



## Catechesis for Eucharist

The National Directory for Catechesis, Section 36(3), lays out our goals. “Since Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life,” (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, no.11) catechesis for the Eucharist recognizes it as the heart of Christian life for the whole Church, for the dioceses and parishes, and for each individual Christian. Dioceses and parishes should present lifelong catechesis for the Eucharist that

1. Helps people understand that the Eucharist is the mystery in which Christ’s sacrifice on the cross is perpetuated; that it is a memorial of Christ’s passion, death, and Resurrection; and that it is a sacred banquet in which the People of God share the benefits of the Paschal Mystery, renew the covenant that God has made through the blood of Christ, and anticipate the

heavenly banquet

2. Helps people understand that the work of salvation accomplished by these events is made present by the liturgical action that Christ himself offers in every celebration of the Eucharist
3. Teaches that through the priest – the other Christ – the bread and wine are transformed, through the Eucharistic Prayer, into the Body and Blood of Christ
4. Includes instruction that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ, his real presence under the appearance of bread and wine, and that the Eucharist nourishes the Body of Christ, the Church and each individual communicant
5. Teaches that Christ is present whole and entire, God and man, substantially and permanently, and in a unique way under the species of bread and wine
6. Teaches that Christ is also present in his word, in the body of the faithful gathered in his name, and in the person of the priest who acts in the person of Christ, the Head of his Body, the Church
7. Includes the effects of the sacrament: unity in the Body of Christ and provision of spiritual food for the Christian’s journey through life
8. Teaches that the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ signifies and effects communion with the most Holy Trinity, forgives venial sins, and, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, helps the communicant to avoid mortal sin
9. Helps the People of God to understand that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Eucharist forms the Church
10. Helps the faithful to understand that, in the Eucharist, “Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once and for all on the cross to his Father” (CCC 1407)
11. Gives instruction about the meaning of the ritual, symbols and parts of the Mass
12. Presents the Jewish roots of the Last Supper as the renewal of God’s covenant with his people in the blood of his beloved Son
13. Teaches that essential signs of the Eucharistic sacrament are bread and wine, on which the power of the Holy Spirit is invoked and over which the priest pronounces the words of consecration spoken first by Jesus during the Last Supper

14. Teaches that the “bread and wine are changes, a change traditionally and appropriately expressed by the word ‘Transubstantiation,’ so that, while the appearances of bread and wine remain the reality is the Body and Blood of Christ.” (NCD 121)
15. Teaches that the Eucharist commits those who receive it to serve the poor (CCC 1397)
16. Reminds the faithful that the Sacrament of the Eucharist is the preeminent sign of the unity of the Church
17. Teaches that the Eucharist is an effective sign of the unity of all Christians and that one day – that is, the Parousia – by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the divisions that separate Christians will be healed
18. Presents the guidelines for Eucharistic sharing that have been set forth by the United States Catholic Bishops (USCCB, *Guidelines for the Reception of Communion* [November 14, 1996]).
19. Considers the mystery of the Eucharist in all its fullness and consequently teaches that the celebration of the Eucharist in the sacrifice of the Mass is the origin and consummation of the worship shown the Blessed Sacrament outside of Mass (*Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*, Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, 1973)
20. Encourages visits to the Blessed Sacrament and other Eucharistic devotions, and teaches appropriate devotional gestures, postures, and proper conduct in church
21. Includes instruction on the implications of the Eucharist for the Church’s mission in the world and for social justice
22. Clarifies the roles and ministries within the sacred action so that all may experience full, active, and conscious participation in the celebration of the Mass
23. Includes an explanation of the theology and practice of celebrating the Eucharist in the Eastern Churches
24. Makes people aware of their obligation to be free of mortal sin before receiving Holy Communion
25. Teaches that Catholics must receive Holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter season
26. Recommends that the faithful receive Holy Communion when they participate in the celebration of the Eucharist
27. Instructs the faithful concerning the Eucharistic fast and the conditions under which Holy Communion may be received a second time on the same day
28. Instructs the faithful that we are called to realize that we become what we receive – which has great implications for how we live and act

National Directory for Catechesis, Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005

## *Preparing for First Communion*



Catechesis for Children's First Reception of Eucharist, Section 36(3a), states, "Children's preparation for the first reception of the Eucharist begins in the home... Parents also have the right and the duty to be involved in preparing their children for First Communion. The catechesis offered should help parents grow in their own understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist and enable them to catechize their children more effectively. Dioceses and parishes should present catechesis in preparation for the first reception of the Eucharist that"

1. Teaches that the Eucharist is the living memorial of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of all and the commemoration of his last meal with his disciples
2. Teaches not only "the truths of faith regarding the Eucharist but also how from First Communion on... they can as full members of Christ's Body take part actively with the People of God in the Eucharist, sharing in the Lord's table and the community of their brothers and sisters" (Directory for Masses with Children no.12)
3. Ensures that the baptized have been prepared, according to their capacity, for the Sacrament of Penance prior to their First Communion
4. Develops in children an understanding of the Father's love, of their participation in the sacrifice of Christ, and of the gift of the Holy Spirit
5. Teaches that the Holy Eucharist is the real body and blood, of Christ and that what appear to be bread and wine are actually His living body
6. Teaches the difference between the Eucharist and ordinary bread
7. Teaches the meaning of reception of the Holy Eucharist under both species of bread and wine
8. Helps them to participate actively and consciously in the Mass
9. Helps children to receive Christ's Body and Blood in an informed and reverent manner.