

Week One: Baptism – A Call to Belong to the Church

As with reconciliation, our formation for Eucharist begins with baptism. When we were born, we joined the community of our family. When we were baptized, we became a part of the community of the Catholic Church. As members of our parish community, we gather together for the celebration of Mass and other sacraments. In this way, we show our love to God and others.

Both Baptism and First Eucharist are, along with Confirmation, sacraments of initiation. In Baptism, parents speak on behalf of their child. In Eucharist, however, the child speaks for himself, expressing his beliefs and promises in faith. Eucharist is the source of our “communion” with Jesus and one another. It unites us with the entire Body of Christ, Catholics all over the world, who worship and celebrate God’s love.

The Mass as a Family Celebration; the Introductory Rites

Each week we gather together as a family and a church community to show God our love for Him by singing, praying and listening to His word. We join together to praise and thank God and to celebrate the Eucharist. This celebration is called the Mass.

The Mass is a ritual made of many parts. It begins with the Introductory Rites that prepare us to listen to God’s word and celebrate the Eucharist. This section includes the **Entrance Song and Procession**, the **Sign of the Cross**, and the **Priest’s Greeting**. Next is the **Penitential Act** in which we ask God and one another for forgiveness. The **Gloria** follows as we praise God and the last step in the Introductory Rites is the **Opening Prayer**.