

2. We Gather Together to Celebrate



At the beginning of his public ministry, one of the first things that Jesus did was to call together a group of men and women who would share in his life and in his work. Chief among these were the twelve Apostles, but there were many other friends (or disciples) who travelled with Jesus, who listened to him, and who believed that he was the Messiah that God had promised. They were the first community of believers.

Today, we gather together in our own place and time as a community of believers, responding to the invitation given by Jesus at the Last Supper to 'Do this in memory' of him. We believe that Jesus is present with us as we join together to celebrate his life, death, resurrection and ascension.

This first section of the book will help your child to understand that Mass is a special time when we gather together to celebrate as members of God's family. It also introduces the priest's greeting, 'The Lord be with you', which may be said up to four times during the celebration of the Mass.

A Prayer for Parents and Families

Loving God,
Thank you for the gift of our community of faith, who gather together in your name each week.
We are mindful of those around the world who cannot come together to celebrate their faith, either because of illness or fear of persecution.
Help us not to take our weekly celebration of the Mass for granted.
Amen.

Think of the times when **your family** gathers together:



God's family also gathers together. We do this in a special way on Sundays, when we go to the church.

Before Mass begins, take a look around the church. See if you can find the following:

Checklist

- Altar:** The priest celebrates Mass on this special table.
- Ambo:** The readings are read from this stand.
- Tabernacle:** The place where Holy Communion is kept after Mass.
- Sanctuary Lamp:** A light which reminds us that the Risen Jesus, the Bread of Life, is present.
- Statues:** There is usually a statue of Mary in the church. There may be others too.
- Candles:** These are lit during Mass.
- Stations of the Cross:** Pictures or sometimes statues showing the story of how Jesus died.

When Mass begins, we stand and sing a song or hymn. **Singing hymns is another way of praying to God.** Next, the priest invites us all to make a special sign – **the Sign of the Cross** – to show that we are there because we are part of God's family and followers of Jesus. Then the priest welcomes us to Mass by saying, **'The Lord be with you'**.



How do we respond?

The Lord be
with you



PJ Prayer

Loving God,
Thank you for my family at home, my family in
school, and my family in the Church.
Help me to pray with all of these families, so that
I will become closer to you.
Keep us all safe through the night.
Amen.