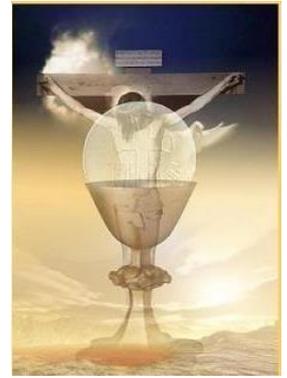


# The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, (CORPUS CHRISTI) Cycle A



## Readings & Background

### This Sunday's Readings

**First Reading** : *Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a*

Moses tells the people to remember how God delivered them from slavery in Egypt.

**Responsorial Psalm** : *Psalms 147:12-15, 19-20*

Praise God, Jerusalem!

**Second Reading** : *1 Corinthians 10:16-17*

Though many, we are one body when we partake of the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Gospel Reading** : *John 6:51-58*

Jesus says, "I am the living bread."

### Background on the Gospel Reading

This Sunday we celebrate a **second solemnity during this period of Ordinary Time** in the liturgical calendar. Today is the **Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ**. This day was once called **Corpus Christi, which is Latin for "Body of Christ."** In the revised Lectionary the name for this day is expanded to reflect more completely our Eucharistic theology.

Today's Gospel is taken from the **Gospel according to John**.

The reading is part of a discourse between Jesus and a crowd of Jews. The discourse comes shortly after **the miracle of Jesus' multiplication of the loaves and fishes**.

In John's Gospel, **miracles such as this are identified as "signs" through which people come to believe that Jesus is the Son of God**. These signs are followed by dialogue, or discourse that interprets and explains the miracle. In John's Gospel, Jesus' multiplication of the loaves is said to have occurred near Passover, thus linking it to the Exodus story and God's saving action toward the Israelites.

Having seen Jesus multiply the loaves and fishes, the crowd pursues him, perhaps seeking more food but **also looking for another sign**.

Jesus tells the crowd **that he is the bread of life**. He explains that just as God gave the Israelites manna to sustain them in the desert, so now God has sent new manna that will give eternal life. It is in this context that Jesus repeats those words in today's Gospel and tells them again **that he is the living bread that came down from heaven**.

Jesus' words are not well understood by the crowd; they argue that Jesus is not from heaven but born of Mary and Joseph. The crowd also has trouble understanding **how Jesus could give them his flesh to eat**. **Jesus tells them that when they eat his flesh and drink his blood, they will remain forever connected to him**. These are difficult words, but they are important because they seek to **show us our intimate connection with Jesus**.

This is the **mystery that is at the heart of our Eucharistic** theology.

**In the elements of bread and wine, Jesus' Body and Blood are truly present. When we share in the Body and Blood of Christ, Jesus himself comes to dwell within us. This communion with the Lord makes us one body, brings us eternal life, and sends us forth to be Christ's Body in the world.**

**The Solemnity of the  
Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ,  
(CORPUS CHRISTI) - Cycle A  
Making the Connection (Grades 1, 2, and 3)  
Gospel Reading  
John 6:51-58: Jesus says, "I am the living bread."**

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Young children are just beginning to learn about the difficult concepts that lie behind the words of our faith. Their experiences with the community of faith can help them to understand the importance of Eucharist and Jesus' promise of eternal life to all those who partake of his Body and Blood.

**Materials Needed**

- Box of cereal
- Box of raisins
- Bowls

**Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings**

1. Bring to class a box of cereal and a box of raisins. Cover the pictures on the boxes with construction paper.  
Read the list of ingredients on the back of each box. Ask the group to try to identify the contents of the box based on what you read from the label.  
Pour some of the contents into bowls and show them to the children.
2. ***Sometimes we can tell what an item is by the ingredients listed on the box.*** Hold up the bowl of raisins.  
Say: ***And sometimes if we can't see the picture on the box, the list of ingredients doesn't help us know what the box contains.*** Hold up the bowl of cereal.
3. ***In today's Gospel, Jesus talks about how he will give people the bread of eternal life. What is bread made from? (wheat)  
What is wine made from? (grapes)  
In today's reading, Jesus says that he will give the people living bread. The crowd thinks that he means the kind of bread that is made from wheat. But Jesus is talking about something else.  
Let's listen carefully to today's gospel.***
4. Read today's Gospel, John 6:51-58.
5. ***What did Jesus tell the people that he would give them?*** (living bread, his flesh and blood)
6. ***Jesus said that the bread and wine that he would give would really be his Body and Blood. And unlike regular bread and wine, which can nourish us for only a time, his Body and Blood will make us live forever. This may be hard to understand.***  
  
Show the cereal box. ***But if we believe the people who make this cereal that these are the true ingredients, then surely, we can believe that Jesus who is God is the true bread and wine.***
7. Let us pray together that we will believe Jesus' words and his promise of eternal life. Pray together the Lord's Prayer or today's Psalm.

**The Solemnity of the  
Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ,  
(CORPUS CHRISTI) - Cycle A  
Making the Connection (Grades 4, 5, and 6)  
Gospel Reading  
John 6:51-58: Jesus says, "I am the living bread."**

As children's familiarity with the Mass increases, their knowledge and experience of Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist deepens. We invite children to this communion with the Lord when we reflect with them on the importance of the gift of the Eucharist in our lives.

**Materials Needed**

- None

**Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings**

1. Invite the group to identify as many different types of bread as they can. (white bread, wheat bread, bagels, English muffins, pita, tortilla, and so on)
2. Ask the group: ***Why do we eat bread? What does bread do for us?*** (Bread is nourishing. Bread sustains us. Eating bread satisfies our hunger.)
3. ***Bread is a staple of our diet today, as it was for the people of Jesus' time. In order to understand the Gospel that we will hear today, we must know a little bit about the story that precedes it. A crowd of people had gathered to hear Jesus. Jesus had blessed five barley loaves and two fish, and there was enough to feed over five thousand people. Many people came to believe that Jesus came from God because of this miracle. The next day the crowd continued to follow Jesus, and many wanted to see him perform another miracle. Jesus talks with them about the miracle, the sign, he had performed. Many people who heard him were not sure how to receive his words.***
4. Say: ***Let's listen to the Gospel for today and see what it tells us about the bread that Jesus gives.***
5. Invite a volunteer to read today's Gospel, John 6:51-58.
6. Ask: ***What kind of bread does Jesus say he will give?*** (living bread)  
***Where does this living bread come from?*** (from heaven)  
***What will this bread do for those who eat it?*** (It will bring them eternal life. Jesus will come to live in those who eat this bread.)  
***What else does Jesus say about this bread?*** (Jesus says that this living bread is his flesh for the life of the world.)  
***What do you think Jesus is talking about?*** (Eucharist)
7. ***In today's reading, Jesus is telling us about the special gift he gives us in the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, the bread and the wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. When we share in the Eucharist, Jesus is present to us, and through our communion we will share eternal life.***
8. Conclude in prayer together, thanking God for the gift of the Eucharist. Pray together the Lord's Prayer or today's Psalm.

**The Solemnity of the  
Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ,  
(CORPUS CHRISTI) - Cycle A  
Making the Connection (Grades 7, 8, and 9)  
Gospel Reading  
John 6:51-58: Jesus says, "I am the living bread."**

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By the seventh and eighth grade, the young people should understand the Church teaching that Christ is truly present in the bread and wine once it is consecrated. They should also begin to comprehend that they, too, form the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Materials Needed**

- Bowl
- Sheaf of wheat from a craft store
- Baguette or other crispy bread

**Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings**

1. First check to ensure that none of the young people have wheat allergies or celiac disease/gluten sensitivity.
2. Explain to the students that this Sunday is the second solemnity that we celebrate after the Easter season ends. Say: ***Last week we celebrated the Trinity, three Persons in one God. This Sunday we celebrate the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. We recognize that Christ left us the gift of himself in the Eucharist.***
3. Show the students the wheat stalks. Let them handle them and break off individual grains that are typically ground into flour.
4. ***In Jesus' day wheat was ground between two stones in order to form flour. Take the grains you have in your hands and grind them between your thumb and forefinger until you have flour.***
5. After each student has some flour in his or her hands, pass around the bowl.
6. ***As the bowl comes to you, place your flour in it, naming someone you want God to watch over this week.***
7. ***In Jesus' day, bread was made with this type of rough flour along with other ingredients that came from God's creation: water, spices, yeast, honey. The dough—made from flour and carrying our prayers—rises, is baked, and becomes something else. The materials the baker started with changed into something else.***
8. Next, pass around the loaf of bread. Invite each student to break off a piece of bread.
9. ***Before you consume this bread—this new creation—say some words of thanks to God for a gift that you have been given.***
10. After all have eaten, say: ***In the making of this bread, its ingredients changed form. Our hearts were also transformed by our communal prayer. This is what happens in the Eucharist. Through the action of the Holy Spirit, the "work of our hands" is transformed into the presence of Jesus Christ.***
11. Explain: ***The Holy Spirit transforms not only the bread and wine but also the assembly. We too are the living Body of Christ.***
12. Read the Gospel, John 6:51-58.
13. Say: ***God taught us to pray for our daily bread. How will you think of the phrase daily bread from now on? Offering one another the sign of peace helps us remember that we are made one in Christ.***

Pray the Lord's Prayer and have the students offer one another the sign of peace.