

# FROM MASS TO MISSION

Understanding the Mass and Its  
Significance for Our Christian Life

for Children



JOYCE DONAHUE

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The title of this booklet was inspired by *Dies Domini*, 45. The cover of this book presents a metaphorical illustration depicting that we are sent from Mass as disciples called by Christ to be his light in the world (see Matthew 28:16–20).

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# Chapter 1

## Why Is Mass Important?



### Mass Is Special!

Did you know that going to Mass is one of the most special things you can do for yourself, your family, and friends? At Mass, Catholics work to become the people God wants us to be.

### We go to Mass to:

- thank God for everything he has given us;
- learn more about God and how he wants us to live;
- remember that Christ died to save us from sin and death;
- receive Christ in the **Eucharist** so he can live inside us and make us more like him;
- be sent out to live what Christ taught and to share that with others.

This book will help you learn to love the Mass by showing how you can be an active part of the Mass and not just someone who sits and watches it take place.

Christ is really  
at Mass!



## Mass Is Where We Meet Christ

Going to Mass is so important that the Church wants every Catholic to go, especially on Sundays (or Saturday night) — and on **Holy-days of Obligation**. Sometimes you may even attend Mass during the week. No matter when you go, everything you do at home, at school, or at play during your week is made more holy by what you hear, say, eat, and drink at Mass. Why? Because we meet Christ in every Mass.

**Christ is present at Mass in four ways:**

1. In the Eucharist
2. In the priest
3. In the Word of God
4. In the people



## We All Participate at Mass

When we gather for Mass, we are not an audience, watching the priest and **ministers** “do” the Mass. It is what we all do together. You have a special part in that holy work.

We call that **participation** — being part of the action. Think about it. If you are on a sports team, you’d rather play than sit on the bench, right? If you are in a band or a choir, you want to make music.

If you are at a party, you want to be part of the fun.

You are part of the Mass when you sing, listen, say the **responses**, and pray. When every-

one in church puts their voices together, it makes one big sound of God’s people praying. When we praise God, we join the crowd



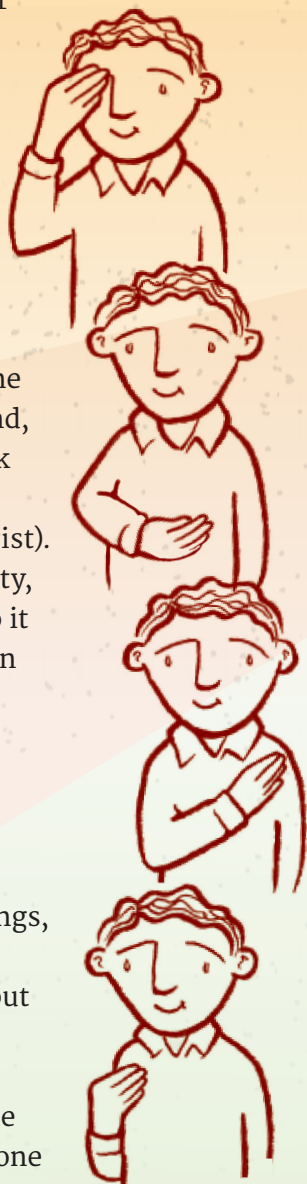
### Reflect and Share

Choose one of the four ways Christ is present at Mass and tell your parents why you think it is important.

cheering for the “winning team.” Just like your team or group needs you to be at its best, your Church community needs your voice at Mass. Don’t be left out!

## Pray with Your Whole Body

To be fully a part of Mass, you should also pray with your whole self. With our bodies, we make the **Sign of the Cross**, stand, sit and kneel, and walk to the altar to receive **Communion** (Eucharist). If, because of disability, you are not able to do it all, do what you can in your own best way.



## We Listen, Speak, Believe, and Live as God’s People

Listen with your whole heart at Mass. Why? If you let him, God can use the prayers, readings, and the Eucharist to make you a better, more loving person — someone who is not selfish but who helps others in the name of Christ.

You don’t do this alone. When you were baptized, you became part of God’s family, the Church. Say your responses along with everyone else. Why? Because everything we pray at Mass is what we believe together. The faith we share at Mass shapes how we as Catholics live together as God’s holy people, working to make a better world.

## Prayer Activity



Close your eyes and remember something about Mass that feels holy or special. Write a sentence or two, or draw a picture in the space below to show this. Sit quietly and thank God in your heart.

### Pray with Your Family:

Dear God,  
you sent your Son to offer his life for us  
and to tell us to remember him in the Mass.  
We thank you for Christ in the Eucharist.  
We thank you for our priests, who help us see Christ.  
We thank you for letting us be your people and for  
your love for us.  
Make us more holy by the work we do at Mass.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## To Do This Week

Next time you are at Mass, join in singing the songs and saying your responses. If you still need to learn some of the parts of the Mass, just do your best. God wants to hear you!



## Family Connection

- Discuss how you can make Sunday Mass a special part of your weekend family time.
- Sit down together with the family calendar and plan when you can go to Mass. Be flexible. You may attend a different Mass each weekend in order to accommodate your busy schedules. If you will be out of town, look on the Internet for a Catholic church near where you plan to be. Mark the time and place on the calendar. Plan to do this at the beginning of every month.
- Think about your own childhood experience of attending Mass. Did you attend Mass with your family? What do you remember most about that? How can you make the experience of Mass “friendlier” for your child? Talk about this with your child.

# Chapter 2

## We Get Ready for Mass

### Preparing Yourself

Think about how you get ready for other events by doing the activity at the bottom of page 7. Compare this to going to Mass. Mass is a special event too. You are going to meet Christ! We get ourselves ready for Mass on both the outside and on the inside.

**On the outside, you show respect to God and other people at church by doing these things:**

- Be sure you are clean — especially your hands — to receive Communion.
- Dress in clean clothes that are appropriate for going to church. Ask your parents to help you choose suitable clothing.
- Do not eat anything (including chewing gum) for one hour before Mass. You may drink water.
- **Genuflect** as you enter church if the **tabernacle** is in the room. (Christ is present in the tabernacle.) If the tabernacle is not near the altar you bow to the altar.
- Be friendly to other worshippers, but quiet as you wait for Mass to start. It is best not to disturb people who are praying.

### FUN FACT

We fast before Mass so that Christ will fill us!

