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We Are Nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ

Gifts to Treasure

Last Saturday Eric went to his Grandmom Lily's house to help her pack. She was going to move to a neighboring town. When Eric got to the house, Grandmom Lily was in the kitchen. She was going through boxes that she had brought up from the basement. Grandmom Lily said to Eric, "Look at two treasures I just found."

Eric thought his grandmother was going to show him a necklace or some other pieces of jewelry. But Grandmom Lily handed him a book of coupons. She said, "When your father was your age, he gave me these coupons for my birthday."

Eric laughed when he read the coupons aloud. The first one read, "I will clean my room before you ask me." Another one read, "I will not complain once this week."

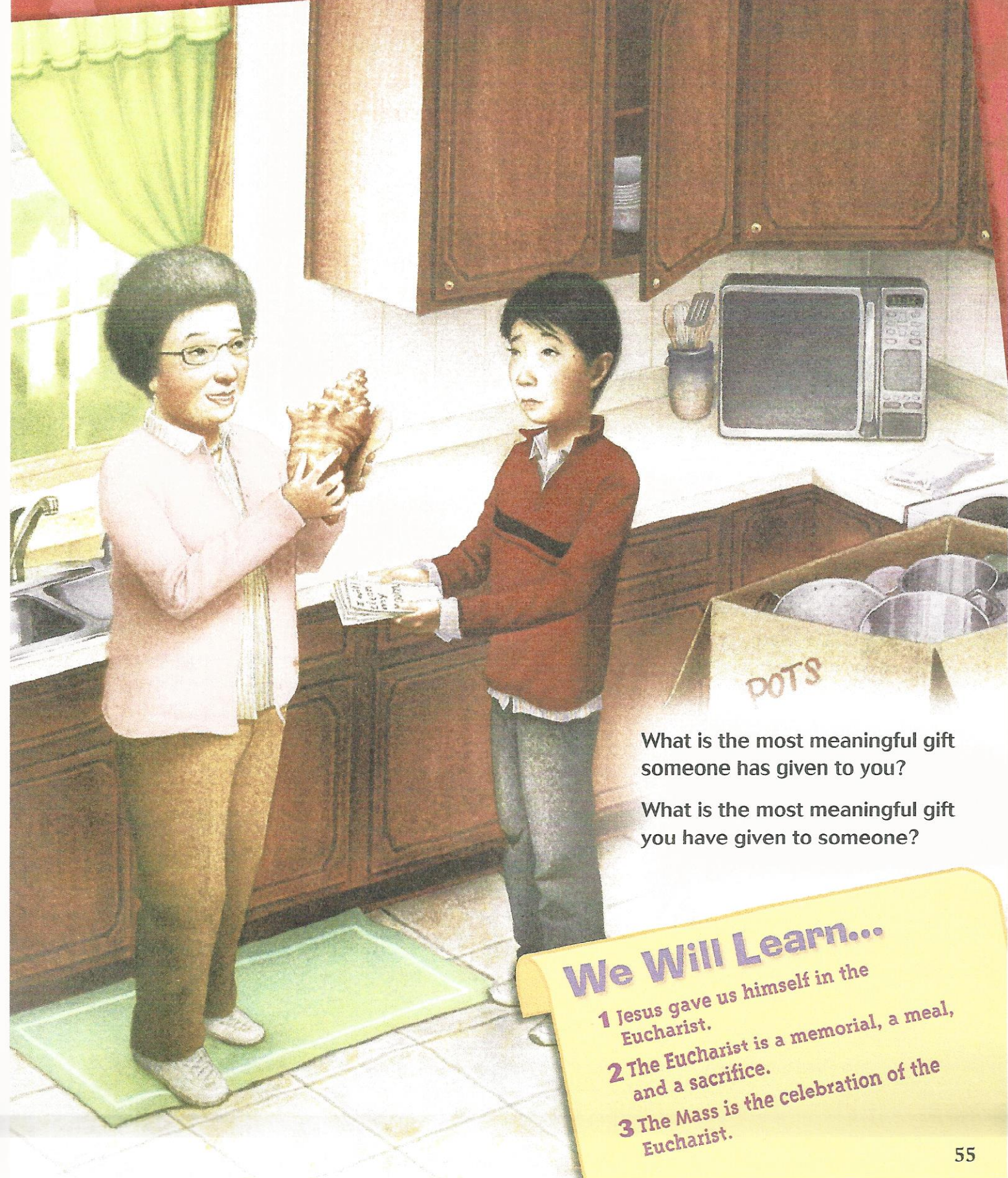
Then Grandmom Lily held up a seashell. She told Eric, "Your Aunt Lee gave this shell to me that same year. It was her favorite shell from the collection she had. Out of all the birthday gifts I received that year, these two were my favorites."

Eric asked, "Why were these gifts your favorites, Grandmom?"



Grandmom Lily answered, "Because they were gifts of love. Eric, always remember that some of the most meaningful gifts you can give cannot be bought in a store. When we love others, we give them our time and attention. We listen to them. We spend time with them. We try to help them. In fact, you're giving me a gift right now—the gift of your time and love."

Eric's grandmother put the coupons and the shell in a small box. She said, "I'm going to make room for these two treasures in my new home."



What is the most meaningful gift someone has given to you?

What is the most meaningful gift you have given to someone?

We Will Learn...

- 1 Jesus gave us himself in the Eucharist.
- 2 The Eucharist is a memorial, a meal, and a sacrifice.
- 3 The Mass is the celebration of the Eucharist.



1 Jesus gave us himself in the Eucharist.

Jesus wanted to remain present with his disciples. So at the Last Supper on the night before he died, Jesus gave his disciples a special way to remember him and to be with him. “While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, ‘Take it; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.’” (Mark 14:22–24)

Jesus’ breaking of the bread and sharing of the cup was an offering of himself for our Salvation. At the Last Supper Jesus gave us the gift of himself and instituted the Eucharist. Through the Eucharist Jesus remains with us forever.

The **Eucharist** is the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. The Mass is the celebration of the Eucharist.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit and the words and actions of the priest, Jesus truly becomes present to us in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. He is truly present to us under the appearances of bread and wine. We receive Jesus Christ himself in Holy Communion.

When we receive the Eucharist, we share in God’s own life—the life of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Our relationship with Christ and one another is strengthened. Christ unites all the faithful in one body, the Body of Christ, the Church.

In the Sacrament of the Eucharist we complete our Christian Initiation into the Church. The Eucharist nourishes us to be faithful members of the Church. Thus, it is the only Sacrament of Christian Initiation that we receive again and again.

Why do you think the Eucharist is at the center of our lives?

2 The Eucharist is a memorial, a meal, and a sacrifice.

The Eucharist is a memorial.

When Jesus gave his disciples the Eucharist, he told them, “do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19). When we gather and celebrate the Sacrament of the Eucharist, we are remembering Jesus who is present to us in this celebration. We are remembering the new life we have because of Jesus Christ’s Death and Resurrection.

The Eucharist is a meal.

At the Last Supper Jesus and his disciples were eating and celebrating a special meal. In the Eucharist we share in a meal. In the Eucharist we, too, are nourished. We are nourished by the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. As Jesus told us, “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” (John 6:55–56).

The Eucharist is a sacrifice.

A **sacrifice** is a gift offered to God by a priest in the name of all the people. During the celebration of the Eucharist, Jesus acts through the priest. At each celebration, Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, his Resurrection, and his Ascension into Heaven are made present again through the words and actions of the priest.

Through this sacrifice we are saved. This sacrifice is offered for the forgiveness of the sins of the living and the dead. Through it we are reconciled with God and one another. Our less serious sins are forgiven, and we are strengthened to avoid serious sin.

In the Eucharist Jesus offers his Father praise and thanksgiving. This thanks and praise is for all the gifts of Creation. The word *eucharist* means “to give thanks.” In every celebration of the Eucharist, the whole Church offers thanks and praise. When we celebrate the Eucharist, we pray to the Father, through the Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. We join Jesus in offering ourselves to God the Father. We offer all our joys and concerns. We offer our willingness to live as Jesus’ disciples.

What will you remember about Jesus the next time you celebrate the Eucharist?

What joys and concerns will you offer to God?



3 The Mass is the celebration of the Eucharist.

The Mass is the Church's great act of worship. The celebration of the Eucharist, the Mass, is the center of the Church's life. For this reason the Church requires all members to participate in Mass every Sunday or Saturday evening.

When we participate in the Mass, we show that we appreciate the great gift Jesus has given us—the gift of himself. Some of the ways that we participate are by singing, praying the responses, listening and responding to readings from the Bible, and receiving Holy Communion.

During Mass Jesus is among us. He offers himself so that we can grow in God's friendship and love. Jesus is present to us in the Word of God, in those who have gathered in his name, in the priest celebrant, and most importantly, in his Body and Blood which we receive in Holy Communion.

The Church recommends that each time we participate in the Mass, we receive Holy Communion. The Church requires us to receive Holy Communion at least once a year.

How will you participate in next Sunday's Mass?

Do You Know?

The Church has many feast days, including very special ones called Holy Days of Obligation. The Church requires that we participate in Mass on these days. In addition to Sundays, in the United States the Holy Days of Obligation are:

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (January 1)

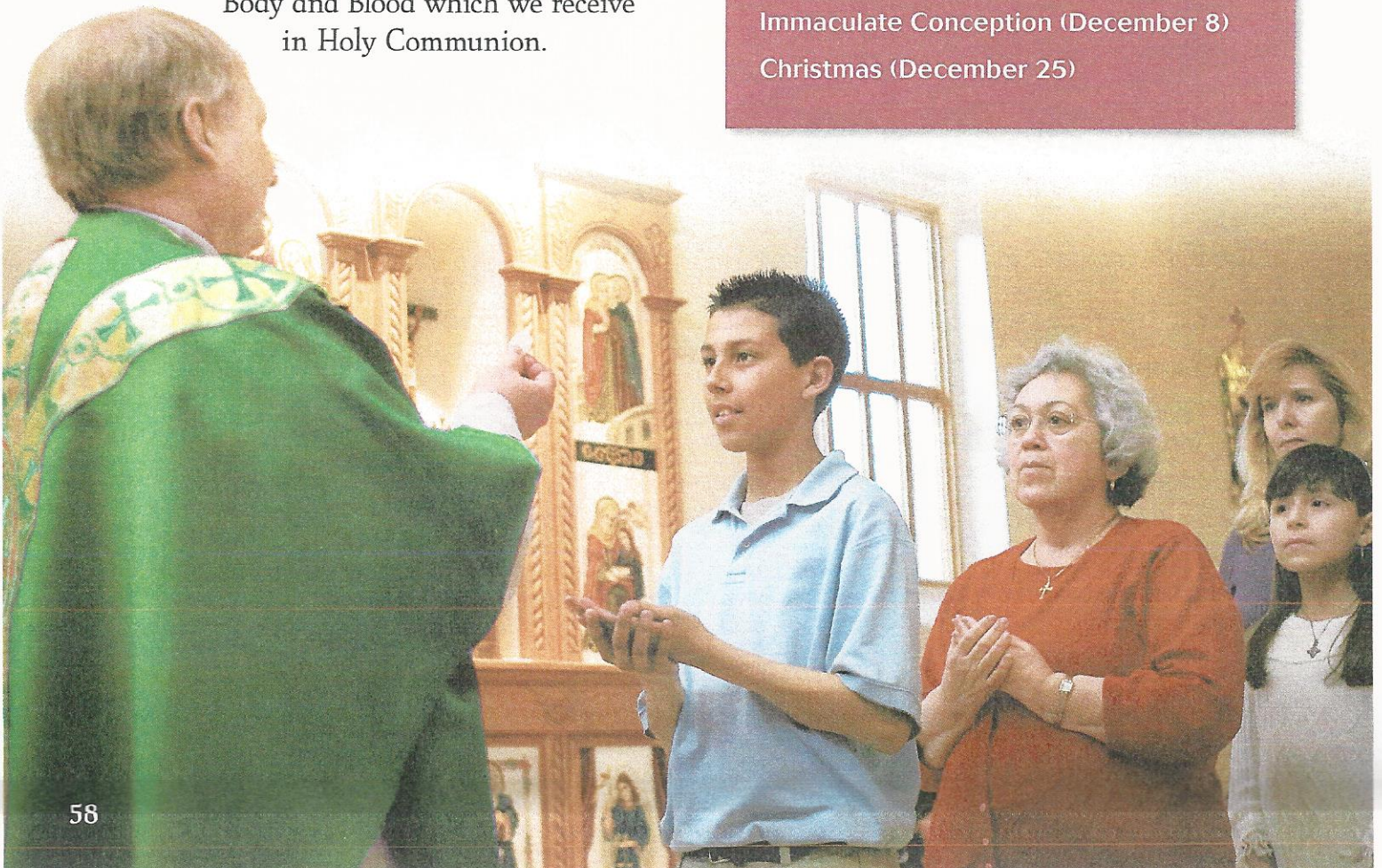
Ascension (when celebrated on Thursday during the Easter season)

Assumption of Mary (August 15)

All Saints' Day (November 1)

Immaculate Conception (December 8)

Christmas (December 25)



Review

Complete the following sentences.

1. Jesus gave us the gift of himself in the Eucharist at _____
_____.
2. The word *eucharist* means "_____."
3. In the Eucharist Jesus is truly present to us under the appearances of _____.
4. The Eucharist is a memorial, a meal, and a _____.

Discuss the following.

5. What happens to us when we receive the Eucharist?
6. How is Jesus present to us at Mass?
7. In what ways do we participate at Mass?

Faith Words

Eucharist (page 56)

sacrifice (page 57)

With My Family

Sharing Our Faith

- 1 Jesus gave us himself in the Eucharist.
- 2 The Eucharist is a memorial, a meal, and a sacrifice.
- 3 The Mass is the celebration of the Eucharist.

PRAYING TOGETHER



After we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, we can say the following prayer of thanks.

Jesus,
thank you for coming to me in Communion.
Thank you for strengthening me to be
your disciple and to serve others.
Help me to be grateful for each day and
to stay close to you always.
Amen.

Living Our Faith

In this chapter you have learned that the Mass is a celebration of praise and thanksgiving. Discuss what gifts from God you are most grateful for this week. Write these gifts below. Then write ways you can show God your thanks.

Gift	Way to give thanks
Our food	Try not to waste food. Donate food to a pantry.
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____