

# FROM MASS TO MISSION

Understanding the Mass and Its  
Significance for Our Christian Life

LEADER'S GUIDE



TRISH SULLIVAN VANNI

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*Nihil Obstat*

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In fond memory of Rev. Kevin Seasoltz, OSB, who taught that our gracious God lives for giving, especially in the Eucharist.  
—PSV and DAN

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The title of this book was inspired by *Dies Domini*, 45. The cover of this book presents a metaphorical illustration depicting that we are sent from Mass as disciples enlightened by the light of Christ.

This book was edited by Danielle A. Noe, MDIV. Christian Rocha was the production editor, Anna Manhart was the designer, and Kari Nicholls was the production artist. Juan Alberto Castillo was the designer and production artist for the materials on the DVD.

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# Welcome!

In *From Mass to Mission: Understanding the Mass and Its Significance for Our Christian Life* we read that ever since the Lord's Death and Resurrection, his followers have gathered on the Lord's Day "in small groups or large, in spaces that are soaring and grand or modest and humble, . . . to share this holy meal together. For Catholics, this is the celebration of the Mass. We leave home. We gather with friends and strangers. We enact a predictable ritual, and we change in unpredictable ways. We place all the events of the past week inside that Mass to offer them for the glory of God. We prepare for the duties of the coming week and seek their sanctification. We discard from our lives what keeps us from Christ, and we retain what makes us good disciples."

For many people, going to Sunday Mass is simply something they "do" as good Catholics. Keeping the Lord's Day holy is something they were taught as children, and attending Mass is simply matter of fact. But even if you're very committed to participating, it's easy to get out of touch with the wonder and gift of it all, and the ways in which we are changed unpredictably.

This *Leader's Guide* is a companion to the booklet *From Mass to Mission: Understanding the Mass and Its Significance for Our Christian Life* by Trish Sullivan Vanni with Paul Turner. It provides a thoughtful window into the meaning of the Mass, the theology that helps us understand it more fully, and an opportunity to become even more engaged participants in this important weekly (or daily) liturgy.

In this *Leader's Guide*, you'll find five session outlines with an opening and closing prayer, discussion sparkers, teaching points, and social media suggestions. Each session outline is tied to a video provided on the accompanying DVD. There are even materials to help you easily market *From Mass to Mission: Understanding the Mass and its Significance for Our Christian Life* in your parish—bulletin inserts, flyers, e-mails, etc. Our hope is that the rich resources

of this *Leader's Guide* along with the participant book will empower you to create a wonderful experience for the adult learners with whom you are working.

Thank you for being part of passing on the beauty and meaning of the Eucharist as experienced in the Mass. This powerful sacrament is a transformative gift of sacrifice and love from our Lord Jesus Christ. May your journey with your participants not only deepen their faith, wonder, and action, but yours, as well.

—Trish Sullivan Vanni



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## About the Participant's Booklet

There are a number of ways that you can use the booklet *From Mass to Mission: Understanding the Mass and Its Significance for Our Christian Life*. You can simply distribute it, encouraging people to read it and use it at home. Many people are busy or question the value of coming to a workshop or learning session, and reading on their own is appreciated.

You might consider making the booklet available in the church vestibule, pamphlet kiosk, or parish office. Consider giving copies to liturgical ministers, worship commission members, parish staff, ministers to the homebound, Christian Initiation sponsors or team members, and other adult faith sharing groups. Similarly, the book can be particularly valuable for parents of those preparing for first Communion who may need a refresher on the Eucharist. Daily Mass attendees, who already feel a deep connection, will appreciate the detail and the theological insight the booklet offers.



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## Using the Leader's Guide

This *Leader's Guide* will help you to create a five-session learning experience that ties the participant's booklet to a larger group experience and deepens their personal and communal connection to the liturgy. Each of the session outlines are tied to a teaching segment on the accompanying DVD. You will be able to choose from the suggested activities to augment the learning of participants. Each session outline includes the following:

- formation/teaching objectives
- list of materials needed and preparation reminders
- video for each session
- references to DVD for supplemental materials
- opening and closing prayer
- topical teaching points
- discussion sparkers
- movie suggestions
- preparation suggestions for each session
- advertising ideas for each session
- postsession social media ideas

You can use the included sessions to build a daylong or weekend retreat, pulling together a focus that best meets the needs of those with whom you are working. By selecting activities, prayers, and more, you can provide participants with a wonderful immersion into the meaning and beauty of the Mass. Each session is designed to be no more than an hour.

Consider adding activities and segments of *From Mass to Mission* as a mystagogical experience for those who were recently initiated at the Easter Vigil. Invite their sponsors, formation ministers, and others accompanying them on their journey. Provide this opportunity during Easter Time to break open the mystery of the Mass.

These sessions can be the heart of an enrichment experience for those participating in liturgical ministries. You can also use the material to support parents and guardians as they form the children they love for first Communion. Ideas for learning and for sharing experiences with children are also incorporated in this *Leader's Guide*.

Since the Church teaches that the Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life” (*Lumen gentium*, 11), you might consider incorporating these sessions into parish staff meetings or scheduling a retreat for the *entire* parish staff. Doing so will help situate the ministerial efforts of the entire parish as flowing from the Eucharist itself, thus creating welcoming, loving, and evangelizing communities.

This *Leader's Guide* provides significantly more approaches to learning, participant activities, and narrative material about the Eucharist than you'll need. You can follow each session closely or customize it to meet the particular needs or interests of your group (for example, substituting hymns with which they are familiar through the worship of your community for the contemporary hymns we suggest). You know the adults in your community best.



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## Using the DVD

The DVD provided in this *Leader's Guide* includes supplemental materials for adult formation as well as PDF bulletin inserts, flyers, and letters for advertising formation opportunities for youth in the parish or school as well as connecting with parents and guardians. The PDF files are editable so that you may customize the text to your parish's needs. These files may also be posted on the parish or school website, social media page, or blog; sent by e-mail; or printed and sent by mail. The opening and closing prayers for each session are provided as separate PDFs to print and place in ritual binders. PowerPoint slides for each session and memes to post and prompt discussion on Facebook (and other social media sites) are also provided.

To access the files on the DVD you must use a computer with a DVD drive. Select “start-here” and an interactive menu will open. The files are organized on the menu in this way:

- Bulletin Inserts
- Flyers
- Letters and e-mails
- Opening and Closing Prayer
- PowerPoint Slides
- Social Media Resources
- Resources for Parent or Guardian First Communion Retreat
- Videos

## Videos

The DVD includes a series of five short videos about the Mass as well as a promotional video for parishes to use to help advertise the *From Mass to Mission* experience in your parish. Each video corresponds to the material provided in the booklet *From Mass to Mission: Understanding the Mass and Its Significance for Our Christian Life* and includes interviews with noted theologians, liturgists, and Catholics with additional information about the Mass. The videos are intended to be shown in your formation session. Suggestions for incorporating the videos are provided in each session outline in this *Leader’s Guide*. You may upload the videos to your parish website, blog, or social media page. Directions for playing and uploading the videos to a website are found on the DVD (select “Videos” and then “How to Play or Upload the Videos”). The videos may be played on your computer with a DVD drive.



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## Leading Formation Sessions with Adults

While adult faith formation is about content, it is even more about relationship. When you gather, you want to create a space in which participants can be at home, socialize, and connect. The following ideas will help you to create a deep experience for all involved.

### Using the Participant’s Booklet at Sessions

The book, *From Mass to Mission: Understanding the Mass and Its Significance for Our Christian Life*, provides valuable information that will enable people to participate more fully in each learning session. Encourage each participant to bring their book every time they gather, and support couples in each having their own book. Participants will use the book for some of the activities. They should not shy away from writing in the book, highlighting paragraphs or single sentences that strike them, or taking notes in the margins. By doing so, they will capture some of the group learning experience and can refresh their memories down the line when they come back to the book for any reason.

### Environment

Consider setting up a prayer corner in the room in which you are meeting, with a small altar cloth in the color of the liturgical season and a table cross. Light a candle. These simple additions can convey to participants that while this is a learning experience, it is also an experience of being a community of faith.

## Hospitality

The Gospel accounts reveal to us that Jesus was quite social. An itinerant preacher and teacher, he made his way from community to community gathering his followers, often around the fellowship of meals. Connecting over food is an essential human experience, one that we honor every time we come together to participate in the Lord's Supper. Consider simple hospitality for your group. If you meet Sunday mornings after Mass, offer coffee and pastries, bagels, or doughnuts. If you meet in the evenings, offer beverages and cookies or pastries, or provide bowls of candy on the table.

## Honor the Time Commitment

Time is a precious commodity nowadays. Even if you have to stop an exercise or experience earlier than you think ideal, it is important to end on time. Many people are aware of promises to return home to spouses and children. Others may be aware that a workday is looming and they have things to prepare. Some are moving on to other obligations after your session. Respecting a start and finish time will support your group in honoring their promise to be present.

## Use Nametags

Often, our parishes are places where people pray in anonymity. Participants may find that they have friends in the room (particularly if they are part of a session for parents and guardians of a child preparing for first Communion). However, many people will know no one. Help everyone be comfortable in using and getting to know each other's names by supplying nametags.

## Electronic Devices

Start each session by respectfully asking that people turn off their phones or other devices. If they cannot do this (for example, a baby sitter might call), they should put them on silent, but please do not leave them on the table top. If they balk, observe that three world leaders—President Obama, President Hollande, and Prime Minister David Cameron—all have a no-phone policy in meetings. They are left at the door with a sticky note with the owner's name.

## Small Groups

When we are asked to place ourselves in small groups, it's completely understandable that we gravitate to friends. It's a rare person who will turn to a group of people with whom they are not well acquainted to form a discussion group. However, when we are gathered as God's people, the Church, there are no "insiders" and no "outsiders." To help people bridge their friend circles to new people, you may have to structure the discussion groups in advance. You can do this by placing numbers on their nametags or using place cards. The latter can be particularly helpful if you'd like to mix the groups up from week to week. Generally speaking, once adults take their seat and settle in, they don't like having to gather up their belongings and move.

## Affirm Confidentiality

The sessions will be livelier if participants feel that it is safe for them to express their opinions or to raise their questions. Whenever a group gathers for learning and conversation, it is helpful to set ground rules—or norms—to set expectations and shape behaviors. By making these rules explicit at the beginning of working together, the group has a sense of how to behave and the leader has a place to point to when participants stray from their agreements.





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## Planning, Logistics, and Advertising

Select a coordinator or formation team to deliver *From Mass to Mission: Understanding the Mass and Its Significance for Our Christian Life*. The *From Mass to Mission* learning experience is appropriate to any season of the liturgical year, and can also be used as a special experience during Lent or for parents of children preparing for first Communion.

- Start by developing a calendar for your sessions. *From Mass to Mission* can be done in a variety of ways. It can be presented as a multiday learning experience or used to create the heart of a special morning or day-long retreat.
- Decide on dates, time, and locations with sensitivity to other activities happening in the parish and the greater community. You don't want to calendar a retreat, for example, on the weekend of the parish festival or the weekend on which Super Bowl Sunday occurs.
- There are flyer, bulletin insert, and letter and e-mail templates on the DVD for you to use to promote the experience to those you are hoping to attract.
- Purchase copies of *From Mass to Mission: Understanding the Mass and Its Significance for Our Christian Life* and distribute them to participants. You will want to have these in hands at least two weeks before you plan on meeting.
- Recruit a team who will host and facilitate the experience.
  - You may know people who already have a deep relationship with the Eucharist. For example, you could invite those who serve your parish as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to participate.
- These people should be coached to be committed listeners, not participants. By this we mean that their job is to be enthusiastic welcomers, great listeners in small group (if you have enough adults to have one per group). They should be encouraged to monitor how much they share in the small groups and be encouraged to keep the space open for participants—even if that means that there is occasional silence.
- See if you can identify particular gifts or interests in your adult leaders. A parish cantor or guitarist who is comfortable leading the suggested music; a reader who would be willing to proclaim the reading during the opening prayer. Some will be super at hospitality logistics. Invite those who are sharing in this ministerial experience to contribute from their strengths as disciples. Consider putting together a list of possible ways people can contribute, like those just mentioned, to provide entry points for your adults.
- Request that parishioners RSVP so that you will know how many booklets to purchase, name tags to print, and so on.
- To distribute *From Mass to Mission: Understanding the Mass and Its Significance for Our Christian Life* you can do one of the following:
  - Mail the booklets. This will allow people to prepare in advance for the first session, something that is particularly valuable to more introverted participants.
  - Distribute the booklets to participants when they gather. If you do this, we suggest printing out two sets of label-style name tag sheets. Put one of the labels with the participants name on the back of the book. That way, the inevitably abandoned copies can find their way home.
- At least six weeks in advance, begin using your bulletin, website, and Mass announcements to make the community aware of this adult learning opportunity.
- This *Leader's Guide* provides you with promotional materials and follow-up approaches for each session you convene so that you can get them to your community in a timely manner.

# Chapter One: Why Go to Mass?

## Session 1 Outline



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### Advertising before Session 1

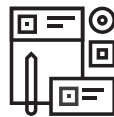
You will need to advertise the *From Mass to Mission* experience in your parish. Consider whether you will be hosting this event as a retreat or as a series of five sessions. Bulletin inserts, flyers, and letters and e-mails are found on the DVD. Select the options for “Retreat,” “Initial Promotion for Five Sessions,” and “Session 1.”



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### Objectives

- ❖ Develop a more mature understanding of what is accomplished for humanity in the Eucharist.
- ❖ Introduce core theological principles regarding the Mass.
- ❖ The liturgy is the source and summit of our faith.
- ❖ Full, conscious, and active participation at Mass.
- ❖ See the connection between participating at Mass and participating in the world
- ❖ The structure of the Mass.



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### Preparation Items

- snacks and beverages (pastries, soft drinks, coffee, water)
- hospitality minister(s) to greet people as they arrive
- name tags
- computer, screen, and projector
- DVD or Blu-ray player and TV
- Session 1 video
- PowerPoint for Session 1 (show slide #1 as people gather)
- *Babette's Feast* (optional movie)
- prayer space has been prepared
- ritual binders for opening/closing prayer
- Lectionary #68B
- music for prayer
- volunteers for leading prayer, leading music, and proclaiming the Gospel
- closing prayer
- *From Mass to Mission: Understanding the Mass and Its Significance for Our Christian Life*, chapter one



## Opening Prayer

Be sure to prepare the environment before leading this session. The session leader leads prayer. You will want to find a volunteer to proclaim the reading. Invite a parish cantor (and instrumentalist, if possible) to lead all in an opening song about discipleship that is familiar to your parishioners. Suggestions are “I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say” (KINGSFOLD), “Come to Me” by J. Michael Joncas (GIA Publications), “Bring Forth the Kingdom” by Marty Haugen (GIA Publications), “We Will Serve the Lord” by Rory Cooney (GIA Publications), “The Servant Song” by Richard Gillard (GIA Publications), or “As a Fire Is Meant for Burning” (BEACH SPRING). Make sure enough hymnals or song sheets (be sure to secure proper copyright permission) are in place for all to participate. You might consider printing the PDF of the opening prayer and place it in a ritual binder for both the leader and the reader. The opening prayer for Session 1 is found on the DVD. Or the reader may use Lectionary #68B. Place the binder or Lectionary on a podium before prayer for the reader.

*Invite all to stand and sing the opening song.*

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

**All:** Amen.

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according  
to Mark. *1:14–20*

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

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips,  
and heart.*

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated. Invite participants to reflect on the Gospel in small groups. Ask: What does it mean to follow Jesus? How is this call connected to the Mass? Invite the small groups to share with the larger group. Then conclude the opening prayer and reflection with the prayer below.*

**Leader:** Loving God,  
we thank you for the time we have together  
and the gift of one another.  
Soften our hearts that we may more fully feel  
your love for us.  
Open our ears so that we can hear in new  
ways about the gift of the Eucharist.  
Help us know you so well that  
we are confident  
in carrying your message of hope and love to  
the world.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

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

**All:** Amen.



## Discussions and Reflections

### Reflection on Chapter One

In small groups, ask participants to share their reactions to chapter one in *From Mass to Mission* by Trish Sullivan Vanni. Slide #2 in the PowerPoint for Session 1 includes these discussion sparkers: What struck you? What was new to you? What inspired you? Invite participants to share their reflections with the larger group. Other questions are found in the booklet on page 10.

### The Importance of Mass and Video

Break into small groups. Before showing the video for chapter one, show slide #3 and ask the following question: Why do you go to Mass? Why do you think going to Mass is important? Discuss as a small group. Show the video for Session 1. After watching the video, show slide #4 and ask: What is your reaction to the ideas presented in the video? Which do you find compelling? Which does your parish live out well in their celebrations of the Mass? What areas could be improved? After the discussion, invite the smaller groups to share with the larger group.

### Liturgy as Source and Summit

In order to understand the Mass more fully, we need to understand its importance and place in the life of the Church. The video you just watched offered insight into the ways Catholics understand the Eucharist. Show slide #5 and refer to the booklet, page 8. Note that the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* was the first document of the Second Vatican Council. This document sets the stage for all post-Conciliar liturgical theology and teaches that “the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all the Church’s power flows” (10). This powerful statement places the Eucharist in the heart of the Church’s life (a similar quote is included in *Lumen gentium*, 11, as noted in the booklet on page 8).

Show slide #6 and ask: Have you ever reached a summit? What was it like? What does that image evoke for you when you think of the Eucharist? After the discussion, invite the smaller groups to share with the larger group. Then show slide #7 and ask: Have you ever come to a fountain? What made that memorable? What does that image for the Eucharist evoke? How does this relate to the Mass? How is the Mass both the source and summit of your own life? After the discussion, invite the smaller groups to share with the larger group.

### Full, Conscious, and Active Participation

Refer to page 8 in the booklet. Emphasize that participating at Mass is the most important act that Catholics do and it involves certain responsibilities that come from our Baptism, including active participation. Show slide #8 in the PowerPoint. Again, we hear from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. Read the quote: “The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people’ (1 Peter 2:9; see cf. 2:4–5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism” (14).

Show slide #9 and ask small groups: What does “full, conscious, and active participation” mean to you? Do you participate actively in the Mass? Why or why not? Why is participating at Mass important? What do you need, or need to let go of, in order to do better? Is there a connection between participating at Mass and participating in the world? Why or why not? How? After the discussion, invite the smaller groups to share with the larger group.

### Eucharist as Meal

Refer to page 1 in the booklet and show slide #10. Read the passage from Matthew 26. Emphasize that we gather in memory of Jesus. Before embracing his Passion and Death, Jesus gathered his disciples and instituted this holy meal. He took the bread and said the blessing, broke the bread, and shared it; he took a cup of wine, blessed

it, and shared it. His promise was that whenever this was done in remembrance of him, he would be there, and his followers would become one body in him.

Show slide #11. For many of us, the natural connection between our communal celebration of the Eucharist and the family meal has been eroded. The Eucharist is a sacrifice, and it is also a meal, and it is challenging to confer the importance of the latter in an age where there is a breakdown in the family meal. Many young people grab meals on the fly, or eat by themselves at a kitchen counter or in front of the television. The family meal has traditionally been a place to come together, share about the day, discuss news and generally reconnect. The Catholic Mass is a sacrifice and it also is a fellowship meal. Encourage adults to consider making dinner for their family one day this week, gathering people at a table with a nice setting, including a candle, and a prayer of thanksgiving.

Refer to slide #11 and ask: What challenges dinner time for you? Have you ever connected your experience at home around a meal to that of gathering for the Eucharist? After the discussion, invite the smaller groups to share with the larger group.

## The Parts of the Mass

Show slide #12. Note the repetitious nature of the Mass:

- The Introductory Rites
- The Liturgy of the Word
- The Liturgy of the Eucharist
- The Concluding Rites

Show slide #13 and ask: Prior to this session, did you know that the Mass has four parts? Are there parts of the Mass that grab and keep your attention? Parts that cause you to lose your focus? What are they? Why do some parts keep your focus? After the discussion, invite the smaller groups to share with the larger group.

Note that at the next session we will focus on the meaning of the Introductory Rites.

## Final Discussion

Show slide #14 and ask small groups to discuss these questions: How are you relating to what you are learning and reflecting on about the Mass? Do you see this as an opportunity to change your understanding of the Mass? How does what you are learning today differ from what you were taught as a child?

## Optional Movie

If your session is taking place within a longer retreat, you might consider showing the movie *Babette's Feast* (G) followed by large group discussion. This Danish film won the Academy Award for "Best Foreign Language Film" in 1997. *Babette's Feast* is about austerity and celebration, solitude and community, and so much more. A film with strong Eucharistic themes, it could be shown followed by discussion as part of your retreat, if time allows.



## Preparing for the Next Session

Mass is so much more than a "Sunday obligation." Read this quote from a 2014 General Audience with Pope Francis (aloud and slowly): "Dear friends, we don't ever thank the Lord enough for the gift he has given us in the Eucharist! It is a very great gift, and that is why it is so important to go to Mass on Sunday. Go to Mass not just to pray, but to receive Communion, the bread that is the Body of Jesus Christ who saves us, forgives us, and unites us to the Father. It is a beautiful thing to do!"

At the end of the session say: This week, note which events in your life seem most significant, gathering them to bring with you next Sunday. See if you find connections between your experiences and what is available in Mass. Participants may also reflect on the questions found on page 19 in their booklet. Ask them to bring their reflections to the next session and read chapter two in *From Mass to Mission*.

Tell participants to check out the parish Facebook page for an online discussion (see below under Social Media).

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## Closing Prayer

The closing prayer is found on PowerPoint slide #15 and in the PDF for the opening and closing prayer.

**Leader:** We close with a prayer from St. Ephrem of Syria, a deacon, writer of hymns, and theologian of the fourth century. His hymns were written to provide catechesis, and some even warn against heresies. Let us pray together:

Open your heart,  
learn in detail  
his sufferings  
and say to yourself:  
God who is without sin  
today was given up,  
today was mocked,  
today was abused,  
today was struck,  
today was scourged,  
today wore  
a crown of thorns,  
today was crucified,  
he, the heavenly Lamb.  
Amen.



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## Advertising the Next Session

Bulletin inserts, flyers, letters and e-mails are found on the DVD. You will need to send those for Session 2.



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## Social Media Discussion

Social media is a good way to continue online conversations after your session or retreat, build community, and encourage other parishioners to attend the next session. Post any of the following memes and discussion sparkers on the parish Facebook page. The memes may also be posted on Pinterest and Twitter. They are found on the DVD (click on “Social Media Resources”).

- Upload Meme 1A with this status message: *Did you go to Mass this weekend? Why? What brings you there? What holds you to that practice? Has anything ever intruded on that commitment? #masstomission*
- Upload Meme 1B with this status message: *What does it mean to be openhearted? Why is that a quality we bring to Mass? #masstomission*
- Upload Meme 1C with this status message: *What do you remember about your first Communion? What made that day special for you and important to your family and community? #masstomission*
- Upload Meme 1D with this status message: *Are you tolerant of mystery? Is it easy for you to dwell in it? What do you think helps people experience mystery? What impedes this experience? #masstomission*
- Upload Meme 1E with this status message: *As you drive or walk to Mass, imagine the great “cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1) that have gone before you in faith. Who stands out to you? Why? #masstomission*
- With your smart phone, take a picture of the front door of your church with this status message: *Waiting to be opened for you. #masstomission*