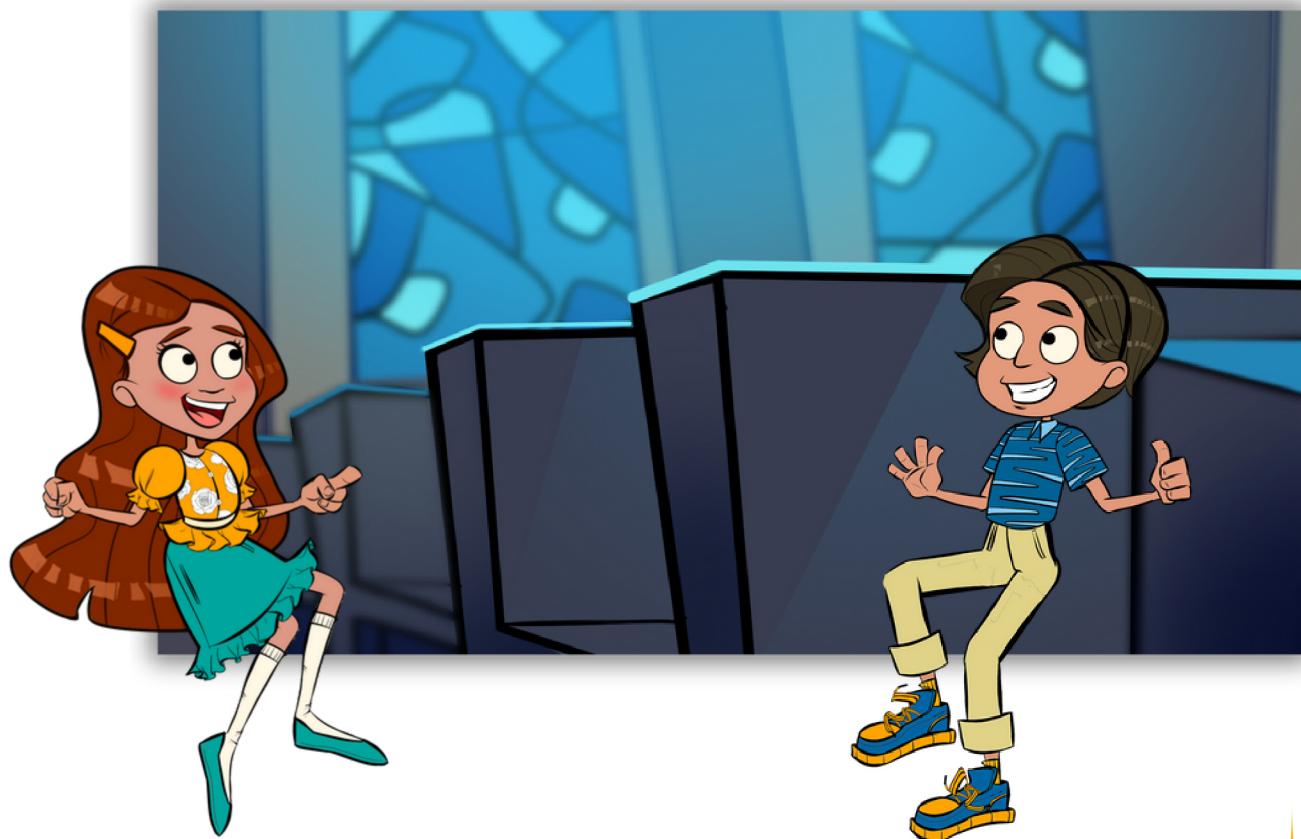




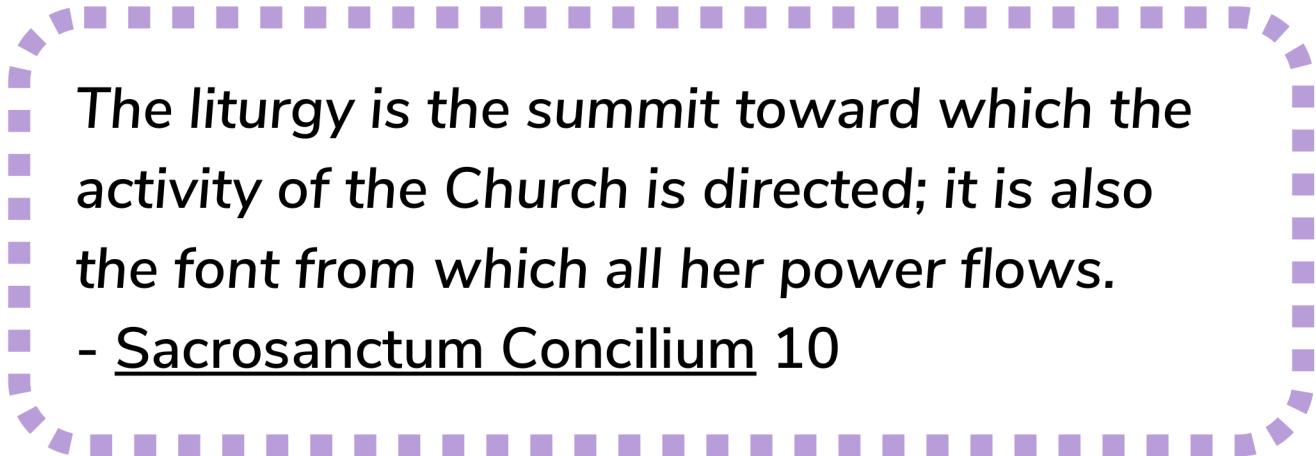
THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR BRINGING KIDS TO MASS



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Welcome!

Welcome to our guide on bringing kids to Catholic Sunday Mass! As parents, you are the primary educators of children (FC, 36). If you do not guide your children through the Mass, who will? Your child(ren) look up to you. Do not be afraid to ask Christ for help each Sunday.



The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which all her power flows.
- Sacrosanctum Concilium 10

“Jesus knocks on the door of families, to share with them the Eucharistic supper (cf. Rev 3:20)” (AL, 318).



But First!



Before we dive in, it is essential to acknowledge something... Children may find it difficult to sit still for an extended period of time. Also, they may not understand the significance of what is taking place. Do not fret!

It takes time and patience to help children grasp the beauty and meaning behind the Mass. It is a process of growth and understanding.



Not One-size Fits All

Every child is unique. What works for one child may not work for another. The tips we present are meant to be adaptable to your family's specific needs and circumstances.

What's in this Guide

The guide is divided into three sections:

1. Preparation.
2. Mass Tips.
3. After Mass.

Ready to have a smooth Mass experience? Let's embark on this journey together!



1. PREPARATION



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Why Prepare Kids?

Preparation is the most important step! Do not skip this section. If you want positive Mass experience, you will need to put in the time for preparation.

"The aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper."
- Sacrosanctum Concilium 10

Everything we do throughout the week should be in preparation for receiving the Eucharist on Sunday.



Talk with Them

Talk with your children about what to expect during Mass and after Mass.



Explain the importance of the Mass and the Eucharist.

You can talk together about how to make it smoother such as holding a parent's hand. You can remind older siblings to help their younger siblings.

Remind them that they will be in the presence of God, they will be entering His house. Remind them it is an opportunity to be in His physical presence, to ask Him questions, to hear His words, and to thank and praise Him for our lives.



Pray with Them

"As preparation for the worship celebrated in church ... the Christian family makes use of private prayer." (FC, 61).

Pray the Our Father

Let you kids become familiar with the prayer that Our Lord taught us, and the prayer we saw every Mass.

"Our Father, Who art in heaven..."

Pray the Confiteor

Confessing being a sinner before God will help your child(ren) grow in humility.

"I confess to almighty God and to you my brothers and sisters that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do..."

Pray to St. Michael

Many churches pray this at the end of each Mass. This prayer can help your child(ren) grow in fortitude, teaching them they can go to St. Michael when they are in need.

"St Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle..."

Other Prayers

All prayers will help your child prepare for the highest form of prayer, which is the celebration of the Holy Mass.



Preparation for the Readings

Lucky for us Catholics, we know what the readings will be ahead of time! Every week!

Prepare your kids by reading them a day or two before going to Mass. All the readings can be found on the [USCCB website](#).

"The family is called to join in daily prayer, to read the word of God and to share in Eucharistic communion, and thus to grow in love and become ever more fully a temple in which the Spirit dwells." ([AL, 29](#))

Pro-Tips!

Have your kids draw the readings when you read them.

Ask questions about the reading and talk about it as a family.



Preparation for the Readings continued...

You can use these resources to help prepare your kids for the readings too!

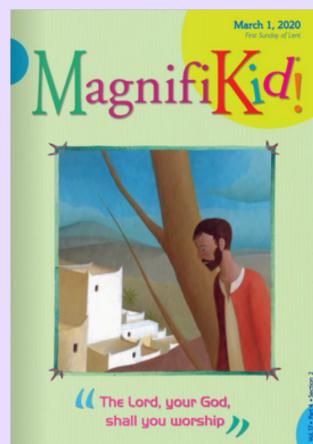
Diary of a God-Man

Contains illustrations of the Mass readings each week.



MagnifiKid

All the readings and the prayers of the Sunday Mass with explanations of the difficult words and the meaning of the rituals.



Preparation for the Readings continued...

The Mass Box

Do a craft themed to every Sunday readings!



Catholic Kids Media

You can also watch animations to go along with the readings each week!



Role play

"A family's living space could turn into a domestic church, a setting for the Eucharist, the presence of Christ seated at its table" (AL 15). Your family is a domestic Church. You can help bring this to life by preparing your child for the celebration of the Eucharist.

Set up a table as an altar, get your best cup chalice and some bread. Pull out your Bible. Let your child know this is just an example of the Mass and in Church they will see the real thing.

Walk through the Mass with your kids. You can find [the full order of the Mass here](#). Start with smaller parts for smaller children, and work your way up to the full Mass. If you know the songs ahead of time, sing them with your kids! Explain to your kids what is going on and let them ask questions.



If you want supplies for role playing, you can check out [Catechesis of the Good Shepherd](#).



Mass Tour



Take your kids to the church during the week when there isn't a Mass going on. As you enter the church, show them the holy water fonts and to make the sign of the cross as they enter.

Artwork

Before your Mass tour, you can contact the church office to see if they have any documentation or information on the artwork around the Church.

Point out the artwork around the church. Ask your kids what they see. Talk to them about the artwork. Usually the art portrays a biblical story or theological truth.

Statues

Walk them up to the statues around the church and talk about them. Ask what they notice about the statues. Is there a statue of the patron of the church? Go to that one. Go to the ones of Mary and Joseph and tell them about Mary and Joseph.

Stained Glass

Point out the stained glass around the church. Ask them what they see. Talk to them about the artwork.



Mass Tour Continued...

Confessional

Go to the confessional and tell them what happens inside. Talk to them about confession.



Stations of the Cross

There should be the stations of the cross around the church. You can walk them from station to station and tell them what is happening in the scene. Remind your kids Jesus is doing all of it for them because He loves them. Remind them about the resurrection and ascension at the end.

The Tabernacle

Point out the tabernacle and let them know that Jesus is inside. You can point out that the sanctuary candle near the tabernacle is kept lit day and night to indicate Jesus is present. Encourage your child(ren) to talk with Jesus in front of the tabernacle.



Writing Preparation

Before they go to Mass, have your child write down what they are thankful to God for, write petitions to God, and write their offerings.

Thanksgiving: Are they thankful for their home, their family, the sun outside?

Petitions: Do they want God to help a friend or family member?

Offerings: They can offer up any painful or sorrowful experiences they had that week. They can also offer up the Body and Blood of Jesus.

They can bring this paper to Mass so they bring these things before God. They can place them in the collection basket. Remind them they can put monetary offerings in the basket, especially when they are older and working.



2. MASS TIPS



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What to do during Mass

You have done the prework, wonderful! Now, here are some tips for Mass-time.



Getting to Mass Early

This can be a touch one. But getting to Mass early is an act that shows your child how important the Mass is to you and to God. "Parents are, through the witness of their lives, the first heralds of the Gospel for their children." (FC, 39) It also allows time for you and your child(ren) to center yourselves before the Mass.

Sitting in the Front

I know this one sounds crazy. Many parents hesitate bringing their kids to the front pews, but children who have a clear view of what is happening are more likely to actively participate and understand the Mass.

If your child starts to cry or get fussy, it is okay to move to the cry room during the Mass.

Entering the Church

Have your kids dip their finger in the holy water and make the sign of the cross on their forehead. Remind them to genuflect towards the tabernacle before entering a pew and sitting.

If you have time before Mass, go to one of the Church statues and pray to that saint, or go to the tabernacle and pray to Jesus.



Explain the Mass

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation
- Sacrosanctum Concilium 14

Talk to your kids through the Mass. Explain what is going on. Here are a few suggestions:

Have them watch the priest enter, proceed to the altar and venerate the alter.

Ask what they hear the priest saying. Ask what book they are reading from.

Show them what to do during the Penitential act when we say "through my fault, through my fault..."

Guide them in sharing the sign of peace with those around them.

Point out the people bringing the bread and wine to the front and remind them that the bread and wine will turn into the Body and Blood of Christ.



Explain the Mass continued...

Tell them that the priest acts *In persona Christi*, in the person of Christ. "Through the ordained ministry, especially that of bishops and priests, the presence of Christ as head of the Church is made visible." (CCC 1549)

Tell them to watch the miracle when the priest puts his hands over the bread and wine and says "This is my body" and "This is the Chalice of my blood."

Remind them to adore Christ when he is raised up in the form of bread and wine.

After they receive Communion or a blessing, tell them to give thanks to God. They can thank God for all the things they have in their live and for everything that happened that week. They can thank God for any hardships too.



Bag of Tricks

For younger children, a "bag of tricks" is very helpful - Catholic coloring books, books, etc.

Young minds want to always be occupied, otherwise they will get fidgety, may start making noises or distracting others. It is good to keep their little minds occupied.

See our next tip for Mass book details!

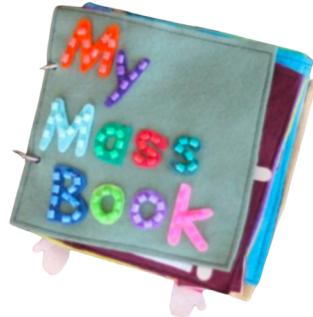


Mass Books

A Mass Book can be helpful so older children can read along with and follow the Mass. For younger children, felt Mass books and Mass books with pictures can help them follow along.

Here are a few Mass Book options:

[Little Rose Shop's Catholic Mass Quiet Mass Book](#)



[Catholic Sprout's Mass Quiet Book](#)

[Interactive Mass Book](#)

[Mass Parts Cards](#)



Plan Movement Breaks

Some children need to move and move a lot, so plan your movement breaks in advance if needed, whether it's to walk to the back of the church, the bathrooms, or check out the entrance area.



NotePad

Having a notepad on hand, whether paper and pencil or a writing tablet, your children can draw what they see, hear, make notes about the homily, etc. This can be a creative way to help children be engaged with the Mass!

EyeSpy

You can do a quiet eye spy for younger children.

Can they spot the tabernacle?

The candle above the tabernacle?

The crucifix? The altar? Mary? Joseph?

What else do they see in the stained glass, statues, and artwork?

What color is the priest wearing?

Where is the baptismal font?

How many candles can they find?



Siblings Helping Siblings

Have older siblings gently lead and guide their younger siblings. Remind the older siblings to be an example for the younger ones.

Separating Siblings

On the other hand, you can separate siblings who have a hard time being together.

If siblings are distracting each other during the Mass, it is best to keep them separate to help them focus. You can sit between them.

Reminders

Kids are easily distracted, so you will need to keep reminding kids calmly and patiently. Remind them they are in God's house, remind them Jesus is in the tabernacle. Remind them Jesus loves them and loves they are there. Remind them to be reverent. Patience is key. Kids will not be perfect; continuous and kind reminders will help guide them.



3. AFTER MASS



There's more after Mass?

After Mass is very important! It is a great time for your children to review what they experienced and help them for the following week.

Lead by example, share how you loved the Mass. Continue spreading the love of Christ that you received in the Mass by sharing that love with your children.

“It cannot be forgotten that the most basic element, so basic that it qualifies the educational role of parents, is parental love” (FC, 36)



Applaud your kid!

Let your kid know what they did well. Highlight even the small things. Did they fold their hands? Did they make the sign of the cross? Were they reverent during parts of the Mass? If you don't think they behaved well at all, you can even tell them you are grateful they came with you and Jesus loved to see them there.

Make corrections for your kid for the next Mass, but always surround it with encouragement. “Do not provoke your children, so they may not become discouraged” (Col 3:21).

Ask what they liked

Ask what your kids liked. Did they like the songs? The stained glass windows? The sign of peace? Receiving the Eucharist or a blessing.

Remind your kids focus on the good parts and to be grateful for the opportunity to be in the physical presence of Jesus and to receive Him.

Meet and greet

Have your kids meet the priest, musicians, lectors, and those serving at Mass. Your kids will stay more engaged if they know the people serving at the Mass.



Discuss the homily

If your kids are older, you can talk to them about the homily. What did the priest say? How can they apply it to their life that week?

Do they have questions?

Kids always have lots of questions! If they were trying to ask questions during the Mass and you weren't able to respond, you can follow-up again after Mass.

If you don't have all the answers, that is okay! You can tell your kid to go ask the priest, or someone else there who might know, or you can look up the answer later.

The website catholic.com is a great resource for finding answers. Catholic radio stations love having kids call in; have your kids call and ask their questions.

Sweets and snacks

Kids love the donuts and snacks after Mass if your parish has them. Rewards for kids can be a stepping stone to get them to go to Mass before they are old enough to fully appreciate the Mass. Always remind them they should be primarily hungry for Jesus, for He is the bread of life.



THAT'S ALL!



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Final Words

Everything here is pointed towards Christ and the Eucharist. The artwork usually portrays theological truths about Christ. Catholic coloring books and other activities help introduce kids to the beauty in the world God has created. Prayers to Jesus and reading the Scriptures allows kids to open their hearts to Christ. Explaining the Mass to them helps them understand the greatest prayer, the greatest sacrifice, the source and summit of our Catholic life.

Everything you do should ultimately point your kid to Christ.

If your kids do not want to go to Mass, do not give up! Keep teaching them and guiding them. Make sure you guide them with love and much, much patience. Show them the peace and joy that you find in Mass. It will take time, stay patient, pray, trust in Jesus.





Catholic Stories for Children is a nonprofit aimed at telling short stories, primarily through animation, to help kids learn Catholic prayers, learn about Catholic saints, and to learn other Catholic concepts.

Many kids today are growing up without knowing the core concepts of our faith. Many are learning the prayers without understanding the words they are saying. We hope to help bridge this gap with enjoyable stories, animations and songs. We hope to help kids grow with a strong love of neighbor and God.



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