

# Sacrament of Eucharist

## Session Focus

This session on Sacraments explores the Sacrament of Eucharist. It explores what we say yes to, what we say Amen to, as we celebrate Eucharist and calls us to be bread broken and shared for others so that all might know life to the full in Christ.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states:

“On the one hand, the Church united with her Lord and “in the Holy Spirit” blesses the Father “for his inexpressible gift” in her adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. On the other hand, until the consummation of God’s plan, the Church never ceases to present to the Father the offering of his own gifts, and to beg him to send the Holy Spirit upon that offering, upon herself, upon the faithful and the whole world, so that through communion in the death and resurrection of Christ the priest, and by the power of the Spirit, these divine blessings will bring forth the fruits of life “to the praise of his glorious grace.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1083)

“At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet ‘in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.’” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1323)

## Learning Objectives

This session on Eucharist guides learners of all ages to...

- comprehend Eucharist as a celebration of listening to God’s invitation and a celebration of responding in love to that invitation
- comprehend Eucharist as a celebration and proclamation of our ongoing Amen to the invitation of God to be his people through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus
- value and appreciate the significance of Eucharist in the living out and sustaining of our Catholic faith and its ongoing call to us to conversion
- to participate actively in Eucharist and to be Eucharistic people in the world

## Session Overview

**Part 1. (10-15 minutes)**

**Gathering and Opening Prayer Service**

**Part 2. (20 minutes)**

**All Ages Learning Experience: God’s Invitation and Our Response (Drama) or Scripture Research and Discussion**

**Part 3. (80-90 minutes) In Depth Learning Experience: Sacrament of Anointing**

- Option 1. Whole Group Format: All participants remain in the same room.
- Option 2. Learning Activity Centers Format: Participants rotate through selected activities in the same room or in separate rooms.

Whole Group Format

- Learning Experience One: Listening to One Another and to God
- Learning Experience Two: The Table of the Word: What are we saying Amen to?
- Learning Experience Three: Our Loving Response: Liturgy of the Eucharist

Learning Activity Center Format

- Learning Center Activity One (All Ages): Liturgy of the Word: A Tour of What We Believe
- Learning Activity Center Two (Adolescents and Adults): Exploring a Eucharistic Prayer
- Learning Activity Center Three (All Ages, especially Families with Children): Meal Stories
- Learning Activity Center Four (All Ages): Creation of a Eucharist Tablecloth
- Learning Activity Center Five (Adolescents and Adults): Bread Broken and Shared Reflection

**Part 4. (20-25 minutes) Sharing Learning Experiences**

**Part 5. (10 minutes) Closing Prayer Service**

## Design Options for In-Depth Learning

### Option 1. Whole Group Format

This format guides the entire assembly through each of the learning experiences. You might choose this format if you have:

- a large physical space with good acoustics/sound system and furniture to comfortably accommodate the learners
- a competent large group facilitator/master of ceremonies able to provide clear directions and to manage the dynamics and energy of a large group
- a group of catechists who feel comfortable moving through the assembly offering assistance, or a large enough team of table leader catechists to have one catechist work with each table group
- a learning topic that lends itself to everyone learning the same thing as the same time, but in different ways, in the same space

**Facilitation Tips for This Format:**

Guide small groups through each of the activities at the same time.

- Organize people into table groups based on age groupings: families with children (grades 1-5), middle school adolescents, high school adolescents, young adults, and adults.
- The lead facilitator guides the entire group through each of the learning experiences. All presentations and activity instructions are given to the whole group.
- The age-appropriate learning activities within each learning experience are conducted in table groups.
- Where needed, catechists and small group leaders facilitate the work of the table groups.

## Option 2. Learning Activity Centers

The Learning Activity Center Format provides structured learning activities at a variety of stations or centers in a common area. Learning activity centers are self-contained learning experiences, focusing on a specific topic or theme. They include brief presentations by the facilitators, interactive and experiential activities, group discussion and sharing. Each center can utilize a different learning method, such as drama or role play, creative arts, prayer, ritual, film, games, demonstrations, exhibits, and music.

One of the best ways to envision a Learning Activity Center Format is to imagine visiting a children's museum or one of the Epcot pavilions at Walt Disney World in Orlando. You will find a variety of interactive, experiential exhibits, media presentations, and staff-facilitated learning activities.

Learning Activity Centers can be used with all age groups. They can be developed for an intergenerational audience or for particular age groups, such as families with children or adolescents or adults. Learning Activity Centers can also be utilized in the families with children learning program within the Age Group Format.

### **Scheduling**

Learning Activity Centers are designed to be conducted within a 20-30 minute timeframe. Depending on the session design, this will allow three or four learning periods to be offered during the In Depth Learning Experience.

Here is a sample schedule with four rounds of learning centers:

- 6:00 Hospitality and Dinner
- 6:30 Part 1. Gathering and Prayer  
Part 2. All Ages Learning Experience
- 6:50 Round 1: Learning Activity Centers
- 7:15 Break (move to next center)
- 7:20 Round 2: Learning Activity Centers
- 7:45 Break (move to next center)
- 7:50 Round 3: Learning Activity Centers
- 8:15 Break (move to next center)
- 8:20 Round 4: Learning Activity Centers
- 8:45 Part 4: Presenting the Home Activities (no small group sharing)  
Part 5: Closing Prayer

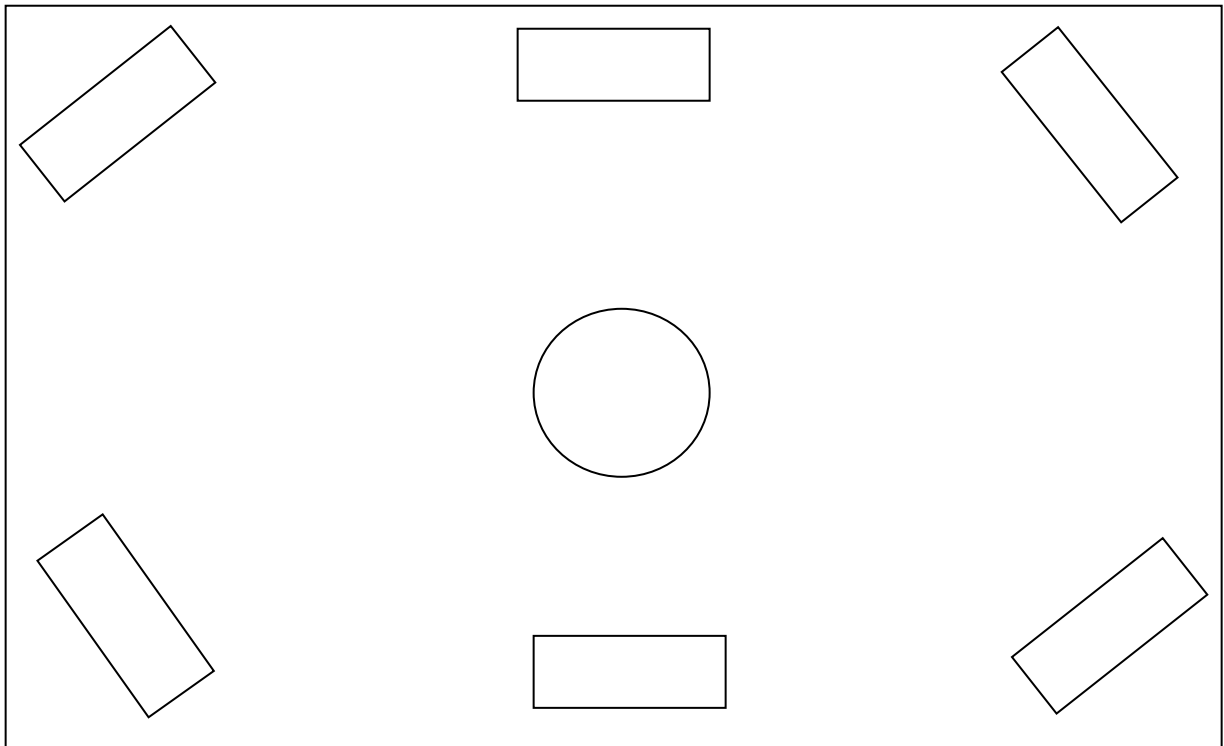
Here is a sample schedule with three rounds of learning centers:

- 6:00 Hospitality and Dinner
- 6:30 Part 1. Gathering and Prayer  
Part 2. All Ages Learning Experience
- 7:00 Round 1: Learning Activity Centers
- 7:25 Break (move to next center)
- 7:30 Round 2: Learning Activity Centers
- 7:55 Break (move to next center)
- 8:00 Round 3: Learning Activity Centers
- 8:25 Break (gather in intergenerational groups)

8:30 Part 4: Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application  
8:50 Closing Prayer

### Organizing the Activity Centers

There are two ways to set up activity centers: one large room, or multiple break-out rooms. If you arrange all of the learning centers in one large meeting gym or church hall, set-up the centers around the outside of the room (see example). The center space can become a storytelling center with a carpet or chairs for children to sit. The example below shows six different learning centers plus the storytelling center. You may still need separate rooms if you have a learning center that focuses on prayer (worship space) or shows a film (meeting room).



Keep in mind the following when organizing in one room:

- Make sure there is adequate space between learning centers so that people are not interrupted by the activity at other centers.
- Set-up each learning activity center with tables and chairs (or carpeted floor space) for participants to listen, discuss, and create. Children and teens can use the floor, but adults will need chairs.
- Assign each learning center a number and post the number on the wall and floor at each center.

If you arrange learning centers in multiple rooms such as meeting rooms, classrooms, church hall, gym, worship space, assign one learning center to each space. This format resembles a conference where people move from room to room for each session. Place the learning center name outside each room and develop a list of centers with locations, and a map if necessary, so that people can easily find the correct room.

## **Organizing Groups**

Once you have determined how many learning centers you will offer, you can organize participants accordingly. If you offer four learning centers, you can organize the participants into four groups of equal size and assign each group a specific sequence that they will move through the learning centers. Assign a number to each learning center and an alphabet letter to each group, then describe how they will move through the centers: Group A: 1-2-3-4; Group B: 2-3-4-1, Group C: 3-4-1-2, and Group D: 4-1-2-3. If you offer three learning centers, there would be three groups rotating among the three learning centers. Keep families together in one group.

If you offer more than three or four learning centers, allow people to choose the learning centers they are going to experience. Remind them that if a particular center is crowded, they can move to another center and then return to their first choice in another round. Families with children should stay together because the activities require parents to work with their children.

## **Staffing**

Each center is facilitated by a team of facilitators/catechists who guide the participants through the activity plan. The teaching team facilitates the overall learning plan for the center: making presentations, guiding learning activities, organizing discussions, and so on. The number of team members needed depends on the complexity of the activities and the number of participants at a learning center. Teams should have at least two or three people, but some centers will require five or six people. Older adolescents can also serve as members of the teaching team, and are especially valuable in facilitating creative activities and dramatic presentations.

To present the focus of each learning activity center, ask the teaching teams to present a very brief overview of what they will be doing in each center. Give each participant the list of learning activity centers with short descriptions, a schedule and the locations of the centers.

## **Materials Needed**

### **Gathering**

- Name tags
- Community building activities and meal sharing activities
- Opening Prayer Service – copies for the leader and readers
- Bible
- Symbols for prayer: -lectionary, Book of the Gospels, processional cross and stand, two candles, bowl of water, two chairs, chalice and plate of eucharistic bread, cloth, sacramentary, parish photo directory or parish photo (or parish bulletin or another photo/image that symbolizes the local community)

### **All Ages Opening Learning Experience**

- Copy of the Listening and Responding in Love Drama (Handout #2)

### **In-Depth Learning Experience**

- Handouts

- Supplies for learning activities (see activity descriptions to ascertain which supplies are needed for which activities)

**Closing**

- Closing Prayer Service – copy for the leader and musicians
- Bible

# Session Plan

## Part 1. Gathering and Opening Prayer (15-20 minutes)

### Preparation

Prepare a newsprint sheet or handout that lists the order of the activities or create a PowerPoint presentation that guides people through the session.

### Registration and Hospitality

- Welcome people and ask them to sign-in for the program.
- Provide nametags or invite people to make their own (have available a collection of stickers with Eucharist symbols for people to decorate their own name tags – chalice, loaf of bread, bible, community, etc.)
- Distribute handouts participants will need for the session—you can also distribute handouts for the activities at the beginning of the activity.
- Invite people to share a meal. Depending on the time of day, the program may end with a meal. Some optional learning activities for use during the meal follow below. These may be used as the table waits for food or waits for other groups to be finished eating.

### Eucharist Acronym

Using the letters from the word Eucharist, think of words that help explain what Eucharist means. For example, the E in Eucharist might mean everlasting love, the u might mean unity with God and each other, and so on.

### Question to Discuss

What do you like best about celebrating Eucharist? How does it challenge and nourish you to live out your faith in deepening ways and actions?

Do you remember your First Communion? What do you remember about it?

### Remembering Eucharist

What do we see, hear, smell, touch, and feel as Eucharist is celebrated? For example, we hear the bells ringing calling us to church, we see people of all shapes and sizes gathering, we hear music, we see the processional cross making its way down the aisle, and so on. How many things can you list?

Welcome the participants to the program and introduce the theme of the session using the following text or your own words:

This session explores the Sacrament of Eucharist. From the Catholic perspective, Eucharist is the source and summit of our journey of faith. Eucharist invites us into the most perfect expression of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Eucharist celebrates all of the promises we have professed in the other sacraments—it challenges us to witness to the world our call to be healers and reconcilers, it challenges us to be faithful to our vocational commitments, it nourishes us to become more Christ-like as we live out our baptismal commitment as the sons and daughters of God. As one person so beautifully says it, “I always had this idea that the priest is up there and he says the Mass and there’s this incredible thing that happens: The bread and wine become the body and blood. And

then all of a sudden one day I realized it's us, too, it's all of us doing this incredible thing and becoming this incredible thing." (Hughes, p.196) Eucharist is about us becoming more and more who we are: the body of Christ.

In this program we are going to remember and learn anew what it is that we say yes to, what we say Amen to, each time we celebrate Eucharist. We will explore together how we are called to live, die, and rise with Jesus through the celebration of Eucharist and we will pledge ourselves to be people who through the power of Eucharist are called to transform the world.

## 1. Group Formation

Organize people into intergenerational small groups of approximately eight people for the All Ages Experience. Ask all members of the same family to sit together in these intergenerational groups. Each group should have as many of the following categories as possible: family (parents, children, teens), young adults, adults without children, and older adults. If members of the same family are intergenerational—children, teens, parents, and grandparents—keep them together in one group.

For the In Depth Learning Experience (Part 3) organize the participants into three types of groups: family clusters of two or more families, groups of adolescents, and groups of adults.

## 2. Opening Prayer Service

### Preparation

Before beginning prayer teach the assembly the last part of the refrain from the song "We Remember" — "We remember, we celebrate, we believe". ("We Remember", Marty Haugen, GIA Publications 1980.)

The prayer service involves two tables, spaced about 20 to 30 feet apart, either in the center of the assembly gathered or in a prominent place up front. One table is to highlight the symbols associated with the Table of the Word, the other is to highlight the symbols of the Table of the Eucharistic meal.

Symbols, to be placed on each table as the corresponding prayers are read, for the table of the word include: lectionary and the Book of the Gospels, processional cross and stand, two candles, a bowl of water, and a chair. Symbols for the table of the Eucharistic meal include:

a chalice and plate of eucharistic bread, a cloth, a sacramentary, and a parish photo directory or parish photo (or parish bulletin or another photo/image that symbolizes the local community), and a chair.

Recruit readers for each of the symbols and print out a copy of the prayer service for them. Take a moment to practice with them so they are comfortable with the placement of the symbols.

### Gather

We gather together on this day to learn about Eucharist. God gifted us with Jesus and Jesus gifted us with the Last Supper, Eucharist. For us it is not a Last Supper but a meal, a celebration, that is ongoing. We gather at the table of the Word and the table of the Eucharist to be nourished on our journey and to be challenged to live out our Christian commitments in the world. And so we pray ...



Gracious God, giver of all gifts, we celebrate the tables that you gather us around. May these tables be places of friendship, hospitality, service, and renewal as we seek to remain faithful in our commitment to you and each other. Bless our learning time together and challenge us to be the best we can be through you.

We ask this prayer in the name of Jesus, your Son, and the Holy Spirit, who live and reign with you forever and ever, Amen.

### **Listen**

Proclaim (or dramatize) the following Scripture to the assembly: Luke 24:28-32

### **Respond**

In our reading for today, two disciples had journeyed from Jerusalem to Emmaus with the risen Jesus but did not recognize him until Jesus broke bread with them at their table. A table is symbolic of many things in our Catholic faith – a table is an important place where we recognize and celebrate Christ. A table reminds us of the home church where faithful love witnesses to God’s gift of love, it reminds us of the Eucharistic table where all are welcome, it reminds us of learning, of gathering together to break open the word, and it reminds us of caring for our neighbor through acts of service like serving at a soup kitchen or acts of justice that have us lobbying at governmental tables for change. A table is where we recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread, in the breaking of one another, in sharing our lives and journeys.

In our celebrations of Eucharist we often refer to two tables—the table of the Word and the table of the Eucharistic meal. We pause to reflectively set our two tables this day, to set our table with the things we know are important to nurturing our Catholic identity.

As we set the tables, I invite you to respond to each prayer by joining in song:

“We remember, we celebrate, we believe.” (Sing the refrain and invite the community to join in.)

### **Placing of Symbols on the Table of the Word**

**Reader 1:** We place beside this table the processional cross, it leads us into our celebration of Eucharist and reminds us that our life is rooted in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.... (Place the processional cross in its stand between the Table of the Word and Eucharist.)

Community Response: “We remember, we celebrate, we believe.”

**Reader 2:** We place upon this table this lectionary, the story of God’s faithfulness to his people and God’s people’s attempts to be faithful to him... (Place the lectionary on the Table of the Word table.)

Community Response: “We remember, we celebrate, we believe.”

**Reader 3:** We place upon this table this Book of the Gospels, the Good News of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus ...(Place the Book of the Gospels on the Table of the Word table.)

Community Response: “We remember, we celebrate, we believe.”

**Reader 4:** We place upon this table these two candles, a reminder of how the Word of God is a light for us in our journey with God and to God ... (Place candles on or beside the Table of the Word table.)

Community Response: “We remember, we celebrate, we believe.”

**Reader 5:** We place upon this table this bowl of water, a reminder of how our baptismal promises are renewed each time we profess the creed and celebrate Eucharist... (Place the bowl of water on or beside the Table of the Word table.)

Community Response: "We remember, we celebrate, we believe."

### **Table of the Eucharist**

**Reader 6:** We place upon this table this cloth, a reminder of Christ sacrificing his life for us, for the cloth reminds of his burial shroud...(Place the cloth over the Eucharistic table.)

Community Response: "We remember, we celebrate, we believe."

**Reader 7:** We place upon this table this chalice, a symbol of grapes crushed and formed into one life giving drink ... (Place the chalice on the Eucharist table.)

Community Response: "We remember, we celebrate, we believe."

**Reader 8:** We place upon this table this plate of Eucharistic bread, symbol of one body, many parts, broken and shared so that all may have life to the full ...(Place the plate of bread on the Eucharist table.)

Community Response: "We remember, we celebrate, we believe."

**Reader 9:** We place upon this table the Sacramentary, the book of prayers, blessings, and rituals that helps us to praise and worship God...(Place the Sacramentary on the Eucharist table.)

Community Response: "We remember, we celebrate, we believe."

**Reader 10:** We place upon this table ourselves (parish photo directory or parish bulletin), may we be transformed and challenged to be the body of Christ each time we celebrate Eucharist ...(Place the directory or bulletin on the Eucharist table.)

Community Response: "We remember, we celebrate, we believe."

**Reader 11:** We place at these tables a chair, to acknowledge the Spirit as part of our faith, challenging us to keep our faith real and wise and true...

(Place a chair beside both the Table of the Word and the Eucharist table.)

Community Response: "We remember, we celebrate, we believe."

### **Go Forth**

Gathered as one body around these Tables of Word and Eucharist we pray: "Our Father..."

Creator God,

You are present to us in word, Eucharist, and community. Bless us with the vision to recognize you in our midst and to be vibrant witnesses of your goodness in our world. We ask this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen

## Part 2. All Ages Learning Experience: Listening and Responding in Love – We Remember Our Relationship with God (20 minutes)

The All Ages Learning Experience is designed to help participants reflect on God's invitation and call to be his people and the loving response that God hopes to receive in reply. It briefly reflects on some of the central people who were called by God into relationship with him and concludes with some faith sharing that ties God's invitation to Eucharist. We listen to God's invitation through the Liturgy of the Word and we lovingly respond through the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

### Preparation

Invite several people from your parish, including a blend of young and older members, to prepare and dramatize the "Listening and Loving" drama (Handout #2). It is presented best when the biblical people memorize their lines or are assisted in speaking their lines by holding them on a small index card hidden in the palm of their hand. Another way to present the characters would be to use PowerPoint images of each and have a different person for each Scripture person read their presentation.

Prepare costumes for the biblical people:

- Moses (robe and staff)
- Abraham (robe, holding a sand pail with shovel)
- Jeremiah (robe and bouncing a basketball to represent youthfulness)
- Mary (robe)
- Peter (robe, holding a large rock)

Invite one to two people from your parish, one younger and one older, to prepare a brief faith sharing (3-5 minutes) to incorporate into the drama using the questions below:

- How do you experience Eucharist as a listening to God (through the Word, prayers, and people) and a loving response (bread broken and shared)?
- How is your life broken and shared with others?
- How does the Scripture feed and invite you into deeper relationship with God?
- How does the Eucharistic table feed and challenge you to lovingly respond to God's summons, God's invitation to you?
- How does Eucharist enable you to be strong in living out your faith?

This faith sharing by parishioners is an important bridge from the Scripture people to the experience of Eucharist so make every attempt possible to include the faith sharing as part of the presentation. For assistance, see a sample faith sharing on Handout #3.

If you choose Option B for the All Ages Learning Experience you will need several bibles for each table group and Handout #4.

## Option A: Drama

As we continue our exploration of Eucharist, we pause to remember how Eucharist is the ongoing celebration of God's invitation to be his people and our loving response to that invitation. As in every sacrament, we listen to God's word, and we are invited to respond by loving God and others more deeply. God invites, we respond, and the story continues. A few people are joining us at this gathering to help us remember the story of our covenantal relationship with God, of how God has, is, and continues to invite us into loving relationship with him.

(Enter Abraham).

Hello! Abraham is my name, and I might still be famous for being one of the oldest fathers on earth as well as for having one of the largest families! God was ever so faithful to me. He invited me into relationship with him, I listened to his voice and his invitations and his promises, and God gifted me with children that I longed for so deeply. I trusted God so much that I was willing to sacrifice my beloved son Isaac to obey him. God in his goodness was simply testing me and did not ask me to follow through on that sacrifice. Listening to God and responding in love, that's what life in faithful relationship with God is all about. (Abraham leaves)

(Enter Moses)

Hello! Moses is my name, and many people have spent a lot of time trying to figure out how I heard God speaking to me through a burning bush. It really was an ordinary day, and I was simply checking on the sheep, when this spectacular bush seemed to come ablaze without being burnt. Lo and behold, I heard God speaking to me. As it is written in the book of Exodus, God invited me to take off my shoes and then proceeded to tell me that he was worried about his people serving as slaves in Egypt. He told me to go to Egypt and set his people free. I wasn't sure if it was really God speaking but he even told me his name and transformed my staff into a snake and back into a staff again. I grew to know that it was God speaking to me and that I really was the one he needed to set his people free. Even though I doubted my abilities to pull it all off, I knew that God's plans for me were greater than any I could imagine for myself. I listened to God, and through an ever-growing and deepening relationship with him, chose to respond in love to God's invitation to serve him with the help of other people. Listening and responding, that's what life in faithful relationship with God is all about. (Moses leaves)

(Enter Jeremiah)

Hello! When God chose me, Jeremiah, I tried to convince him that I was too young and did not know enough to serve him as a prophet. Have you ever tried to convince God that he is choosing the wrong person? Good luck! I knew that in God's invitation was also God's faithfulness—he was not going to invite me to be his servant only to abandon me. No doubt the work was hard, trying to get the Israelites to realize that they were making bad choices and living in sin and corruption. It was painful work too, watching people reject God's loving relationship with them. I did my best, and God worked through me to reach some of his people, and that is good news. Listening and responding to God's invitation, that's what life in faithful relationship with God is all about. (Jeremiah leaves)

(Enter Mary)

Greetings, O chosen children of God! I am Mary, the woman who was blessed to serve as the mother of our Lord, Jesus. Jeremiah and all the prophets tried to get God's people to understand his loving relationship with them, but God chose to have Jesus become human and show us the way to

life and love through an earthly existence. How graced I was, to be invited to share in Christ's human existence. I remember the day when Gabriel surprised me with his presence, affirming me as having found favor with God and telling me the incredible news that I was to conceive and bear a Son, Jesus! What could I say in response to such an invitation?

The response that surfaced in my heart was, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word." I listened in faithful relationship to a God who had been so faithful to me, and how blessed was I as I responded in love to gift the world with Jesus. (Mary leaves)

(Enter Peter)

Greetings, from Peter, to the church gathered here! Do you remember, from the Gospels, the description of the Last Supper? What a night that was, such a mixture of joy and pain and a sense of something greater to come. When Jesus broke the bread, gave it to us, and said "do this in memory of me" we all felt a deepening awareness that our relationship with Jesus was going to be changing. Jesus seemed to be preparing us for him no longer being with us. We had been blessed to journey with Jesus for just a few short years, but we had grown to love and know him in ways that were unforgettable and in ways that changed our lives forever. When Jesus offered us that broken bread, we began to have a sense of how we too were going to be called to be bread for the world and for one another. Oh, I thought I was strong, that I would never deny Jesus, but fear grabs the best of all of us and I failed to be bold in my relationship with Jesus. But I did not give up, I continued to listen to Jesus and kept pondering how I was to respond in love to his invitation to feed his people. God speaks to us through Scripture and events and people, and we are called to break bread, to celebrate Eucharist, and to lovingly be God's presence in our world. Listening and loving, that's what life is all about. May you be open to listen to what God has to tell you and may you be courageous enough to lovingly respond to God's invitation. (Peter leaves)

(Enter 1-2 parishioners who have prepared a brief faith sharing)

"Hi, I am ...."

Continue:

Eucharist is about listening to God's invitation and challenge to his people and our loving response to that invitation. We listen, and through the grace of Christ and the Spirit we respond. Our learning for this session will enable us to explore the concept of listening and responding to God and each other through the celebration of Eucharist.

## Option B: Exploring Scriptures

Using Handout #4 guide the participants through the following process.

Assign each group (or groups, depending on the number of groups you have) one of the passages and challenge them to reflect on it using the questions provided. After each group has answered their questions, invite them to share with the large group their insights about God's invitation, the person's response, and the connection to Eucharist.

## Part 3. In Depth Learning Experience (80-90 minutes)

### Whole Group Format Learning Experience One: Listening to One Another and to God

#### Materials Needed

- 11 x 17 paper, one per family or individual
- Markers

Begin by sharing the following in your own words.

The ability to truly listen to another is a skill and a choice. We often feel that no one listens to us, that we are speaking but no one cares enough to really pay attention to what we are trying to say. This learning experience is a simple opportunity to reflect on how we fare as listeners. How well do we listen to others? What can we do to be better listeners? How do we listen to God, and how can we create a space in our lives to better listen to God?

As a group, sitting in a circle if possible, show one another what it looks like to NOT listen to another person who is speaking. What are some of the things we do when someone is speaking to us that might communicate to them that we are not paying attention to them? For example, physically doing something like walking away says we are not listening.

Give the groups time to complete their actions/discussion and gather some examples from them. The continue:

How do we show one another that we ARE listening and paying attention? What are some of the things we do to show others that we are paying attention to them when they are speaking to us? Discuss how we show one another that we are listening and paying attention to the other person's words, actions, needs, and so on. What do we do to show another that we are not only hearing what they are saying but understanding it too? One example is making eye contact with the speaker and asking a relevant question about what they have said.

Give the groups time to complete their actions/discussion and gather some examples from them. Then continue:

How does God speak to us? How do we hear God's invitation to love and serve him?

Talk about the variety of ways you think God speaks to you and his people.

Give the groups time to complete their discussion and gather some examples from them. Then share with them the following:

Listening is important work. We have to choose to pay attention, to really try to understand what others are saying to us. We are challenged to first understand what the other is saying and then try to help them understand what we are saying.

Listening to God is also important work. As Catholics we believe that God speaks to us in a variety of ways. God speaks to us in our hearts when we take quiet moments to listen to God.

God speaks to us through our friends and families, who love and challenge us to be the best we can be. God speaks to us through the beauty and power of nature.

At Mass, when we celebrate Eucharist, God has many opportunities to speak to us. God speaks to us through the community of people who gather, who greet one another, who spend time in prayer and conversation together. God speaks to us through the Scriptures, through the reading of the Old Testament, New Testament, and Gospel readings. God speaks to us through the prayers – the ones the priest prays for us and the ones we pray together. God speaks to us through the physical things we experience – the bread, the wine, the table of the Word and of the Eucharist.

God speaks to us and invites our response in many different ways. What can we do to prepare ourselves to listen to God in our lives and at Eucharist?

As family groups or individuals, create a “ten commandments of listening poster.” What are the top ten things to respect to be able to listen to others and to God? Invite younger children to illustrate the poster as well as to offer ideas for the commandments.

As an alternative, plot out your story of listening and responding in love to God in your life. As you reflect back on your life, what are the significant moments of hearing God speaking to you, and how did you respond?

Share examples from your own life, then get participants started.

## Whole Group Learning Experience Two: The Table of the Word: What Are We Saying Amen to? (25 to 30 minutes)

This learning experience is a dialogue with the participants, using Handout #5 to help learners of all ages stay focused on the movements of the journey of the Liturgy of the Word. A catechist either works with the entire group, inviting their responses, or table leaders at each table facilitate this process with their assigned group. The catechist or table leaders share bits of information and raise questions to engage the learners in remembering and articulating their understanding of the various parts of this liturgy. The catechist or table leader should feel comfortable adding content and ideas. The italicized content may also be used as examples to assist the table conversations.

Begin by sharing:

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (#1062) states that in Hebrew the word “amen” comes from the same root as the word “believe”. The root word expresses solidity, trustworthiness, and faithfulness. So we can understand why “Amen” may express both God’s faithfulness towards us and our trust in him. Amen for us is saying yes to God and his invitation to us to be his people. What are we saying yes to as we celebrate the liturgy of the Word during Eucharist? It is easy for us to take it for granted. Let’s walk through the movements of the Liturgy of the Word and work

together to name the Amens we profess. Use the “A Journey in Listening to God” (Handout #6) to keep the journey in front of you. Feel free to draw footprints on the handout as we move from one movement to the next to enable you to stay focused on the journey.

We begin by listening to the assembly gathering. What are some of the things you hear as people gather to celebrate Mass? What do you think we are saying yes to, amen to, when we gather as a community?

*(Answers could include: we are saying yes to diversity—accepting all people as part of God’s family; support—as community we are called to journey in love and support of one another; community—there is no such thing as a lone Christian.)*

Words of welcome are usually extended to us as we are invited to stand and sing together the processional hymn. The cross leads the procession of ministers including the celebrant/priest to the front of the church. What do you think we are saying yes to, saying amen to, by having the cross be at the front of the procession?

*(Answers could include: we are saying yes to journey—as Christians we are on a journey with and to God; the cross—our central Christian symbol and part of every sacrament that we celebrate; Jesus—his life, death, and resurrection are part of us and all that we do.)*

We then mark ourselves with the sign of the cross – what other sacraments does that remind you of? Why do we mark ourselves with the sign of the cross?

*(Answers could include: we are saying yes to our baptism—at baptism we are marked with the sign of the cross, claimed, marked, and identified as choosing to live our life as Christ lived his.)*

As a community we do not always do a good job of living out our Christian lives. So we are invited to pause and pray, to prepare our hearts and minds to be changed by God’s love and grace that we might hear him speak to us and that we might be worthy to celebrate Eucharist together. So we pray—Lord have mercy...Christ have mercy...Lord have mercy.

We then hear the organ or other musical instruments play out the first notes of the Gloria, and we are invited to praising God for all the blessings that God showers upon us. What are we saying yes to, saying amen to, by singing praises to God?

*(Answers could include: we are saying yes to God’s grace—all that we are and have is gift from God; the commandment of loving God—God is the one and only higher power in our lives.)*

We are reminded through the opening prayer of what we are celebrating at this Eucharist and are called through the prayer to pay attention to the many images we have of God and to place our needs in God’s hands. We always close our prayer by asking it in the name of Jesus, God’s Son, who lives and reigns with God and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. What are we saying yes to, saying amen to, through the opening prayer?

*(Answers could include: we are saying yes to Trinity—the God of three persons, the all mightiness of God—for whom one image of God is not able to say it all.)*



The Scriptures are then proclaimed to us by a member of our community. We pause to listen to God challenge and affirm us through his Word – first through the Old Testament, then from a reading from the early church, then a reading from the Gospel followed by a homily that enables us to integrate what we have heard. What are we saying yes to, saying amen to, through listening to the Scriptures?

*(Answers could include: we are saying yes to revelation—God continues to speak to us through his word today, for revelation and our understanding of God is a dynamic reality; our ability to change—the Word of God has the power and ability to challenge and affirm us into being who we are, daughters and sons of God.)*

Our listening to God’s word pushes us outward to think of the needs of all God’s people. We pray for church leaders, we pray for world concerns, we pray for the sick, the dying, the poor. We stand in humble need before God and intercede, like Jesus, for those in need. We bring all of who we are and who our community is to God and plead for him to give us what we need.

We stand in faith to profess our faith too—through the creed we say a huge AMEN to everything that is central to who we are as Catholics. What do we profess belief in? Can you name some of the elements we profess faith in through the creed? I believe in God the Father almighty...I believe in Jesus his only Son...I believe in the Holy Spirit ...What does our public proclamation of the creed say about us?

*(Answers include: we are saying yes to convicting our lives to practicing what we profess; living our faith together with our community; publicly witnessing to our faith in the world.)*

Our journey through the Liturgy of the Word concludes with a challenge. In the center of the handout there is a blank space with the heading: “We say yes to”. Take a few minutes as a family or as an individual to summarize what you are saying yes to, or trying to say yes to, as you participate in the Liturgy of the Word.

## Whole Group Learning Experience Three: Our Loving Response—Liturgy of the Eucharist

This learning experience involves the creation of a picture portrayal of Eucharistic Prayer Two, one of the Eucharistic prayers that is prayed on a regular basis parish communities. Central phrases have been cited from the prayer, with an invitation to find or draw pictures or images that help to illustrate the Eucharistic prayer.

### **Materials Needed**

Each family group or team of individuals will need:

- a piece of poster board
- Handout #6
- a variety of pictures and symbols (precut a collection from old magazines and newspapers)
- scissors, glue sticks, adhesive foam pieces, and washable markers
- Bible

Begin by sharing:

When we gather for Eucharist, we do not simply gather to remember something Jesus did in the past. We also gather to celebrate how God, Jesus, and Spirit continue to live in and through us as we muddle our way through our daily lives. We gather to challenge ourselves to respond in loving ways to God's invitation to be bread for the world. Using the quotes from the Eucharistic prayers listed on Handout #7, spend some time as families, table groups, or individuals, celebrating and naming the presence of Eucharist in your lives by drawing or pasting pictures that relate to each quote. Cut the quote out, paste it on your collage/poster board, then add a picture or two to illustrate it.

Invite the group, after they have illustrated their Eucharistic prayer, or instead of illustrating it, to have a conversation launched by the following reflection and guided by the questions that follow it:

Read together Luke 24:28-32.

Have table groups read the two stories on Handout #7 and the commentary following. Then invite them to discuss the questions on the handout.

As Joanne walked down the aisle in the communion procession, she and her husband were offered the sign of peace by numerous community members. A few months back their thirteen-year-old daughter had died from what was to have been routine heart surgery. The community had wrapped them in support, bringing them food, praying for and with them, and simply being present to them as they grieved the loss of their daughter. What Joanne and her husband did not realize yet was how much they had gifted the community in return. Their faithful presence, their open belief in the resurrected Jesus, their simple reception of the gifts the community had shared with them had gifted the community in ways that were beyond description. Joanne and her husband had been bread broken in nourishment of the community, just as the community had been bread broken to them in the sharing of the bread.

Joe had been in a wheelchair all of his life. Born with fetal alcohol syndrome, he was unable to verbally speak but made sounds and jerky movements that conveyed a little what was going on in his mind and heart. Joe could do almost nothing for himself and was dependent on a full-time care giver to help him with his daily rituals – eating, bathing, attending school, exercise, and so on. An outsider may have simply seen Joe as the receiver of gifts and not the giver of many. Insiders at Joe's high school knew differently. They could recognize the sounds of joy coming from Joe when he greeted them in the hallway; they knew how excited and passionate the sounds and gestures were coming from Joe during the praying of the Our Father in school assemblies. Joe had gifted the school with gifts that were there for anyone who dared to pay attention. Joe was bread broken for the community, calling them to a joyful stance of the world, and the community was bread broken for Joe, supporting and loving him in his physical struggles.

Eucharist is about recognizing Jesus in the breaking of the bread, just like the disciples recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread during the Emmaus story. They recognized Jesus in the action of breaking, in the memorial act of Jesus reminding them of and making present again his willingness to be broken, to die so that they and we might have life to the full. Through the breaking of the bread at Eucharist we are called to become Eucharist for others, to offer our pain, to take risks and make sacrifices so that others may come to know the fullness of life that Jesus offers us. Our loving

response to God's invitation to be in relationship with him includes a willingness to be bread broken for others, and to receive bread broken for us by others.

Broken bread could mean offering other people areas of our lives where we have felt pain and suffering. Breaking bread could mean having the courage to receive from others. Jesus calls us not to give from our excess but to give our all—to share all that we are and have with those in need. Eucharist is a celebration of giving and receiving, a celebration of thanksgiving for being part of a community that is willing to break bread, and to take and eat the gift of bread from another, and to give bread to those who have lost hope, who have no resources or ability to give or take.

As you ponder the stories of Joanne and her husband and Joe, how do they speak to you of Eucharist being a celebration of bread broken, lives offered in gift to another? When you think of the community that you are part of, do these stories remind you of any of its members?

What is harder for you to do, to give or to receive? Why?

How does this reflection challenge, affirm, or surface questions about your understanding of Eucharist?

What other insights surface for you from the Emmaus reading and the disciples recognizing Jesus in the breaking of the bread?

# Learning Activity Center 1. Liturgy of the Word: A Tour of What We Believe

## Preparation

This activity center needs to take place in the church. Depending on the size of the church, this center could accommodate 50 to 75 learners. This is a “moving” version of the whole group format activity “The Table of the Word: What are we saying Amen to?”

Prepare a banner—title it “We Say AMEN to God’s Word”— for learners to write or draw their learning from this center upon as they leave this activity. The banner could be on a large table at the exit the participants will be departing through, along with washable markers for them to write/draw with.

## Materials Needed

- Handout #5
- the processional cross and stand placed in the front by the altar
- banner with the title “We Say AMEN to God’s Word”
- markers

Gather everyone in the welcome area of the church. Then share:

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (#1062) states that in Hebrew the word “amen” comes from the same root as the word “believe”. This root expresses solidity, trustworthiness, and faithfulness. So we can understand why “Amen” may express both God’s faithfulness towards us and our trust in him. Amen for us is saying yes to God and his invitation to us to be his people.

What are we saying yes to as we celebrate the Liturgy of the Word during Eucharist? It is easy for us to take it for granted. Let’s walk through the movements of the liturgy of the Word and work together to name the Amens we profess. Use the handout called “A Journey in Listening to God” (Handout #6) to keep the journey in front of you.

We begin by listening to the assembly gathering. What are some of the things you hear as people gather to celebrate Mass? What do you think we are saying yes to, amen to, when we gather as a community?

*(Answers could include: we are saying yes to diversity—accepting all people as part of God’s family; support—as community we are called to journey in love and support of one another; community—there is no such thing as a lone Christian.)*

Gather everyone in the aisle, with the processional cross at the front of the line heading towards the front of the church. Share:

Words of welcome are usually extended to us as we are invited to stand and sing together the processional hymn. The cross leads the procession of ministers including the celebrant/priest to the front of the church. What do you think we are saying yes to, saying amen to, by having the cross be at the front of the procession?

*(Answers could include: we are saying yes to journey—as Christians we are on a journey with and to God; the cross—our central Christian symbol and part of every sacrament that we celebrate; Jesus—his life, death, and resurrection are part of us and all that we do.)*

The cross is placed in its holding stand and people are now gathered across the front of the church with the leader facing them. Continue:

Continue:

We then mark ourselves with the sign of the cross – what other sacraments does that remind you of? Why do we mark ourselves with the sign of the cross?

*(Answers could include: we are saying yes to our baptism—at baptism we are marked with the sign of the cross, claimed, marked, and identified as choosing to live our life as Christ lived his.)*

As a community we do not always do a good job of living out our Christian lives. So we are invited to pause and pray, to prepare our hearts and minds to be changed by God’s love and grace that we might hear him speak to us and that we might be worthy to celebrate Eucharist together. So we pray—Lord have mercy...Christ have mercy...Lord have mercy.

If the community’s organ or leader of song area is at the front of the church, gather everyone in that area. Continue:

We then hear the organ or other musical instruments play out the first notes of the Gloria, and we are invited to praise God for all the blessings that God showers upon us. What are we saying yes to, saying amen to, by singing praises to God?

*(Answers could include: we are saying yes to God’s grace—all that we are and have is gift from God; the commandment of loving God—God is the one and only higher power in our lives.)*

Re-gather everyone in the front of the church before the altar. Share the following:

We are reminded through the opening prayer of what we are celebrating at this Eucharist and are called through the prayer to pay attention to the many images we have of God and to place our needs in God’s hands. We always close our prayer by asking it in the name of Jesus, God’s Son, who lives and reigns with God and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. What are we saying yes to, saying amen to, through the opening prayer?

*(Answers could include: we are saying yes to Trinity—the God of three persons, the all mightiness of God—for whom one image of God is not able to say it all.)*

Invite everyone to gather around the ambo. Find out if anyone knows what it is called and tell them what it is if they do not know. Then continue:

The Scriptures are then proclaimed to us by a member of our community. We pause to listen to God challenge and affirm us through his Word – first through the Old Testament, then from a reading from the early church, then a reading from the Gospel followed by a homily that enables us to integrate what we have heard. What are we saying yes to, saying amen to, through listening to the Scriptures?

*(Answers could include: we are saying yes to revelation—God continues to speak to us through his word today, for revelation and our understanding of God is a dynamic reality; our ability to change—the Word of God has the power and ability to challenge and affirm us into being who we are, daughters and sons of God.)*

Our listening to God's word pushes us outward to think of the needs of all God's people. We pray for church leaders, we pray for world concerns, we pray for the sick, the dying, the poor. We stand in humble need before God and intercede, like Jesus, for those in need. We bring all of who we are and who our community is to God and plead for him to give us what we need.

We stand in faith to profess our faith too—through the creed we say a huge AMEN to everything that is central to who we are as Catholics. What do we profess belief in? Can you name some of the elements we profess faith in through the creed? I believe in God the Father almighty...I believe in Jesus his only Son...I believe in the Holy Spirit ...What does our public proclamation of the creed say about us?

*(Answers include: we are saying yes to convicting our lives to practicing what we profess; living our faith together with our community; publicly witnessing to our faith in the world.)*

Conclude with the following:

At this point in the liturgy, we would now be shifting our attention from the Table of the Word to the Table of the Eucharist, which we will be learning about in other learning activity centers.

As you move to the other learning centers, you are invited to place a word or image on the large banner "We Say AMEN to God's Word" that captures for you or your family what you are saying yes to, or trying to say yes to, as you participate in the Liturgy of the Word.

## Learning Activity Center 2. Exploring a Eucharistic Prayer

### Materials Needed

- Hymnals or missalettes containing the Eucharistic prayers
- Markers or highlighters

Invite learners to read together a Eucharistic prayer of their choosing. As they read through the prayers they are to underline or highlight—if using a print copy that allows them to do so—or make note of the words that help them to understand the meaning of Eucharist.

Once everyone has completed the reading and note-taking, invite them into a conversation:

1. What words or phrases in the prayer did you find inspiring or challenging?
2. Are there any words you do not understand? Which words?
3. Did you notice or read any words that you had not really heard before when the prayer was prayed during Eucharist? If yes, which words?
4. What did the prayer teach you about the meaning of Eucharist?
5. What questions about Eucharist did the prayer surface for you?

## Learning Activity Center 3. Meal Stories

### Preparation

Cut card stock into table name-card size (a 4" x 5" rectangle folded in half becomes a 2" x 5" table card). You will need about 20 pieces of card stock per learner, depending on which Bible passages you choose to explore. If desired, gather supplies to decorate the place cards with—adhesive foam pieces, stickers, markers, or crayons.

### Materials Needed

- Card stock
- Stickers, markers, crayons
- Bible

This learning center involves reading together stories of Jesus sharing meals with people. Use a children's Bible for the family version of this center and an appropriate translation for older audiences.

Begin by inviting the learners to sit around a large table and listen to several of the following Scripture stories involving meals.

1. John 2:1-11 Wedding Meal at Cana
2. Matthew 9:10-12 Dinner with Levi
3. Luke 14:1-6 The Sabbath Meal of the Scribes and Pharisees
4. Luke 19:1-10 Zacchaeus
5. Luke 22:7-13 Last Supper
6. John 21:1-4 Jesus Cooks for His Friends

After the reading of each story, invite the learners to discuss/reflect upon:

- Who was Jesus eating with?
- Why was Jesus' presence at the meal important to the people he was eating with?

After the stories have been discussed, invite the learners to create a table name card, using the folded card stock, for each of the people mentioned in one of the stories. They can also decorate the name cards with symbols—adhesive foam pieces or stickers would work well—that describe the person. Encourage the learners to take the name cards home with them and place them in the middle of their table to remind themselves of the people that Jesus included in his life and the people that we are also called to remember and pay attention to.



## Learning Activity Center 4. Creation of a Eucharistic-Themed Tablecloth

### Preparation

Invite seamstresses from the parish to prepare squares of fabric (one square yard) and zigzag the edges or sew simple hems to keep the fabric from fraying.

### Materials Needed

- square of fabric (broadcloth or muslin) for each learner or household (approximately one yard square)
- fabric markers, crayons, or permanent markers for writing on the fabric
- protective material such as plastic or heavy paper to keep the markers from staining the surface beneath the fabric
- Handout #9

Using this simple reflection, guide the learners to decorate their tablecloth:

At this learning center we are creating a Eucharist tablecloth to take home to adorn our dining table, our prayer center, or to use as a simple wall hanging.

Eucharist is about remembering and celebrating Jesus and his gift of life to us. A cross is our central Christian symbol that reminds us of that. In the middle of your tablecloth, I invite you to create the image of a cross.

In the first part of Eucharistic celebrations, we listen to the stories of God's faithful love for his people and hear stories of Jesus' life and the life of the early church community. In one corner of the tablecloth, I invite you to write the names of biblical people you have met in the Liturgy of the Word and titles or images of some of your favorite Scripture stories.

God always speaks to us through the people in our lives. Who shares God's message of life and love with you? In the corner of the tablecloth adjacent to the one you have just completed, write names or draw pictures of the people in your life you are grateful to for sharing God's love and life with you.

In the second part of the Eucharist we gather to lovingly say yes to be part of God's mission in the world. In one corner of the tablecloth draw symbols of bread and wine, the body of Christ that we lovingly say yes to becoming in the world.

Eucharist does not end with the closing hymn, but continues by the choices we make to be bread broken and shared with the world. We are called to serve and love others so that they too may come to know the love and forgiveness of God and Jesus. In the final corner of the tablecloth, trace your hand(s) as a symbol of your willingness to make a difference, to be Good News in the world.

## Learning Activity Center 5. Bread Broken and Shared Reflection

### Preparation

Before beginning the learning plan, make sure that none of the learners are allergic to any of the ingredients – either by handling the ingredients or by consuming them. Set up measuring stations for the ingredients and gather all the materials.

### Materials Needed

- 2 cups of white all-purpose flour per household
- 1 cup whole wheat flour per household
- 1 packet of quick rise yeast (or 2 tsp) per household
- 1 tsp salt per household
- 1 ½ cups of water per household
- ¼ cup liquid honey per household
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil per household
- 1 ziplock bag per household
- permanent markers
- stalks of wheat or pictures of stalks of wheat
- bowl of grains of wheat, one per learner—organic or health food stores often carry unground wheat
- copy of the recipe on Handout #10
- salt shaker with salt (to sprinkle into learner’s hand for tasting)
- yeast to sprinkle onto the learner’s hand for viewing
- container of honey and a popsicle stick for each learner
- container of vegetable oil in original container from store, and a small bowl to pour it in
- unmarked container of powdered milk and a bowl to pour it in
- large pitcher of water and small water cups, one cup per learner
- measuring cups and spoons for learners to measure out the ingredients
- Bible with the Scripture passages marked with post it notes

**Note:** Learners are to measure out the ingredients themselves so no pre-measuring is needed.

Begin the activity by asking the learners gathered if they have ever baked bread from “scratch” before – if yes, did it turn out? Did they like it? Also ask everyone what their favorite breads are and why.

Then share the following.

At this learning center we are going to prepare bread ingredients for you to bake at home. We will read a Scripture passage about the ingredient, talk about it, then you are going to measure out the ingredients to add to a ziplock bag to take home and bake. Ready? Let’s become bread makers! First, take a marker and write your name on the zip lock bag I have given you.

Hold up the flour and share:

The standard or basic ingredient for most bread is flour of some kind. In the United States and Canada the most common type of flour used is wheat flour. Wheat flour contains a substance

known as gluten. When gluten is mixed with a liquid, then kneaded, it stretches to form an elastic network that traps the gas bubbles formed by the yeast in bread. Have you ever seen wheat before it is ground up into flour?

Here is what it looks like (show them stalks of wheat or pictures of stalks of wheat). Choose from this bowl of wheat grains a grain of wheat to hold in your hand and to look at.

Read or invite someone to read the following passage marked in the Bible:

“Jesus answered them, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.’” (John 12:23-24)

Continue:

The grain of wheat you are holding in your hand started out as part of a stalk of wheat. The stalk of wheat only became a stalk of wheat through the planting of a single grain of wheat. By planting one simple grain, if it is not consumed by bugs or disease, a beautiful stalk of wheat is produced. The grain of wheat “dies” to being a grain of wheat so that it can give life to many grains of wheat. That is like us when we celebrate Eucharist together. We come together, offering time and energy to be together, so that we can build a beautiful community of people that shows the world the commitment we’ve made to being God’s people. For wheat to become flour it needs to be transformed once again—the wheat seeds that you are holding are ground up to make the flour that becomes the staple ingredient in bread. I invite you now to come forward to measure into your bag the flour—two cups of white and one cup of whole wheat.

Sprinkle onto each learner’s hand a tiny bit of yeast. Share:

It is amazing to hold in our hands the tiniest grains of yeast that have such power to take the heavy flour, work in combination with it, and produce light fluffy bread.

Read or invite someone to read the following passage marked in the Bible:

“And again he said, ‘To what should I compare the kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.’” (Luke 13:20-21)

Continue:

When we come together to celebrate Eucharist, we are called to go out into the world to be leaven, to be yeast, to give witness and praise to God so that the love and hope of God, Jesus, and Spirit may penetrate the heart of the world. The simple grain of yeast you are holding seems too tiny and powerless but joined with others it has the power to have significant impact on the world. Our simple actions in love of one another and in service to those we meet has the power to build the kingdom of God. I invite you to come forward now to measure into your bag two teaspoons of this quick rising yeast.

Sprinkle onto each learner’s hand a few grains of salt and invite them to taste it if they would like. Then share:

This salt is part of many of the things we eat and is mostly used to help our foods' flavor be as strong as possible. Like the yeast, the salt seems tiny and insignificant, but has the power to do great things. It strengthens the gluten in the flour by slowing down the yeast's growth to give the bread better texture.

Read or invite someone to read the following passage from the Bible:

“When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot.” (Matthew 5:1-13)

Continue:

When we gather to celebrate Eucharist, we gather first to hear and be nourished by the Word of God. We respond by being nourished by the body and blood of Jesus and agreeing to go out into the world to be bread for others. Being salt of the earth is doing just that – it is doing all the good things that we know we need to do to work with God and the Spirit to make Jesus known and loved by all people. Salt is an important part of being bread for others—it reminds us that we all, through our gifts and talents and personalities, have ways to work with God so that everyone knows of God's love for them. I invite you to come forward now to measure into your bag 1 teaspoon of salt.

Using a popsicle stick for each person, invite them to dip their stick into a container of honey for a small taste of it. Then share:

Honey is sometimes used as a sweetener when making bread. In order for yeast to rise, it needs food to eat. Sugar is the food that yeast needs to effectively rise. What foods do you like that have sugar or honey in them?

After sharing, read or invite someone to read the following passage from the Bible:

“I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.”  
(Psalm 81:16)

Share:

When God freed the Hebrew slaves from their slavery in Egypt, he led them to a land flowing with milk and honey. In Psalm 81 the writer is claiming the God has power to get honey even from a rock. The psalm writer is challenging the Hebrew people to repent and return to God. He tells them that God will take care of their every need. God takes care of us; he does not invite us into relationship only to abandon us. Eucharist feeds us through the bread and the faith and support of each other. Eucharist feeds us to be leaven, to be yeast in growing God's love in the world. Eucharist is a little taste of what the land of milk and honey, heaven, will be like.

Pour a small amount (half an ounce) of oil into a small bowl and invite learners to dab one finger into it and spread it on the back of their other hand. Then share:

Oil is used in bread to keep the consistency soft and to keep the bread moist. Bread can be made without oil but it will be a harder, crustier bread and will dry out more quickly than bread with oil in it.

Read or invite someone to read the following passage:

"Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.' For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again." (Jeremiah 31:10-12)

Continue:

Celebrating Eucharist helps us to be like a watered garden, a garden that has the food and the water it needs to produce healthy and strong plants. The oil in bread helps us to last longer than bread without oil. Eucharist helps us to be strong and fresh as we serve the world.

Pour some powdered milk (in an unmarked container) into a bowl and invite the learners to guess what it is. Then share:

Bread can be made without milk, but like the oil milk improves the bread's texture and flavor and helps keep the bread fresh a little longer.

Read or invite someone to read the following passage:

Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.'" (Exodus 3: 7-8)

Continue:

To the Hebrew people a land flowing with milk and honey was like paradise. We tend to take milk for granted as we drive to the grocery store or convenience store and pick up a jug as needed. We are fortunate to celebrate a land of milk and honey each time we celebrate Eucharist, for God promises through Jesus to be faithful to us and to help us through any challenge in our life that takes place. Eucharist is a celebration of the past, present, and future—we celebrate God’s faithful relationship to his people of the past, we celebrate God’s relationship with us now, and we eagerly look forward to being gathered with God at the heavenly banquet.

Using mini paper cups, pour everyone a glass of water to drink. Then share:

Water is an important ingredient in the bread for it dissolves the yeast. The yeast remains inactive unless it is given both sugar (honey) and water for it to grow.

Read or invite someone to read the following passage:

“Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.’” (John 4:13-15)

Share:

Through our baptism we enter the life-giving water of relationship in Jesus. Eucharist is a gift from Jesus to sustain us, to quench our thirst for life and love and hope, as we live our lives here on earth as best as we can. The waters of baptism confirm us as children of God and as members of a community.

When you get home and are ready to make your bread, dump the ingredients into a bowl and add the water as prescribed in the instructions on your handout. Simply follow the steps of baking the bread and in one and a half hours you could be enjoying a fresh loaf of bread. If you are unable to complete the bread for a few days, place the bag of ingredients in your refrigerator until you are ready.

May the bread you bake remind you of the gift of Eucharist and challenge you to be the best children of God that you can be. Happy bread baking!

Invite anyone who is not comfortable completing the bread at home to leave it with you or to give it to another learner who will complete the mixing and baking of the bread for them.

## Part 4. Sharing Learning Reflections (20-25 minutes)

Ask participants to gather in intergenerational groups. Invite them to share their responses to the following question:

What did you learn about Eucharist tonight? What thought, phrase, or image are you carrying home with you?

One option to guide the sharing of the learning is to provide each group with a roll or small loaf of bread. As each person shares their insight about Eucharist they are invited to break off a piece of bread and then pass the loaf onto the next person.

## Part 5. Closing Prayer Service (10 minutes)

### Preparation

Closing prayer is a simple litany that celebrates what we say yes to, Amen to, as we celebrate Eucharist together. The Amen to each prayer petition could be a simply sung Amen familiar to the community or could be simply a verbal Amen to each petition. Learners could be standing for the prayer service as it is brief. Before the prayer service begins, inform them that they are to respond to the prayer petitions with Amen.

### Gather

Creator God, you gifted us with your son Jesus and gift us with his body and blood each time we celebrate Eucharist. We gather to close our learning in prayer, remembering what we say yes to, what we say Amen to, each time we gather for Eucharist.

### Litany

Do you promise to be inviting and welcoming to all people as we gather in community to celebrate Eucharist?

Amen!

Do you promise to stand before God when you are hurting or have hurt others, to seek forgiveness?

Amen!

Do you promise to listen attentively to God's word, that it may inspire and transform your life?

Amen!

Do you promise to live out your belief in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit by being a hope filled person?

Amen!

Do you promise to offer all that you are in service to God?

Amen!

Do you promise to be bread blessed and broken and to allow others to be bread for you too?

Amen!

Do you promise to live a life of prayer in communion with the whole Church?  
Amen!

Do you promise to journey faithfully with this community to continue building the kingdom of God?  
Amen!

Do you promise to seek opportunities to serve others and share with them the Good News of Jesus?  
Amen!

Our learning celebration has ended, let us go forward to love and serve the world, AMEN!

**Go Forth**

To conclude our time together, let us offer each other a sign of peace.