



Eucharistic Lenten Calendar Teacher/Parent Discussion Guide

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Basic Discussion

This Lent let us include Jesus in the Eucharist in every single one of our days! Let us make Him an important part of our days!

You will receive a calendar showing each day of Lent and three Eucharistic ways to include Jesus in your days.

[There are two versions of the Eucharistic Lenten Calendar. One version is a path from Ash Wednesday to Easter with coloring and drawing. It should be printed on purple paper. The other version is an actual calendar in which the youth simply mark off their day's Eucharistic time.]

Your number one goal is to pray an **Act of Spiritual Communion** every single day of Lent [Point out the prayer's words on the calendar.]

Praying an Act of Spiritual Communion extends the graces of your last in-person Communion. Once you have prayed your Act of Spiritual Communion for the day, you can color that day's Eucharist white (or mark it off on your calendar).

[For the littlest: They can express the **desire** to have Jesus come spiritually into their heart, even if they can't read the actual prayer. They can pray something simpler, such as, "Jesus, I know you are the Eucharist. I love You. Come to my heart."]

In addition to reminding you to pray an Act of Spiritual Communion every day, the Eucharistic Lenten Calendar also encourages you to spend time with our Eucharistic King by attending Mass AND visiting Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration.

If you go to Mass, you will draw a circle around that day's Eucharist on your calendar (or mark it off on your calendar). When you go to Adoration, you will draw the rays of the monstrance around that day's Eucharist (or mark it off your calendar).

You can do all three in one day if you wish! Pray an Act of Spiritual Communion, go to Mass, and visit Jesus in Adoration. On those days you would color the day's Eucharist white, draw a circle around it, and then draw the rays of the monstrance off the circle. There is a key on the calendar to help you remember how to mark your days.

More In-Depth Discussion

Something special is going on in our country right now. The entire United States is in the middle of a three-year Eucharistic Revival.

The Eucharistic Revival hopes to encourage all people, especially Catholics, to think about the Eucharist more and more. The Revival hopes that all people will start to take more interest in Jesus in the Eucharist. There is great hope that people will make the Eucharist an important part of their everyday life . . . that the Eucharist becomes something they cannot live without. The hope is that over these three years that Jesus, the Blessed Sacrament, also known as the Eucharist, becomes wildly and endlessly popular!

This Lent let us include Jesus in the Eucharist in every single one of our days! Let us make Him an important part of our days!

You will receive a calendar showing each day of Lent and three Eucharistic ways to include Jesus in your days.

[There are two versions of the Eucharistic Lenten Calendar. One version is a path from Ash Wednesday to Easter with coloring and drawing. It should be printed on purple paper. The other version is an actual calendar in which the youth simply mark off their Eucharistic choices.]

An Act of Spiritual Communion

Your number one goal is to pray an **Act of Spiritual Communion** every single day of Lent. [Point out the prayer's words on the calendar.]

Once you have prayed your Act of Spiritual Communion for the day, you can color that day's Eucharist white (or mark it off on your calendar).

Questions to Engage:

What is an Act of Spiritual Communion?

Have you ever prayed an Act of Spiritual Communion? (Many of us prayed it during the pandemic while we watched Mass virtually.)

Who remembers the words of the prayer?

When should you pray an Act of Spiritual Communion? (When you are sick and unable to attend Mass, when you have unconfessed mortal sin, plus anytime!)

Do we only pray an Act of Spiritual Communion when we are sick and miss Mass?

Praying an Act of Spiritual Communion extends the graces of your last in-person Communion. [These graces are discussed in more detail below.] Even if you are not old enough to receive Communion, you can still pray the Act of Spiritual Communion to join your heart with Jesus in the Eucharist.

[For the littlest: They can express the **desire** to have Jesus come spiritually into their heart, even if they can't read the actual prayer. They can pray something simpler, such as, "Jesus, I know you are the Eucharist. I love You. Come to my heart."]

Saint John Paul II revealed praying an Act of Spiritual Communion helps "*cultivate in our hearts a constant desire for the sacrament of the Eucharist.*"¹ Another way to say this is, praying an Act of Spiritual Communion frequently helps our heart to love and wish for Jesus in the Eucharist **all** the time. It helps our hearts and souls to crave receiving the Eucharist like our body craves drinking water when we are thirsty. Just like our body needs water to live, our soul needs the Eucharist. So when you pray your Act of Spiritual Communion, don't rush through it. Say it slowly, think about the words of the prayer, and say it with love for Jesus in your heart.

St. Leonard of Port Maurice said, "*If you practice the holy exercise of spiritual Communion several times each day, within a month you will see your heart completely changed.*"

If you color in the Eucharist on your calendar every day of Lent, you will have prayed an Act of Spiritual Communion 46 days in a row which is a month and a half.

Questions to Engage:

How might your heart be changed by the end of Lent?

Do you think this practice can help you to know and do God's will better?

Do you think this practice can give you courage in situations to do His will even when it is hard?

St. Maximilian Kolby prayed an Act of Spiritual Communion twenty times an hour!

¹ Ecclesia de Eucharistia

Questions to Engage:

What must his heart have been like?

Do you think that influenced his choices in the concentration camp? [Volunteering to take the place of the man condemned to starve to death]

Do you think other saints and people even living today pray an Act of Spiritual Communion frequently? (In a vision, Jesus showed St. Catherine of Siena two chalices: one made of gold, the other of silver. He told her that her sacramental Communion was preserved in the gold chalice and that her spiritual communions were in the silver chalice. He said, “Both chalices are quite pleasing to me.”)

Jesus told Blessed Jane of the Cross, “As often as you make a spiritual Communion I send you a grace which is in a measure similar to the grace which I grant you in sacramental Communion.”)

In addition to praying an Act of Spiritual Communion every day, the Lenten Calendar also encourages you to spend time with our Eucharistic King by attending Mass and visiting Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration.

Attending Mass

Mass should hopefully be an easy one for you to mark off on your calendar, right? We should all be attending Mass every Sunday, so you will be able to mark your calendar for spending time with our Eucharistic Lord in this way. You will draw a circle around the Eucharist on your calendar (or mark it off on your calendar).

Questions to Engage:

How many Masses would you be able to mark off during Lent if you just went on Sundays? (6)

What about including Holy Days? (9)

Will you choose to add additional days during Lent to go to Mass?

Can you choose to add in one more Mass a week? More?

How do we spend time with Jesus in the Eucharist during Mass? (We listen to His Word in the Scripture Readings. Our souls are fed as we receive His Body as Bread.)

Who has ever “spent” [air quotes] time with someone, but didn’t really engage with the person or perhaps you just thought your own thoughts so much you didn’t really communicate with the person? (This can happen in Mass too. We can miss what Jesus wants to share with us if we are not present in the moments of Mass.)

I encourage you, especially during Lent, but hopefully after as well, to really pay attention to the Consecration at Mass. Consecration is when by the power of the Holy Spirit and the priest's words, the bread and wine become Jesus' Body and Blood. Listen carefully to the words. Watch the priest at the altar lift high the Body and Blood of Jesus. This happens three times! Perhaps even whisper, "I love You" as Jesus is held up for you to see.

Also, when you receive Communion (or the blessing if you have not made your First Communion or need to go to Confession), ask Jesus to open your heart wide to receive His graces. Ask Him to make you more and more like Him.

Eucharistic Adoration

The third way on our Eucharistic Lenten Calendar to spend time with our Eucharistic King is in Adoration. When you go to Adoration on a particular day this Lent, you will draw the rays of the monstrance around that day's Eucharist (or mark it off your calendar).

Questions to Engage:

What is Adoration?

Who has been to Adoration?

Adoration is when you sit before Jesus in the Eucharist. You love Him and He loves you. You talk (pray) and He listens. He talks and you listen. Sometimes you will be able to see Him as the Eucharist in the clear center of a Monstrance on the altar. Other times, Jesus will be behind the door of the Tabernacle. Both times, Jesus' Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, not just His spirit, are in the **very** same place as you! You are sitting and kneeling with God, himself.

Questions to Engage:

What should you do in Adoration? (See www.guidedchildrensadoration.com.)

What can you do in Adoration? (See www.guidedchildrensadoration.com.)

Consider now, make a goal, how many of the 46 days of Lent will you go visit Jesus in Adoration? Have a plan!

You can do all three in one day if you wish! Pray an Act of Spiritual Communion, go to Mass, and visit Jesus in Adoration. On those days you would color the day's Eucharist white, draw a circle around it, and then draw the rays of the monstrance off the circle.

What are the graces given to us at Communion that praying an Act of Spiritual Communion help to last longer?

Questions to Engage:

Do you know any of the graces, also known as fruits, of Communion?

At Mass, Jesus gives Himself to us as a precious gift as His Real Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. We recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread ² and we receive Him as spiritual food to nourish our souls.

At Mass, when we receive Communion, Jesus fills us with every heavenly blessing and grace. ³ Receiving Communion makes our relationship with Jesus, our Divine Friend stronger and closer. It connects our hearts to His.

Receiving Jesus in Communion increases the graces from our Baptism and forgives our venial sins. Communion helps us to resist grave (mortal) sin which separates us from God.

Communion helps us to love Jesus more and more simply because He is God. And this loving God more and more helps us grow in our love of others as well.

Communion unites us to all the faithful as the Mystical Body of Christ ⁴ which includes those already in heaven, those waiting to go to heaven in purgatory, and those of us hoping for heaven here on earth. Communion is a foretaste, a brief moment, of being in heaven with Jesus and all the saints after our death including all our loved ones that are already there. ⁵

1416 Catechism of the Catholic Church

“Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ increases the communicant's union with the Lord, forgives his venial sins, and preserves him from grave sins. Since receiving this sacrament strengthens the bonds of charity between the communicant and Christ, it also reinforces the unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ.”

A quote from Saint John Paul II

*In the Eucharist, “unlike any other sacrament, the mystery [of communion] is so perfect that it brings us to the heights of every good thing: Here is the ultimate goal of every human desire, because here we attain God and God joins himself to us in the most perfect union.” Precisely for this reason **it is good to cultivate in our hearts***

² CCC 1329

³ CCC 1402

⁴ CCC 1391-1397

⁵ CCC 1000

a constant desire for the sacrament of the Eucharist. This was the origin of the practice of “spiritual communion,” which has happily been established in the Church for centuries and recommended by saints who were masters of the spiritual life. St. Teresa of Jesus wrote: “When you do not receive communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you” [The Way of Perfection, Ch. 35].⁶

⁶ Ecclesia de Eucharistia emphasis added

Graces and Fruits of Holy Communion⁷

1. Increases the strength of our friendship (union) with Jesus; it connects our hearts to His
2. Preserves, increases, and renews the graces of our Baptism; enables us to get better at living a Christian life
3. Gives us forgiveness from our venial sins
4. Helps us to resist grave (mortal) sin which separates us from God
5. Strengthens our Charity ("the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God"⁸) which tends to be weakened by our daily life
6. Revives our love for Jesus and helps us break our attachment to worldly things
7. Roots ourselves in Christ
8. Unites us to all the faithful as the Mystical Body of Christ which includes those already in heaven, those waiting to go to heaven in purgatory, and those of us earth hoping for heaven
9. Helps us recognize Jesus in the poorest and helps us to love them as we love Jesus
10. Gives us a foretaste, a brief moment, a glimpse of the glory of Heaven

⁷ CCC 1000, 1391-1397

⁸ CCC 1822

Graces and Fruits of Baptism

1. Complete forgiveness of original sin and personal sin; the eternal consequences are wiped away as well
2. Gives you new life as God's adoptive sons and daughters; you are now a citizen of God's Kingdom
3. You become a member of the Body of Christ and a sharer in her mission
4. You receive your first installation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and become a temple of the Holy Spirit
5. With Baptism, you are now priest, prophet, and king. You are now able to obtain the inheritance of eternal life
6. Helps you to **believe** in God, to **hope** in God, and to **love** God
7. Allows you to grow in goodness