

# Week 1: To The Heights

Week of Oct. 11

## Basecamp: On the Body of Christ

“I receive what I am—The Body of Christ, so that I may become what I receive—The Body of Christ”

### GATHER—Lifemaze:

The goal of the game is to get through the correct path of the maze. Set up a 4 x 4 grid on the floor with colored paper/foam/bandanas/other material that can be stepped on. Starting at one corner, a player must choose a space to move to. The next space must be directly adjacent to the space they are currently on (left, right, up, down, or diagonal). After moving, the leader tells them whether that was a correct or incorrect move. If correct, the player can make another move. If incorrect, the player starts again from the beginning. Here is an example route, or feel free to write your own (9-12 moves recommended).

↓	1	4	3	
		2	5	
		6/8	7	
		9	10	↓

### CONNECT (teaching/discussion points)

- For our sessions this fall, we are going to dive into the Mass, or rather, climb the most important mountain of our lives, the journey to heaven, and the Mass will be our leader and guide.
- Even though we currently live in a time and place where the obligation to attend Sunday Mass has been lifted, that doesn't diminish the importance of it. So why is the Mass so important?
- Firstly, because the Church says so. The Church is not a group of ancient old men who like to make rules to make people's lives more difficult. The Church is a mother, who knows what is best, and so sets rules that help us reach our eventual goal of heaven.
- The Church (under normal circumstances) requires that the faithful attend Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- The Mass is also important because through it we receive the Eucharist, which is the source and summit of our faith.
- It is the source because Jesus's passion, death, and resurrection are the very beginning of Christianity and the beginning of our salvation through him.
- It is the summit because our goal as Catholics is to be with God forever in heaven, to be united to Jesus Christ, in the glory of the Holy Spirit.
- There's a beautiful prayer that is traditionally said after receiving the Eucharist: "I receive what I am—The Body of Christ, so that I may become what I receive—The Body of Christ."
- Firstly, it means that when we receive the Eucharist, we become more like Christ through grace.
- When we consume food, it becomes part of us, but when we consume the Eucharist, we become more a part of it!
- Secondly, when we receive the Eucharist, we are renewed in our identity as members of the Body of Christ and brought closer to all other members. That's why one name for the Eucharist is Communion!
- And as St. Paul wrote, "As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).
- So who is the Body of Christ?
- We can sum up the whole Body of Christ in 3 categories: The Church Militant, the Church Suffering, and the Church Triumphant.
- The Church Militant are the faithful who are currently alive on earth. We are "militant" because we are currently fighting the good fight, working our way through a broken world to get to God. It is you, me, our St. Matthew church family, the whole worldwide universal Church of baptized faithful.
- The Church Suffering are those souls in Purgatory. Purgatory is (for almost everybody) a necessary place to go before going to heaven (we'll talk more about Purgatory later). It is where we are purified of our worldly

desires, and that hurts! But, it is joyful because they know that after they have been purified, they can join...

- The Church Triumphant! These are the people who made it! While it does include all of the canonized saints of the Church, there are also millions and billions of other people that we don't know about!
- As the Body of Christ, we are on a journey, we are climbing a mountain.
- The theme for our series is "To The Heights", which comes from a great man named Pier Giorgio Frassati.
- He is currently "Blessed" (one step away from being a Saint), and lived a joyful life of adventure.
- He loved the outdoors-hiking, sports, camping- and being with his friends.
- He loved God as fiercely as he loved his life. Pier often shared his faith with others, advocated for Catholic Social Teaching in local government, and served the poor and sick as often as he could.
- At the age of 24, Pier contracted polio from a patient he was serving and died six days later. In his last days, his only concern was for those that he had been called to serve.
- Pier is quoted saying "Verso l'alto!", or "To the heights!" in English.
- He strived to reach the heights in everything, whether it be a mountain or his relationship with God.
- May we follow his model and always go to the heights in our faith!

## **EXPLORE**

*Journal Booklet:* Walk through the journal, and discuss:

- Pages 1-2: What the booklet is/is not.
- Pages 3-4: Outline of our sessions for the fall.
- Page 5: Set up norms for when you sit down to do sessions together. Examples: We'll start each Explore by sharing 3 moments we encountered God today; Each session we will pray with the intercession of the Saint of the Day (easily found by looking up the daily readings); After we finish, we'll go get ice cream.
- Page 6: Get to Know Your Catechist—share a little bit about you!
- Pages 7-8: My Thoughts on being Catholic. Let them fill out these questions on their own. Ask them to share at least one of their responses.
- Pages 9-14: Session pages. Each session has a corresponding page with questions/activities.
- Pages 15-16: Blank pages to take notes, doodle, etc.
- Pages 17-18: Prayers for you to know.

## **REFLECT**

Enter into a time of meditative prayer focusing on the image, "The Body of Christ". Feel free to tear it out of this packet to look at it. Read through the mediation while looking at the image.

## **LIVE IT**

Write down at least 1 person you know in the Church Militant & the Church Triumphant, and one who you believe is in the Church Suffering (someone who may have recently passed or may need extra prayer to aid in their purification). Pray with the intercession of Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati that they may soon reach the heights of glory with God in heaven.

# The Body of Christ Meditation

*[Begin with the Sign of the Cross]*

As we go through this meditation, I want you to look at the artwork. Pay attention to what stands out and what you are drawn to.

*[Draw the youth's attention to the Person of Christ]*

We begin our reflection with Jesus.

Here we see Him as He is in heaven.

His crown of thorns once used to torture Him, has become His crown of glory.

He looks up to His Father, who is symbolized by the letters Alpha and Omega in the right corner. Alpha and Omega mean "the One who is the beginning and the end."

Surrounding Jesus are the songs that the angels sing in heaven: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of goodwill."

*[Pause for a moment of silence, draw the youth's attention to the people surrounding Jesus]*

They are the Church.

The Church is made up of people in heaven, people on Earth, and some who are being purified in purgatory.

Together they all make up the Body of Christ.

*[Pause for a moment of silence, draw the youth's attention to the green colored people at the bottom of the image]*

These people are called the Church Militant.

This large group of people is everyone that is on Earth.

These people come from many countries and cultures; they may speak different languages. Some are old, and some are young. Some of them are scientists, artists, teachers, youth ministers, doctors, or taxi drivers.

They are students in your school and the people sitting next to you. They are some of your closest friends and even the people that are the worst to you. Even you are a member of the Church Militant.

Do you see yourself standing in the middle of that crowd?

Where are they going?

They are all moving towards Christ.

That is the mission of the Church Militant; that while we are on Earth, we would continue to be drawn deeper and deeper into Christ.

*[Pause for a moment of silence, draw the youth's attention to the people on the right side of the painting in red and orange]*

When we die, if we desire to be with God but have not yet rid ourselves of our attachments to sin, we join those known as the Church Suffering.

Do not be mistaken, even though these souls are suffering they are not in hell.

Do you see something in the fire?

There is something different about these flames.

In the fire, you may see a dove, representative of the Holy Spirit.

The fire of purgatory is a purifying fire.

When we draw close to the Holy Spirit, He burns away all those things that are impure on our soul.

This can be painful, and it can be difficult to face our sins and let go of our attachment to them.

But notice something else about these souls.

How are they responding to their own suffering?

They are falling on their knees and reaching out their hands in worship of God.

They are hopeful because they know that, despite their current suffering, they will go to heaven soon.

*[Pause for a moment of silence, draw the youth's attention to the saints in blue on the left side of the painting]*

This is the Church Triumphant.

These souls are the citizens of heaven and are a great service to the rest of the Church.

You may notice a saint lifting a soul out of purgatory by his prayers.

Because of the prayers of the Church Triumphant, many people on Earth and in purgatory will receive the grace they need to go to heaven.

You may recognize some of the saints on the left side of the painting.

Notice the Virgin Mary.

She occupies an important space in the Body of Christ because it is from her that we received Jesus.

The glory of heaven, seen here as a bright light, radiates through her to the rest of the Church.

Let's look at the rest of these holy men and women. (From top to bottom: The Virgin Mary, Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, St. John Paul II, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Teresa of Calcutta, and St. Faustina Kowalska).

All these saints are blue, which represents their place in heaven but you may see traces of green on them.

This is to remind you that while they are great saints, they started at the same place you did.

They each lived on Earth and struggled with many of the same things you do.

Just as they were once members of the Church Militant, you are destined to be a member of the Church Triumphant.

*[Pause for a moment of silence, draw the youth's attention to the Eucharist]*

We look now to the very heart of Christ.

At the center of the painting, over the heart of Jesus, we see a priest consecrating the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is the source of life to the Body of Christ.

In the same way that the human heart sustains and gives life to the entire human body, so too the Eucharist sustains and gives life to the entire Body of Christ.

At every Mass, we may not see it, but everything we see here in the painting is present.

The entire Church (the Church Militant, the Church Suffering, and the Church Triumphant) are all gathered around the altar as Jesus Christ gives us His very self through the Eucharist.

*[End with a brief prayer to see the Mass in a new way as the celebration of the whole Body of Christ.]*



AΩ

WORTHY IS THE LAMB,  
WHO WAS SLAIN,  
TO RECEIVE POWER  
AND WEALTH AND WISDOM  
AND STRENGTH AND HONOR  
AND GLORY AND PRAISE!

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST