THE LAST SUPPER

“ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES, THE ONE WHOM JESUS LOVED, WAS RECLINING AT JESUS’ SIDE.”
(John 13:23)

Are you surprised that the picture to the right is not Da Vinci’s painting of the Last Supper? While it is probably the painting that comes to mind when you think of the Last Supper, it is not an accurate depiction of how the table would have been set up.

During the time of Jesus it was customary to eat while reclining. Diners would rest on cushions with their head pointed towards the table leaning on one arm while eating with the other.

DID YOU KNOW?

Holy Thursday is also called Maundy Thursday. “Maundy” is derived from the Latin word *mandatum*, which means “command.” During the Last Supper Jesus tells His apostles, “A new commandment I give unto you.”
(John 13:34)

PARENTS’ & CATECHISTS’ READING

REFLECTION & PRAYER

Sacred Scripture

LUKE 22:1-13
JOHN 13:1-20
LUKE 22:14-20
JOHN 13:21-38

Preparations for the Passover
Jesus Washes the Apostles’ Feet
The Last Supper...The First Mass
Betrayal...The Greatest Commandment

Catechism of the Catholic Church

#610-611, 1130, 1403
#1322-1332
#1337-1344
#1823-1824, 1970
TEACHING STRATEGY & OBJECTIVES

THEME:

THE HOLY EUCHARIST IS THE SACRAMENT GIVEN TO US BY JESUS AT THE LAST SUPPER—WHICH IS THE FIRST MASS—AND AT MASS IN HOLY COMMUNION...

THE BREAD OF LIFE IS REALLY AND TRULY JESUS’ BODY, BLOOD, SOUL, AND DIVINITY.

OBJECTIVES:

Read the Scripture passages and emphasize these important points:

The Last Supper was celebrated during the Jewish feast of Passover (brief review of Passover from Exodus Chapter 12)

By washing the Apostles’ feet, Jesus reminds them He came to serve and they should also be willing to serve with humility, faith, and love

During the Last Supper Jesus gives His Apostles two new commands:

“DO THIS…” Where Jesus institutes the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and gives the Apostles (and priests they and their successors would ordain) the power to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

“LOVE ONE ANOTHER…” Jesus tells the Apostles (and all of us) to love with a Divine love

Review the Matter, Form and Effect of the SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

STUDENTS’ READING REFLECTION & PRAYER

Sacred Scripture

Grades K-4  New Catholic Picture Bible  pp. 190-191  Washing of the Feet at the Last Supper
pp. 192-193  The Institution of the Holy Eucharist
pp. 194-195  Prayer for the Apostles

Grades 5-12  LUKE 22:1-13
JOHN 13:1-20
LUKE 22:14-20
JOHN 13:21-38

Preparations for the Passover
Jesus Washes the Feet of the Apostles
The Last Supper...The First Mass
Betrayal...The Greatest Commandment

Catechism

Grades K-2  First Communion Catechism  pp. 47-52  The Holy Eucharist
Grades 3-6  Baltimore Catechism #1  pp. 124-138  The Holy Eucharist
Grades 7-12  Catechism of the Catholic Church  #610-611, 1130, 1403, 1322-1332
#1337-1344, 1823-1824, 1970
O SACRAMENT MOST HOLY
O SACRAMENT DIVINE
ALL PRAISE AND ALL THANKSGIVING
BE EVERY MOMENT THINE!

REVIEW: (IF TIME ALLOWS)

PRACTICE THE ACT OF CONTRITION

O My God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins, because of Your just punishments, but most of all because they offend You, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love I firmly resolve, With the help of your grace, To sin no more And to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen

READINGS FROM SACRED SCRIPTURE:
PREPARATIONS FOR THE PASSOVER   LUKE 22:1-13

WHAT IS THE PASSOVER OR “THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD”? On the last dark night of their slavery in Egypt, at God’s Command, the Israelites celebrated the first Passover... to celebrate the “passing over” of the Angel of Death which helped to free them from the bondage of slavery. Yahweh directed them to celebrate their meal with a “paschal lamb”... a young lamb slain and roasted... and to eat with it unleavened bread and bitter herbs. This meal and its meaning is described in great detail in the Old Testament—in Exodus Chapter 12.

Every year the Jews celebrated the Passover—the way that we celebrate Thanksgiving in the United States [only they feast on lamb, and we eat our turkey]. Interesting too, that the word “thanksgiving” in biblical language is rendered, “eucharist.”

It is this “thanksgiving/eucharist” meal that Jesus celebrated with His disciples at the Last Supper—which is the first Mass.

WHY WERE THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND THEIR SCRIBES AFRAID OF THE PEOPLE? The mob of common people still thought that Jesus was a prophet... and might be the Messiah. They wanted to see some miracles... they wanted to be entertained. The Chief Priests and Scribes did not want the people rioting against them if they took Jesus publicly by force. Mobs in our own day are the same—things have not changed one bit.
WHY DID JUDAS OFFER TO TURN JESUS OVER TO THEM?

Judas may have had several motives. We know that he was greedy and was a thief [John 12:4-6]. So he may have done it for the money—30 pieces of silver.

It may also be the case that Judas thought he knew better than Jesus how to build the Kingdom. Judas may have thought that it was necessary to overthrow the Romans. Perhaps he thought that turning Jesus over to the Jews and the Romans might force Him to use His power to vanquish them.

But Judas may also have been envious. He was the keeper of the common purse, and so must have been a good organizer and administrator. He may have envied Simon when Jesus re-named him “Peter” and made him the head of the Apostles. We know that Jesus would take Peter, James, and John aside at special moments during His Mission…and Judas may have felt “left out.” Judas’ pride might have been hurt, and with the devil working on him he may even have begun to hate Jesus and his brother Apostles. His heart may have been so filled with pride and envy and malice that He sought to destroy The Christ.

WHY DID JESUS HAVE PETER AND JOHN GO THROUGH SUCH A COMPLICATED PROCEDURE TO FIND THE UPPER ROOM FOR THE LAST SUPPER?

We are not sure. But since Judas was in charge of their funds, he probably also arranged for lodgings and meals. Jesus knew that Judas was seeking to turn Him over to the authorities. He did not want their last meal together to be interrupted by the arresting soldiers. So Jesus sent Peter and John out with special instructions so that the meal could be prepared without Judas knowing where it was to be.

READINGS FROM SACRED SCRIPTURE:

JESUS WASHES THE APOSTLES’ FEET  JOHN 13:1-20

WHY DID JESUS WASH THE DISCIPLES’ FEET?

By reading all four of the Gospels we may be able to figure out what happened. Luke tells us that the Apostles began to argue [LUKE 22:24]—even at that most solemn and sacred moment—about who among them was the greatest. Perhaps they were arguing about the places of honor at the table. Jesus must have been discouraged. He had told them before…more than once…that they should not seek the highest place, but the lowest place.

Washing feet in Jesus’ time was a filthy business. Cities had open sewers running through the streets and gutters, and people wore sandals. Feet could be very dirty. Even the lowest servants were not expected to wash feet. Jesus humbles Himself and takes this lowly duty as His own to make His point so clear that the Apostles would never forget it: the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve…and that those who would be truly great among them must be willing to serve the rest.

This is why one of our Holy Father the Pope’s most beautiful titles is “Servant of the Servants of God.”

WHAT ELSE DOES THE FOOT WASHING REMIND US OF?

It reminds us of our need to have our sins washed away in the SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION…especially if they are serious sins…before we receive Holy Communion at Mass.
THE LAST SUPPER

WHAT ARE TWO KEY TERMS WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LAST SUPPER?

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS: JESUS’ DEATH AND RESURRECTION ARE MADE PRESENT FOR THOSE WHO ARE GATHERED, AND WE RECEIVE HIM IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

AND

THE HOLY EUCHARIST: THE SACRAMENT GIVEN TO US BY JESUS AT THE LAST SUPPER AND AT MASS IN HOLY COMMUNION, THE BREAD OF LIFE IS REALLY AND TRULY JESUS’ BODY, BLOOD, SOUL, AND DIVINITY.

WHY IS JESUS SO EAGER TO CELEBRATE THE LAST SUPPER WITH THE APOSTLES?

We must never forget that Jesus loves each of us...as He loved His Apostles. He came to save the world from its sins, knowing that He had to die that we might live. He had lived with the Apostles and worked with them for more than two years—and He wanted to show them just how much He did love them. He wanted to give Himself to them completely. He had waited [for all Eternity] for this sacred moment. His plan was to use Bread and Wine as food and drink so that He might be not just with them... but within them.

WHAT DOES JESUS SAY AND DO WITH THE BREAD?

Although we are focusing primarily on Luke’s Account of the Last Supper, looking at Matthew and Mark help us to see a fuller picture. As He did in the Miracle of the Multiplication of the Loaves and the Fishes, Jesus TOOK the bread, GAVE THANKS, BLESSED, BROKE, and GAVE the bread to His disciples. At the Last Supper, however, a much greater miracle took place.

As Jesus holds the bread in His Sacred Hands, He says…

“TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT.
FOR THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.”

WHAT DOES THE BREAD BECOME?

A year earlier by the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus fed a crowd of 5,000 men… together with women and children, with bread which He multiplied—broke and broke again—over and over…so that 5 loaves and two fish fed thousands of people. It was a multiplication of substance. But we know that the next day those same people were hungry again… this barley bread, miraculous as it was, did not ultimately satisfy them. Like Moses’ manna in the desert, although miraculous, it was only bread for the BODY.

At the Last Supper a far greater miracle takes place. When Jesus says, THIS IS MY BODY, the substance of the Bread becomes Jesus’ Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity...food for our SOUL.

WHAT DOES JESUS SAY AND DO WITH THE WINE?

Jesus takes the Chalice and giving thanks, says,

“TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU AND DRINK FROM IT:
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT,
WHICH WILL BE POURED OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN
DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.”
HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND JESUS’ COMMANDMENT...“DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.”?

These are among the most important words that Jesus ever spoke. This is one of the Chapter Numbers that we ought to memorize: LUKE 22...which gives us a clear reference for the SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST and the SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS.

Jesus commands His Apostles [and us] to do THIS... what He had just done. Jesus had taken bread and said, THIS IS MY BODY. Not, “This is a symbol of My Body,” or “This is a reminder of Me,”... but, “This IS My Body.” When Jesus first spoke those words [and when the Priest speaks them at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass] the bread appears to be unchanged. All of our senses tell us that nothing has changed. But Faith helps us to see that a great change has indeed taken place.

When we talk about “change” we need to consider several terms.

ACCIDENTS are the OUTWARD CHARACTERISTICS OF A PERSON OR A THING WHICH CAN BE KNOWN BY THE SENSES. Size, shape, color, weight, taste, smell... the sound that something makes—these are all “accidents.” So if you see a creature that is about as tall as your waistline, has golden colored fur, walks on four legs, has floppy ears, friendly eyes, a long muzzle with white teeth, and goes “Woof Woof,” your senses tell you that the creature is a dog—perhaps a Golden Retriever. Accidents are what our senses perceive.

SUBSTANCE is the INNER REALITY OF A PERSON OR A THING... “what” it really is. If you paint the Golden Retriever green—that doesn’t change what it really is... it is an “accidental” change. It is still a Golden Retriever—he just looks a bit weird. But if the Golden Retriever is bad and runs away into the mountains and a Black Bear eats him, then this is not an accidental change, but a SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE; he is no longer a dog, but part of a bear.

So—

“Accidental Change”... the appearance is altered, but the person or thing remain what they were

“Substantial Change” ... the person or thing is changed into something else completely different.

The miracle that Jesus worked at the Last Supper allowed the external Accidents of bread and wine to remain the same—but in Reality, in their Substance, they became Jesus Himself. When the Apostles ate and drank what Jesus gave to them, although the bread and wine looked and tasted the same, they were not merely eating and drinking bread and wine, but were receiving Jesus’ Precious Body and Blood.

This miracle is called TRANSUBSTANTIATION:


Also we consider who was there to receive Jesus’ Command to “DO THIS” in memory of Him—the Apostles. Jesus gave His friends the power, when they were later to celebrate Mass, to DO THIS... to do what He had just done, and cause the Bread and Wine to become Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. This is a great Mystery... and is the source and summit of our Catholic Faith and Worship...the essence of the HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS:

JESUS’ DEATH AND RESURRECTION ARE MADE PRESENT FOR THOSE WHO ARE GATHERED, AND WE RECEIVE HIM IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

By this Command “DO THIS” Jesus made his Apostles Priests...and instituted a second sacrament...

HOLY ORDERS: THE SACRAMENT IN WHICH A MAN IS MADE A PRIEST OF JESUS CHRIST, WITH THE POWER TO FORGIVE SINS AND TO OFFER THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS. This refers to Priestly Orders, Diaconate will be considered in Year 3.
WHY DO WE BELIEVE THAT THE BREAD AND WINE TRULY BECOME JESUS’ BODY, BLOOD, SOUL, AND DIVINITY?

We remember now Jesus’ words in His Bread of Life Discourse [in JOHN CHAPTER SIX]

*I AM THE LIVING BREAD THAT CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN; WHOEVER EATS THIS BREAD WILL LIVE FOREVER; AND THE BREAD THAT I SHALL GIVE IS MY FLESH FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD...AMEN, AMEN I SAY TO YOU, UNLESS YOU EAT THE FLESH OF THE SON OF MAN AND DRINK HIS BLOOD, YOU DO NOT HAVE LIFE WITHIN YOU...WHOEVER EATS MY FLESH AND DRINKS MY BLOOD HAS ETERNAL LIFE, AND I SHALL RAISE HIM UP ON THE LAST DAY. FOR MY FLESH IS TRUE FOOD, AND MY BLOOD IS TRUE DRINK...WHOEVER EATS MY FLESH AND DRINKS MY BLOOD REMAINS IN ME AND I IN HIM... THIS IS THE BREAD THAT CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN... WHOEVER EATS THIS BREAD SHALL LIVE FOREVER” [JN 6:48—54].

The crowds who heard Jesus’ words at the Bread of Life Discourse were shocked and refused to believe in Jesus or trust Him. They walked away from Him. But after hearing Jesus’ words at the Last Supper, the Apostles realized that now they really could eat Jesus’ flesh and drink His blood—but that their reality or substance would be made present under the forms of bread and wine. Finally they could receive Him in Holy Communion by eating and drinking the “accidents” or external forms of bread and wine. This is what we see and touch and taste at Mass—the forms of bread and wine—while with the "eyes of faith" we Behold Jesus, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world and embrace Him in Holy Communion.

*The Church, our Mother, has always taught us that the words of Jesus in the Bread of Life Discourse and at the Last Supper are to be taken literally—as entirely true and worthy of belief.*

READINGS FROM SACRED SCRIPTURE:
JUDAS’ BETRAYAL AND THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT
JOHN 13:21-38

IF JESUS KNEW THAT JUDAS WAS GOING TO BETRAY HIM, WHY DIDN’T HE STOP HIM?

Jesus knew that to save the world He had to go to the Cross. Judas was free to choose between good and evil—he freely chose evil. Jesus allowed him to be a part of the plan.

God does not ever want us to choose evil—but He has made us free...so we may choose to be like Judas if we please. But if we choose evil, we become servants of the devil and we risk losing Heaven forever!

WHAT IS THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT, AND WHY IS IT THE GREATEST OF ALL THE COMMANDMENTS?

When Jesus told the Apostles to. “LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU,” He was telling them to love not merely with human love…but to Love as He Loves...as Christ Loves... as God Loves... with a Divine Love. This surpasses all other Commandments because it challenges us to be and to love like God Himself. The Holy Spirit who lives and moves and loves within and through us gives, and IS this power!

CHARITY THE VIRTUE WHICH GIVES US THE ABILITY TO LOVE WITH GOD’S LOVE

WHAT TERRIBLE PREDICTION DOES JESUS MAKE ABOUT PETER?

In spite of Peter’s declaration that He will never abandon Christ, Jesus tells him that not only will he abandon Him...but will deny Him three times before the cock has finished crowing in that darkest night in history.