

Purposes of the Mass

Remembering that Jesus is present with us



TARGET AUDIENCE

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Overview

This Object highlights nine key 'purposes' of the Mass; each theme is developed and supported by a statement of Church teaching.

The multimedia element is an interactive illustrated 'map' of nine key statements describing the sacrament of Eucharist; clicking on each of the nine 'tiles' reveals a graphic with foundational information.

Teacher Background

Teachers are encouraged to review the 'Exploring the Mass' section of the DVD *Rom Become One Body One Spirit in Christ* to deepen their understanding of the scriptural, historical and theological foundations of the Eucharist.

In particular, the following aspects of *Become One Body One Spirit in Christ* provide entry points and context for this Learning Object:

- Read the introduction to the pathway 'Theological Reflections'. It would be pertinent to watch the videos in this pathway. Click on each of the bottoms to view them: 'The Received Tradition', 'Mystery', 'We go to God Together', 'Word and Table', 'Sacred Signs', 'Human Work and God's Work', and 'Liturgical Catechesis'.

Where appropriate, use this material with the students.

Supporting Content

This text supports the focus of the multimedia element.

Church documents describe the Mass as having many purposes, some of which we have described below.

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Supporting Content

The Mass is a time when Jesus is present with us.

'Christ is always present in the Church, especially in its Liturgical Celebrations.' (CSL no.7)

During the Mass, Jesus is present in the form of the Word, the bread and wine when it is changed into the Body and Blood, through the Priest and through us, the community, which has gathered together.

The Mass is a time when we pray through words, actions and gestures.

'We take part by acclamations, responses, songs, actions and gestures.' (CSL 30)

When we celebrate the Mass we participate through the words, actions and gestures.

The Mass is a time to listen and respond to God's Word.

'In the reading, God's word is laid before the people and the treasures of the Bible opened to them.' (GIRM 33-34)

During the Liturgy of the Word, we listen to the Word of God in the readings and the Gospel and then respond in prayer to each.

The Mass as a community of believers gathered together.

'For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.' (Mt 18:20)

The Mass is an opportunity for us to join together as a community of believers and pray and celebrate together.

The Mass is a memorial celebration.

The Eucharist is a 'memorial of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection.' (CCC 1330)

Jesus instructed his apostles to 'Do this in memory of me' at the Last Supper, and so we memorialise Jesus' Death and Resurrection at every Eucharistic celebration. The words and actions of the Last Supper are repeated during every Mass at the Eucharistic Prayer.

The Mass is a thanksgiving celebration.

The Eucharist is an action of thanksgiving.' (CCC 1328)

The word Eucharist means thanksgiving. When we celebrate the Mass we are participating in a thanksgiving celebration. We give thanks for all that had been given to us by God, particularly the gift that is Jesus.

The Mass is a time when we share and celebrate our faith in Jesus.

'We gather at Mass that we may hear and express our faith.' (Music in Catholic Worship no.1)

In addition to being an opportunity to celebrate and express our faith in Jesus,

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Supporting Content

the Mass is a time when our faith in Jesus is shared and has the opportunity to grow and develop. Through listening to the Word and the Priest's homily, we are able to draw closer in our faith in Jesus and develop a greater understanding of the life of Jesus.

The Mass is a time to share and to be nourished by God's gifts.

'Take; this is my body... this is my blood of the covenant.' (Mk 14:22-25)

The Mass is a shared celebration where our faith is nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ, just as it is nourished through listening to the Word.

The Mass challenges us to go out and live as Jesus would.

'We are sent forth to live the Gospel in our daily lives.' (Directory for Mass with Children no.54)

At the end of Mass we are called to go out into the world and take our beliefs in Jesus and our knowledge of His life out into our own lives and to live a truly Christian life.

For Reflection and Discussion: Ideas for Use

Select one or more of the following activities for students to complete.

- 1 **Invite a range of people to speak to the class about what the Eucharist means to them.**
- 2 **Discuss with the students one of the themes of the Eucharist portrayed in the multimedia element before and after attending the celebration of the Eucharist as a class.**

Before every Mass investigate and further discuss one of the themes of the Eucharist. Participate in the Mass with a particular focus on that theme and when you return from the Mass discuss what you saw, heard and felt that made that theme evident.

- 3 **Invite the students to reflect on the following questions:**
 - Who are some people that you see when you go to Mass?
 - When you are at Mass, what helps you to remember that Jesus is with you?
 - What do you like doing at Mass that shows God that you are praying?
 - Who do you like to talk to about Jesus?
 - When you go to Mass, can you see a cross that helps us remember Jesus?
 - When you pray, do you remember to thank God for everything He has given you?

Purposes of the Mass

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- When you say *Amen*, which means 'I believe', do you say it like you mean it?
- What is your favourite food – that nourishes your body?
- What is your favourite part of Mass – that nourishes your heart and soul?
- What can you do to show others God's love?

Teacher Professional Development Resources

Zenit, ['Interview With President of Pontifical Liturgical Institute – On the Meaning of the Mass'](#), 2005