blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,  
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

*A period of silence is observed after the reading.*

### **The word of the Lord.**

**Children: Thanks be to God.**

*A period of silence is observed after the reading.*



## Gospel

The children stand for the Gospel. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

### ✠ A reading from the holy Gospel, according to Luke.

Jesus spoke to the crowds about the kingdom of God,<sup>8</sup>  
and healed those who needed to be cured.

The day was drawing to a close,  
and the twelve came to him and said,  
"Send the crowd away,  
so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to lodge and  
get provisions;  
for we are here in a deserted place."

But Jesus said to them,

"You give them something to eat."

They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish-unless we are to go  
and buy food for all these people."

For there were about five thousand men.

And Jesus said to his disciples,

"Make the people sit down in groups of about fifty each."

They did so and made them all sit down.

And taking the five loaves and the two fish,  
he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them,  
and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.  
And all ate and were filled.

What was left over was gathered up,  
twelve baskets of broken pieces.

At the end of the Gospel, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "The Gospel of the Lord."

### The Gospel of the Lord.

**Children: Glory to you, O Lord.**

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<sup>8</sup> The Kingdom of God is central in Christianity, particularly in the teachings of Jesus and the New Testament. It refers to God's sovereign rule over all creation, but more specifically to God's spiritual reign in the hearts and lives of those who willingly submit to God's authority.

## Simplified Readings for Children

### First Reading

A reading from the book of Genesis.

A long time ago, there was a good man named Abram. After Abram won a big battle, a very special person came to meet him. His name was Melchizedek.

Melchizedek was a king and also a priest of God. He did something very important. He brought out bread and wine and offered them to God.

Then, he blessed Abram and said, "May God bless you, Abram!"

Abram was so thankful that he gave Melchizedek ten percent of everything he had.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

**The word of the Lord.**

**Children: Thanks be to God.**

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

Responsorial Psalm

**R.** Jesus, you are our priest forever.

God said to Jesus,

“You are my Son, and you are a King.” **R.**

You are a special priest, just like Melchizedek,  
who offered bread and wine. **R.**

## Second Reading

### **A reading from the first letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.**

Saint Paul says:

I am telling you what I learned from Jesus himself. On the night before he died, Jesus had a special supper with his friends.

First, he took a loaf of bread. He gave thanks to God, broke the bread into pieces, and said, "This is my body. It is given for you. Do this to remember me."

After supper, he did the same thing with the cup of wine. He said, "This cup is a new promise from God, made with my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this to remember me."

So, every time we eat this bread and drink from this cup at Mass, we are sharing the story of Jesus' great love for us, and we will keep doing it until he comes again.

*A period of silence is observed after the reading.*

**The word of the Lord.**

**Children: Thanks be to God.**

*A period of silence is observed after the reading.*

## Gospel

The children stand for the Gospel. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

### **A reading from the holy Gospel, according to Luke.**

One day, a huge crowd of people followed Jesus to a quiet, empty place. Jesus welcomed them and talked to them about God's kingdom.

When it started to get late, the disciples said to Jesus, "We should send the people away. They need to find food and a place to sleep."

But Jesus said to them, "You give them something to eat."

The disciples were worried. "But we only have five small loaves of bread and two little fish! That's not enough for all these people!"

Jesus told them, "Have everyone sit down on the grass in big groups."

Then Jesus took the five loaves and two fish. He looked up to heaven and said a blessing over the food. He broke the bread into pieces. Then he gave the food to his disciples to share with everyone.

Everyone ate as much as they wanted, and they were all full! And when they were finished, there was so much food left over that the disciples filled twelve big baskets.

At the end of the Gospel, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "The Gospel of the Lord."

### **The Gospel of the Lord.**

**Children: Praise to you, O Lord.**

## Reflection:

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions. An excellent place to begin is the question:

Good morning, children. Let's begin by making the Sign of the Cross.

### **What did we hear?**

I have a question for you.

### **What's your favourite food in the whole world?**

### **Is it pizza? Macaroni and cheese? Ice cream?**

Imagine you're hungry, like the crowd in our Gospel story. They were with Jesus all day and had nothing to eat. The disciples worried because they only had five loaves of bread and two fish—barely enough for one family! But Jesus wasn't worried. He took that small lunch, prayed, and shared it. A miracle happened: everyone ate until they were full, and there was food left over!

But Jesus gives us an even greater miracle: himself. At the Last Supper, he took bread and wine, saying, "This is my body" and "This is my blood." During Mass, the priest does the same, and the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus that feeds our souls.

The Eucharist fills our hearts with Jesus's love and helps us be kinder to others. When you're at Mass, pay attention when the priest holds up the bread and cup. If you've made your First Communion, receive Jesus with joy. If not, you can still pray quietly, saying, "Jesus, I love you. Please come into my heart."

Jesus gave us this gift because he loves us so much. It's the food of love that lasts forever!

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith. Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

## Alternative Reflection

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ is the ideal day to introduce the Eucharist. You may use the following questions or use your own.

**In the story, how much food did the disciples have at the beginning?**

**Was it a lot or a little?**

**What four special things did Jesus do with the bread and fish before sharing it?**

(He took it, blessed it, broke it, and gave it.)

**After Jesus blessed the food, did everyone get enough to eat?**

**What happened at the end showed how much food there was?** (A lot of leftovers!)

**At the Last Supper, what did Jesus say the bread and wine would become?**

**How is the miracle in the story like the even bigger miracle that happens at Mass?**

The bread in the story fed people's tummies. **What does the special bread at Mass, the Eucharist, feed?**

**When you watch the priest at Mass, do you see him do the same things Jesus did in the story?** (take, bless, break, give).

How do you think the people felt when Jesus gave them food when they were so hungry? How does it make you feel to know that Jesus wants to give you the special gift of Himself?

**What is one way you can show Jesus you are thankful for the gift of the Eucharist this week?**

**When we receive Jesus's love, it helps us to share that love with others. Who is one person you can share God's love with today?**

(If you have not yet made your First Communion): What is a special prayer you can say in your heart to Jesus during Communion time at Mass?

(If you have made your First Communion): What do you think about when you are about to receive Jesus in the Eucharist?

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith. Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

## The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who gave his life for us?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: I believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.



## Prayer of the Faithful

Leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. The leader may need to repeat and paraphrase the petition and conclude it with the cue for the response: we pray. All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

**Leader:** Jesus loves us so much that he gives himself to us as our special food.  
Let's bring all our prayers to him now.

After each prayer, we will say, "Lord, hear our prayer."

1. For our whole Church, that we will always thank God for the gift of Jesus in Holy Communion.  
We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
2. For our families, that we share the love we receive from Jesus with everyone we meet at home and at school.  
We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
3. For children all over the world who are hungry, that God will make help them through others have good food to eat.  
We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
4. For our priests, who give us the special gift of Jesus at Mass.  
We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
5. For all of us here, that we will always welcome Jesus.  
We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** Lord Jesus, you feed us with your Body and Blood. Thank you for listening to our prayers and for always being with us.

We ask this in your name. Amen.

**Leader:** Let's finish by making the Sign of the Cross together.

**All:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

## Return to the church.

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and think about what they have heard and are now doing. Be mindful of children having difficulty finding their families.

Readings: Lectionary for Sundays and Solemnities, CCCB, Ottawa, ON.  
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