

Lesson 26 – The Holy Eucharist

Grades 6-8

Lesson Preparation:

Read Lesson 26 in the Baltimore Catechism. You will need to prepare the items for the opening activity. Also, be sure to print or be able to display the attachment for the “Go Deeper” section, and print and copy the sheet for the activity.

Opening Prayer:

Scripture: “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.”
John 6:54-56

Leader: Lord, Jesus, You are the bread of life. Your Flesh gave us life on the cross, and it gives us life in the Eucharist. Help us to understand with a deep faith. Amen.

Together: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Opening:

Today’s lesson is about the Eucharist and we will be trying to teach the students the concept of transubstantiation. To get started, we will get them thinking about the way things change. We want students to understand that things can change in their appearance, and in their essence. The appearance of things – how they look, smell, taste, etc. – in philosophy is called their “accidents.” The essence of a thing – what is really is, is called its “substance.”

Take a piece of paper and tear it in half for the class. Ask the students if the paper has changed. Did its appearance change? Other than being ripped, it still looks the same. Its accidents are basically unchanged. Has its substance changed? It is still the same substance, paper, so its substance did not change.

Now, you can use ice. As the ice melts, its appearance does change, so the accidents change. However, it is still the same substance, H₂O. Sometimes, there can be a change that we don't see. For example, when you learn something new, you don't look any different, but knowledge is added to your mind.

Can the substance of something change without the accidents changing? God does just that in the Eucharist. Bread and wine changes into the Body and Blood of Christ. It is no longer bread and wine, the substance has changed. But it still appears like bread and wine, the accidents have not changed. Only God's power can do something like this, which is why only a priest can consecrate the Eucharist. This is called transubstantiation, which means "change of substance."

It is important that students have at least a basic understanding of these things as they begin study of the Eucharist.

Watch the Lesson 26 Video on Catholic Brain

Comprehension Questions: *Note: These questions are asked after the video, just to check student comprehension. They are not discussion questions, but be sure students understand the answers to these questions before moving on*

1) What is the Eucharist?

The sacrament by which Jesus gives us His Body and Blood, under the appearance of bread and wine.

2) When did Jesus give us the Eucharist?

At the Last Supper, the night before He was crucified.

3) What is transubstantiation?

The change of substance of bread and wine to the Body and Blood of Christ.

4) Who can consecrate the Eucharist today?

Priests.

Discussion Questions: *Note: These questions are for student discussion. The students should consider these questions and comment on them. There are some key points included in this lesson, after each question, that you can use to help guide their discussion toward truth. It's important that the students think about*

and discuss these things, but that they don't leave the discussion with false impressions about what is true.

1) Why did Jesus give us the Eucharist?

It is a perpetuation of the sacrifice of the cross at every Mass. To be received in Holy Communion by the faithful, and unite us intimately with Him. He remains with His Church physically, in the sacrament.

2) How can we show our gratitude and respect for the Eucharist?

Answers will vary, but may include receiving often and worthily, participating in Eucharistic Adoration and processions, making visits to the tabernacle.

Go Deeper:

Every Eucharist is a miracle. By the power of the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of the priest, bread and wine becomes the Body and Blood of Christ. Occasionally, there is an extraordinary miracle of the Eucharist, in which God changes not just the substance, but also the accidents of the sacrament.

One of the most famous examples happened in Lanciano, Italy around the year A.D. 700. Tell the story of Lanciano to the students.

A priest who was struggling with his faith was celebrating Mass. At the moment of consecration, the host underwent an extraordinary change. Not only did the substance change, as it always does, the accidents of the host changed so that it looked and felt like flesh. The Precious Blood did, as well, physically resembling blood.

Both the Body and Blood have been saved for 1,300 years, and pilgrims can visit them to this day. In the 20th century, the Church allowed scientific tests to be done on the miracle, and the results were astounding. The flesh is human heart tissue, and it was shown to be tissue taken from a living Heart. The blood, after more than 1,000 years, had not broken down, and contained all the proteins of human blood. Both the Flesh and Blood are blood type AB.

Show the students the attached picture of the Lanciano Flesh and Blood, and ask them why God occasionally gives us such extraordinary miracles of the Eucharist. Encourage the students to learn about more, maybe getting a copy of Joan Carroll Cruz's book *Eucharistic Miracles*.

Activity:

Do the attached crossword about the Holy Eucharist.

Closing Prayer:

Leader: Thank You, God, for the gift of the Eucharist. Thank You for priests who bring this sacrament to us every day. And thank You for desiring to be with us so much that You have stayed with us in this incredible way, through the Holy Eucharist. Amen.

Together: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.