

**An Instructed Holy Eucharist
for Children
Rite II**

by

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A NOTE FOR THE USER
Third Edition

This instructed eucharist is designed to be used in conjunction with an actual service of Holy Communion, either during a regular service of worship or as a resource for a First Communion class, a Sunday School class, or during a children's eucharist such as a day school chapel. It may also be used in sections with related activities for several sessions if you wish.

We recommend that this script not be used with children under second grade; if you do use it for kindergarten or first grade you may want to shorten the sections. Some of the material about the Eucharist is suitable for younger children in other ways (see enclosed activity sheet), but they do not have the attention span to listen to the full script of the service.

The script, except for the introduction, should be read by a minister, lay or ordained, other than the celebrant. Sections are read as indicated during the quiet times between the actions of the eucharist. You may want some time for questions after the service which may occur to the children as they listen and take part in the service.

We have used the images of a drama and a family meal since these are experiences that the children will understand. As with any symbol, it will not be totally adequate, but perhaps it will help the children to grow in their understanding of the sacrament of the eucharist.

The outline of the service at the end of this script may be duplicated and handed out to the children. We suggest you omit the Old Testament lesson, and perhaps the psalm, if used at a non-Sunday service. Use of the Form II of the Prayers of the People is helpful, and the propers "For the Eucharist" (p. 927 in the Prayer Book) are especially appropriate. You may feel free to edit the text to suit your needs. **Note that the use of brackets indicates optional omissions and alternative materials, such as seasonal variants. You should determine which options and variants you intend to use well in advance and practice with your reader before conducting the instructed Eucharist.**

Betty Fuller
Corpus Christi, Texas
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AN INSTRUCTED EUCHARIST FOR CHILDREN Rite II

A Word of Explanation

(The Celebrant introduces the service with these or similar words.)

For both children and adults, the Eucharist can be a real mystery. What is going on during this service? Why is it so important? How are we supposed to feel as we take part? Today, we want to help you understand a little better what is happening. You are welcome to ask questions at breaks between the prayers.

The Prayer Book is a guidebook to the events of the Eucharist. We will show you how to use the Prayer Book during this service. Following the printed outline of the service will help as well. Take time now to find page 355 in the Prayer Book.

Think about two main ideas as we go through this service: a play and a family meal. The eucharist is like a play or a television show. There are main characters who take part in the action, and a show is divided into parts or scenes. But it is more than a play. It is a real, ongoing story in which each one of us has a part to play. Jesus Christ is really present with us here and now as we eat and drink his body and blood that he sacrificed for all of us.

The eucharist is also a family meal, for God's family. We take part in preparing the meal, setting the table, and eating together. We are given a bite of bread and a sip of wine. In these simple things we are given Christ, his strength and love, to live our lives as God wants us to live them. The Eucharist is a feast for our souls.

Sometimes when you come to the Eucharist, you will feel very good and close to God, other times you will not have any special feelings or even feel far away from God. Everyone has these feelings from time to time. It does not mean that God loves us more or less when we have different feelings at the eucharist. Feelings can change, but the love of God given to us in the Eucharist is always strong and sure. God loves us all the time. His love does not depend on our feelings.

I. THE LITURGY FOR THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

General Introduction (Narrator before service begins)

What we are doing today [tonight] we call the Holy Eucharist or Holy Communion. We do this because Jesus told us to "do this is remembrance of me." He wants us to do this so that we may be close to him, and for that we are thankful. *Eucharist* means *thanksgiving* in the Greek language of the New Testament. It helps us to remember all that we have to thank God for in our lives, especially that he loves us and that he helps us to love others.

This service has its roots in the common meals which Jesus ate with his disciples, like the Last Supper on the night before he died. The last meal that Jesus shared with his friends was probably a Passover meal. The Passover was a yearly remembrance of the escape God gave the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. By continuing to gather as followers of Christ, we show what Jesus told his disciples that night: that He was giving His Body and Blood to free the whole world from sin and death.

The Eucharist itself falls into two main parts: the liturgy of the word of God, beginning on page 355 of the Prayer Book, followed by the liturgy of Holy Communion, starting with page 361. The word Liturgy means "work of the people" in Greek, because everyone has something to do in the service.

[ENTRANCE HYMN]

1. The Liturgy of the Word

We now begin the service or liturgy of the Word. This first part of our service is based on the kind of worship that the Jews had in the synagogue when Jesus and his friends worshipped there. It is the first "act" of the drama. It is a reminder of Christ's teaching and preaching ministry in Galilee. [In the first five centuries this part of the service was called "The Mass of the Catechumens." Catechumens are those who are preparing for baptism by study and discipline. This was the only part of the service that unbaptized persons might observe, since only full members of the Body of Christ could take part in the Eucharist.]

ALTERNATE PARAGRAPH FOR ORDINARY SEASON BEGINNING:

Our service tonight (today) begins with the opening greeting on page 355. The Collect for Purity prepares us for worship by asking the Holy Spirit to purify our hearts and give us his own spirit of love. Then we usually sing a song, called a canticle, from page 356, to praise God. [TO 2. **Collect and Lessons**]

ALTERNATE INSERT WITH PENITENTIAL RITE (especially in Lent)

Our Liturgy tonight [today] begins [since it is the Lenten season] with the Penitential Order on page 351. This part of the service is our chance to tell God we are sorry for the sins that we have done and ask for his forgiveness. Confession helps us to feel clean inside. After the introduction best for the season, we hear God's laws told in the [Decalogue, better known as the Ten Commandments and the] Summary of the Law. The *Kyrie Eleison* which we next sing or say is not only a cry for mercy, but a shout of joy that God is our Father and Savior forever. [TO 2. **Collect and Lessons**]

ALTERNATE INSERT FOR EASTER SEASON:

Our Liturgy tonight [today] begins on page 355 with the joyful Easter greeting. The Collect for Purity then prepares us for worship by asking the Holy Spirit to give us his own spirit of love. We then sing a very old song called the *Gloria in Excelsis*, which means "glory to God in the highest," as an opening song of praise. [TO 2. **Collect and Lessons**]

PRIEST LEADS: ACCLAMATION/[SUMMARY, CONFESSION, ABSOLUTION]
[COLLECT FOR PURITY] / GLORIA, KYRIE OR TRISAGION

2. Collect and Lessons

We are now ready for worship. We begin the part of the service called the Word of the Lord. The Collect of the Day is the prayer that gives us our main idea. It is called a collect because it "collects" our thoughts in one focus as we begin. The lessons that follow come from the Bible and are part of the family stories of God's people. An Old

Testament reading and Psalm may be included. A passage from one of the letters of the Apostles follows — these letters are called epistles. Apostles like Paul and Peter were the first followers of Jesus, who taught and shared the Christian faith with others around the ancient world. Then we stand as a deacon or priest reads the most important lesson, the Holy Gospel. The gospels are the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John which tell the story of the good news about the life and teachings of Jesus.

The sermon [which we omit tonight [today]] comes after the Gospel. In it the preacher is trying to help us to understand what we have heard from the Bible and how to see God's actions in our own lives.

PRIEST LEADS COLLECT / EPISTLE / GOSPEL
(NO SERMON due to instructed eucharist)

3. The Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed follows the sermon. It is like a pledge of allegiance to God. Its name comes from *credo* in Latin which means "I believe." [The Nicene Creed came from meetings of early Christian leaders in Turkey in the fourth century A.D.] In saying together the Creed, we tell what we believe about God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. These are beliefs that summarize all that the Bible tells us about what God has done for us, and guide our way of thinking about God. The Creed lets us say out loud what we believe as God's people.

PRIEST LEADS CREED

4. Prayers of the People

The prayers of the Church come next, led by a layreader, deacon, or priest. In them we offer to God our needs and those of others. We can use different forms for this prayer. Some churches add special prayers with names of members and friends who need our prayers, but the outlines are all similar to the outline you can look up on page 359. We pray, in order, for:

- The church all over the world, its members and work (called mission),
- The nation and all leaders,
- The wellness of the world,
- The concerns of our city [town],
- Those who suffer and those in any trouble, and
- Those who have died..

The celebrant ends with a "collect" to gather all the prayers together.

PRIEST LEADS

INTERCESSION FORM III, page 387

5. [Confession, Absolution] and the Peace

ORDINARY / EASTER USE:

After we pray for others, we turn to our own needs. First we tell God what is wrong in our life, ask him to forgive us and to help us not to do them anymore. Confession helps us to feel clean inside. We then move to the passing of the Peace which ends the Service of the Word. [TO >>>CONTINUE]

ALTERNATE FOR LENT/PENITENTIAL RITE USAGE:

Since we used the confession and absolution at the beginning of the service, we move immediately from the prayers to the passing of the Peace, which ends the Service of the Word. [TO >>>CONTINUE]

>>>CONTINUE:

The Peace shows the love that God has for us. Now we are acting out the phrase of the Lord's Prayer, "forgive us...as we forgive those who have trespassed against us."

The passing of the Peace takes different forms: a kiss, a hug, or shaking hands. Remember that we are greeting each other not just as friends, but "in the name of the Lord." Sometime sharing the peace with someone who has made us angry or hurt us can help us to be friends again. It helps us to remember that God loves and forgives us all, if we ask him and reach out our hands to him. Then we also must forgive others.

PRIEST LEADS

PEACE / ANNOUNCEMENTS / OFFERTORY SENTENCE

THE LITURGY FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

6. The Offertory

We are now at the second part of the Eucharist, the Liturgy of Holy Communion. Communion comes from the same root word as community and common. We eat this Thanksgiving meal together as a community which is God's family.

The people of Jesus' time came to the Temple to make sacrificial offerings to God. We come to this Eucharist to thank God for the one-time perfect offering and sacrifice that Jesus made on the Cross for all people. As the first part of this service recalls Jesus' ministry of teaching in Galilee, the liturgy of the altar gives us his saving work at Jerusalem in his last days before his death and resurrection.

It begins with the offertory and setting the table, as you do for a family meal at your home. The altar is our table. In the offertory we offer gifts to God, gifts He has given us — our selves, bread and wine, and water and money. We ask God to bless us and make us more like Jesus. With our offerings we respond to Jesus' offering of himself. Offer yourself silently to God, so that you are part of this offering.

PRIEST LEADS PREPARATION OF THE TABLE / RECEPTION OF ALMS

7. The Great Thanksgiving

After the offertory, we begin the prayer known as the "Great Thanksgiving." We remember what God has done for us, so we give thanks. In this prayer we ask God's blessing on our offerings of bread and wine and of ourselves "to make it holy" for us as the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This prayer has 4 parts:

- (1) "Lift up your hearts.." This reminds us why we are here. We are to give thanks and praise to God for his love. As we sing (or say) the Holy-Holy-Holy, called the *Sanctus*, we sing it with our loved ones who are with Christ. In this moment we are lifted out of time and space into God's presence where all the Church, living and dead are gathered.

- (2) Then we name and remember God's saving acts in the death and resurrection of Jesus for us.
- (3) We listen as the story of the Last Supper is retold in Jesus' own words. He commands us to continue to eat and drink these elements until he comes again. Then we say aloud what we believe about Jesus: "Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again."
- (4) We ask God to send his Holy Spirit to fill us and the bread and wine, to bless us and to make us holy. God blesses whatever we offer him and gives it back to us in wonderful, new, and powerful ways.

We believe that Christ is really present in these simple elements of bread and wine. We do not know exactly how it happens. It is one of the mysteries of the sacraments that we accept by faith, because we trust Jesus who told us that it was so. This prayer ends with a loud "Amen," which means "So be it!" Then we all join in the Lord's Prayer that Jesus taught his followers to pray.

PRIEST LEADS SURSUM CORDA / SANCTUS / CONSECRATION /
LORD'S PRAYER

8. The Breaking of the Bread

After the celebrant blesses the bread and wine, there is still one more event before we share in the meal. In the Breaking of the Bread, we repeat what Christ did the night that he was betrayed. He took the bread and broke it. In order to share Christ's body, it must be broken, as he accepted the cross and his body was broken in his death. The broken bread shows us that God wants us to know his love is stronger than all pain or hurt or brokenness. God will share it with all who come to his altar.

When the priest says "The gifts of God...", you may begin to come forward, but without noise or hurrying. The clergy, the lay readers, and the acolytes will make their communion and then begin to serve those at the altar rail.

Our communion is our moment of special closeness with our Lord. He feeds our spirits as the bread feeds our bodies. One by one at the altar rail we share this meal and are fed as a family. Just as the disciple ate with Jesus so we eat with him now. Hold out

your hands to receive the bread and then take hold of the base of the cup and help guide it to your mouth. Say a quiet prayer thanking God for his love and goodness to you and asking him to make you his always.

PRIEST LEADS FRACTION / PASCHA NOSTRUM OR (LENT) AGNUS DEI /
INVITATION / COMMUNION

9. Postcommunion, Blessing & Dismissal

Our service ends quickly after communion. The ministers clear the Table after the meal. Then we say a short prayer of thanks to God for making us part of the Church and feeding us so that we can go out and love other people. After the celebrant blesses us, we may sing a hymn, and then we are dismissed, sent from the Table to love and help others in Jesus' Name and with His love. That is your ministry and the ministry of every Christian person. Each day as we go to school and play and work with our family and friends, we have this wonderful opportunity: to share Jesus' love and care for everyone. Go out to the world with God's joy in your heart!

PRIEST LEADS POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER / BLESSING / (HYMN) /
DISMISSAL

OUTLINE FOR AN INSTRUCTED EUCHARIST

Rite II

I. The Liturgy for the Proclamation of the Word of God

1. Greeting, Collect for Purity & Canticle p. 355-6
2. Collect of the Day & Lessons p. 357
Sermon (omitted for Instructed Eucharist)
3. Nicene Creed p. 358
4. Prayers of the People (Form III) p. 387
5. Confession of Sin, Absolution, & the Peace p. 360

II. The Liturgy for the Celebration of the Holy Communion

6. Offertory [He took] p. 361
7. Great Thanksgiving [He blessed]
a. Dialogue ("*Lift up your hearts...*")
b. Proper Preface p. 377ff
c. Sanctus ("*Holy, holy, holy...*") p. 362
d. Words of Institution ("*This is my Body...*")
e. Memorial Sacrifice & Oblation ("*...we offer you...*")
f. Invocation ("*Sanctify...by your Holy Spirit...*") p. 363
g. The Great Amen
h. The Lord's Prayer p. 364
8. Breaking of the Bread [He broke]
Administration of the Sacrament [He gave]
9. Prayer p. 365
Blessing & Dismissal

Some Special Words:

- canticle:** a "little song" from the Bible and used in public worship
- collect:** a short prayer telling the theme of our worship, intended to "collect" or summarize our thoughts and prayers
- Eucharist:** from the Greek word *eucharistia*, meaning thanksgiving: the act of worship celebrating the central events of the Christian faith
- Liturgy:** from the Greek word *laos* = the people, and *ergon* = work: the official public services of the Church (as distinct from private devotions)
- rubrics:** the directions for Prayer Book services; term comes from being printed in red (Latin: *ruber*)

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

1. The images of a play and a family meal are used in this instructed eucharist. You may want to make sure that these images are familiar ones for the students by asking such questions as:
 - a. Have you attended a play or watched one on television? What was it about? Who were the main characters? Do you know what an actor is, an act, a scene?
 - b. Describe a meal that you and your family might eat together. Who would be there? Who prepares the food? Sets the table? Cleans up? What do you talk about during the meal?
2. Have the students retell the story of the first Passover meal. Describe the foods that are eaten and what they symbolize. Ask the students if we eat any of the same foods in church. [bread and wine]
3. Look briefly at the Prayer Book and locate the Holy Eucharist services.
4. Sing Hymn 654 "Day by Day." Talk about what it means.
5. Discuss the following:

We make statements of our beliefs at various times. What are some of these? (Scout pledges, Pledge of allegiance). Can you name others?
6. Have the students write their own prayers of the people (intercessory prayer), using the categories listed in section 4 of the instructed eucharist or on the top of page 383 in the Prayer Book.
7. Bake a loaf of bread to be used at a parish eucharist.
8. List ways that the students can share God's peace and love with others.

RESOURCES

We recommend several manuals for children to use during a eucharist.

Choi, Beryl and Visminas, C.E., *A Children's Service Book for Eucharist and Baptism*. Pittsburgh: C.E. Visminas.

Garrison, Eileen and Albanese, Gayle, *A Eucharistic Manual for Children*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing,

Holy Communion for Children. Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications.