

Food for the Soul

A First Communion Guide for the Liturgy of the Eucharist



Food for the Soul

God has blessed you in so many ways, but he isn't finished blessing you. There are still thousands of blessings God wants to shower upon you. One of the great blessings God wants to share with you is the Eucharist. Every day you are getting closer to receiving Jesus in the Eucharist! Are you excited?

The Eucharist is food for the soul. That's right, your soul gets hungry just like your body gets hungry. It's easy to tell when your body gets hungry because your tummy growls and you feel weak and tired. But how do you know when your soul is hungry? When our souls are hungry we become restless, impatient, angry, and selfish. But most of all, we find it harder to do what we know we should do.

When our souls are hungry we need to feed them. The Eucharist is the ultimate soul food, but we can also feed our souls with prayer, the Scriptures, and serving people.



You feed your body every day. You don't wait until it is starving before you feed it. You have a regular routine of meals and snacks to make sure your body has the food and energy it needs to thrive. We need a routine like that for feeding our souls too. This routine includes daily prayer, grace before meals, service to others and of course, Sunday Mass.

The Mass is an incredible blessing because it feeds your soul in many ways. The Word of God feeds your soul, receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist feeds your soul, and participating in a community of faith feeds your soul.

This year we have really focused on the Word of God in the Scriptures and how important it is to listen to God. Now Let's talk about how he feeds us with the Eucharist.

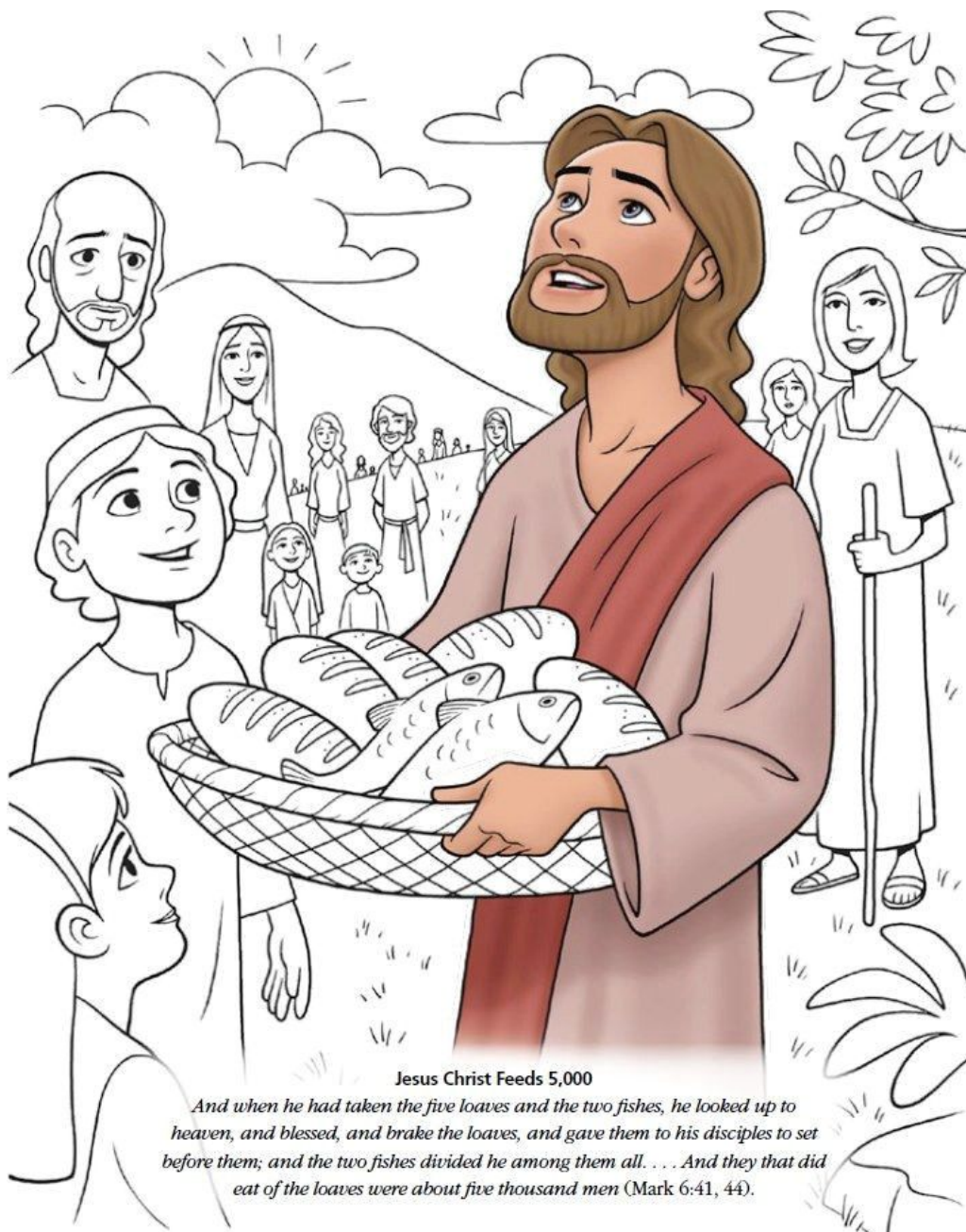
**WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE
WERE STARVING IN THE
DESERT, GOD RAINED
DOWN MANNA FROM
HEAVEN FOR THEM TO
EAT.
EXODUS 16**



You are so blessed to be Catholic. One of the many reasons you are blessed to be Catholic is the Eucharist. You get to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus. The Eucharist is uniquely Catholic.

The part of the Mass that we receive the Eucharist is in the Liturgy of the Eucharist and it is broken up into three parts: the Offering, the Eucharistic Prayer, and the reception of Holy Communion.

This is all very important, so let's go over it together, step by step.



Jesus Christ Feeds 5,000

And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. . . . And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men (Mark 6:41, 44).

The Offertory

Throughout the Mass, God gives us moment to pause and experience its many wonders. The offertory is one of those moments.

During the offertory a family from the parish usually brings the bread and wine, along with the money we put in the collection for the Church and the poor. Then the priest prepares the gifts to offer them to God.

As the gifts are being brought forward and the priest is preparing the gifts, we offer ourselves completely to God. We can do this with a simple prayer in our hearts. Here is an example:

Lord I give myself completely to you right now. Teach me, lead me, feed me with the Eucharist so I can serve you powerfully here in this world and live with you forever in heaven.

The offertory is also a great time to bring our problems to God and ask for help. If there is someone you know who is suffering or something that you are struggling with, ask Jesus to heal the situation. He is the great healer.

The offertory is a perfect time to ask Jesus the Healer to help you out in your life.

You are on a great journey with God. Your destination is heaven. God wants to be your guide and companion on this journey. He wants to be invited into every detail of your life so that he can best guide and advise you. He wants to show you the best way to live. God wants to help you become all you can be, to grow in virtue, and live a holy life.



The Eucharistic Prayer

We've always celebrated the presence of God. The Jewish people believed that God was present in the Ark of the Covenant. For a long time, the Ark was lost. This was a very sad time for the Jewish people. They tried very hard to find it because they wanted to be close to God.

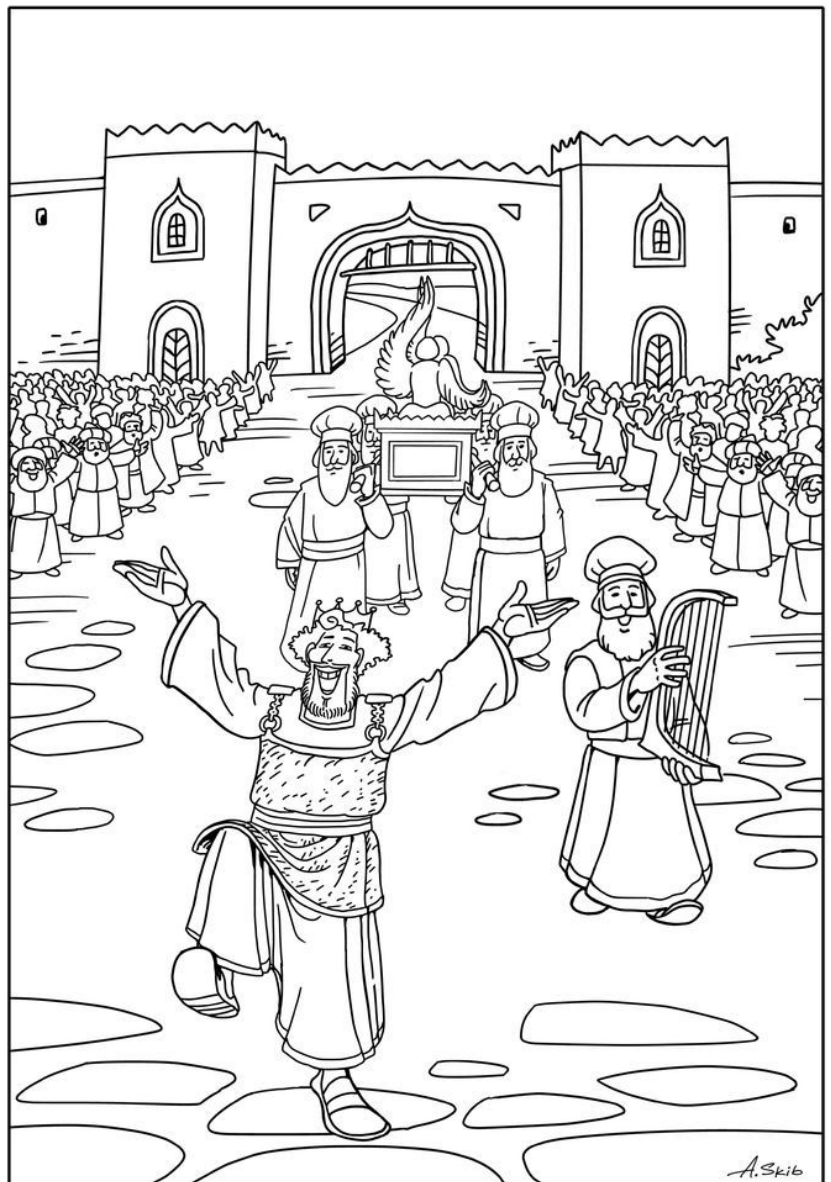
When King David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, the people were overjoyed. So was King David. He was so happy when he brought the Ark back to his people, he danced with great joy. Nothing made King David happier than being in the presence of God.

The Eucharist is God in our midst.

Every time we go to Mass or visit a Catholic Church where Jesus is inside the Tabernacle, God is physically with us in the Eucharist. The word Eucharist means "Thanksgiving:" we are thankful to have God with us always.

The Eucharistic Prayer is the most important part of the Mass because this is when Jesus comes to be with us. This is when the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

During the Eucharistic Prayer we thank God for his friendship and for coming once again through the Eucharist to share his life with us.



The Consecration

The consecration is the moment when the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus. This is an incredible moment- That's why we kneel down for the consecration. Kneeling is a simple and profound sign of reverence.

When we kneel during the Mass, it is a sign that something amazing is about to happen.

Just before kneeling, we pray the Holy, Holy, Holy together as a parish family.

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

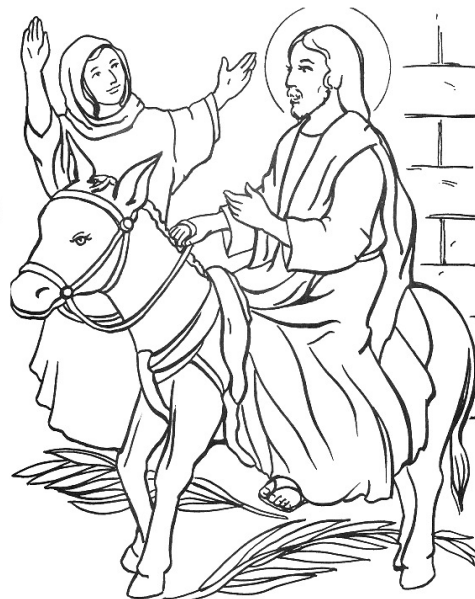
Now we kneel and prepare for the great moment of consecration. Leading up to consecration, the priest reminds us what happened at the Last Supper, the very first Eucharist.

To consecrate the bread and the wine, the priest says the same words Jesus said during the Last Supper:

**This is my Body, which is given up for you;
This is the Blood of the new and everlasting covenant,
do this in memory of me.**



“Hosanna in the Highest. . . .



Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord.”

Our Father

This is the moment of consecration. After the priest says these words, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus. The consecration of the Eucharist is one of the great mysteries of our faith.

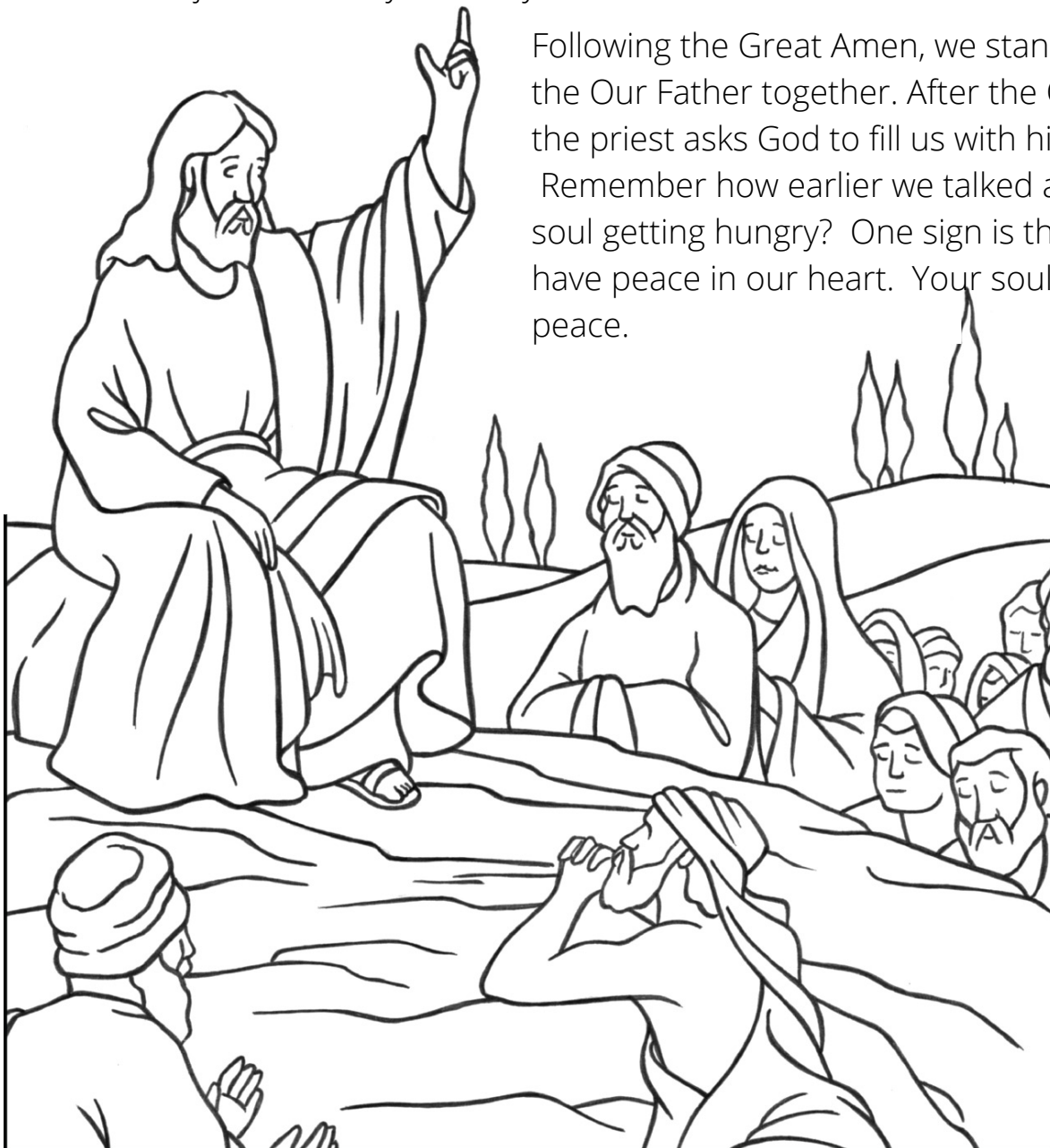
The Eucharistic Prayer ends with the Great Amen. Sometimes we say the Amen and sometimes we sing it. Either way we should say it loud and with confidence.

This is our way of saying, "Yes! Jesus, I believe in you! I believe that the bread and the wine just became your Body and Blood!"

Following the Great Amen, we stand and pray the Our Father together. After the Our Father, the priest asks God to fill us with his peace.

Remember how earlier we talked about your soul getting hungry? One sign is that you don't have peace in our heart. Your soul craves peace.

God wants to fill you with his peace so that you can go out into the world and share it with everyone who crosses your path.



Holy Communion

When you receive Holy Communion Jesus gives himself completely to you. In the prayers leading up to the consecration we remember that Jesus died for us on the cross to save us from our sins. This is not meant to make us feel guilty; it is meant to make you feel loved. God wants you to remember how much you mean to him.

One of the most famous passages in the entire Bible is John 3:16

For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.

(If you want you can find this passage in your Bible and underline it, highlight it, decorate it! and memorize it!)

God loves you so much that he sent his son, Jesus, so that you could have eternal life. For God so loved YOU that he sent Jesus so that YOU may have eternal life! You are loved and indeed blessed!

Say it out loud:

God loves me so much that he sent his son Jesus so that I could have eternal life and live with him forever in heaven.



How did that feel?

God always wants you to feel loved. And when we receive Jesus in the Eucharist this is a special moment of God's love.

If you ever get to climb a huge mountain, the feeling of looking out across the vast surroundings from the top of that mountain is an amazing experience.

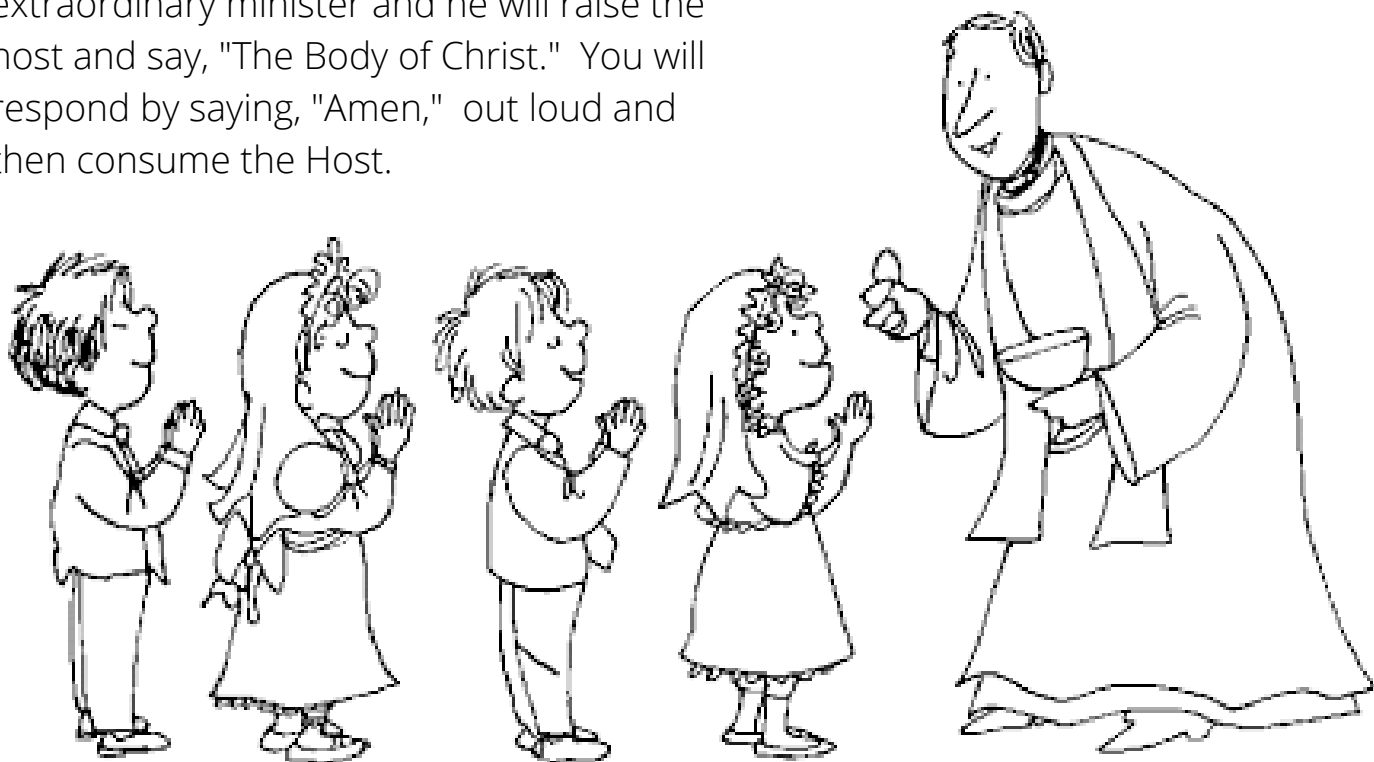
The Mass is like climbing a great mountain. Receiving the Eucharist is the top of the mountain, the pinnacle of the Mass.

God feeds us the ultimate food for the soul at the mountain top of the Mass.

The Eucharist is food for the soul. Every Sunday at Mass God fills us with the Eucharist to help us become the person we were created to be, grow in virtue, and live holy lives.

Receiving Holy Communion is an incredible gift that we should never take for granted.

When the moment arrives to receive Jesus, you will stand before the priest, deacon or extraordinary minister and he will raise the host and say, "The Body of Christ." You will respond by saying, "Amen," out loud and then consume the Host.



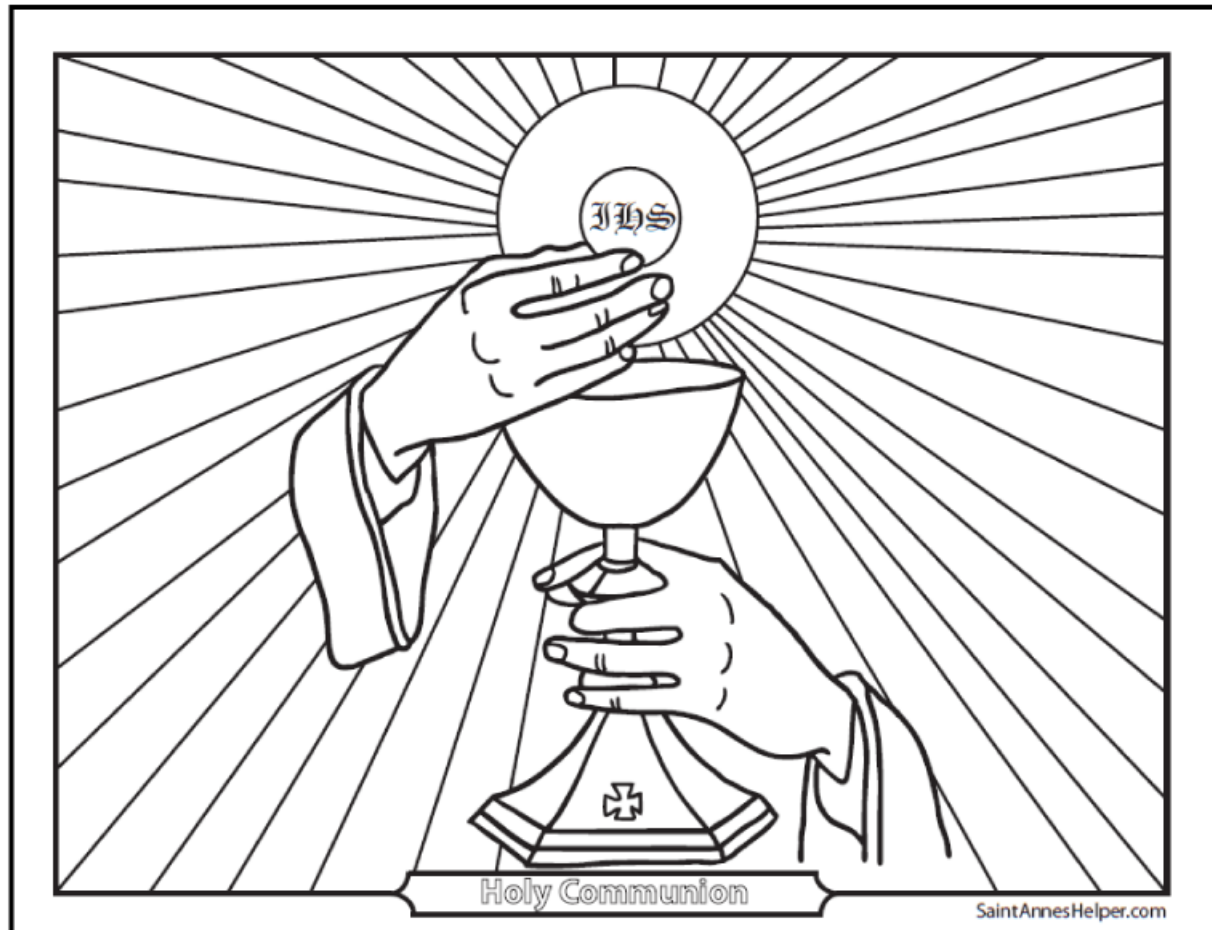
Jesus in you

After you receive Jesus in the Eucharist you will make your way back to your seat. At this moment, Jesus is in you. Amazing!

If Jesus came to visit you at your house, imagine how you would prepare for his arrival, imagine how excited you would be for him to get there, and imagine how you would sit by him and listen to everything he had to say.

Well, not only does Jesus come to visit us in the Mass, but he makes his home within us when we receive the Eucharist. So, when you get back to your seat after receiving Jesus in the Eucharist, this is a very special time of prayer.

Kneel down, close your eyes, and talk to Jesus in your heart. This is a very special moment. Jesus is inside you. Thank him for all the ways he has blessed you. Count your blessings, one by one, with Jesus.



The Eucharist energizes and nourishes your soul. You receive many gifts each time you receive the Eucharist. This is a short list of some of those gifts:

- Friendship with Jesus**
- Desire to do the will of God**
- Cleansing of venial (minor) sins**
- Hunger for virtue**
- Grace to avoid sin in the future**
- A heart that listens to the Holy Spirit**
- Desire to know and love God**

Your First Communion is a very important moment in your life, but every time we receive Jesus in the Eucharist is an incredible gift that we should never take for granted.



