

## Week 5: To The Heights

Week of Nov. 1

**Source and Summit:** On the Eucharist in Scripture

*“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”* John 1:29

**GOAL:** The goal of this session is to help youth to understand the Scriptural roots of the Eucharist in the Old and New Testaments and to help them have a deeper love of the Eucharist and appreciation for the Mass.

### MAIN IDEAS:

- The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith.
- The Institution of the Eucharist is foreshadowed in the Old Testament, especially in the book of Exodus in the story of the first Passover.
- At the Last Supper, Jesus institutes the Eucharist as a memorial of His Death and Resurrection, which we continue to celebrate today.

### GATHER - Where are we going?/Heads Up!

Select 2 teams of 4 players to have 1 driver and 3 passengers. One at a time, passengers “get in the car with the driver, and the driver asks “Where are we going?” The passenger must communicate to the driver where they are going without saying the name of the location. They can describe the area, landmarks, what they are wearing, who is there, etc. to convey the location. When the driver correctly guesses the location, the passenger “gets out” and the next passenger goes in. The team with the most correct answers wins!

Location Ideas:

- |                    |                   |                                |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Carowinds        | • The Moon        | • Heaven                       |
| • Broadway         | • My House        | • College/University of choice |
| • Panther Stadium  | • The North Pole  | • Narnia                       |
| • Chick-fil-A      | • Doctor’s Office | • Karaoke Night                |
| • The Eiffel Tower | • Jail            |                                |
| • On a Road trip   | • St. Matthew     |                                |

Alternatively, download the Heads Up! app and play a couple of rounds!

### CONNECT

- The Eucharist is at the center of everything we do as Catholics for Jesus Christ Himself is contained within it. **It is the source and the summit of our faith.** Think about this mountain climbing journey we’ve been on--The peak is the highest point, it is the goal, it is the summit. Everything on a mountain leads to and comes from the peak just like everything in our faith leads to the Eucharist and stems from the Eucharist.
- The Eucharist is the greatest gift to mankind and is wrapped up in one of the greatest stories of all time. On the night that He was betrayed, Jesus took bread and wine and instituted this great sacrament of His sacrifice. He asked us to partake in the Eucharist until He comes again.
- **Passover:** Even before the Institution of the Eucharist, there are multiple stories interwoven throughout Scripture that prepare us and foreshadow the Eucharist. In the **Old Covenant**, before Jesus came, bread and wine were offered in sacrifices to give thanks to God the provider. The **Feast of Passover** is the greatest event in the Old Testament that foreshadows the Eucharist.
  - God’s people were in slavery under the rule of Pharaoh. God heard the cries of His people and sent Moses to bring them out of slavery and to the land He promised to them. Moses went to Egypt to ask Pharaoh to set the people free but Pharaoh would not. Through the power of God, Moses sent plagues upon the Egyptians to persuade Pharaoh to let the people go.
  - After a series of devastating plagues Pharaoh still would not let the slaves go, so God sent one last plague. God sent the spirit of death over the Egyptians and the first born son of every household died. God protected His own people from this particular plague by instructing them to put the blood of a lamb over their door and in doing so the spirit of death would pass over them. Pharaoh, who lost his first born son, finally conceded to let the people go and the Israelites were set free.
- This foreshadows the Eucharist because God saved His people from the slavery under Pharaoh and through Jesus sacrifice on the Cross God saves us from the slavery of sin. Jesus becomes the new lamb of sacrifice and when we receive His Body and Blood the “spirit of death” passes over us, meaning we are given the promise of eternal life.
- **Manna in the Desert:** After the Israelites left Egypt, they wandered in the desert for forty years on their way to the Promised Land. Not too long in their journey, they became hungry and were without food. During that time, God gave

them bread called manna to sustain them. The manna would appear each morning for the Israelites to collect and feed their families. There was always enough for everyone to eat and no one went hungry.

- During his time on earth, Jesus also performed a lot of miracles involving bread and wine to foreshadow the Eucharist. He turned water into wine at the **Wedding at Cana** and **multiplied loaves** of bread to feed the crowds of people who came to hear Him preach.
- The night before Jesus died He gathered together with His twelve disciples to celebrate the Passover meal. But Jesus does something a little bit different this night. **He changes the Passover meal to not just be a remembrance of what happened in Egypt, but He makes it something new.**
- *Read Matthew 26:26-28.*
- He transformed the bread and the wine into His Body and Blood which would be sacrificed for them on the cross. His Body and Blood become our everlasting food. He becomes the new sacrificial lamb and saves us from slavery and death.
- This is the first celebration of the Eucharist. He commands His followers to “do this in memory of me” until He comes again at the end of time.
- *Ask the youth to respond: What are some things in your life that you are thankful for?*
- The word Eucharist literally means “thanksgiving” but there are also many other names for it such as The Lord’s Supper, the Holy Sacrifice, Holy Communion, and the Holy Mass. Regardless of what it is called, the Eucharist is the greatest gift and we should be thankful for the opportunity to receive the very Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ and the promise of eternal life and freedom from the slavery of sin.
- *Read aloud John 6:35.*
- When the Israelites ate of the manna in the desert or when the crowd ate of the bread that Jesus gave them after He preached, they would eventually be hungry again in a few hours. No matter how much they ate, their hunger could never be totally satisfied. In this passage, Jesus isn’t talking about a physical hunger in their stomachs, but the hunger of their souls. Our souls are hungry for fulfillment, love, peace, joy, and purpose. We can snack on the things of this world: social media, Netflix, friends, school, sports, and more, but the hunger of our souls will be only be satisfied by Jesus.
- Jesus knew we would be hungry so He made Himself to be eternal food. The Eucharist isn’t just any ordinary bread, this is the bread that gives life to our souls. **When we have Jesus inside of us, He changes us.** The Church has such a great love for the Eucharist. It’s why we genuflect towards the tabernacle when enter the Church, why we kneel during the consecration, why we reverence the Eucharist before we receive it, and why Catholics have an obligation to Mass each Sunday.
- The Eucharist is Jesus’ pledge of love. It is a promise that He will never leave us. When we remember His Passion, Death, and Resurrection, we are reminded of His unending love for us. Jesus gives us the Eucharist because He desires to dwell within our hearts and satisfy the deepest hunger of our hearts.
- You are never alone, Jesus is always here with you and present to you in the Eucharist. He hears all your prayers and loves you so much that He humbled Himself to become bread and wine so that you can share in His life.

## EXPLORE

*Open in Prayer*

### *Miracles*

Ask teens to read aloud the stories of the Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-10) and the Multiplication of Loaves (John 6:1-15).

Discuss the following questions:

- What elements of these miracles relate to our celebration of the Eucharist?
  - Elements of bread and wine, the abundance\*
- [regarding the Wedding at Cana] This is the first miracle that Jesus performed in His public ministry and it was Mary, His mother, who prompted Him to do so. What does this reveal about Jesus’ relationship with His mother?
- [regarding the Multiplication of Loaves] What does this miracle reveal about God? Do you think He understands our human needs?
- Bonus: look up Matthew 7:7-11!

## **REFLECT**

### *Names for the Eucharist*

Ask teens to open their booklet to page 13 (be aware that they may have torn out the page numbers with the last session's activity). Read out the names for the Eucharist, ask if they know what any of them mean. *For ones that need further explanation, see next page.*

Tell them to circle 1 to 3 that have significant meaning to them and complete the two questions on the page.

Discuss the following questions:

- Which name(s) for the Eucharist did you pick as significant to you? Why?
- Which ones have you not heard of before?
- What name(s) are hard for you to understand?

### *FAQs about the Eucharist*

Review common questions about the Eucharist (see following pages) Remember that if you are not sure of an answer, feel free to reach out to us and we'll help direct you.

### *Close in Prayer*

## **LIVE IT:**

Share with a different family member or friend the name for the Eucharist that is significant to you and why. Next time you attend/stream Mass, say a prayer of thanksgiving for the gift that is the Eucharist!

## Names for the Eucharist

*Eucharist (Thanksgiving)* — The word Eucharist in Greek means “thanksgiving”. When we receive the Eucharist, it is an act of thanksgiving to the Lord who gives us everything.

*Body, Blood, Soul & Divinity of Christ* — All that Jesus is and was is present in the Eucharist. No part is left out—He gives himself to us completely as a gift.

*Passover Sacrifice* — For the Ancient Jews, celebrating Passover was the memorial of God’s saving action in taking them out of enslavement in Egypt. Christ offered himself as the final and ultimate sacrifice for our salvation.

*Lamb of God/Agnus Dei* — When John the Baptist met Jesus he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” John’s words may refer to the victorious lamb at the end of time (Revelation 5-7, 17:14), the paschal/Passover lamb, and/or the suffering servant from Isaiah who bore the punishment of all (Isaiah 53).

*Breaking of Bread* — As we read in the Story of the Road to Emmaus, the risen Christ was recognized in the breaking of the bread (Luke 24:30-31) and in the early church the disciples “devoted themselves to... the breaking of the bread...” (Acts 2:42).

*Holy Communion* — By the sacrament we unite ourselves to Christ, and Christ unites himself to us.

*The Lord’s Supper* — At the Last Supper that we celebrate on Holy Thursday, Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist,

*Bread of Life* — This comes from John’s Gospel, in the aptly named Bread of Life Discourse, John chapter 6.

I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world. (John 6:48-51)

*Medicine of Immortality* — St. Ignatius of Antioch called the Eucharist “the medicine of immortality, the antidote we take in order not to die but to live forever in Jesus Christ.”

*Viaticum* — In Latin, this word means “food for the journey”. This is the name used for the Eucharist when it is given during the Anointing of the Sick or near the end of someone’s life. The Eucharist is food for the journey between our earthly life and everlasting life.

## FAQs about the Eucharist

*Isn’t the Eucharist just a symbol/representation of Jesus’ Body?*

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is very clear about the bread of life literally being his flesh. When the crowd starts arguing about whether he was serious, he doubled down and said “Amen, amen I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you” (John 6:53). And Jesus let people walk away rather than go back and try to qualify or change his statement (John 6:66). Sounds like he means it, doesn’t it?

*How many times a day can I receive communion?*

In normal circumstances, once a day. However, a person may receive the Eucharist twice in the same day, once being in the form of Viaticum with the Anointing of the Sick.

*I see the St. Matthew priests dipping the host into the chalice of wine—What is that?*

This is a practice called intinction. It is not something we see often in the U.S.!

*Does that mean I can do it?*

Logistically, we can’t make it work here at St. Matthew, but at some point in your life you may attend a church that does intinction for the congregation as well! Because of the nature of the practice, you’ll have to receive the Eucharist on the tongue, rather than in the hand.

*Can non-Christians or non-Catholic Christians receive the Eucharist?*

Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires permission according to the directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law (canon 844 §4). Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are urged to respect the discipline of their own Churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of Communion by Christians of these Churches (canon 844 §3).

We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family. [USSCB Guidelines](#)

*Does consuming the Body & Blood of Christ make Catholics cannibals?*

No. Cannibalism, simply put, is the eating of human flesh, typically after a person has died. Second, the quantity of the flesh diminishes as it is being consumed. Third, digesting flesh results in physical nourishment, protein included. In the banquet of the Eucharist, however, Jesus is not dead but is a living sacrifice. Second, his substance is not diminished by consuming the Eucharist. To the contrary, Jesus is bodily in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father, though his body becomes miraculously present when the Eucharist is celebrated. Third, the eating of his Body and Blood does not result in practical physical nourishment on a natural level, although some have miraculously subsisted solely on the Eucharist. The Eucharist provides spiritual nourishment. [Catholic Q&A](#)