



THE DWELLING PLACE

"O Lord, I love the place where Your glory dwells!"
Psalm 26:8

Welcome to **The Dwelling Place**, a feature in a series of monthly newsletters to Eastern Catholic families from God With Us Publications, powered by the team of ByziMoms, who bring you ByziKids Magazine

Our goal is to educate, equip, and inspire families to participate in their own catechesis and provide the tools to empower them to engage in the evangelization of those they encounter. Each month, we will provide a set of resources for your parish, family, or homeschool community to use as you come together to explore a new facet of the overall theme for the catechetical year, which is "The Church as our Spiritual Home with God."

We believe that faith education isn't just for kids. It's lifelong! And it's best experienced in a multi-generational environment. In each of our newsletters, we will simultaneously present the same broad topic to various educational levels. While the younger students focus on the aspects that coincide with their elementary skill level, the middle grades can incorporate more "hands-on" activities that impress ideas upon their developing memories. Meanwhile, older students and adults can explore more profound concepts and practical applications of that same topic. Everyone learns together, fostering opportunities for further discussions long after the lessons.

We hope to shower you with an abundance of resources for each monthly theme. This does not mean that we anticipate you will use every single resource, but rather that you will choose the projects and activities that best suit your group's needs. We know that our communities vary widely across the US and the world! With an assortment of choices, you are sure to find the perfect combination of education and fun for all those involved.

My dear ones, I am asking you from the bottom of my heart to love the church! May the church be dear to you; and, as much as you can, whenever you can, go to church, because this is the place we learn to pray, to confess, to humble ourselves, and to love one another."

-St. Paul the Simple of Egypt

In this November issue, we will consider the Church as the Body of Christ. We will see that in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he describes the Church as a body with many different interconnected parts that function independently, yet in harmony to animate a whole entity which is the Church when he says,

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ." He continues, "Even so, the body is not made up of one part but of many...Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it."

Each part of this body is unique, but each is also equally as important to the whole as every other! This means that YOU are just as important to the Church as any other soul! Without YOU, the Church is incomplete!

Together we will learn about this Body of Christ, the Church, with its different parts and offices and the function of each. We will think about how Christ planned for us to be united as one body by the reception of HIS Body in the Eucharist. We will also consider those members of the Body of Christ who are less fortunate and make Blessing Bags for them. We will have a lesson in making the Prospora, the Holy Bread which will become the true Body of Christ as the Eucharist and learn about the icon of the Inexhaustible Cup that reminds us of Jesus' unending gift of Himself to us, and the mighty Pantocrator icon which depicts our King in all His glory!

You will find our suggested agenda on the next page for your faith family and friends but feel free to use this resource however it will be most suitable for your community. We pray that you find these resources an engaging and fun way to come together as a faith family and grow closer to God, your Church, and each other!

Christ is Truly Among Us!
He IS, and He Always Shall Be!!

Scripture Highlight

We become partakers of the Divine Nature through the reception of Holy Eucharist. We are united to Christ and become His Body. We all serve different roles in the Church, both as lay people and clergy, but Christ as the head of the Church directs us.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.



Our Suggested Agenda

It is our hope that parish families, homeschool communities, or even individual families will gather together monthly to put these lessons to use and grow together in learning about our Eastern Catholic faith. Whether at the parish hall or a family living room, it is an opportunity for all ages to strengthen their faith while they support each other in community! We suggest the following general plan.

1. Prayer together
2. Break into color-coded groups to begin the individual lessons
3. Snack together
4. Back into color-coded groups for game/activity/craft
5. Gather together to present what you've learned to the large group
6. Close together in prayer

Snack Idea : Since our theme of the month concerns the Body, it might be fun to include a vegetable platter filled with lots of circles and sticks with which your students can construct a "Body" of their own! Baby carrots, celery sticks, or even pretzel rods can become bones for arms and legs. Cherry tomatoes or carrot coins become the joints and pepper strips can make a colorful rib cage. Use cucumber or orange slices for a face, with olive eyes and a celery slice for a smile would be perfect. Use your imagination! Serve with hummus or ranch dressing and perhaps the unblessed prosphora made by the blue level.

Let's Get Started!

Red

Suitable for ages
0-3/infant & toddler

We like to start early and include everyone in catechesis! Red activities are provided for little brothers and sisters, the tagalongs, who do not require direct instruction but need something to keep them occupied while the rest of the family participates.

Our objective for these littlest members of the Body of Christ is to introduce them to the theme of the day, making positive connections to each other and to Christ through sensory play.

Orange

Suitable for Pre-Readers;
3-6 years

As pre-readers, these children are best served by hands-on experiences, song, and movement as they learn. Although everything from the red level is still applicable, we can adapt the activities to bring them to the orange level by including more hands-on learning and structured play.

Our objective is to present the theme of the day in an engaging way that involves sufficient movement, creativity, and fun to accommodate the activity level of a child of this age.

Yellow

suitable for early readers;
ages 7-9 years

Children of this age are now able to read functionally, so we can begin to teach them foundational theology points with concrete instruction. They can begin to write about topics as well as create paper projects and use other creative mediums. With a more outward orientation and a new awareness of time, history, and community, at the yellow level, they are more capable of collaborating on projects, although any of the above material may also be of interest to them.

Our objective for this age level is to involve the children in group projects and collaborations so that they can begin to understand and interact as part of a bigger faith community.

Green

suitable for Pre-teens,
ages 10-12 years

This age group is now able to read for comprehension and can apply the teaching they have received to their lives and the lives of those around them. Building on the previous stages, the children in the Green level can delve deeper into the story of salvation and begin to focus on how each is called to participate in this plan and see that Christ is the source of our strength.

Our objective is to use reference tools to explain the topic of the month and encourage the student to feel confident in searching for these tools on his own.

Blue

suitable for young teens,
ages 13-15 years

The young teenage student looks outside his family to the broader community and the world, wanting to understand it and participate in it. We begin to introduce community service ideas and encourage parish participation in various ways so that they can serve both their parish community and the Church at large.

Our objective is to provide ideas that encourage students of this age to remain engaged in developing their own spiritual identity and find support within the Church community.

Purple

suitable for teens and adults;
Ages 16+

Learning about the faith isn't just something for childhood, but it is rather a life-long journey that takes us ever closer to God. This group can tackle apologetics, moral life questions, and more challenging concepts and ideas of adult catechesis.

Our Objective: To explore the complex depth of the theme by exploring the writings of the Church Fathers, Scripture, and historical documents. We hope to introduce tools of apologetics, so participants can learn how to defend a position used as a common argument against the theme.

Red

(0-3): suitable for ages 0-3/infant & toddler:

When God created us, He made us both body and soul, meaning we are both physical and spiritual beings. We are not like angels that are just spirits. For this reason, when we use our bodies to help us learn, our spirits are changed as well!

A sensory bin is a small tub or table filled with items that you can touch, smell, taste, or make noise with. They typically include items that are about a particular theme. When we use our senses to help us learn something, it helps us to recall the information better. It also provides a stimulating and fun experience with open-ended play. There are sensory tables you can purchase online, but even large, flat Tupperware containers will work and are very affordable!

It is best to play with sensory bins outside because they do get messy! But, if you are working inside, lay a flat sheet underneath the bins to help contain the mess and make it a bit easier to clean up. We work hard to make our bins “taste safe,” meaning while not ideal for the little ones to put in their mouth, it shouldn’t cause any harm. We promise the experience is worth the work!



1- Sensory Bin

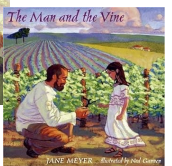
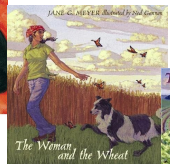
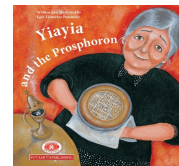
This month, we are focusing on the Body of Christ, and the sensory experience for our youngest learners is a simple salt dough recipe. Little ones will love pretending to make their own “Prospora bread.” You can give the children a small amount of dough to play with alone or provide baking pans and popsicle sticks to further enrich the activity. To make salt dough, mix the following together and knead until smooth:

One cup water
Two cups flour
One cup salt



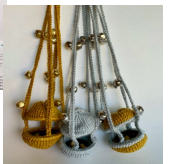
2-Book suggestions

- Yiayia and the Prosporon-**
<https://store.ancientfaith.com/yiayia-and-the-prosporon/>
- The Woman and the Wheat—**
<https://a.co/d/9kCqbUa>
- The Man and the Vine—**
<https://a.co/d/9MmqS5A>



3-Toy suggestions

- Orthodox Prospora Stamp**
<https://www.etsy.com/ca/listing/916353158/orthodox-prospora-stamp-with-step-by>
- Digital Pattern for Toy Censers**
<https://www.drawneardesigns.com/art-kits-coloring/digital-patter-download-for-toy-censers>



Orange

(suitable for Pre-Readers; 4-6 years)



Teaching objectives : Jesus says we are His body, and we all have different work to do in His Church. We become part of His Body by receiving Baptism and Holy Communion.

Jesus lives inside us, and we become His hands and feet, doing His work in the world!!

What Part of the Body of Christ are YOU??

Jesus taught us to think of His Church as we think of His Body. When St. Paul wrote his first letter to the people of Corinth, he told them they were all individual members of the body of Christ, each with his own specific job and function!

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so, the body is not made up of one part but of many.

1 Corinthians 12:27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

This means that each person in the Church has his own role to play, each is as important as the others, and no two are alike.

Just like your brain is very different but just as important to your body as your heart,

Just like your eye is very different, but just as important to your body as your ear,

Just as your hand is very different but just as important to your body as your foot...

We must know that what the priest is called to do for the Church is very different but just as important as what YOU, a little kid, are called to do!

To make this point come alive for the children, Break the group into partners. It is best to partner boys with boys and girls with girls for this activity. Have each student lie down on a sheet of butcher paper and have the student's partner trace their figure onto the paper. (If you don't have butcher paper, you could also trace the students with sidewalk chalk outside.) Then, have the partners switch places so that every student has his own outline to work with.



Pantocrator image

Once their body is traced out, have them draw a heart where their heart should be on their body. Inside the heart, glue a copy of the Pantocrator Icon. . Before class, print enough of this page so that each child will have an icon.

Now, each student can complete their drawing of themselves by adding more features, hair, clothing, etc.

(Alternatively, if your group of students would benefit from having one focal point rather than individual ones, consider tracing one large body and fastening it to a wall. The students could then work on it together as a group project.





Connected Parts

By Sylvia Dorham

A body is made
Of connected parts
That work by themselves
Like lungs and hearts
But they also work together
And so should we
For the strength and health
Of the whole body
We are the Body of Christ (clap)
We are the Body of Christ (clap)
From every different time
And every place
We're here to serve God
And to spread his grace
Because... *(start again and go faster)*



*This song increases in speed and the number of claps each time you sing it.
The first time through, sing slowly and use slow hand motions, clapping once.
The second time through, sing at a regular speed using hand motions and clapping twice.
The third time through, sing fast with fast hand motions and clap three times.
Make up your own hand motions to match the words of the song.
Can you do a fourth time through???*

Listen here:



<https://www.byzimom.com/thedwellingplace>

Yellow

(suitable for early readers; ages 7-9 years):



Teaching objective/points:

Jesus says we are His body and we all have different work to do in His Church. We become part of His Body by receiving Baptism and Holy Communion. When we receive Holy Communion, we truly receive Jesus' Body.

What Part of the Body of Christ are YOU??

Teaching objective/points: Jesus gave each of us a remarkable body with organs that work independently but coordinate together to keep the whole body functioning properly. Jesus says we are His body, and like the various organs, we each have a different work to do in His Church.

Make a photocopy of the images or the Body Parts on page 11, one set for each student. Have them cut out the various organs. Establish where each body part listed should be on their poster, discussing the function of each part as you paste it into place.

Now, discuss how this part of the body functions for you. What can you do because of this organ? What would you be unable to do if this organ was not working properly? Write down, next to each of the organs, the ways YOU can use that particular organ of YOUR body to glorify God in your home and in your parish.



Brain: This part of the body is responsible for thinking clearly, making decisions, and planning the body's course of action.



Heart: This is the part of the body that is responsible for feeling deeply, loving beyond measure, and caring for others.



Hands: A person's hands DO things for the Body. They reach out to those in need and offer assistance to others.



Feet: This part of the body walks to take the body to faraway places.



Stomach: The responsibility of the stomach is to take what the body ingests and break it down into smaller pieces that are more useful in nourishing the body.



Eyes & Ears: Information is given to the brain in the head of the body by sensory input from the eyes and ears. Without them, the head wouldn't know what was happening around the Body.



Voice: A voice communicates and conveys the ideas and thoughts of the body to those around them. When others listen to a voice speak, they understand more clearly what the body is



Lungs: The body gets the oxygen it needs to breathe and refresh itself from the lungs. When the lungs do their job, the whole body is refreshed and comes to life!

Examples of things your students can write on their poster

Brain:

You can make wise decisions; learn to read so you can learn about Jesus and the saints; think deep thoughts about heavenly things.

Heart:

Love your neighbor as yourself; love God with your whole heart; love God's creation

Hands:

do good works; help others in need; put them together to say prayers or hold the knots on your chotki as you pray; make gifts for others;

Feet:

Go to Church!; walk the walk of a true Christian; take Jesus with you wherever you go.

Stomach:

Partake of the Eucharist!; Eat healthy food to keep the body God gave you strong and healthy. Learn how to fast and feast with the Liturgical seasons.

Eyes & Ears:

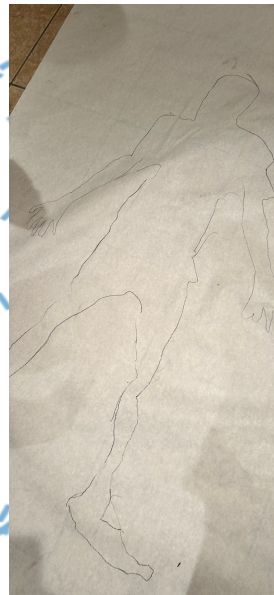
Look at icons and other holy things; listen to bible stories, the Holy Gospel and the homily at church; see and hear the glorious creation God made!

Voice:

Say your prayers; sing the hymns at Divine Services; speak kindly to all and of holy things.

Lungs:

Breathe and be still, and know that God is with you!



Before class, print enough of this page so that each child will have a set of icons



Alternate Activity

Blessing Bags

We will be making and distributing blessing bags for the homeless. This is a very real, tangible way to care for the Body of Christ when you find someone who is in need and you feel like you want to do something but are unsure of exactly what to do. Handing out a Blessing Bag to someone gives you a way to meet their immediate needs by providing them with some basic supplies such as toiletries, water, food and warmth.

Blessing Bags are great to keep on hand in your car, so if you are in a situation where you find someone in need, you have the bag right there to hand to them. We can also keep some on hand at church in case we have any drop in visitors in need when we are meeting. This is a way to demonstrate the act of giving in the face of a need instead of just driving by or walking away without responding...it is the truly Christian thing to do!

This project requires a bit of planning ahead. Post an ad in your bulletin, send an email or make a flier asking for donations prior to your meeting day. For your convenience, we are providing a list of suggested items for donation. There is no minimum or maximum donation here, we will simply use whatever we bring in to the best of our ability! If you have an idea not on this list, by all means, bring that also! I would avoid items that can melt in the heat. It is also best not to mix scented soaps with food items in the same bag.

Once all of the items are collected, lay them out on a table in an organized fashion. Each child takes a turn taking a gallon size ziplock and filling it with a number of items from those collected. The amount in each bag will depend on how much you were able to collect. Consider having the children write a note to place in their bag that says "For the nourishment of your body, lovingly prepared by (your parish's name)." Divide the prepared bags among the families so that everyone can hand them out as the occasion presents itself or place them in a designated spot to give to homeless visitors who come to your parish.



Green

(suitable for Pre-teens, ages 10-12 years):

- **Teaching objective/points:** Jesus says we are His body, and we all have different work to do in His Church. We become part of His Body by receiving Baptism and Holy Communion. When we receive Holy Communion, we truly receive Jesus' Body.
- Students in this group may also enjoy the blessing bag activity from the yellow level

What Part of the Body of Christ are YOU??



After doing the Yellow Level Activity, students in this level can take it one step further by discussing the various members of the Church who make up the Body of Christ. Each organ relates to a particular membership within the Church as well! Use the list below to start the conversation, then ask the students if they can think of which groups of members have the same function within the Body of Christ as the organ in their own bodies. They may opt to write these on their paper "Bodies" as well, have the instructor write them on the class "body", or simply use them as discussion points.



Brain: In the Body of Christ that is the Church, the **Patriarchs, and Bishops** do all these things.



Heart: In the Body of Christ, **Monastics** like monks, nuns, and sisters offer their very lives to God in prayer for the love of all of us!



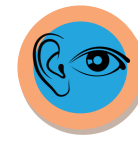
Hands: **Deacons** have this responsibility to the Body of Christ



Feet: **Missionaries** take the Body of Christ to people worldwide!



Stomach: **Apologists and Catechists** take the complex truths of the faith and break them down into concepts that the Body of Christ can understand and become nourished by.



Eyes & Ears: **Priests** are the eyes and ears of the Body of Christ because they see and hear everything in their parishes and among their parishioners.



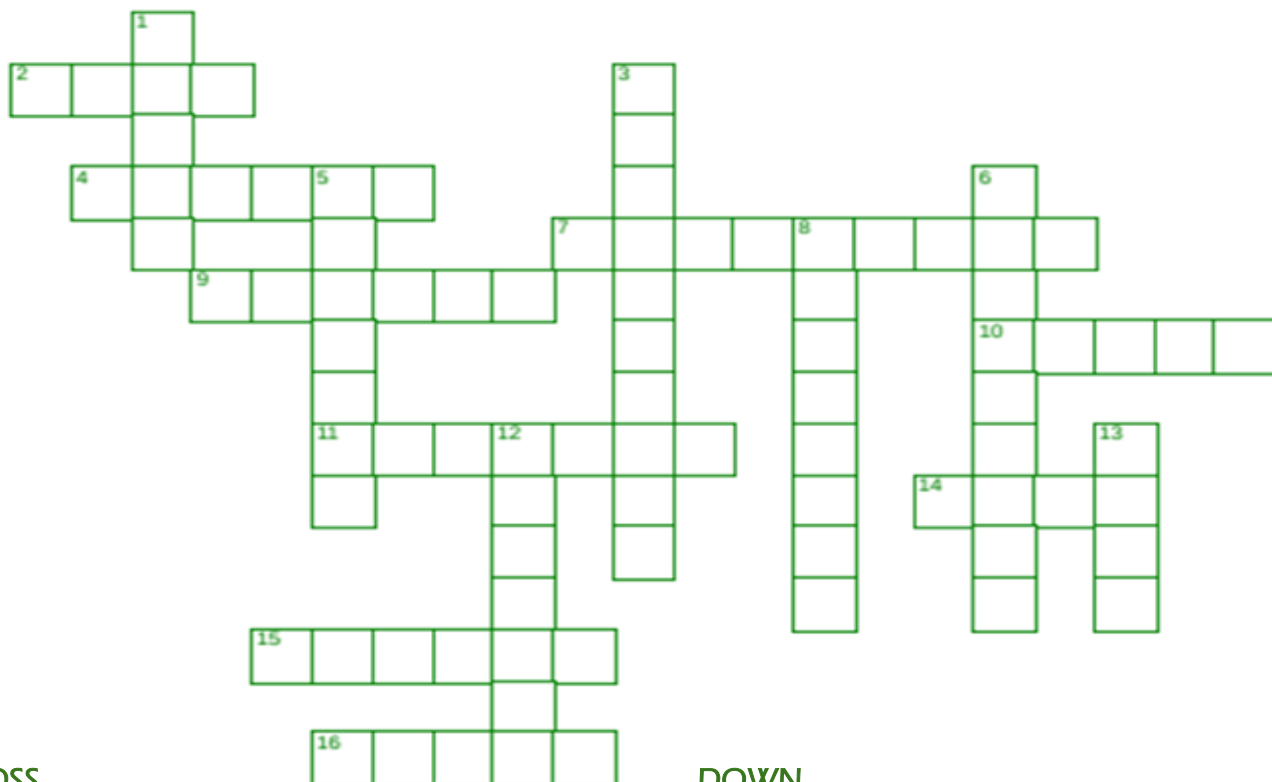
Voice: The people in the **congregation** convey messages to those around them about the Body of Christ. Some voices are loud, while others are soft whispers. Unfortunately, some voices can remain silent. We are called to be a voice for the Body of Christ, the Church.



Lungs: The people within the Church, especially the **Children**, breathe life into the Body of Christ that is the Church. YOU have this job! When people see young people who authentically express their faith, something wonderful happens within them. THEY want to be

Crossword puzzle

John 6: 48-66



ACROSS

- 2 He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a _____ teaching. Who can accept it?"
- 4 Just as the living _____ sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.
- 7 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your _____ ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."
- 9 But here is the bread that comes down from _____, which anyone may eat and not die.
- 10 Your ancestors ate the _____ in the wilderness, yet they died.
- 11 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has _____ life, and I will raise them up at the last day.
- 14 Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no _____ in you.
- 15 The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the _____ and life.
- 16 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my _____, which I will give for the life of the world."

DOWN

- 1 I am the _____ of life.
- 3 From this time many of his disciples _____ and no longer followed him
- 5 Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has _____ them."
- 6 Aware that his disciples were _____ about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you?"
- 8 Then what if you see the _____ ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.
- 12 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood _____ in me, and I in them.
- 13 Then the _____ began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

WORD BANK: ANCESTORS, BREAD, ENABLED, ETERNAL, FATHER, FLESH, GRUMBING, HARD, HEAVEN, JEWS, LIFE, MANNA, RE-MAINS, SONOFMAN, SPIRIT, TURNEDBACK

Body of Christ



Though Christ has ascended into Heaven,
His work must still be done.

Christ said: "You are the Body of Christ."

Unique, but in Christ we're one.

We each have a job that Christ has given:

Become His hands, eyes, and feet.

We each have gifts that make us unique,

There's a part only you can complete.

- Do you see in the picture how Christ is one, but has many parts to his body? We are each called to take a part in Christ's Church, to act as His Body here on earth.
- The illustration labels Christ's head, eye, ear, nose, mouth, heart, hand and foot. What is each body part for?
- What did Christ do with His eyes? "When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry!" (Luke 7:13). In Luke 4:17-21 He read the scriptures.
- What did Christ do with His hands? In John 8 Christ wrote with His hand. In John 9 Christ spat on the dirt, and formed mud with his hands, putting it on a blind man's eyes to heal him.
- What did Christ do with His feet? In Matthew 14 Jesus walked on water.
- What else did Christ do with his body? Can you think of a gospel passage where Christ used his ears? He listened to the woman at the well, and to the Pharisees and scribes. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!" Matthew 11:15.
- Did Christ ever use His heart? "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." John 13:34



The foot of the body doesn't say "I am sad!
 I wish to be a hand instead!"
 The ear doesn't say: "I'll be an eye,
 The belly say: "I'm a head!"
 We can't all be the Body's eyes.
 Parts make the whole succeed,
 The body is made as it should be.
 And if one suffers, all need.

- In this picture, do you notice the blind hand trying to walk across the street? Do you think it can make it on its own? How will it eat? What would happen if everyone wanted to hold the Troitsa candles? What would happen if nobody answered God's call to become a priest or a doctor?
- We need all parts of the body in order for the body to be most successful. Every job in the Church is important, even the one that comes with the least amount of notice and praise.



Here's how we act as the Body of Jesus:
 When we teach, heal, help, and guide.
 Miracles, clear speech, wisdom, discernment.
 Who might you be inside?

- Who is the saint preaching in the picture? Do the bees give a hint? St. John Chrysostom. He preached on the selfless work of bees and is often shown with one. In the picture he is teaching. He was known for his ability to preach the word of God in a way that people understood and took to heart.
- Who are the children in the picture? All of us who participate in the Divine Liturgy and hear or read the preaching of St. John Chrysostom.
- Each of these children have a role in the Church. Will they be sisters? Monks? The cleaning lady? The catechist? How might you serve Christ now? How might you serve in the future?



Right now you are serving as God's little ears.
 Hear what He says, hold to heart.
 When you say God's word you act as His mouth,
 Hug, and Christ's arms play a part.

- Children have an important part to play in the Body of Christ. What are some other ways that children imitate Christ? Does this change when you get older? "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in My name welcomes Me" (Matthew 18:2-5).
- Do you notice the plant in the corners of the picture? Those are olive branches with olives and the olive flower. This is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, since olive oil comes from olives, and is used to anoint God's people. Any gifts and work we have are given to us by the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the Church.



St. Alphonsa said she'd love with Christ's heart,
She loved and prayed for others.
St. John Chrysostom became Christ's mouth,
Preaching God's word to our brothers.

- Saint Alphonsa was from the Syro-Malabar Church in India. She was lame and suffered deeply. She strove to be like Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, offering up all her suffering and prayer for the love of Jesus.
- What are some examples of saints or people you know who allow Christ to live in them? What are ways Christ lives in you? "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20).



“Abide in Me and I in you.”
 In the Body, the Spirit leads.
 Together our little parts make up one Church,
 And united to Christ, we succeed.
 Christ is the Head of the Body, and we are His Body,
 the Church. The Holy Spirit is in us, giving us life, grace and gifts.
 Every body needs a soul, and the Holy Spirit is the life, the soul of the Church.

- To add to the Mystery... What (or Who) is the Food of the Church? The Body and Blood of Christ! Why isn't this cannibalism? If you or I were to eat normal human flesh, it would die and become a part of our bodies. The Precious Gifts are the opposite: when we consume the Body and Blood of Christ He does not die but lives in us, and we become a part of Him!
- Do you see the cedars and junipers in the picture? They are a symbol of God's love and care for his people. Psalm 104:16-17 “The trees of the Lord are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. There the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the junipers.” The trees are an image of the Church, as we peacefully make our nests in them.
- The Body of Christ (the Church) is one way that Christ dwells on earth. “They will know you are my disciples by your love for one another” John 13:35. What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ?
- Do you notice the grapevines over the head of Christ? This is another image of the Body of Christ. “I am the Vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him will bring forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Blue

Suitable for 13-15 years

Teaching objective/points:

We become partakers of the Divine Nature through the reception of Holy Eucharist. We are united to Christ and become His Body. We all serve different roles in the Church, both as lay people and clergy, but Christ as the head of the Church directs us.

Students at this level may also enjoy the blessing bag activity from the yellow level. & Icon reflection



God is with us!

When you attend Compline this Christmas Eve, listen for this hymn. It is known as the Song of the Prophet Isaiah because it's verses are taken from the book of Isaiah, chapters 8 and 9 in which God spoke to the prophet shortly before the birth of his own son, centuries before the coming of God's son, the Baby Jesus.

If we trust in Him, He will be our refuge, for God is with us! He was with His people when He came to us in a stable in Bethlehem. He is with us today when He comes to us in the Holy Eucharist. Don't be afraid when you see scary things happening! God really is with us!

God is with us!

*Understand, all you nations, and submit yourselves
for God is with us!*

*Hear all you distant lands, You mighty ones, submit yourselves,
for God is with us!*

*If you strengthen yourselves again, again you will be defeated,
Form a plan, but the Lord will thwart it,
for God is with us!*

*Whatever word you speak will not stand even among yourselves,
We will not fear what you fear nor shall we be dismayed,
for God is with us!*

*Hallow the Lord our God and He will be your fear,
If you trust in Him, He will be your refuge,
for God is with us!*

*We will hope in Him and by Him will we be saved,
Here am I with the children God has given me
for God is with us!*

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light,
Upon you who dwelt in the shadow of death, a light has shone,
for God is with us!*

*For a child is born to us; a son is given to us,
Upon His shoulder dominion rests, Of His peace, there is no end,
for God is with us!*

*They call Him Angel of Great Counsel, Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Master, Prince of Peace, Father of the age to come,
for God is with us!*

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and
ever and forever. Amen...for God is with us!*

*God is with us! God is with us!
Understand, all you nations, and submit yourselves for God is with us!*

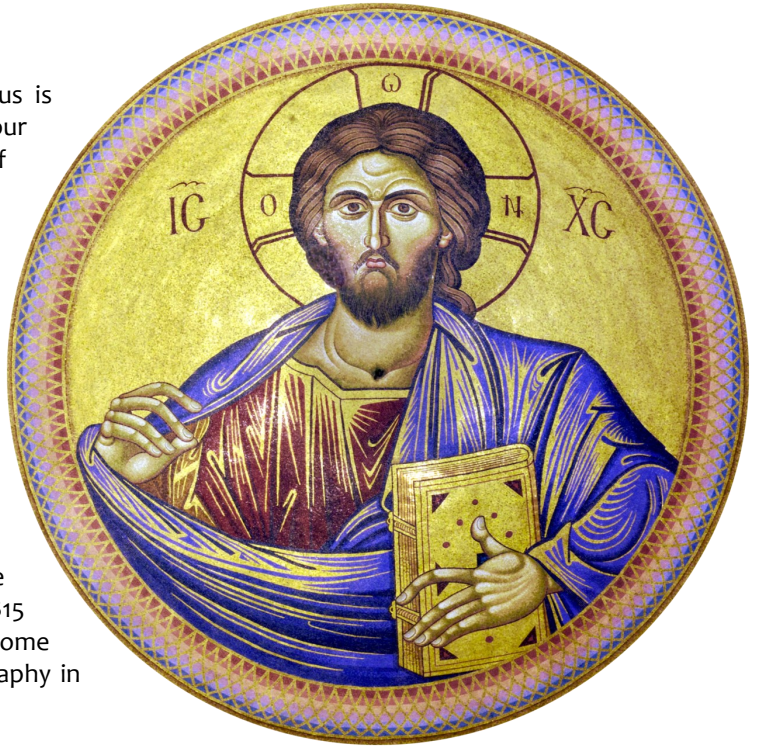
Icon Reflection

A view of the Christ Pantocrator mosaic depicting Jesus in the dome above the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Copyright: Andrew Shiva / Wikipedia

When we speak of the Body of Christ, Jesus is always the Head, directing all of our movements. The architecture and design of our church buildings reinforces this truth. In our churches, the highest point, typically a dome, is reserved for Christ, the Head of the Church. Specifically, the icon used is called “Pantocrator.”

The original version of this icon of Christ dates back to the sixth century. This icon was painted in the monastery of St. Catherine in the Sinai desert. Due to its remote location, the image survived the destruction of most icons during the iconoclastic era in Byzantine history. (726 to 815 AD) Glory to God for this mercy! It has become one of the most common images in iconography in the world today.



“Pantocrator” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew title “El Shaddai,” and means “all powerful.” Sometimes this icon is also called “Christ the Teacher,” and its original intention was to confirm the teaching of the Nicene creed that Jesus is both fully God and fully man. This icon has several distinct elements that set it apart from other images of Christ.

First, Christ is presented looking directly at us, only showing half his body. His face is generally stern, as if he is watching over all of creation. He wears a red tunic symbolizing His divinity and a blue himation (or cloak), symbolizing his humanity. His right hand is raised in priestly blessing, with His first three fingers touching, representing the Trinity and his last two fingers touching His palm, signifying His dual nature of human and divine. He holds a bejeweled Gospel book, His Word given to us, in his left hand.

Above Christ’s head, we see the letters “IC XC” which is an abbreviation of the name Jesus Christ in Greek: *IHCOYC XPICTOC*. By taking the first and last letter of each word, it is also a symbol that Christ is the beginning and the end, First and Last, Sustainer of All. Inside His halo, we first notice the outline of a cross, a reminder of Christ’s suffering and the means of our salvation. We also see the letters *Ω O N* (omega, omicron, nu)- which mean “He who is,” the name that God gave himself when speaking to Moses (Exodus 3:14).

In our churches each Sunday, when we receive Holy Communion, we tilt our heads up, facing Christ looking back down on us from the dome. As we receive His Body and Blood, our eyes remind us that Christ is the Head, and by uniting ourselves to Him in Holy Communion, we are truly joining His Body, the Body of Christ.

A Lesson in Baking the Holy Bread

The bread we will learn to prepare today is called the Prosphoron, the Holy Bread that is offered as a gift to the Church for consecration into the Body of Christ at Divine Liturgy.

It contains only four ingredients: flour, water, yeast, and salt, and can be made by any member of the congregation. It is common practice, but not required, for the baker to have gone to confession before baking the Prosphora and to make it first thing in the morning, after prayers, and while fasting. For centuries, the faithful would bring gifts of these Prosphora, along with wheat, oil, and wine, to the Church – specifically to the deacons, who would receive the gifts and prepare them for use at the Divine Liturgy. The word means “gift” and when you prepare the holy bread for use at the Divine Liturgy, you really are presenting the Church, and the Lord, with the gift of your talents and time! It is important that we make such a gift, which will become the Body of Christ, with a prayerful and loving attitude. It is important to dedicate your time completely to the task, not multi-tasking or allowing yourself to become distracted by the television, music, or other worldly things.

A **Prosphoron** is made of two separate round pieces of leavened dough, which are placed one on top of another and baked together to form a single loaf. This double loaf represents the two natures of Christ. Before baking, each loaf is stamped with a seal, usually bearing the image of a cross with the Greek letters ICXC NIKA, which means “Jesus Christ conquers”. This impression is baked into the bread and serves as a guide for the removal of the “Lamb”, or center-most square of the loaf. This portion of the Prosphoron will be consecrated into the Body of Christ during the Divine Liturgy.

When the **Lamb** is removed from the Prosphoron during the preparation service before the liturgy, there is a substantial amount of bread left over. Because tradition requires the faithful to fast before Communion, they are given this bread (and in some traditions, they are also given wine and water) to give them strength after they receive the Eucharist. Also, at the end of Liturgy, loaves of unconsecrated (but blessed) bread are cut and given out to the people while the priest imparts a blessing on them. This anointing is known as **Mirovanije**. The unconsecrated bread taken from the Prosphoron is called the Antidoron. Therefore, the Antidoron, which literally means “in place of the gifts”, has its origins in the food which was distributed to the poor in the early Church.



The Antidoron is distributed to all in attendance as a sign of fellowship, even to those who are unable to receive the Eucharist. Because it is unconsecrated but is blessed, it is often taken home by the faithful to those who cannot attend the Liturgy to be eaten as a sacramental. The faithful piously believe that blessings and healing graces are bestowed upon one who partakes of this blessed bread.

The Recipe:

Before you begin to make your bread, pray:

O Lord Jesus Christ, only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, who has said with your most pure lips: without me you can do nothing. O Lord, my Lord, with faith I accept your words, help me a sinner to prepare the bread of offering, that the works of my hands may be acceptable at your holy table, and may become through the operation of your Holy Spirit, the communion of "your most pure Body for me and all of your people."

In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

You will need to gather the following ingredients:

- 1/8 tsp active dry yeast
- 1 cup warm water
- 4 cups white, unbleached wheat flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- NOTHING ELSE



Why nothing else? These are the basic ingredients necessary to make pure, unadulterated bread. The reason to include any additional ingredient would only be to suit someone's taste, insinuating that it was less than perfect on its own. What if someone else didn't like that flavor? What if it was different each time you approached the Eucharist? When you consider what, or Whom, this bread will become, we realize that it needs nothing more than basic ingredients to be considered perfectly made. Also, it is not customary, as it is in some family bread recipes, to include oil because oil can turn rancid quickly and ruin the loaf, and it is also very slick and can cling to the chalice after the distribution of the Eucharist, causing difficulty when the priest needs to purify the chalice. Therefore we can see that the very basic elements are all that are necessary to make the perfect Prosporion.

Mix the yeast and water and allow the yeast to proof for approximately 15 minutes. You will see bubbles begin to form when the yeast becomes activated. Once you see this, you add the salt, saying,

"Lord Jesus Christ, you are the salt that seasons the heart of mankind."



Then you may gradually add the flour, mixing until a workable dough forms. (You may add a bit more than 4 cups if necessary).

"O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, through the prayers of Thy Most Pure Mother, by the power of the precious and life-giving Cross, by the intercessions of blessed Michael the Archangel, of the holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist, John, of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, of [your patron saint and the patron saint of the church], of my holy Guardian Angel, and of all the saints, have mercy upon me and save me. Amen."

Knead the dough for 20 minutes, then place it into a large bowl, cover it with plastic wrap, and allow to rise in a warm dry place for approximately 30-60 minutes, until it has doubled in bulk. While kneading, pray,

"Dear Lord, this bread that we have baked represents each one of us in this family and in our congregation. We are offering ourselves to You, our very life, in humble obedience and total commitment to You. We place ourselves on Your holy altar through this bread to be used by You in any way that You feel will help enlarge Your kingdom. Accept our gift and make us worthy to receive the greater gift that You will give us when You consecrate this bread and give it back to us as Your Precious Body. Amen."

Set your oven for 350 degrees Fahrenheit, with your rack in the lower section of the oven.

Once your dough has risen, lightly work it by taking the outer edges and pushing them down in the middle of the ball of dough. Continue to work your way around the bowl, pushing the edges into the center, then roll the ball of dough out onto a flat surface that has been dusted with flour to keep it from sticking. The recipe makes either one large or four small loaves. You may cut the ball into four equal pieces at this point or work with the whole thing.

To make the prosphora, take your ball of dough and cut it in half. These two halves will represent the two natures of Christ, both God and man. Then, using the palm of your hand, roll them against the counter until each forms a perfect ball. Using a rolling pin, roll each ball into a disc that is approximately half an inch thick. Now you may use a cookie cutter, empty tuna, or coffee can to cut two perfect circles from the discs.

Prepare a baking sheet by lining it with parchment paper and a light dusting of flour. Place one of the discs on the sheet. Brush the top with water so that the surface becomes sticky, and ensure that the water doesn't run down upon the baking sheet, or else your bread may stick! Brush the bottom of the other disc with water and place it on the other disc, with both sticky sides together, like a sandwich, making sure there are no air pockets between them! (It may be easiest to begin at one end and slowly roll the top onto the bottom disc, like a sticker.



Now take your seal and dust the entire surface of it with flour, then tap it so that any excess falls off and only a very thin coating remains on the seal. Place this carefully in the center of your discs and press down hard! Take your hands away and let the seal sit for a moment, then carefully lift it directly upward, pulling it away from your loaf so that it leaves a perfect seal upon it, saying,

“ O heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art in all places and fillest all things; Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and dwell in us and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O gracious Lord.”

Using a skewer of some kind, pierce the loaf on each of the four ends of the cross that is in the middle of the Lamb-section and once in the center. Allow the loaf to rise for about 20 minutes more, then bake it in the lower rack of your pre-heated (350) oven for 30 minutes.

“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

Remove from the oven and cool completely on a wire rack before wrapping in plastic.

When you have finished, pray:

O Lord and Master Jesus Christ, our God, who alone has power to forgive the sins of mankind, do you O Good One, who loves mankind, forgive all the sins that I have committed in knowledge or in ignorance, and make me worthy to receive without condemnation, your divine, immaculate and life-giving mysteries; not unto punishment or unto increase of sin, but unto purification and sanctification and a promise of your kingdom and the bread of life; as a protection and a help against all adversaries. For you are a God of mercy and compassion and love toward mankind, and unto you we send up glory together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.



Violet 16 +

Teaching objective/points: We become partakers of the Divine Nature through the reception of Holy Eucharist. We are united to Christ and become His Body. We all serve different roles in the Church, both as lay people and clergy, but Christ as the head of the Church directs us.



Violet Apologetics:

The Church Professes that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ. How can this be true?

John 6: 48-66 I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, **“How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”**

Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. **For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.** Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.

This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”

Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.”

From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

Jesus tells us in scripture that the bread and the wine that we consume as the Eucharist is truly His precious Body and Life-giving Blood. It is clear that Jesus spoke literally, because if He had not, do you believe that He would have let the unbelievers just leave like that? How compassionate would Christ have been if He had been speaking

figuratively, but then allowed his followers to be misled and leave the Church? The only option left is that Christ truly meant what He said; His flesh IS real food and His blood IS real drink.

The early church fathers evidently understood this concept because we can read about it in their writings.

Ignatius of Antioch “I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the **bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ**, who was of the seed of David; and for drink I desire his blood, which is love incorruptible” (Letter to the Romans 7:3 - 110 AD)

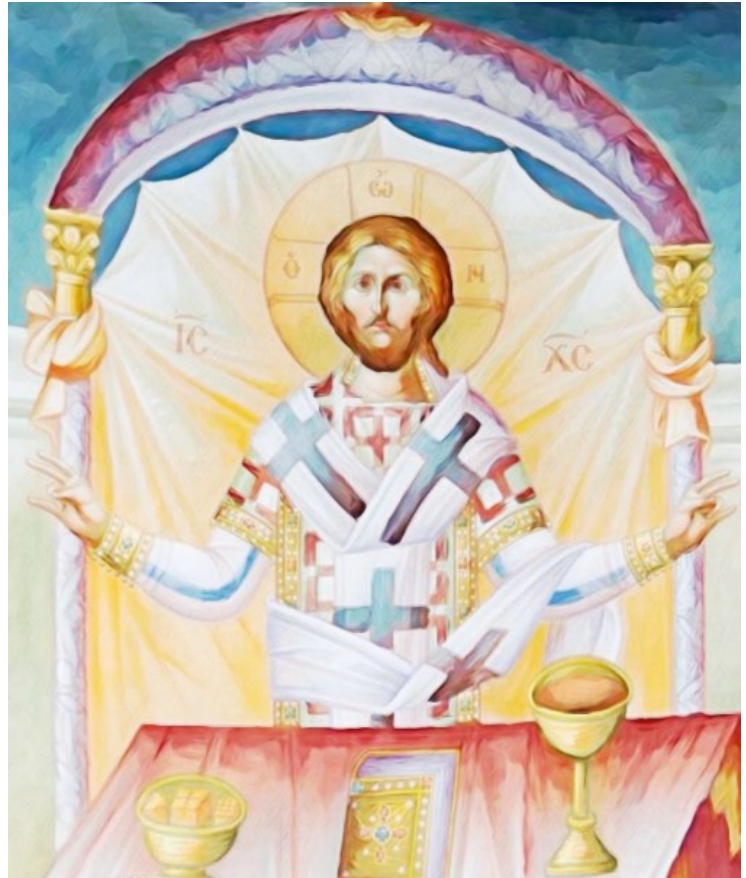
“Take note of those who hold heterodox opinions on the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us, and see how contrary their opinions are to the mind of God. . . . They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer because they do not confess that **the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, flesh which suffered for our sins and which that Father, in his goodness, raised up again**. They who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes” (Letter to the Smyrnaeans 6:2-7:1 - 110 AD)

Justin Martyr: “We call this food Eucharist, and no one else is permitted to partake of it, except one who believes our teaching to be true and who has been washed in the washing which is for the remission of sins and for regeneration [i.e., has received baptism] and is thereby living as Christ enjoined. For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior was made incarnate by the word of God and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, **the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nurtured, is both the flesh and the blood of that incarnated Jesus**” (First Apology 66 -151 AD)

Irenaeus: “If the Lord were from other than the Father, how could he rightly take bread, which is of the same creation as our own, and **confess it to be his body and affirm that the mixture in the cup is his blood?**” (Against Heresies 4:33-32 - 189 AD)

“He has declared the cup, a part of creation, to be his own blood, from which he causes our blood to flow; and the bread, a part of creation, he has established as his own body, from which he gives increase unto our bodies. When, therefore, the mixed cup [wine and water] and the baked bread receives the Word of God and becomes the Eucharist, the body of Christ, and from these the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they say that the flesh is not capable of receiving the gift of God, which is eternal life – **flesh which is nourished by the body and blood of the Lord, and is in fact a member of him?” (Against Heresies 5:2 - 189 AD)**

Now that we have established that the early church, as well as the true Christians today, are to believe and be certain in the fact that the Eucharist is truly the Glorified Body and Most Precious Blood of Our Lord, we must consider the frame of mind and heart with which we are to receive Him.



Consider that the first consecration happened during the Passover meal. This meal was to have been a precursor; yet a memorial of a past event which was the freeing of the Israelites from captivity in Egypt. Therefore, both the eating of the Passover sacrifice and the eating of the Eucharistic sacrifice signify one and the same thing. If we look at the regulations for the eating of the Passover meal given to the Jews in the book of Exodus, we see the following:

Exodus 13: 47-48 "All the congregation of Israel are to celebrate this. "But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it.

Nobody who was not a Jew was allowed to celebrate the Passover, let alone eat of the lamb! This is why no one who is not a member of the Church (one who did not leave when Christ proposed His true presence in the Eucharist), may receive the Eucharist during Divine Liturgy.

Paul goes even a step further by stating

1 Corinthians 11:23-30 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

Paul tells the Corinthians that to eat and drink of the flesh and blood of the Eucharist without knowing it is His Body and Blood (discerning the body) is guilty of His Body and Blood. In Jewish culture this means that they carry the guilt of His murder!

How can one be guilty of His Body and Blood if it ISN'T His Body and His Blood?

It MUST be!

One thing is abundantly clear. Christ, Himself, taught His twelve disciples (His future priests) to consecrate bread and wine into His Body and Blood at the Passover Supper (the future Divine Liturgy). He told ALL the disciples (70+) to accept it from them and EAT it. Remember that some could not do so because they found it too disturbing and they left the Church. Remember that Christ let them go rather than recant what He declared. The early Church is unanimous in their upholding of the teaching of the real presence, and the practice is continued in the Church even today.

Matthew 28: 16-20 And the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And seeing them they adored: but some doubted. And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.



This icon is called

“The Inexhaustible Cup”



It depicts the Body of the Christ Child blessing us from inside the Eucharistic Chalice. Behind Him, we see the Theotokos, the Mother of God, with her hands raised in prayer. This is called the “orans” position of prayer, indicating that she is pleading with God for us. As a good mother, she always magnifies her Son and points the way to him. During this time of the Nativity Fast, it is fitting for us to remember that God planned for our salvation by giving His Son, our Redeemer, to us through her.

But why do we call it an “Inexhaustible” Cup? Inexhaustible means infinite or never-ending. Do you ever wonder how the Body of Christ can be present everywhere, in every particle, every chalice, every Catholic Church, every day, forever? It seems unbelievable! Jesus knew we would have difficulty with this concept, and while He was alive on Earth, He constructed a scenario whereby He could earn our trust that he could multiply food at will. Do you know a story from scripture that would help us understand?

One day, Jesus spoke to the crowd for such a long time that it was almost time for dinner! The disciples had no food to offer to the enormous crowd and grew worried. A little boy came up to St Andrew and offered him the five loaves of bread and two fish that he planned to take home to his family that night for their dinner. Andrew took them to Jesus, and He prayed over them

and told the disciples to hand them out to the crowd. When the disciples had finished feeding the crowd of over five thousand people, there was more left than they had even started with! Jesus had multiplied the food! If He can multiply bread and fish, He can certainly multiply the Eucharist! The chalice is truly inexhaustible!

So now that we understand that Jesus can be present in all of those particles of the Holy Eucharist, let’s think about the fact that the same Jesus is consumed every day, in every church, in every chalice in every communicant, including you, and me, and my Uncle John, and a lady in China, and my great grandmother over a hundred years ago, and St. Nicholas, and every single Catholic who has ever received the Eucharist for as long as it has ever been consecrated until He comes again! The same Jesus is present within us all! Further more Jesus tells us,

John 6:56 Whoever eats my flesh
and drinks My blood remains in Me
and I in him.

We are part of Christ and He is part of each and every one of us! We are now more than parishioners at the same parish or “fellow- Catholics”. Just like having common DNA makes us relatives, becoming one with Christ in the Eucharist transforms us and gives us a sacred commonality that makes us family! We are all ONE with every Catholic who has ever, or will ever live! Christ has created a way to truly be with us forever, and the Eucharist makes all of us truly ONE in HIM!

Image: The Inexhaustible Cup, an icon in the Greek Catholic Church of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Lipany, Presov region of Slovakia





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These lessons were lovingly and prayerfully crafted for your ByziFamily by the ByziMoms who work in unity to bring you ByziKids Magazine.

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We, the ByziMoms who collaborate to produce ByziKids Magazine believe...

- * that today's world does not strive to provide a culture of respect toward God, His Church, or His teachings.
- * that Eastern Christian families are in dire need of fellowship and resources for teaching the littlest members of the Body of Christ about Him and His will so that they may become the next generation of the true Church.
- * that Byzantine Children deserve resources that speak to their little hearts and souls in the language of their own culture as Eastern Christians.
- * that these resources should be shared with anyone and everyone who can use them, regardless of their affiliation with any particular Church or jurisdiction since we understand and respect that Christ's final plea to His Father was that we all be **One**.
- * that these resources should provide our children with lessons that appeal to the same five senses that were consecrated to Christ by their chrismation, and that the lessons be should be fun as well as educational!

Finally, we the ByziMoms who collaborate to produce ByziKids Magazine believe that this is a wonderful way for us to multiply the talents we were given, share the things we have learned in the education of our own children, and thereby glorify God.

We hope you enjoy our publication.