

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
The Eucharist

Catechist Preparation

Clarifying the Essentials

The Church herself participates in the sacrifice of Christ, offering in the Eucharist all that she is and does in union with her Head.

- ◆ In this Sacrament our own lives of faith, which are comprised of praise, sufferings, prayer, and work, are united with those of Jesus Christ and his total self-offering. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] 1368.)
- ◆ Celebration of the Eucharist associates all members of the universal Church as one Body in Christ. (See CCC 1369.)

Through the words of the Institution Narrative, a change takes place so that the entire substance of the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

- ◆ This Sacrament is described as the *real presence* of Christ, not to exclude other ways that Christ is truly present, but because in the Eucharist his presence is realized in the fullest sense. (See CCC 1374.)
- ◆ Even outside of the celebration of Mass, we adore and solemnly venerate consecrated hosts, for as long as the Eucharistic species endure, the real presence of Christ remains. (See CCC 1378.)

Why Is This Important?

Before Christ entered his hour of glory, and before he ascended to the Father, he desired to give us his sacramental presence. In the Eucharist he who loves us and gave himself up for our sakes remains mysteriously in our midst.

*(The Eucharist is) the food
that makes us live for ever
in Jesus Christ.*

SAINT IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Arrange the space with chairs and a focal point with a white cloth, unleavened bread and wine, and a chalice and paten. Provide name tags and have some refreshments available.

Welcome

Greet the participants by name as they arrive and take time for introductions. Sing or play a eucharistic song as the gathering prayer.

Engage

1. Ask the group to share what they already know about Eucharist in the Catholic faith and what questions they might have.
2. Invite the group to read and reflect on the story in Insight. Then explore the For Reflection questions together.

Teach

Summarize or invite the group to read Church Teaching. Then discuss the following points:

- ◆ Eucharist completes initiation into the Church and is the only repeatable Sacrament of Christian Initiation.
- ◆ The bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, our spiritual food. We become what we eat—the Body and Blood of Christ—for the sake of the world.
- ◆ The word *eucharist* means “thanksgiving.” It is the Church’s great prayer of thanksgiving to God. We join our hearts and voices with Mary and all the angels and saints to give thanks to God.

Apply

Remind the group that at the end of every Mass we are sent forth to love and serve the Lord and one another. Invite the participants to think of one concrete action they can do this week to serve someone in need.

Pray

Proclaim the Scripture at the top of the participant page as the closing prayer.