

The Sacrament of First Holy Communion



Preparation Booklet 2

The Bread of Heaven

After the miracle of Jesus feeding the five thousand people, many began to realise that Jesus had the power of God in him. People wanted to listen to Jesus more and more.

People also wanted more signs to show that Jesus had power from God. So they asked him:

"What sign will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

Jesus answered:

"Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Easy to understand ...



The people wanted another sign or miracle from Jesus. They mentioned an old sign that God had given the Jews when he sent down bread from heaven (manna) to feed them when they were hungry in the desert.

Think deeper ...



Jesus tells the people that God the Father has sent down his own kind of bread. This bread is different from normal bread because it gives us life. This means that God's bread doesn't just feed our body; it also feeds our soul. In other words, God's bread gives us **everything** we need.

"I am the Bread of Life"

After telling people that God's bread gives us life, many listened more closely to Jesus and wanted to hear more. Jesus told the people something quite amazing about the Bread of Life.

Jesus: The bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

Crowd: Sir, always give us this bread!

Jesus: I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty... anyone who believes has eternal life ...

Jesus told the people that he **IS** the bread of life; he is God's special bread that gives us life. The people would have been amazed to hear this! How could Jesus be God's bread?

Although the people were amazed to hear what Jesus said, they were even more amazed at what he said next ...

Jesus: Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world...

Crowd: How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Jesus: Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.

“I am the _ _ _ _ _
of life.”

“Whoever eats my
_ _ _ _ _ and drinks
my _ _ _ _ _ has
eternal life.”

Easy to understand ...



Jesus told the people that they should eat his flesh. We eat the flesh of animals when we eat meat. Jesus wants us to do the same with him!



*This
bread is
my flesh,
which I
will give
for the
life of the
world. ..*

John 6:51

Think deeper ...



If Jesus wants us to eat his flesh and drink his blood, we need to be able to do this simply and often.

This is exactly what we do when we receive Holy Communion. It is the real body and blood of Jesus that we receive at Mass. This is what the **Real Presence** means.

When Jesus says "This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" he means that he will offer himself as a sacrifice to save the world. Jesus is just like a sacrificial lamb. So, this is why Jesus is called the Lamb of God.

Jesus is the _____ of life.

Jesus said that we should eat his _____ and
drink his _____.

When we make our First Holy Communion Jesus will be really
there with us. This is what we call The _____
_____.

Quiz Challenge



- 1 What is "manna"?
- 2 Who is the Bread of Heaven?
- 3 Who sent the Bread of Heaven into the world?
- 4 What happens to people who eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood? (Hint: They live _____).
- 5 What does "eternal life" mean?
- 6 What did Jesus mean when he said "*This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world*" ?
- 7 What is a "sacrifice"?
- 8 What does "The Real Presence" mean?

First Holy Communion Preparation Booklet 2

Worksheet 1

The Bread of Heaven

15 minutes

This sheet follows on from the story of the Feeding of Five Thousand People and what Jesus says shortly after this event (and walking on water!) in John Chapter 6. The pages on John 6 are tricky (even for adults) but should at least be walked through as children will pick up the gist - older kids more - and will be able to refer back to John 6 and make connections later. It is also important to go through this because the children will hear much of the John 6 language about the Bread of Heaven, etc at Mass.

You should highlight the power of God that has just been witnessed through the miracle of the loaves and fishes to set the scene for the next sign/miracle which Jesus is about to explain: that God once sent physical bread (called manna) down from heaven to feed people, but he now sends a new kind of bread, much better than manna because it gives life. You could spend time on what "gives us life" might mean, aiming to elicit things like "gives us what we need to live/survive; fills us with good things; looks after our body and soul, etc.

In the Easy to Understand section, explain that people asked for another sign because they took a long time to believe and trust Jesus. Miracles helped many people to believe in Jesus, but not everyone. Even Jesus' twelve apostles struggled to understand and believe despite living closely with him. In the Think Deeper section, explain that when God sent Jesus into the world his role/job/aim was exactly like that of bread - to feed/nurture, but that Jesus also feeds us spiritually; he looks after the whole of us - body, soul, mind. How does he feed us spiritually? He feeds us with things which the non-physical part of us needs to thrive - love, friendship, wisdom, conscience, etc,

Worksheet 2

I am the Bread of Life

20 minutes

This sheet contains two very short role-play conversations using some of Jesus' actual words from John 6. You could ask stronger readers to read them aloud and

repeat again with other readers to reinforce these tricky conversations. The main point is to try to get the group to pick up that Jesus tells us that he is the bread that God sent and that he wants us to eat this bread - his flesh - and drink his blood. Allow time for the children to be bewildered by Jesus' words - as the disciples were bewildered too. They will make comments about the disgusting idea of eating flesh, cannibalism, etc, but tell them that the disciples had the very same reaction as them. (Some abandoned Jesus altogether when they heard it). Try to get across the fact that Jesus uses graphic language and even when the people complain/object to what Jesus says, Jesus does not resort to using tamer, less offensive language - he sticks to his guns. Tell them that the verb used by Jesus is not even the normal verb "to eat" but it is the verb that mean "to gnaw". Gnawing is the way an animal would chew and eat, so Jesus really does want us to eat his flesh!

The other important aim of this sheet is to introduce the theme of sacrifice. The words "This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" foreshadow Jesus' offering of himself as a sacrifice to save the world. If the seed of this theme is planted here, the children will make a connection again with the theme in subsequent worksheets.

For the catechist, a good point of reference is Robert Barron's 5-minute video clip explaining this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDVLBUK5FGw>

Worksheet 3

Fill in the blanks

10 minutes

This sheet simply invites the children to fill in the blanks to reinforce the two key quotes from John 6.

Worksheet 4

15 minutes

The aim of the **Easy to Understand** and **Think Deeper** section is to highlight the two things: The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the theme of

sacrifice. Discussing this here with clear and age-appropriate explanations in this section will help them to make links and have a clearer understanding of the Last Supper later on.

The quotation on the left could be discussed as a separate task and a stimulus for discussing the idea of sacrifice. The next booklet presents the story of Passover and sacrifice will be discussed there too. You could ask them to make a bookmark or prayer card and write the quotation onto it.

Worksheet 5 Fill in the blanks and Quiz activities 20 minutes

The Fill in the Blanks activity simply reinforces the main points of the booklet.

The answers are: BREAD, FLESH, BLOOD, REAL, PRESENCE.

For the quiz, you could do any of the following:

Make it an oral quiz - spoken answers only.

Make it a written quiz - they could take it home to do with parents and bring their answers to the next session.

Put the children into pairs/small groups to discuss and feed back to the group.

Give each group one question only to discuss and feed back to the group.