

TEACHING REVERENCE FOR THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST

ONE OF THE IMPORTANT TASKS of any catechist is to teach – and to model – reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist, the source and summit of our Faith. There are some very simple, yet important, ways by which this can be done. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Teach children and teenagers to genuflect before the tabernacle when they enter and leave the church. Also, teach them that we do this because Jesus is truly present in the tabernacle in His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity – that is, in His totality as true God and true Man.
2. Teach them that they must be in a state of sanctifying grace when they receive the Holy Eucharist and that if they are conscious of mortal sin they must receive absolution in the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion.
3. *We are also expected to fast from food and drink for at least one hour prior to the reception of Holy Communion.* – United States Catholic Catechism for Adults - p. 222.
(Note to catechist: Water and/or medicine do not break the Eucharistic fast, cf. Can. 919 of the Code of Canon Law.)
4. Teach them to bow before the altar of sacrifice.
5. Frequently insert the adjective “holy” before the words “Mass” and “Communion.” By doing so, we teach that “Holy Mass” and the Holy Eucharist (Communion) are not part of the ordinary, everyday set of realities, but are sacred and mysterious. We need to help to instill a sense of the sacred with regard to God and His holy things. Language is important in this regard.
6. Teach them to fold their hands when going up to receive Holy Communion. This helps to emphasize that the Mass is a prayer, and not any prayer, but THE PRAYER OF PRAYERS, THE HIGHEST FORM OF WORSHIP!
7. Teach them to bow their heads before receiving Holy Communion.
8. Teach them to unite their very selves with Jesus’ sacrifice for the salvation of souls.
9. Teach them to offer their Holy Communion for intentions before Mass and emphasize to them how important that prayer is.
10. Teach them to say a prayer of thanksgiving at the end of Holy Mass.
11. Teach them that they may receive the Holy Eucharist on the tongue or in the hand-except in the case of intinction, in which case they must receive on the tongue.
12. Encourage Eucharistic adoration and devotion. If possible, occasionally take students to the church to visit our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.
13. Teach your students to ask our Blessed Mother, Mary, for a great love of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.