

Scripture and Tradition

Read and Reflect

As your parish implements ***Encounter with Christ***, your leaders are committed to giving you a comprehensive and personal experience in Sacrament preparation. Ongoing formation assists you in preparing and accompanying the children and families you serve.

Prior to responding to the following reflection questions, read the essay titled *Scripture and Tradition* on pages CG14-CG15 from the Catechist Guide (included at the end of this document). Record your responses to each of the reflection questions in the spaces provided or on a separate sheet of paper. Refer to your responses for later discussion or complete as instructed by your catechetical leader.

For Reflection

- In helping your children to encounter Christ you will lead them to God's Word and the Church's worship. The children engage with God's Word in four specific ways. They will reflect upon God's Word, pray with the Word, study God's Word, and apply God's Word to their lives. When engaging with Scripture, with which of these four ways are you most comfortable? Explain why.

- Reflecting on God's Word helps prepare the children for an ancient practice of prayer called *Lectio Divina*, or Divine Reading. This modified practice is outlined in the box in the left column on page CG14. How comfortable do you feel leading your children in this practice? What do you need to do in order to become more skilled in this vital step of offering them a way to listen for the voice of God?

- There is a sacred dance in worship. We need to experience the fullness of what we are about to do, and we are formed by what we experience. So we need to learn about what we will experience in the Sacraments. Then the Sacraments will offer us an encounter with Jesus. What do you think is important for your children to learn in order to celebrate the Sacraments with open hearts?

- Why is it important to develop a desire in your children to live a full sacramental life?

Sacred Scripture

In a sermon, Saint Leo the Great once said “what was visible in our Savior has passed over into his mysteries”⁹ (CCC, 1115). By *mysteries*, Saint Leo meant the Sacraments. He was teaching his community that the Sacraments arise from the ministry of Jesus—his words and actions, his life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. The Seven Sacraments are intrinsically bound to the Scriptures, for in the Word of God, we meet Jesus. We encounter Christ.

In *Encounter with Christ*, the children are invited to understand the importance of Sacred Scripture in the Old and New Testaments, as both the font of Divine Revelation and the voice of God speaking directly to their hearts. In the Child Book, the Word is always given prominent visual importance with a parchment background and the title “God’s Word.” The children are led to know, love, and be formed by God’s Word.

Scripture in the Catechetical Process

Invite In the opening prayer, the children pray with Scripture. The practice of scripture reflection is an essential element in the Invite step of every lesson and the means by which we enter into the divine pedagogy. Children are formed by this practice of

reflecting on Scripture and being open to the Word of God. Listening with the ear of the heart and reflecting on Scripture prepares children for practices such as *Lectio Divina*.

Discover and Live Sacred Scripture is connected to the session outcomes. The Scripture is taken from the Rite when possible. In every sacramental rite, Scripture holds a primary place. We recognize the need for God’s Word to penetrate our hearts so that we may understand and respond to this great gift.

In the Scriptures, we encounter Christ and his truth. The faith conversations, activities, and images found in the Discover and Live steps invite the children to fall in love with the Scriptures and the teaching of the Church that flows from them.

Pope Francis tells us that “the Church’s life and mission are founded on the word of God” and that “our faith is not only [centered] on a book but ... above all on a Person, Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh.”¹⁰

You can be sure that *Encounter with Christ* will help your children meet Christ in both Word and Sacrament.

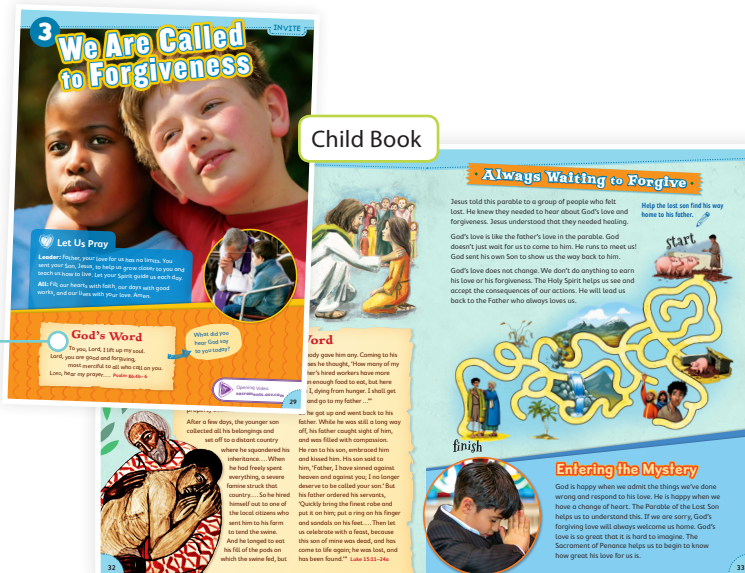
In this program, you will use the following scripture reflection process:

Step 1 Begin by using the directions provided on the Invite page of the lesson.

Step 2 Help the children enter into sacred space by prominently displaying the Bible, lighting or turning on a candle, and guiding them to become quiet and still.

Step 3 Read the passage in a slow and steady voice, one complete sentence at a time.

Step 4 Ask the question, “What did you hear God say to you today?” This reflection is critical in providing the children an opportunity to encounter God through his Word. It prepares each child to receive and respond in faith to God’s personal invitation.



Sacred Tradition

Sacred Tradition, along with Sacred Scripture, is a primary source of the Word of God. The Seven Sacraments represent a vital part of our Sacred Tradition.

Since ancient times, God has spoken to and formed his People through worship. The liturgical celebrations of the Church hand on essential truths about our faith. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that the Sacraments are both “by the Church” and “for the Church.” They are “by the Church” because Christ works in the Church “through the mission of the Holy Spirit,” and they are “for the Church” because they lead us into communion with God himself (1118).

How should children be formed in order to prepare them for meaningful, lifelong celebration of the Sacraments?

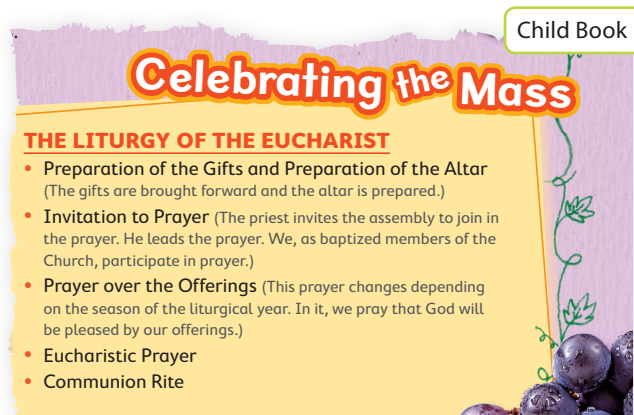
The Church guides us, teaching that the catechetical message has “a ‘comprehensive hierarchical character’¹¹ which constitutes a coherent and vital synthesis of the faith” (GDC, 114). The truths of the faith are organized in the hierarchy around the mystery of the Holy Trinity, in a Christ-centered (or *Christocentric*) perspective.

In salvation history, God has revealed himself to people in a systematic and gradual way, showing us more of himself as we become capable of understanding (see GDC, 38 and CCC, 54–65).

The catechesis in ***Encounter with Christ*** models this divine pedagogy and includes the essential elements of the faith regarding the Sacraments, presenting these truths in a gradual and systematic way.

To help us know what is foundational, the USCCB’s Subcommittee on the Catechism has identified the truths of the faith deemed essential to the formation of children preparing for the Sacraments. ***Encounter with Christ*** has been found to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Both the Child Book and Catechist Guide include excerpts from the *Roman Missal* and the *Rite of Penance* so that children are able to learn about the rites from the language of the rites themselves. Children are invited to read and practice the responses they will pray with the community and discover the meaning behind them, so their participation will truly be a prayer. The Child Book includes the order of the rites, the signs and what they signify, and the meaning of the Sacraments in the larger context of our Catholic faith.



➔ Go to page CG28 for Church Document connections related to Eucharist and to page CG30 for more on the relationship between Sacrament preparation and basal religious education, including a correlation with ***Alive in Christ***.