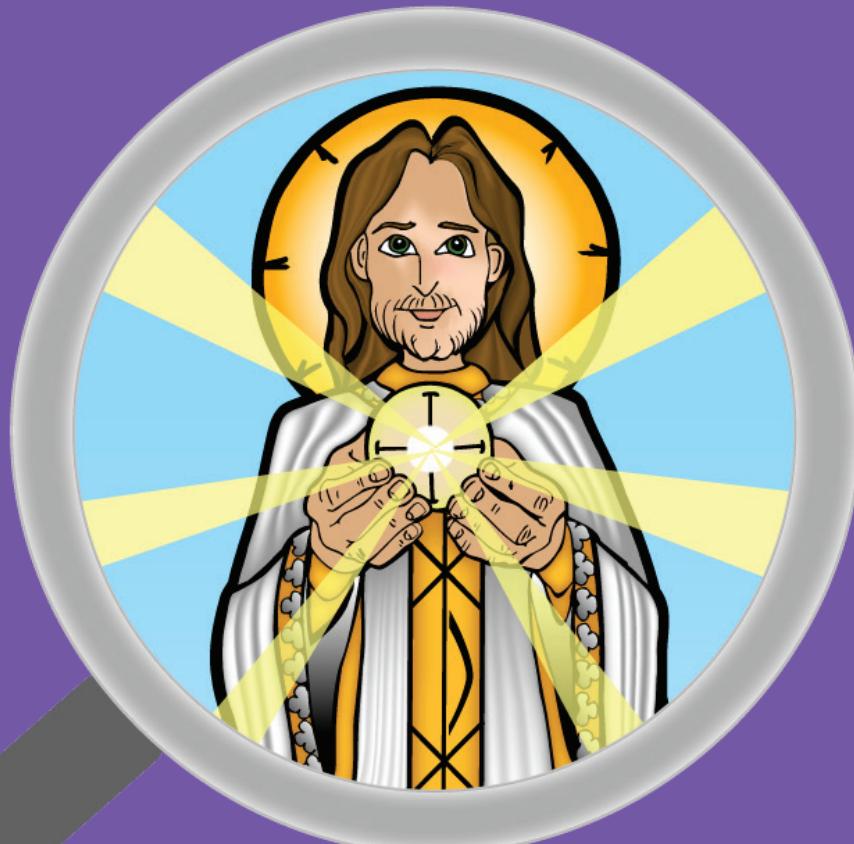




Welcome to the **FAITH STATION**



Day 1

Theme: The Mass is a **MYSTERY** that Jesus wants us to learn more about.
We celebrate this special mystery in the Eucharist at every Mass.

Virtue: Patience (*the ability to wait without grumbling or complaining*)

Opening Prayer:

Light a candle.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Jesus, we offer you this day. Help us to enter into the mystery of Your Holy Mass.
Teach us to be patient in seeking you, just as you are patient with us.
St. Joan of Arc, pray for us. Amen.



Bible Verse of the Day:

“He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him.” John 6:56

Show the Bible Verse poster and watch the Bible Verse video.

Theme Intro (2 minutes)

What does the word mystery mean? *A mystery is something we do not fully understand.*

There are many things that are a mystery to us, even some things about our faith. With patience (*today's virtue*), we can begin to discover a little more clearly the wonderful and mysterious things about our faith. This week at our Marvelous Mystery VBS, we can ask God to help us understand more about the Mass and about Jesus in the Eucharist.

How do you try to solve a mystery? *Look for clues, study and research, investigate, ask questions, talk to people, spend time and persevere (don't give up), pray, etc.*

That's also how we can learn more about the mysteries of our faith.

“Do not think that Jesus Christ is forgetful of you, since he has left you the greatest memorial and pledge of his love, himself in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.”

St. Alphonsus Liguori

Teaching: Church Tour (15 minutes)

If you are not able to take a physical tour of the church, you can still teach the lesson by doing a show n' tell of some of the special items used in the church. (Ex. Chalice, paten, vestments, lectionary, holy water, etc.) The age of the children you are working with will determine how in-depth you cover the lesson.

We're going to take a tour of the church and explore things in each area that might be a mystery to you.

1. GATHERING AREA

When you first walk into a church, the welcoming space is called the gathering area. In many church buildings, you will see a baptismal font.

We bless ourselves with holy water to remind ourselves of our baptism and to renew our promise to follow Jesus.

How do we bless ourselves?

We make the sign of the cross while saying part of the words used in our baptism: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19)

Has anyone noticed people greeting one another here before and after Mass?

An important part of being a church community is getting to know each other. Greeters and ushers are people who welcome us as we enter the church and some may even help us find our seats.



Before we move on to the next area, ask:

Who remembers why we come in to the church and bless ourselves with holy water?

To remind ourselves of our baptism and renew our promise to follow Jesus.

2. NAVE

The nave is the central area in the church where the parishioners sit or stand.

Some of the things you will see in the nave:

Aisle: a space for walking with rows of seats on either side.

Pews: benches that we sit on during Mass. Some churches have rows of chairs instead of pews.

Kneelers: padded risers at the bottom of a pew to kneel on during special times in the Mass.

Has anyone ever seen people kneeling on one knee before they enter a pew?

Kneeling before you enter a pew is called genuflecting. Before entering or leaving our pew, we should face Jesus in the tabernacle and kneel on one knee to show Him respect and reverence.

Genuflect comes from a Latin word meaning "to bend the knee".

Choir/Music Ministry area: sometimes found upstairs or in a space to the side of the church.

It's the choir's responsibility to lead us in song during different parts of the Mass.

Stations of the Cross: a series of images on the wall to remind us of all the things Jesus went through as He suffered and died for us. (*not used as part of the Mass*)

Votive Candles with money box: a lit candle acts as a symbol of our prayers being lifted up to heaven. We usually put money in the box to pay for the cost of the candle.

Statues of Mary and the Saints: statues of the saints are beautiful reminders of holy men and women of our faith. We do not pray to the statue, but the statue helps us remember the saint as we pray. We ask Mary and all the saints in Heaven to pray for us and our needs. Just as we would ask for our friends on earth to pray for us, we also ask the saints for their special prayers in Heaven.

Point to a statue.

Does anyone know what Saint this is?

Have the kids try to identify any of the statues in the church. Ask them if they know anything about that saint or you may choose to add a brief comment about the saint.

Before we move on to the next area, ask:

Who remembers what the name of this area is called? *Nave.*

Would anyone like to show us how to genuflect before entering a pew?

Why do we genuflect? *To show reverence to Jesus and recognize His presence.*

3. SANCTUARY

The Sanctuary is the raised area where the altar is and where the priest celebrates the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Sanctuary comes from the Latin word “sanctus” which means holy.

Some of the things you will see in the sanctuary:

Presider's Chair: a special chair for the priest to sit in. It is a symbol of the “chair of Peter”, spiritual authority passed on from pope to bishop and bishop to priest.

Ambo/Pulpit: a podium used by the priest to read the Gospel and give the Homily or teaching.

Sacramentary: the book from which the priest reads the prayers of the Mass.

Lectern: a podium used by lectors who read the 1st and 2nd readings from the Lectionary.

Your parish may only have 1 podium –usually called an ambo.

Lectionary: the book containing the Bible readings to be read during the Liturgy of the Word.

Is anyone in your family a lector at Mass, an altar server, or a member of the choir?

These are great ways to participate at Mass.

Short Teaching on the Eucharist

At Mass, we witness the bread and wine becoming Jesus' Body and Blood. It may still look the same to us on the outside, but deep down on the inside it has actually changed. It is Jesus truly present. This is a great mystery of our Catholic faith that we can't fully explain or understand. God asks us to have faith and believe.

It is not necessary to go into detail about the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist as it will be covered on Day 4.

Altar: the table where the priest celebrates the Eucharist.

Host: the round pieces of bread used in the Mass that become the Body of Christ.

Chalice: a special cup used to hold the wine that becomes the Blood of Christ.

Paten: a special metal plate used to place the host on, before and after it becomes Jesus.

Tabernacle: Consecrated hosts (*the real presence of Jesus*) are kept here for the purpose of adoration. Hosts are sometimes brought to the sick to receive if they are not capable of coming to Mass.

Sanctuary lamp/red candle: it is always kept lit by the tabernacle whenever Jesus is present there in the Eucharist. *To show their respect for Jesus, invite the children to genuflect in front of the tabernacle. (Your parish may not have the tabernacle in the sanctuary, but rather in a side chapel off the nave.)*

If time permits, also point out the following:

Purificator: the small, white cloth used with the chalice.

Ciborium: a special dish or cup with a lid used to keep the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle.

Pyx: a small round box used for carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick.

Bells: used at the time of consecration to tell us the moment that the bread and wine are becoming Jesus.

Cruets: little pitchers to hold the water and wine.

Washing bowl: used by the priest to wash his hands during the liturgy of the Eucharist as a symbol of washing/cleansing him from sin.

Candles: found on either side of the altar and/or lectern/ambo. The lit candles symbolize the light of Christ and draw attention to the presence of Jesus in the Word and the Eucharist.

Credence Table: small table off to the side of the sanctuary for sacred vessels.

Who remembers what the name of this area is called? *Sanctuary.*

Name 2 things you would find in the sanctuary. (Ex: chalice, paten, candles, etc.)

4. SACRISTY/VESTRY

The sacristy is the place where the priest and altar servers prepare for Mass. They come here to put on their vestments (*or special robes*). Extraordinary Ministers/Eucharistic Ministers come here to prepare the communion vessels used at Mass.

Some of the things you will see in the sacristy/vestry:

Stole: a long piece of cloth worn over the priest's shoulders.

Cassocks: black/red/white vestments worn by altar servers and the priest.

Chasuble: piece of large cloth that covers his shoulders, chest and back.

The priest will wear different colors for special seasons in the church.

Sink or sacrarium: a special sink with a pipe that goes straight into the ground (*and not into the sewer*). This sink is used to properly dispose of sacred things that can no longer be used (*old holy water, blessed oils and ashes, etc.*) so they are returned to the earth and not to the sewer.

Processional cross and candles: used to lead the Mass procession.

Thurible/censer: holds the burning incense that is used during special celebrations.

Altar cloth/linens: special white cloths that are used on the altar for Mass.



What are the names of the four main areas of the church? *Gathering area, Nave, Sanctuary, Sacristy*

What is something new you learned on this tour? *Answers may vary.*

Faith Activities

Choose one or two of the following activities:

The Holy Mass Question Game (5 minutes)

You'll Need:

- Two dice

1. Divide into two teams. Each team gets a die.
2. I'll ask Team One a question. If your team answers correctly, a player from that team can roll the die. If it lands on 4, your team receives 4 points.
3. If your team gets the question wrong, the other team has a chance to answer it.

The object of the game is to be the first team to score the highest points after 5 minutes of play.



Questions for younger kids: (ages 4 to 6)

- What is the name of the bench in church where you sit during Mass. (*pew*)
- What is the name of the special table in the sanctuary that the priest uses during Mass? (*altar*)
- Can you show us how to do the Sign of the Cross?
(In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit)
- What is the name of the building where we come together for Mass? (*Church*)
- Should you talk loud to your family during Mass? (*no*)
- During Mass, should you try and sit still and be quiet? (*yes*)
- Should you eat candy or chew gum during Mass? (*no*)
- When you go up for a blessing at Communion time, what should you do?
(cross my hands over my chest so the priest can give a blessing)
- What do you say after the priest says: "The Lord be with you" (*and with your spirit*)
Add other questions of your own...

Questions for older kids: (ages 7 to 11)

- Can you name one main part of the church? (*sacristy, gathering area, nave or sanctuary*)
- Where is the altar situated in the church? (*the sanctuary*)
- Where are the pews situated in the church? (*the nave*)
- Can you name one thing you would find in the sanctuary? (*altar, presider's chair, ambo, etc.*)
- What is the altar? (*the table of the Lord in the sanctuary*)
- What are vestments? (*special clothes the priest wears for Mass*)
- Should you eat candy or chew gum during Mass? (*no*)
- Who reads the first and second readings? (*lector*)
- What is the name of the book containing the Bible readings to be read during the Liturgy of the Word? (*lectionary*)
- Who are the group of people who sing during Mass? (*choir*)
- What is the name of the chair that the priest sits in during Mass? (*presider's chair*)
- What is the name of the light that burns continually to indicate that the Blessed Sacrament is present in the tabernacle? (*sanctuary lamp*)
- What do you call the action when you bend down on one knee and bow your head? (*genuflect*)
- What is the name of the special robes worn by the priests and altar servers? (*vestments*)
Add other questions of your own...

VBS Audio Clip (Track 13 - Audio clip length: 3:23)

Play the audio clip from the MY VBS online program or the VBS Music CD.
The script is available to download.

After listening to the audio clip, ask the following questions:

Can anyone tell me why we go to Mass?

To worship God, to glorify Him, to praise and thank Him for giving us life, etc.

What is the great Mystery of the Mass?

When the bread and wine becomes the real presence of Jesus' Body and Blood!

What did Jesus ultimately do for us? *He suffered, died and rose again.*

Who came to speak to Papa's class about the Holy Mass? *The Bishop.*

Does anyone remember the name of the church Papa went to as a young boy? *St. Joseph's Church.*

VBS Saint of the Day (2 minutes)

I'd like to share with you a short story about a saint who loved to explore the **mysteries** of her faith. She took the time to pray and ask God for his guidance in her life. God called her to do many things that required great **patience**. Her name is St. Joan of Arc.

Read the saint story and ask the following questions:

Where did Joan live? *(A farm in France)*

What amazed you about St. Joan of Arc's life? *(Answers will vary)*

Give each child a saint card to take home with them. Encourage the children to read the story on the back of their saint card with a parent.

